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## THAT'S THE TICKET

*Friends work for more than three decades as ticket takers at Phillipsburg rodeo*

PHILLIPSBURG, KAN. (June 14, 2021) – For the past thirty-plus years, Ron Lower and Brett Biggs have been cooped up during the Phillipsburg rodeo, shut into an eight-by-ten room and assigned to get their work done.

It wasn't jail, and actually they chose to be there.

They were two of the ticket sellers, the first faces fans saw as they arrived at Kansas Biggest Rodeo.

They retired after the 2019 rodeo, but for the previous three decades, they sold tickets at the north gate, in the ticket office.

The two, longtime friends who are always cutting up and poking fun at each other, were in charge of general admission sales, not the assigned seats, which are taken care of by other volunteers. It is harder to mess up general admission tickets, Lower joked. "You can have a limited vocabulary (with the job.) We prefer to sell general admission. We know our place," he quipped.

It can be hot work. If there's no breeze, the air is muggy and still, and even a fan doesn't help much. But too much wind is also a problem. "We hate a windy night," Lower said, "because it blows the money all over hell."

The men, along with other volunteers, arrived by 5:15 pm on the three nights of rodeo and started selling tickets immediately. They stayed till 9 pm.

They loved to see familiar and new faces among the ticket buyers. "We had regulars each year," Biggs said. "You could plan on them." They also got to see native Phillips Countians who were back for the rodeo. "You see a lot of kids who come back, once a year, other than Christmas. Whether they're rodeo fans or not, they're still (at the rodeo), because all their buddies are there. That's just how it works."

Lower and Biggs didn't always recognize everyone who comes through the gate. "Once in a while someone would say hi to me, and start talking to me," Lower said, "and I had no idea who it is. Then you fake it. I've watched Brett so I know," he cracked.

They knew they were only two of the dozens of volunteers who make the rodeo successful. They were glad to not be the cotton candy person. "If you do cotton candy," Lower said, "you end up wearing cotton candy. The rule is to stay up wind," he quipped.

It takes the whole town to pull off an event that draws more than three times its population to the rodeo. “If you live here, you’re going to be asked to help,” Lower said.

But they didn’t mind. It helps the local economy: the restaurants and motels are full, even places like the grocery store, hardware store and laundromat are busy.

“It’s a big deal for the town, so you do what you can to help,” he said.

Kansas Biggest Rodeo celebrates its 92<sup>nd</sup> year August 5-7 in Phillipsburg. The rodeo starts at 8 pm each night. Tickets range in price from \$16-19 for adults and \$12-\$15 for children. Children ages ten and under get free admittance with the purchase of an adult ticket for the August 5 rodeo.

For more information, visit the website at [KansasBiggestRodeo.com](http://KansasBiggestRodeo.com).

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Ron Lower (on the left) and Brett Biggs have volunteered to man the ticket booth at the Phillipsburg rodeo for the last thirty-plus years, for all three nights of rodeo. They retired after the 2019 rodeo.