CONCERTS: Free events set for Fir Street Park in Sisters

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Folk Festival, leading the Community Show on Sunday mornings for the past five years, and as staff director at the Americana Song Academy. She's a bright light in this world, and we look forward to sharing her beautifully crafted songs and dynamic performances," said Brad Tisdel, creative director of Sisters Folk Festival.

RJ Cowdery is a Columbus, Ohio-based artist who has solidified herself as a standout of the next generation of performing songwriters. She performed at the Sisters Folk Festival in 2013 after winning the Dave Carter Memorial Songwriting Contest the year prior. Cowdery took a circuitous path to becoming a full-time artist. She experienced exciting creative breakthroughs followed by distractions and obligations that took her away from her lifelong dream of being a professional singer/songwriter. RJ is becoming a much-sought-after performer and guitar player, highlighted in 2015 with her first mainstage performance at the Kerrville Folk Festival. She will be adding her keen songwriting insight as an instructor at The Rocky Mountain Folks Festival this year.

On Saturday, July 23, Boston-based country folk quintet The Novel Ideas will perform. The band is already booked for the 2016 Sisters Folk Festival, and this will provide Sisters Country folks a preview of this up-and-coming band. Featuring the voices of three different songwriters, The Novel Ideas create a blend of pastoral, harmony-driven, and plaintive Americana. In 2014 they released a 10-inch single, "Lost on the Road," featuring two new songs and marking the band's first effort as a quintet. The following couple years have been spent touring nationally, writing, and recording as a band. Their latest release, "St. Paul Sessions," was recorded live in an old church in their hometown. It features six unreleased songs and aims to capture the raw, live energy of their stage performance.

On Thursday, August 4, the series will conclude with the Irish Americana roots and bluegrass group I Draw Slow. This Dublin-based band has been drumming up enthusiastic reviews in Ireland since the release of their top-10 second album, Redhills. Irish national broadcaster RTE made Redhills album of the week, and the album has been welcomed to the playlists of stations across the country. Their impact abroad is redrawing the map for these Irish/Americana songwriters.

I Draw Slow's newest release and third album, White Wave Chapel, is a creative progression for the band. The sound is rooted in the style of the Appalachian mountains and draws on the traditions of Irish music while incorporating all that's great about modern Americana.

They have been described in the UK press as "American top-league equivalents," destined "to blow the opposition away," drawing favorable comparisons with Gillian Welsh and Alison Krauss. The band has played to audiences in the UK, Germany, Denmark and Belgium, and started 2012 with a performance with Béla Fleck and the Flecktones, and an appearance at the Celtic Connections Festival in Glasgow, Scotland.

I Draw Slow is a five-piece outfit comprising vocals, guitar, fiddle, banjo and double bass. Holden siblings Dave (guitar) and Louise (vocals) have been writing together for two decades. In 2008, the pair teamed up with violinist Adrian Hart, claw-hammer banjo player Colin Derham, and double-bassist Konrad Liddy to form the band.

All shows begin at 7 p.m.; lowback seating is encouraged. For more information on SFF Presents: Free Summer Concerts at Fir Street Park and all 2016 Sisters Folk Festival events, visit sistersfolkfestival.org. Fir Street Park is located at the corner of Main Avenue and Fir Street in Sisters.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Beth Wood is a festival favorite.

Agenda

Agenda…
Sisters City Council
City Hall, 520 E. Cascade Ave., Sisters
June 23
5:30 p.m. Workshop
1. Joint workshop with Sisters Planning Commission.
7 p.m. regular meeting
A. Resolution No. 2016-20: Supplemental budget.
B. Resolution No. 2016-21: Master fee schedule for solid waste collection.
C. Continued public hearing: Remand by the Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) of Case No. 2015-063 McKenzie Meadow Village assisted living facility within the project site.

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– Kandace & Shane Pielstick, High Desert Home Improvement

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