



# ABILENE

Convention and Visitors Bureau  
1101 North 1st • Abilene, Texas 79601  
325.676.2556 • 800.727.7704 • Fax: 325.676.1630  
www.abilenevisitors.com

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Kelly Thompson, Communications Director

325-676-2556, [kelly@abilenevisitors.com](mailto:kelly@abilenevisitors.com)

Rochelle Johnson, Taylor County Expo Center General Manager

325-677-4376. [rjohnson@taylorcountyexpoctr.com](mailto:rjohnson@taylorcountyexpoctr.com)

ACVB News: <http://www.abilenevisitors.com/Press-Releases>

### Texas State 4-H Show Finals Announce Move to Bryan

ABILENE, Texas –Organizers for the Texas 4-H Horse Show State Finals have announced a new site for the statewide competition. On Wednesday, August 1, the Expo Center of Taylor County was notified by the Texas St. 4-H Horse Show Management Team that the contract for the 2019-2023 shows was being awarded to the Brazos County Expo in Bryan, Texas.

4-H youth have competed at the Taylor County Expo Center for 35 years, making it among Abilene’s longest running equestrian events.

“We’re losing a member of the family,” ACVB Executive Director Nanci Liles said. “But, this was a business decision. It isn’t a reflection on our city, the Expo Center or any of our hospitality partners.”

4-H leadership said the move was based on financial incentives offered by Brazos County, but invited Abilene to bid on hosting the finals when the new contract expires in five years. Meanwhile, the Expo Center and ACVB will work to replace the weeklong event with new business.

“While we are disappointed by this news, we now have the opportunity to work with other groups that want to host events in Abilene during July,” said Rochelle Johnson, Expo Center General Manager. “We are thankful for our relationship with the 4-H Management Team from College Station, as well as the 4-H Horse Show leadership in Abilene. We wish the best to the Texas St. 4-H Horse Show in their move to the Brazos County Expo.”

Liles joined Johnson to thank the Taylor County AgriLife Extension Service and statewide 4-H leadership for its decades of work to bring the 4-H finals to Abilene.

While the move is a loss to the community, the venue change wasn’t a complete surprise, Liles said. In recent years, 4-H participation has diminished. The competition has required greater resources from the ACVB with less return for city coffers.

“We’re grateful to the hotel operators who have graciously donated complimentary rooms to 4-H management,” Liles said. “These business owners helped bring the group back to our city year after year.”

*The Abilene Convention & Visitors Bureau leverages local hotel tax into economic development. The ACVB’s tourism professionals harness the latest travel trends, research and strategies to bring group and leisure visitors to Abilene. Travelers to the Abilene MSA brought \$455 million into the economy, money spent by happy people who stay in local hotels, shop, dine, and enjoy sports, arts and attractions. Established as an affiliate of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce in 1970, the bureau has improved the quality of life and enhanced the Abilene visitor experience for nearly 50 years.*