

ROCKIN' THE HOUSE

Eddie Montgomery and Jesse Leigh keep fair crowds entertained with high-energy performances



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Eddie Montgomery, this year's headliner, belts one out during a raucous performance Friday, Aug. 12, 2022, at the Grant County Fair.

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

Award-winning country music singer Eddie Montgomery rocked the house Friday, Aug. 12, at the Grant County Fair's Stars, Stripes and Summer Nights concert. Montgomery rose to fame in the early 2000s as half of Montgomery Gentry. He decided to carry on as a solo act following the tragic death of longtime bandmate Troy Gentry, who died in a 2017 helicopter crash.

Montgomery, who was originally set to be the opening act, stepped in as the headliner after country music superstar Wynonna Judd canceled following the death of her mother, Naomi.

Singer Jesse Leigh kicked off Friday's concert and blazed through a set that included original music and covers. Leigh closed out on a patriotic note with a version of Lee Greenwood's "God Bless America."

Mindy Winegar, manager of the Grant County Fair and Rodeo, said Monday that the concert drew an estimated crowd of 600 people.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

The crowd gets into it during headliner Eddie Montgomery's set.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

A young fairgoer smiles during Jesse Leigh's set.



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Singer Jesse Leigh, right, whips up the crowd Friday, Aug. 12, 2022, during her opening set at the Grant County Fair.



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Fans hold up the stars and stripes during opening act Jesse Leigh's set Friday, Aug. 12, 2022, at the 113th Grant County Fair. Leigh opened for headliner Eddie Montgomery.

A grand pair of brothers

By STEVEN MITCHELL
Blue Mountain Eagle

JOHN DAY — As the 113th Grant County Fair got underway on Wednesday, Aug. 10, the grand marshals of the 2022 Grant County Fair and Rodeo Parade met with fairgoers in the Trowbridge Pavilion of the fairgrounds.

Brothers Gibb and Gary Gregg, longtime Grant County residents, were named grand marshals late last year.

Gary, 90, and Gibb, 86, who rode in their first rodeo together at the Grant County Fairgrounds in 1953, reflected on county fairs of years past, on their respective careers and on raising a family in Grant County.

In addition to competing in the rodeo, Gibb, a skilled horse trainer, recalled bringing colts that he broke to the fair to show in 4-H horse shows when he was in high school.

The fair, he said, was much different in the 1950s.

"There were a lot of cowboys in those days," Gibb said.

Given that there was not much



Steven Mitchell/Blue Mountain Eagle

Brothers Gary, left, and Gibb Gregg, grand marshals for the 2022 Grant County Fair and Rodeo, met with fairgoers ahead of Saturday's parade.

money to be made in competing in rodeos back then, it was more about having fun.

His older brother agreed with that sentiment.

"They still had pretty damn good horses and bulls," Gary said. "The money, sometimes, was questionable, but we didn't argue much."

In addition to showing horses at the fair during high school, Gibb began riding broncs competitively and won a championship in Houston and then traveled to New York and rode saddle bronc at Madison Square Garden.

Gary got his start competing in rodeos after he enlisted in the Navy.

In 1959, the year the U.S. admitted Alaska as the 49th state, Gary finished first in saddle bronc at the National Intercollegiate Rodeo.

In the Navy, Gary was stationed up and down the West Coast, with stints in Seattle and San Francisco and then in Japan, where he became a propeller mechanic.

After leaving the Navy, Gary earned a diesel technology degree from Oregon Tech in Klamath Falls. After college, Gary moved back to Eastern Oregon and spent more than 40 years driving a log truck.

In 1955, Gibb and Gary both got married. Gibb tied the knot with Glee Craig, while Gary wedded Glee's sister LoLieta.

Gibb and Glee had three daughters and a son. Over the years, they had seven grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Glee passed away in 1999.

Gary and LoLieta raised two daughters and a son with four grandchildren and four great-grandkids. LoLieta passed away in 2021.

Gibb worked in logging for several years as a tractor operator skid-

ding logs. However, during the weekends, he traveled the professional rodeo circuit for six years, winning several trophies, buckles and saddles.

In addition to careers in logging and rodeo, Gibb worked as a ranch manager, raised horses and owned the Dayville Mercantile.

After Gary retired from logging, he started making horse-drawn buggies for the Oxbow Trade Co.

Looking back, Gibb said he was grateful his family — including his brothers Gary, the oldest, and Lee, who died about five years ago — moved to Grant County when he was 13.

"I was pretty fortunate to have a place like Grant County to grow up in; it's a great place for young people," he said.

Had he grown up in a bigger city like Portland or Salem, he believes he might have ended up in jail. In cities, he said, kids risk falling in with the wrong crowd.

That's not the case in Grant County, Gibb said.

Gary agreed and added, "It's just a great place to live."

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