



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Post Malone performs during Saturday's Pendleton Whisky Music Fest.

Post Malone lights up Pendleton Whisky Music Fest

By WYATT HAUPT JR.
STAFF WRITER

A bet by concert promoters on the appeal of rap in a region where country music is king paid off Saturday night as about 17,000 people flocked to Pendleton Round-Up Arena to catch two of the genre's biggest names — Post Malone and 50 Cent — at Pendleton Whisky Music Fest.

The daylong event drew people from across Oregon, as well as neighboring states, on a beautiful sunny day when the temperature hovered around the high 80s only to cool off a bit and give way to a star-filled evening sky by the time Post Malone took the stage amid much fanfare.

For some concertgoers, such as Jake Thomas of Madras, the event marked his first visit to Pendleton. But it was the second time he attended a concert at which Post Malone was performing. Thomas, who came to the show with Bridget Neikirk of Bend, said the first time he saw Post Malone perform was in Brisbane, Australia.

"It was just a random event," said Thomas in recalling a moment leading up to the performance.

"OK. So let's go see (American DJ) Diplo and Post Malone ends up opening for him. And I'm just like, 'This could be the best night of my ... life.'"

Thomas and Neikirk were pumped to be in the

company of the thousands of people sitting and standing shoulder-to-shoulder on the arena's grass-covered grounds flanked by thousands of other fans in the grandstands.

"We are really enjoying it," said Neikirk prior to an electrifying performance by 50 Cent. "We just got here a couple of hours ago. Went and had dinner over at Hamley's ... it was wonderful."

The performance by 50 Cent energized the crowd and served as a powerful lead-in to Post Malone, who opened his set with "Too Young." Post Malone, who is not shy about his embrace of adult beverages, took the stage clad in a multi-colored two-piece ensemble that looked like it came straight out of Pendleton, and a 16-ounce red Solo cup in hand.

He repeatedly encouraged the crowd to party as he deftly worked his way through a nearly 90-minute show that included songs "Better Now," "Candy Paint," "Wow," "Sugar Wraith," and his latest, "Goodbyes." The performance of "Goodbyes" marked the first time he played the song at a concert.

Post Malone rounded out his set with "Congratulations" and then made an emotional salute to the crowd before slowly making his way off the stage.

"I can't explain to you my life has been ... crazy. But no matter what the ...

is going on in my life — to be able to come out and sing these ... songs with y'all means the ... world to me. Thank you so much. I hope you all had a good ... festival."

He added, "I love you all to death. I hope you all have a good ... night. Drive safe, be safe."

The festival, which also featured performances by Tyla Yaweh, Blanco Brown, Grieves and DJ Govern-T, capped a music-filled weekend that kicked off with a Friday night party on Main Street in downtown Pendleton that drew thousands of people and packed bars.

Whisky Fest co-organizer Doug Corey said Monday "it took a whole bunch of people" to make the event happen.

"We couldn't do this without the support of the community," said Corey, who also extended thanks to Pendleton Mayor John Turner, the city council, police and fire personnel as well as the vendors and others who helped make the event a success.

He said the event, which wrapped up its fourth year, drew the second largest crowd. Last year, the combination of Pit Bull and Blake Shelton pulled in about 18,700 people.

"I really think a lot of people had a great time," said Corey, who co-founded Whisky Fest with Andy McAnally. "We're really pleased with it."

Women's coalition to host economic summit

By ANTONIO SIERRA
STAFF WRITER

The Eastern Oregon Women's Coalition is gathering big names and big companies in Hermiston to discuss the economic status of the region.

"The inaugural Eastern Oregon Economic Summit will offer in-depth discussion about factors affecting rural Oregon's economy, from the impacts of legislation enacted during the 2019 session to changes in technology, demographics and environmental resources," a press release states.

Coalition President Bobby Levy said the event, which is slated for July 26 at Hermiston High School, differs from other economic summits because it targets the entirety of Eastern Oregon rather than a specific city or county.

"In visiting with private and public sector leaders, there was no singular event to address Eastern Oregon's economic issues or how to grow rural Oregon's pres-

ence in Salem and beyond," she wrote in an email. "This summit will bring a wide variety of issues under one roof and help attendees leverage the area's economic growth. We intend for this to be an annual event."

"This summit will bring a wide variety of issues under one roof..."

Bobby Levy,
Coalition President

Levy added that the coalition has organized a governor's luncheon during Round-Up week for the past six years.

The summit has already booked speeches from U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R-Hood River, as well as two members of the state Legislature's northeast Oregon delegation — state Rep. Greg Smith, and state Sen. Bill

Hansell. Walden's speech may be given via live video.

The event will also feature talks from leaders at PAE ISR, a Virginia-based defense contractor that has based its West Coast drone operations in Pendleton, and Woodgrain Millworks, a Fruitland, Idaho, moulding manufacturer that bought sawmills in Pilot Rock and La Grande in 2018.

In the afternoon, the summit will transition to discussion panels that will cover various economic topics, including state and federal policy, housing, natural resources, broadband, and business recruitment.

MORE INFORMATION

The Eastern Oregon Economic Summit requires registration and will run from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on July 26 at Hermiston High School, 600 S. First St. For more information, visit www.easternoregonsummit.com.

BRIEFS

Stanfield class of '69 plans 50-year reunion

There's still time to make plans to catch up with the Stanfield High School class of 1969 during their 50-year reunion.

Organizers for the event are finalizing plans and hope to hear from classmates who haven't confirmed with an RSVP. In addition, other Tigers are invited to join the class of 1969 for their reunion activities.

The event kicks off Friday, Aug. 2 at 5:30 p.m. in the school's cafeteria. The meal will be catered by Delish Bistro. In addition to visiting and catching up, classmates Larry Simmons and Kelly Bissinger will serve as master of ceremonies. The cost is \$25.

The following morning features a breakfast pre-

pared by the Hermiston Rotary Club. It will be held Saturday, Aug. 3 at 9 a.m. at Bard Park, Stanfield. There is no set fee; people may make a donation to help offset costs.

In order to ensure there's enough food, those planning to attend either event are asked to RSVP by Friday, July 26. For more information or to register, call Gloria Rodriguez at 541-377-1353 or Larry Simmons at 541-561-5853.

Local family steps up with shoe drive

A Umatilla family is hosting a shoe drive to raise money for RettSyndrome.org.

Megan and Brandon Brown's 3-year-old daughter is impacted by the rare syndrome and are hoping to collect 300 pairs of

shoes by October. All sizes and styles of new or gently used shoes can be donated. Megan Brown said the effort raises money through the sale of the shoes by "micro entrepreneurs" in Third World countries.

Rett Syndrome is a rare neurological disorder that is mostly diagnosed in females. It impacts cognitive, sensory, emotional, motor and autonomic functions of the brain. It is sometimes misdiagnosed as autism, cerebral palsy or as a non-specific developmental delay.

Shoe collection sites in the area include Neighbor Dudes, 405 N. First St., Hermiston; the Hermiston branch of Banner Bank, 101 E. Main St.; Peach Tree Produce, 81700 Peach Tree Lane, Umatilla; and by contacting the Browns at megan@pittraffic.com or 253-217-1458. For more about Rett Syndrome, visit www.rettysyndrome.org.

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