The 52nd annual Hugo PRCA Rodeo will feature a new event Thursday evening —steer roping.

“This is the first ever steer roping for Hugo,” according to PRCA committee member, Debbie McLemore. “It will begin at 7 p. m. Thursday, May 30 at the Todd Whatley/Lige Hammock Memorial Arena and will feature several of the nation’s top steer ropers.”

PRCA steer ropers travel to 60 or more events each year in efforts to gain a place in the Clem McSpadden Memorial Steer Roping finals held in Guthrie, Okla.

According to the media guide, steer roping is derived from original ranch work, but resembles tie-down roping and requires the cowboy to catch and control a large steer (about 450-600 pounds).

The mounted cowboy backs into the box and nods when he’s ready; the steer gets a head start, just as the calf does in tie-down roping. The cowboy must catch the steer by first roping it around the horns, which are protected by horn wraps and reinforced with rebar. Then he tosses the rope over the steer’s right hip and rides to the left, bringing the steer to the ground, a frontier technique modern ranch cowboys still use to bring down full-grown steers that need medical attention.

When the steer is lying on its side and the rope is taut, the rider dismounts and runs to the steer, tying any three of its legs. As in tie-down roping, the steer’s legs must remain tied for six seconds after the tie is complete and the roper remounts his horse.

Fifty-three steer ropers will saddle up in Hugo Thursday, for a total of 106 runs. The gate fee to attend this new event is $5.