

Centennial, CO. May 6, 2020

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## BPIR KEEPS 2020 TOUR ON PAUSE DUE TO COVID-19 “Ridin With You Virtually”

*ALWAYS The Greatest Show on Dirt*

FROM CEO/PRESIDENT/PRODUCER VALERIA HOWARD-CUNNINGHAM

COVID-19 continues to throw us a curve ball as we learn new things about the virus daily. Seeing the tragic increases in the number of people who are infected and the deaths across the world and the U.S.A., has generated many questions about what we should do about the remaining 2020 Bill Pickett Invitational Rodeo tour.

As you know, we had to cancel Memphis, and based on the current state protocols in California for COVID-19, we will not be able to have our West Coast tour with rodeos in Oakland and Los Angeles. Regardless of whether we agree or disagree with the decisions being made by the various states, not having these rodeos are the right thing to do. We would never put our BPIR family, supporters, venue partners or sponsors in harm's way because our priority is to do what is right and protect everyone at the same time.

Understanding how much is still unknown about COVID-19 and the devastation it has already caused, I have made a decision that our contestants, supporters, venue partners and sponsors are more important than us trying to do a rodeo that might expose anyone to the virus. As a result, my decision is to keep everyone safe, therefore the BPIR 2020 Season is being CANCELLED!



The cancellation means that we will not be doing rodeos this year in Oakland, CA., Los Angeles, CA., Atlanta, GA., or Upper Marlboro/Washington, DC.

I was hoping I would not have to make this decision, but COVID-19 is calling all the shots at this point. I can assure you that I will be taking the remainder of 2020 to continue monitoring COVID-19 and determine how we return in 2021, if possible. Additionally, we will continue making a difference in the community by staying involved where and when we can. We will be “Ridin with you Virtually” with our monthly newsletters, live activities and virtual stories. In addition, we will continue making a difference by providing youth educational content for the schools and scholarships through The Bill Pickett Memorial Scholarship Fund (BPMSF), where you still are able to support via donations. We will also maintain our focus on providing vital information about Mental Illness, Breast Care, Prostate Cancer, Domestic Violence and Suicide through the BPIR Kares program; so, stay plugged in at [www.billpickettrodeo.com](http://www.billpickettrodeo.com) and on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram page.

I personally thank everyone who has supported us over the 36 years and assure you we will get through this together by taking one day at a time. We must have faith that we will have an opportunity to rodeo, laugh and embrace each other sometime in the future.



Until then, please practice physical distancing, wear your mask/facial coverings and be careful when out in public. Be sensible, wise and take care of yourself until we see you in the future.

We love you and pray for your protection!

Valeria Howard-Cunningham

Start, Jacket, and Hat, GQ. Ride Me, for you.