

In spite of one of the worst recessions in history and a torrential rainstorm in the early morning hours before the event, the 2009 Cattlemen's Ball raised nearly a half million dollars for cancer research, as well as health care and wellness activities in area communities.

Last Tuesday night, officials of the 2009 event announced the final total—\$488,694.23—with nearly 90 percent of that money going toward cancer research at the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center. The remaining funds are being apportioned across central Nebraska through a series of grants.

Co-chairs Fred and Deanna Bosselman and Don and Marilyn Deitemeyer—along with Greg Robb, a cattleman whose family hosted the 2009 Cattlemen's Ball near Doniphan—presented the check to Ken Cowan, M.D., Ph.D, director of the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center at a reception in Hastings.

Dr. Cowan commended the chairs and the group of volunteers behind this year's event. "It is truly a yeoman effort to raise this kind of money in the present down economy," Dr. Cowan said. "It's a testimony to the quality of the people who were involved in this year's ball. They were so dedicated from beginning to end -- what an outstanding team of hard working volunteers.

Despite the muddy grounds and a messy economy, on June 6 more than 3,000 people gathered in Doniphan to give cancer the boot.

Deanna Bosselman thanked the more than 500 people who volunteered in one way or another to make this year's Cattlemen's Ball an unqualified success.

"We cannot say enough about our volunteers who gave so much time, talent and effort, especially those who responded to the pre-dawn call for assistance when we needed to prepare the grounds after five inches of rain just hours before the start of the ball," Don Deitemeyer said.

Some significant new developments for the 11th annual Cattlemen's Ball included:

- A new theme for the event— "Give Cancer the Boot"—which will continue as the event theme for 2010;
- Honoring cancer survivors with "I Gave Cancer the Boot" T-shirts;
- A "Famous Boots Auction," which raised more than \$18,000 by auctioning autographed boots from famous folks such as billionaires Bill Gates and Warren Buffett;
- A raffle for a Chevy Tahoe Hybrid, which raised a record \$76,693; and
- A new Web site, which provided for online bidding, online donations and social media.

Other activities included:

- A fashion show featuring cancer survivors as runway models;
- A cocktail reception the evening prior to the event and a cocktail brunch on Saturday for Trail Boss ticket holders;
- A casino;
- Wine tasting;
- Working dog demonstrations, and
- A general store.

Country music star Craig Morgan performed Saturday evening.

The Cattlemen's Ball is hosted by a different Nebraska ranch or feedlot every year. Its mission is to raise money for cancer research at the UNMC Eppley Cancer Center, while showcasing rural Nebraska and promoting beef as part of a healthy diet.

Since its inception, the Cattlemen's Ball has raised more than \$3.7 million.