

Welcome and good morning.

I would like to thank you all for being here today and spending your valuable time, knowledge, and resources to support our organization. We have some tremendous challenges ahead and it will take all of us to find solutions and prepare IGRA for the next generation of LGBTQ cowboys and cowgirls. This primary goal forms the foundation for all the initiatives that I and our committee chairs, bring to the board today and in the next two years

To that end, I would also like to thank the committee chairs and team members who have been working together since our last meeting to take action on issues and propose initiatives to elevate our organization. To survive we need to take more action than talk, and we need to take calculated informed risks. In the end, our new 501C3 charitable organization will not be judged by the amount of money in our bank account, rather it will be judged by how we worked together to answer the challenges we face and the improvements we tried to make.

I don't need to tell you that the environment around us has taken an ominous turn and we will need to circle the wagons, let go of past disagreements and come together to persevere through these troubling times. The challenges we face are more serious, mean-spirited, organized, and focused than ever; possibly worse than when our predecessors started this great gay rodeo adventure.

Here are some updates on initiatives:

Initiative One: Update the IGRA-owned Rodeo Registration (A) and Rodeo Management System (B).

Work has begun by RW Enterprises on the Contestant Rodeo Registration Project and you will see a mock-up of the product today, and potentially test drive it by Palm Springs Rodeo or shortly thereafter. This project will require multiple fundraising efforts perhaps including a convention proposal for a continuation of a user flat fee. The plus here is that the current estimated \$3500 annual cash flow, will flow to IGRA and not to a third-party provider. This pays for part A of the project in the first year of use and may provide ongoing revenue support to IGRA.

Work has also begun on Project B. Initially recall that these were two separate projects, however, combining these two projects will facilitate integration and potentially save cost in the long term. The final contract will come for approval today and I hope this can be supported. Funding will need to come from a variety of sources, including a \$15,000 capital outlay to continue the development, applying for grants, and potentially a formal 501C3 capital campaign. As president and based on broad discussion, our current circa 1985 system presents a looming existential threat to the organization. We cannot pass this along to the next generation.

Initiative Two: Marketing and reconnecting with the LGBTQ sport/rodeo enthusiast public

As President, through extensive conversations, I have realized that we have been a very internal-looking organization for the last 10 years, at least, talking to ourselves, about ourselves, and assuming that the community was listening in. They are not, and the effect is showing in our public attendance and is a contributor to our contestant population deterioration. Today, you will see some work and hear plans by the newly formed marketing committee chairs and

committee on a revitalized marketing plan to improve public awareness of IGRA, including the WGRF in El Reno. I hope they will have your support.

Initiative Three: A complimentary public-facing Gay Rodeo Website, linked to IGRA.com

IGRA.com is a treasure for our organization. It is probably the most extensive repository of current and historical information on any LGBTQ sporting organization. I would challenge anyone to find a more complete story about their organization available to the public. To reach the IGRA-naïve market, the marketing committee has developed a complimentary website to reach the un-initiated potential public. The primary goal of this site is to answer the question "How do I get involved with gay rodeo?"

Initiative Four: "Road to 2025; 50 Years of Gay Rodeo" Campaign.

As President, I see two IGRA's. This has developed over years of personality conflicts with diverging goals for the organization. It will take time and effort to heal these divisions, however, we are presented with a neutral, common opportunity to come together as we approach the 50th Anniversary of "Gay Rodeo" in 2025. My goal is to encourage the organization to return to the birthplace of gay rodeo Reno, NV with the IGRA WGRF in October 2025: 50 years almost to the day of the first gay rodeo, and several years before the formation of the IGRA. I believe this initiative is something that we can all be proud to be part of; putting aside our divisions and working together on a common, triumphant accomplishment. Maybe the healing will begin. Today, I will ask you to approve a visual representation of this initiative to be used over the next two and one-half years. The medallion can be used on all of our fundraising and grant requests to illustrate our long-term, stable leadership in gay rodeo. The physical patch that you will see can be used as a fundraising effort. To me, this is one of our most important initiatives and I hope you will support this effort.

Convention 2023 is planned in Reno, NV to connect with the city leaders, tourism board, facilities, hotels, and the surrounding LGBT communities in advance of 2025. You will be presented with a conference hotel contract that I think you will find appealing.

Initiative Five: Restore a revenue-producing merchandising program: IGRAStore.com

As a 501C3 we are allowed to produce revenue from "retail sales" which equates to about 10% of our total budget. Technically, my understanding is that the remaining 90% should come from charitable donations and grants, however, I digress 😊. We need every revenue source that we can muster and the marketing committee along with the executive director have created an online, on-demand, low-to-no inventory retail store to sell IGRA merchandise to members and the public. Today, you will have a demonstration and I hope you will support this potential revenue stream, organizational awareness campaign, and culture-building effort. I hope you will endorse this project.

Initiative Six: WGRF 2023: The committee will present the latest important updates on WGRF 2025. We must achieve operational and financial success for this and future WGRF. While this is a convention-driven issue, we are behind in this effort, We need to catch up and get into long-

IGRA Presidents Report April 2023, Denton, TX.

Brian Helander

term-planning mode; at least three years out. We cannot afford to be linear with our signature annual event. To that end, I have established 2024 and 2025 PLANNING chairs, who will research potential locations, venues, logistics, conditions, and hotels. Once data is collected, it can be used to educate delegates and the BOD to make a more informed decision. The PLANNING chairs will eventually turn over the operation to the operations black shirt teams. Please engage with Ron Trusley for 2024 and Roger Bergmann for 2025 PLANNING suggestions or discussions. No action is needed today, but I want the board to endorse a long-term planning approach and simultaneously develop a rolling three years of WGRF opportunities.

Additional Items:

I have assigned each board member as a liaison to one or more standing or ad-hoc committees. If the Chair of a committee is a board member, they become the default liaison. I cannot be the primary point of contact for all the IGRA committees. Your job is to mentor, encourage, support, be informed, report to the BOD in the absence of the committee chair, and otherwise be a point of contact for the committee chair. If you have a problem with your assignment, please tell me.

We have several small initiatives that need a board member to lead or impanel a group to find a solution to the issue. A few examples: we need a BOD member to learn about and educate members on "Corporate/ workplace donation matching", this can be a good source of income. We need a BOD member/ group to launch a quarterly GO-fund-me effort for a specific project or two. We need a BOD member who may be interested in creating a capital campaign. There are LOTS of things to do and if I miss the opportunity to ask you, please ask me.

NON-BOD member out there who may be reading this, If you want a project to help your organization, I have one for you, please reach out to me at 602-320-7136 or bhelander@me.com (IGRA email address coming soon)