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Thousands Turn Out in Denver for Western Americana Shopping Event

Denver, CO – Nearly 6,000 people turned out for Brian Lebel's 22nd Annual Old West Show, held June 24-26, 2011 at the Denver Merchandise Mart. 200 dealers in both antique and contemporary Western art, collectibles and merchandise exhibited at the three-day event, which also included exhibitors from Western museums and non-profit organizations, as well as authors doing book signings. Dealers reported strong sales on all three days, with a well-attended early buy-in on Friday morning.

People attended from across the Rocky Mountain region, though many attendees boasted of traveling for days just to shop the extensive and eclectic mix of Western items. Show dealers came from across the country and even overseas to offer Western fare such as fine art, custom leather work, vintage posters, Native American antiquities, jewelry, apparel, furniture, antique firearms, fine cowboy and horse gear, saddles, spurs, boots, books and more. Brian Lebel, show owner and promoter stated, "It's not just the wide variety or number of dealers we have, but the quality of their merchandise that we're most proud of."

Formerly the Cody Old West Show & Auction, Lebel moved the event to Denver in 2009 after 19 years in Cody, Wyoming. The move to a larger venue enabled the show to expand in size and scope, allowing for more diverse and contemporary dealers than are commonly found at Western antique shows. "It's really like nothing else out there," says Lebel, who likes to keep the general admission price low (\$5/day) so that anyone and everyone can afford to attend. "It's not just about selling merchandise," he says. "It's about education, entertainment and American history." This year Lebel introduced "First Responders Day," offering anyone with a military, police, fire or medic ID free entry all day on Sunday. "We will definitely do that again next year," he says.

The weekend event also featured the Saturday night Old West Auction, which this year broke records with the sale of the Billy the Kid tintype for \$2.3 million (a record for a historic photograph), and the sale of Edward Borein's "California Vaquero" for \$138,000 (a record price for a Borein watercolor). Overall the auction realized \$3.5 million including premiums, a record for the Auction House.

Additional information about the Old West Show & Auction can be found at www.denveroldwest.com or by calling 480-779-9378.