By Amber Hanneken
Staff Writer

HUGO — The mustang, the spirit of the “Wild West,” holds a strong position besides man in American history. From now until Wednesday at the Todd Whatley-Lige Hammock Rodeo Arena in Hugo, Choctaw County residents have a chance to give these legendary wild horses a home.

The adoption event began in southeastern Oklahoma last week in McAlester. Adoptions opened Monday in Hugo and continue today until 8 p.m. Wednesday is the last day to purchase a horse at the Hugo arena from 8 a.m. to noon. If you miss your chance in Hugo, the horses will be at the Bryan County Fairgrounds in Durant from 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. Thursday and Friday and 8 a.m. to noon on Saturday.

Wild horses are managed by the Bureau of Land Management and are defined as “unbranded, unclaimed and free-roaming horses found on western public rangelands administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service.” When a herd becomes over populated the bureau offers excess animals for adoption. Burros, or small wild donkeys, are also managed by the bureau in the same manner but none were available for adoption at the Hugo sale.

The horses are of no particular breed and typically stand between 13 and 15 hands high and weigh 700 to 1,000 pounds. They come from as far away as Oregon and Nevada and as near as Kansas. The animals range in color including sorrel, chestnut, black, gray, bay, dun, buckskin, brown, pinto and red roan. All the horses for adoption in Hugo — yearlings through age 4 — are untrained and cost $125 to adopt. There is a $500 incentive to those wishing to adopt a 4-year-old horse. All adopters of older horses will receive a $500 care-and-feeding allowance, which is paid in full after one year of ownership.

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