

Wheatstock Music Festival rolls out the grass carpet

By Tammy Malgesini
Go! Magazine

HELIX — With three bands based out of Austin, Texas, filling half the lineup, DeWayne Dunlap, Wheatstock Music Festival board president, said the 2022 festival is among the best yet.

The Lone Star State acts include Josh Abbott Band and Micky and the Motorcars, both from the red dirt music scene, and Giovannie & The Hired Guns, who incorporate everything from Southern rock and stoner metal to la musica norteña and Latin hip-hop.

"The Josh Abbott Band is one of the hottest groups out of Texas right now," he said. "It might be the best band we've ever had."

In its 14th year, Wheatstock is Saturday, Aug. 20, 3-10 p.m. at Quantum 9 Arena. The nonprofit festival was founded with the purpose of raising money for the Helix School District. It also donates proceeds to Cross the Divide, a wilderness retreat for combat veterans in the Willowa Mountains.

After making a desperate pitch in the spring, Dunlap said Micky and the Motorcars signed on the dotted line. They cemented the deal, he said, after founders Micky and Gary Braun talked to their older brothers, Cody and Willy



Jef Farley and Shaner Applegate of Imperial Twang entertain the crowd on Aug. 17, 2019, at Wheatstock Music Festival. In addition to popular acts from Texas and Oklahoma, the Eastern Oregon-based band will take the stage on Saturday, Aug. 20, 2022, at Quantum 9 Arena, Helix.

Kathy Aney/EO Media Group, File

Braun, frontmen of Reckless Kelly, who headlined Wheatstock in 2019.

The older brothers sang praises about the venue. And that is music to the Wheatstock board's ears.

While organizers don't roll out a red carpet, they take pride in the arena's lush grass.

Dunlap said after Memorial Day weekend's Heart of the Country Rodeo, the arena is re-seeded and pampered. Comparing it to a golf course, Dunlap said people won't go home with dirty feet or a mouth full of grit.

The rest of the lineup are Oklahoma-based Ragland — offering up Okie Americana with edgy, alt-country — and bands hailing from the region, Imperial Twang and The Froghollow Band.

Imperial Twang is sometimes referred to as Pendleton's quintessential party band. Performing in the inaugural festival, the group has taken the stage numerous times over the years. They play alt-country, folk, Americana and rock and roll.

Walla Walla's Froghollow Band continues to hop on stage after originally

forming for a one-time New Year's Eve gig in 1994. The alt-country band performs original music and covers from multiple genres.

"These boys aren't from Texas but at least they got a fiddle in the band," Dunlap said in a 2019 interview.

The festival offers free camping, bouncy houses and shopping for event swag and band merch. Food vendors include a taco truck, Texas barbecue, made-to-order donuts and a boutique lemonade stand.

The beer garden will feature Budweiser products, wine from Saviah Cellars and Wheatstock Hefeweizen, created as a tribute to the local wheat farmers and music festival by The Prodigal Son Brewery & Pub.

To catch a ride to/from Helix, head to the MotoLodge, 310 S.E. Dorion Ave., Pendleton.

The initial transport is at 2 p.m. and continues hourly. The last ride back to Pendleton is around 11 p.m.

General admission tickets are \$59 and VIP packages are \$149, which includes one admission ticket, a limited backstage pass, a meet-and-greet with the Josh Abbott Band and a signed event poster. For tickets or more information, visit www.wheatstock.org.

Sue Orlaske
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