



COUNTRY MUSIC MECCA

CART CARPENTER PERFORMS AT
THE 2013 OREGON JAMBOREE

Linn County's non-existent country concerns WORDS BY ANDY VALENTINE • PHOTOS BY TODD COOPER



hirty miles northeast of Eugene, tucked amid trees and fields like a memory of some simpler time, sits the historic city of Brownsville. This quaint town is made up of roughly 40 streets over 1.34 square miles of land. A few of these roads extend beyond Brownsville's center and out into true Willamette Valley countryside. The

commerce that dots Main Street is not exactly bustling, but does not fall short where patronage is concerned. The folks here know one another; they exude a sense of camaraderie, of tolerance, of knowingness that cities far on the horizon sprawl thin and fade with the tides of consumer demand. Those cities' fates lie in the hands of capitalist fluctuations, and they will be remembered as such.

Founded in the 1840s and municipally incorporated in 1876, Brownsville maintains a nicely intact historic culture, which is immortalized by the Linn County Historical Museum, Moyer House and other artifacts from Oregon's pioneer days. But once a year — for six years now — this small town becomes an epicenter for some ten to fifteen thousand visitors, and they come not for the history, but for the monstrous amalgam of modern culture that is the Bi-Mart Willamette Country Music Festival.

The festival takes place for three days, Aug. 16-18, at Anderson Farm just 3 miles outside of Brownsville city limits. Don't let the location deter you, though. This isn't a small-town gathering, nor is it a medium-sized, shruggably attended romp with unknown talent and even more uninviting amenities. It's got room to be the largest country music festival in Oregon, rivaled only by Sweet Home's Oregon Jamboree 20 minutes down the road, which has a maximum attendance of 13,000 per day. As for the talent, well, see for yourself. The 2013 lineup includes Hunter

Hayes, Chris Young, Eli Young Band, Darius Rucker, Carrie Underwood and Brad Paisley.

In short, this thing is huge. And yet, despite a show of support from the people of Brownsville, there appears to be a floating sense of apathy in the air.

Over in Sweet Home on Aug. 2, the streets were lined with signs welcoming country music lovers. The sidewalks were crowded with cowboy hats, Daisy Dukes

and American flags (some of the flags were Confederate). Indeed, every bar, restaurant and parking lot seemed packed to the brim with spirit and support for Oregon's other country music festival. It seemed as though Sweet Home was truly cashing in on the Oregon Jamboree.

Brownsville could benefit enormously from a similar show of support. But whether this tiny town is prepared to cash in remains to be seen.



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