

Wheatstock lineup waits out pandemic cancellations

Randy Rogers Band headlines Aug. 21 festival

By Tammy Malgesini
Go! Magazine

HELIX — Just like the title of Randy Rogers Band's 2004 album, "Rollercoaster," things have been up and down for DeWayne Dunlap, founder and president of Wheatstock Music Festival.

The Helix man was absolutely thrilled when he talked about booking the Texas-based group for the 2020 summer event. Then everything went downhill as COVID-19 restrictions forced its cancelation. Now, Dunlap is riding high as Rogers and his bandmates — as well as the rest of last year's confirmed lineup — are set to play Saturday, Aug. 21,

from 2:30-11 p.m. at Quantum 9 Arena in Helix.

"They're the best band coming out of Texas playing real country and red dirt music," Dunlap said about the Randy Rogers Band. "We're lucky to get them."

The festival features free camping, food vendors, a beer garden and bouncy castles. General admission is \$40 and VIP passes are \$149, which includes admission, a limited backstage pass and event swag. Entry is free for active military personnel and kids 12 and younger.

A biography written by Marisa Brown for AllMusic.com reveals that Rogers was 6 when his great-grandmother taught him to play piano. And five years later, he was writing his own songs and learning guitar chords.

Rogers played in a backing band before deciding to form his

own group. Shortly after their first practice, the band released its 2002 debut album, "Live at Cheatham St. Warehouse."

Since then, they haven't looked back. In addition to eight albums, Randy Rogers Band plays upward of 200 shows each year.

TYLOR AND THE TRAIN ROBBERS

Wheatstock co-headliners Tylor and the Train Robbers is a Boise-based band with deep roots in Eastern Oregon. Dunlap coached frontman Tylor Ketchum in basketball during his younger days in Helix, and this summer won't be the band's first appearance at Wheatstock.

Calling him a "wordsmith," Dunlap said Ketchum's songwriting is Bob Dylan-esque. As for the rest of the band, he said people will be really amazed by



Courtesy of Wheatstock

their playing abilities.

"They are really stepping up their game," Dunlap said. "They are really making a name for themselves in the country music world."

The rest of the music festival lineup features Wanderlost, Norman Baker and the Backroads, Great American Trainwreck and Hillfolk Noir. Dunlap said many of

them are headlining acts in their own rights. The audience will be treated to a variety of sounds — everything from southern rock, country and bluegrass to a unique funk vibe.


"You're not going to see the same kind of music back-to-back," Dunlap said. "By the time you get to the headliner, Randy is going to blow them away."

Wheatstock was founded with the purpose of raising money for the Helix School District music program. It continues to support that effort as well as donating proceeds to Divide Camp, a wilderness retreat for combat veterans in the Wallowa Mountains. The festival is dedicated to Army warrant officer Adrian Stump, a Pendleton man who died in a helicopter crash in Afghanistan in 2005.

For more information and tickets, visit www.wheatstock.org.


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