

billboard Country Update

BILLBOARD.COM/NEWSLETTERS

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

Tom.Roland@billboard.com



Nashville's WSM-AM Celebrates Its Centennial By Reexamining Its History

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One of the most important storylines in country music in 2025 is the celebration of the Grand Ole Opry's 100th anniversary.

But that milestone, which arrives Nov. 25, wouldn't exist without another, earlier centennial: the launch of **WSM-AM** Nashville on Oct. 5, 1925.

Despite the passage of time, some of the same aesthetics are at work at the station in 2025 that were there when it started in 1925, according to current WSM GM/content director **Eric Marcum**, including a focus on hiring from within and a dedication to its technological history. Marcum made the observations during a one-hour conversation on Sept. 4

with *Air Castle of the South: WSM and the Making of Music City* author **Craig Havighurst** on **Tom Truitt's WHO KNEW The Smartest People in the Room** webinar.

Given the age of the station, the 30-something Marcum is a relative newcomer to its history, only becoming aware of it when he spotted the WSM microphone on the cover of the 2008 **Ricky Skaggs & Kentucky Thunder** album *Honoring the Fathers of Bluegrass - Tribute to 1946 & 1947*.

"I'd never seen call letters for a radio station that were just three call letters," Marcum said. "Everything I had ever heard my entire life were mostly FM at that point and four call letters. It was also at that time that I learned that anything west of the Mississippi was starting with a K. So it was my introduction, really, to radio."

Marcum started at WSM in 2013, following his graduation from Purdue University, sharing some commonalities with **George D. Hay**, the station PD who founded the Opry. Both were born in Indiana, and both joined the staff in their 20s, though

Hay started higher up the ladder when he arrived. In just two years, Hay had gone from **WMC** Memphis to **WLS** Chicago — where he founded *The National Barn Dance* and was recognized by *Reader's Digest* as America's favorite on-air personality — to WSM, joining the station exactly five weeks after its original sign-on. Hay inaugurated the Opry less than three weeks later, introducing a fiddler,

Uncle Jimmy Thompson, who performed for an hour.

Hay's two-year advance in broadcasting runs partly parallel to Marcum's climb up the ranks at WSM. Marcum started as a board operator, progressing steadily into marketing, then traffic, before serving as assistant PD, morning-show producer and eventually GM.

"It was probably a new job title every two to three years," Marcum said.

Longevity has long been encouraged at WSM. In addition to the Opry, it aired **Ernest Tubb's** *Midnite Jamboree* — the second-longest-running radio program — for over 75 years. A number of its staffers have likewise maintained affiliations of 25 years or more, including **Bill Cody** (30 years), **Keith Bilbrey** (30), **Eddie Stubbs** (25), late stage manager **Vito Pellettieri** (43) and late



MARCUM



HAVIGHURST

COURTESY OF ZRG PARTNERS



Russell Dickerson

HAPPEN TO ME MAX SPINS THROUGH 9.21



Country Music Hall of Fame member **Grant Turner** (47).

“The way WSM and National Life [and Insurance], its parent company, operated in the golden era — in the ‘40s, ‘50s, ‘60s — people I talked to who had worked on either side of that company talked about how much mentorship there was,” Havighurst said, drawing on the research for his book. “People stayed out of loyalty, and because they got promoted, their career development was really healthy.”

WSM’s call letters were an acronym for the National Life slogan — “We shield millions” — and the station was used to enhance the brand identity.

Radio was the first live media, and WSM also used a 150-pound portable transmitter to highlight that strength. The audience didn’t previously connect with the community in real time — news had only spread through newspapers or word of mouth — and the station employed that transmitter to broadcast the sound of the Pan American train passing through suburban Brentwood every afternoon. The new technology fascinated listeners, some of whom knew it was the end of their workday when the train whistle sounded after 5 p.m.

“Today we would think, ‘What is that? What big deal is that?’” Havighurst said. “But it lit people’s imaginations up. The train was symbolic and it felt vivid. It was just real radio — real, atmospheric, in-the-field radio — and it went so well... it became a daily feature on WSM for almost 10 years.”

It was one of the first — if not *the* first — instances of a station transmitting wireless audio to the home studio rather than using a phone cable. Other technological advancements followed, including the installation of its historic broadcast tower in 1932 and its involvements with successive platforms, including network radio, broadcast and cable TV and the internet.

“One of the great things about WSM engineers over time is everybody has known the significance of this radio station,” Marcum said. “Every engineer has left this radio station in a better shape than how they arrived. I think that’s just a fascinating thing, and I feel that weight as the general manager of the radio station, also overseeing the programming department and the sales department. You always want to leave the radio station better than how you found it.”

As WSM celebrates its centennial, the station has launched a 10-part *WSM Remembers* series of mostly preproduced accounts of its history. The final, live installment airs on the Oct. 5 anniversary.

Meanwhile, WSM itself, like the Opry, has an intense mission to represent country’s big picture in its programming. Classic country, bluegrass, current artists and new acts are all represented in the programming with storytelling holding it together. Three of the four Opry announcers — Cody, **Kelly Sutton** and **Charlie Mattos** — form WSM’s morning team, which benefits from the overlap.

“There’s a 75% chance the host of our morning show would have been hosting the show the night before,” Marcum said. “They take the experience that they got watching **Jelly Roll** interact with a **Brad Paisley**, watching **Post Malone** interact with a **Vince Gill**, and they get to bring that story to the morning show and tell you exactly what you got to feel.”

Thus, WSM remains, after 100 years, the most storied station in country music’s history. ●



Several WSLC Roanoke, Va., staffers visited Tyler Hubbard during his Aug. 30 tour stop in the city. From left: Mel Wheeler/Roanoke operations manager Brett Sharp, WSLC morning co-host Taylor Sherrill, Hubbard and WSLC promotions assistant Barry Casteel.



Riley Green fielded questions from *Billboard* executive editor West Coast/Nashville Melinda Newman during an Aug. 27 event at the Grammy Museum in Los Angeles.



T. Graham Brown was joined by surprise guest Tanya Tucker when he performed “Delta Dawn” on Aug. 30 during an appearance at the Grand Ole Opry.

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ISSUE DATE 10/4

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CONTACTS

East Coast/Midwest: Joe Maimone | joe.maimone@billboard.com

Southeast: Lee Ann Photoglo | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Latin: Marcia Olival | marciaolival29@gmail.com

Touring & West Coast: Cynthia Mellow | cmellow615@gmail.com

International: Ryan O'Donnell | rodonnell@pmc.com



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ON THE CHARTS JIM ASKER jim.asker@billboard.com

Luke Combs Rides ‘Back’ Into The Country Airplay Top 10

Luke Combs achieves his 24th top 10 on *Billboard*’s Country Airplay chart as “Back in the Saddle” (Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville) moseys 11-10 on the Sept. 13-dated list. During the Aug. 29-Sept. 4 tracking week, it increased by 8% to 17.5 million audience impressions, according to Luminate.

Combs co-wrote the song with **Dan Isbell** and **Jonathan Singleton**, while Combs and Singleton co-produced it with **Chip Matthews**. The single introduces Combs’ upcoming album.

A week earlier, Combs hit No. 2 on Country Airplay with “Backup Plan” with **Bailey Zimmerman**. Before that, **Post Malone**’s “Guy for That” (featuring Combs) reached No. 5 in March and Combs’ “Ain’t No Love in Oklahoma” led for two weeks last fall, becoming his 18th No. 1.

Combs, from Asheville, N.C., has a career-opening-record 14 consecutive Country Airplay No. 1s. His 24 top 10s dating to his first appearance in the region in April 2017 with “Hurricane,” which led for two weeks, mark the most in that span. **Morgan Wallen** is second with 21, followed by **Thomas Rhett** with 17.



MORE ‘GOOD NEWS’ Shaboozey’s “Good News” (American Dogwood/Empire/Magnolia Music) tops Country Airplay for a second week (32.4 million, up 4%). The Northern Virginia native’s first entry, the multigenre smash “A Bar Song (Tipsy),” dominated for seven weeks beginning in August 2024, surpassing **Carrie Underwood**’s “Jesus, Take the Wheel” in 2006 as the longest-leading hit on the list ever to establish a country career (counting acts’ first titles on the chart as a lead artist or their initial songs promoted to country radio).

Meanwhile, of the 11 songs that have risen to No. 1 on Country Airplay for the first time in 2025, “Good News” is the eighth to lead for more than one week, matching the number of multiweek rulers in all of 2024. In 2023, 12 new No. 1s reigned for multiple weeks. ●

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE		
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)
HAPPEN TO ME Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	+1.693
WANT YOU BACK Valory	Brantley Gilbert	+1.584
I GOT BETTER Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+1.499
HEART OF STONE Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	+1.464
GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	+1.346
BOTTLE ROCKETS Triple Tigers	Scotty McCreery & Hootie & The Blowfish	+1.310
BACK IN THE SADDLE Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	+1.299
DARLIN’ Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	+1.094
BAR NONE MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	+1.093
HOUSE AGAIN River House/Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Hudson Westbrook	+1.077

MOST INCREASED PLAYS		
TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN
HEART OF STONE Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	+598
WANT YOU BACK Valory	Brantley Gilbert	+541
HAPPEN TO ME Triple Tigers	Russell Dickerson	+530
I GOT BETTER Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	+529
GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music	Shaboozey	+523
DARLIN’ Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	+488
BAR NONE MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	+419
BACK IN THE SADDLE Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	+392
DON’T MIND IF I DO Nashville Harbor	Riley Green Featuring Ella Langley	+373
BOTTLE ROCKETS Triple Tigers	Scotty McCreery & Hootie & The Blowfish	+318

RECURRENTS			
THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	I’M THE PROBLEM Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	15.922
2	HIGH ROAD YellaBush/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Koe Wetzel & Jessie Murph	15.495
3	THIS HEART Combustion Masters/RCA Nashville	Corey Kent	14.816
4	COUNTRY SONG CAME ON Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Luke Bryan	12.282
5	LIAR Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	11.642
6	HOMETOWN HOME BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	10.894
7	POUR ME A DRINK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Post Malone Featuring Blake Shelton	10.431
8	PARK Hubbard House/EMI Nashville/Mercury Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	10.352
9	FIX WHAT YOU DIDN’T BREAK RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	10.007
10	COUNTRY HOUSE MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	9.259



TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING SEPTEMBER 4, 2025

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE (Label)	ARTIST	TW SPINS	SPINS +/-	THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE (Label)	ARTIST	TW SPINS	SPINS +/-
1	3	16	ONE NIGHT IN DALLAS (Independent) ★★ 1 Week at 1 ★★	Tristan Roberson	1590	89	11	13	13	I MISS US (RedPlay Media)	Trevor Underwood	1154	61
2	2	24	THE MOMENT (Independent)	Sundance Head	1537	-36	12	14	11	TWO HANDS (Independent)	Pat Green and Corey Kent	1098	26
3	4	13	CHEATIN’ ON MY HONKY TONK (Warner Music Nashville)	Randall King feat. Braxton Keith	1535	57	13	12	23	IF IT RAINS TODAY (Independent)	Matt Castillo	1097	-1
4	6	21	LAST COWBOY STANDING (Independent)	David Adam Byrnes	1466	11	14	15	21	COUNTY FAIR (Independent)	James Robert Webb	1071	11
5	5	18	IT AINT THE WHISKEY (Big Loud)	Jake Worthington	1454	-6	15	16	8	WHEN SHE KISSED ME (Almost Country)	Casey Donahew	1068	109
6	7	15	COWGIRLS RIDE (LuckySky Music)	Tori Martin	1394	18	16	19	11	LONELY OVER YOU (Warner Music Nashville)	William Beckmann	1009	79
7	9	20	ADELINE (Independent)	Shane Smith & The Saints	1288	35	17	18	12	BURN (RedPlay Media)	Guy Vincent	960	24
8	8	23	ARE YOU A REAL COWBOY (Independent)	Amanda Kate Ferris	1275	5	18	17	13	UNINVITED GUEST (Independent)	Casey Chesnutt	959	7
9	10	11	SWEET (Independent)	Bubba Westly	1220	77	19	20	14	WATCH ME GO (Mirror Ball Records)	Caleb Young	886	42
10	11	11	WEATHERMAN (River House)	Hudson Westbrook	1180	60	20	21	12	BORN RUNNIN OUTTA TIME (Sony Music Group)	Lukas Nelson	858	36

Texas Regional Radio Report Top 100 is compiled from weekly online playlist reports from 86 radio stations located in Texas and surrounding states, including reports from specialty shows, internet and satellite radio outlets. Songs are ranked by total plays. For tracking, complete chart methodology and more information, visit www.texasregionalradio.com, or contact Dave Smith at 972-252-8777. Copyright 2025, Texas Regional Radio Report

billboardCountry Airplay

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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)		PLAYS		
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
1	1	32	GOOD NEWS American Dogwood/EMPIRE/Magnolia Music ★★ No. 1 (2 Weeks) ★★	Shaboozey	32.440	+1.346	8798	523	1
2	4	25	HAPPENTO ME Triple Tigers ★★ Most Increased Audience ★★	Russell Dickerson	26.656	+1.693	7540	530	2
3	2	18	BACKUP PLAN Atlantic/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Bailey Zimmerman & Luke Combs	24.399	-4.482	6790	-1617	4
4	6	17	BOTTLE ROCKETS Triple Tigers	Scotty McCreery & Hootie & The Blowfish	23.625	+1.310	6932	318	3
5	3	29	AFTER ALL THE BARS ARE CLOSED Fifty-One/Forty-Nine/Valory	Thomas Rhett	23.322	-4.787	5971	-1443	6
6	7	23	HEART OF STONE Bailee & Buddy/BMG/Republic/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	22.905	+1.464	6778	598	5
7	5	24	JUST IN CASE Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	22.444	-0.901	5386	-29	9
8	8	24	BAR NONE MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	19.578	+1.093	5840	419	7
9	9	11	I GOT BETTER Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	19.578	+1.499	5764	529	8
10	11	6	BACK IN THE SADDLE Seven Ridges/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	17.532	+1.299	4901	392	12
11	10	52	FRIDAY NIGHT HEARTBREAKER Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Jon Pardi	16.794	+0.104	5082	202	10
12	12	40	DARLIN' Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Chase Matthew	15.861	+1.094	4929	488	11
13	13	50	HEAVENSTO BETSY Big Machine	Jackson Dean	14.805	+1.027	4407	219	13
14	14	51	WHAT KINDA MAN MCA Nashville	Parker McCollum	12.116	+0.681	3651	189	16
15	16	15	SOMEWHERE OVER LAREDO Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	11.837	+0.976	4028	299	15
16	15	25	HANDS OF TIME BigEC/EMI Nashville/Mercury Nashville	Eric Church	11.510	+0.569	4066	55	14
17	17	24	HOUSE AGAIN River House/Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Hudson Westbrook	10.452	+1.077	3329	261	17
18	19	26	3,2,1 Tucker Wetmore/Back Blocks/EMI Nashville/Mercury/Republic/Mercury Nashville	Tucker Wetmore	9.341	+0.553	3167	169	18
19	18	13	GOOD TIMES & TAN LINES Leo33	Zach Top	9.213	+0.089	2966	80	19
20	20	35	COWGIRL Stoney Creek	Parmalee	8.873	+0.649	2635	189	21
21	21	34	STRAIGHT LINE Hit Red/Capitol Nashville/MCA Nashville	Keith Urban	8.010	+0.007	2876	65	20
22	22	8	DON'T MIND IF I DO Nashville Harbor	Riley Green Featuring Ella Langley	7.649	+0.515	2449	373	24
23	24	32	IT WON'T BE LONG RECORDS Nashville	George Birge	6.504	+0.656	2483	193	23
24	25	31	I DARE YOU Big Machine	Rascal Flatts & Jonas Brothers	6.493	+0.857	2527	231	22
25	26	21	FAVORITE COUNTRY SONG Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	HARDY	6.117	+0.633	2175	114	26
26	23	15	STAY COUNTRY OR DIE TRYIN' Ten Point/Wheelhouse	Blake Shelton	6.030	+0.079	2276	66	25
27	27	37	TIME'S TICKING Valory	Justin Moore	5.478	+0.277	1903	72	29
28	28	9	6 MONTHS LATER Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney	5.395	+0.331	1838	119	30
29	29	17	YOU HAD TO BETHERE Blue Chair/Megan Moroney/Columbia/Columbia Nashville	Megan Moroney & Kenny Chesney	5.127	+0.480	2082	39	27
30	32	30	BETTER ME FOR YOU (BROWN EYES) Fugitive Recordings/Magnolia Music	Max McNown	4.819	+0.707	1794	226	31

COUNTRY AIRPLAY CHART LEGEND

RANKINGS

Country Airplay is ranked by total audience impressions for the week ending Sunday based on monitored airplay by Mediabase of 145 stations by Luminate. Audience totals on the chart are derived, in part, using certain Nielsen Audio-copyrighted Persons 12+ audience estimates (under license © 2025, Nielsen Audio). The list of all Country Airplay chart reporters can be viewed in Luminate's online platform.

TIES

On Country Airplay, if two songs are tied in audience, the song with the larger increase in audience is placed first.

BULLETS

Awarded on Country Airplay to titles gaining audience or remaining flat from the previous week. A song will also receive a bullet if its percentage loss in audience does not exceed the percentage of monitored station downtime for the format. Titles that decline in audience but increase in detections will also receive a bullet if the total audience erosion for the week does not exceed 3%.

RECURRENTS

On Country Airplay, descending titles below No. 10 in either audience or detections are moved to recurrent after 20 weeks, provided that they are not still gaining enough audience points to bullet or if they rank below No. 10 and post a third consecutive week of (non-bullethead) audience decline, regardless of total chart weeks. Plus, songs that ascend to a peak between Nos. 1 and 5 will remain on the chart for one additional week even if dropping below No. 10.

HOT SHOT DEBUT

Awarded to the highest-ranking new entry on Country Airplay.

MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

Most Increased Audience on Country Airplay lists the songs with the greatest week-to-week increases in total audience.

AIRPOWER

Awarded on Country Airplay to titles ranking inside top 20 in plays and audience rankings for the first time, with increases in both plays and audience.

BREAKER

Awarded on Country Airplay to titles achieving airplay (at least one detection) at 60% of reporting stations for the first time.

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billboard Country Airplay

 AIRPLAY
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THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)		PLAYS		
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	RANK
31	31	39	GOLDEN CHILD Riser House	Meghan Patrick	4.699	+0.550	1783	105	32
32	34	19	WHAT HE'LL NEVER HAVE Curb	Dylan Scott	4.257	+0.298	1920	117	28
33	30	11	WEAK Valory	Preston Cooper	4.146	-0.048	1461	77	35
34	33	27	ENDS OF THE EARTH RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Ty Myers	3.917	-0.163	1164	4	39
35	36	42	WOULD IF I COULD Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	ERNEST	3.876	+0.258	1604	63	33
36	38	8	A SONG TO SING Vanner/Republic/Big Loud	Miranda Lambert & Chris Stapleton	3.730	+0.343	1433	76	36
37	35	20	I AIN'T COMING BACK Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring Post Malone	3.547	-0.079	1041	-13	43
38	37	19	THE FALL CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson	3.325	-0.153	1029	58	44
39	39	14	ME & A BEER Harpeth 60	Chris Janson	3.088	-0.128	1326	20	37
40	40	21	HARD FOUGHT HALLELUJAH Brandon Lake/Essential/Lyric Ridge	Brandon Lake X Jelly Roll	2.887	-0.180	1116	18	40
41	41	22	TIL THE LAST ONE DIES Boss Moves/Black River	Chris Young	2.816	+0.150	1475	70	34
42	42	15	SAME MOON Riser House/Columbia Nashville	Mitchell Tenpenny	2.201	+0.155	1025	74	45
43	46	8	2 PAIR Zone 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	1.806	+0.188	785	110	51
44	43	12	WRONG HEARTS BMG/Galaxy Label Group	LOCASH	1.787	-0.041	857	-10	47
45	44	23	NOT AT THIS PARTY VERSION III/Warner/WAR	Dasha	1.783	+0.020	1083	31	41
46	48	26	WISH YOU WELL Music Soup/Interscope/MCA Nashville	Vincent Mason	1.627	+0.096	1083	21	42
47	45	16	PAPER UMBRELLAS McGraw/Big Machine	Tim McGraw Featuring Parker McCollum	1.613	-0.079	1205	-17	38
48	NEW		WANT YOU BACK Valory ★★ Hot Shot Debut ★★	Brantley Gilbert	1.584	+1.584	541	541	59
49	49	15	BAGGAGE Black River	Kelsea Ballerini	1.464	-0.021	917	16	46
50	47	13	DRINK WITH YOU Nashville Harbor	Brett Young	1.343	-0.226	829	-54	48
51	51	16	BURNED DOWN HEAVEN Big Machine	Chase McDaniel	1.318	+0.004	670	27	54
52	50	9	KID MYSELF Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan	1.318	-0.003	814	17	49
53	53	4	MAKING GOOD TIME Three Up Three Down/Columbia Nashville	Old Dominion	1.301	+0.183	656	78	56
54	55	6	NEVER CALL AGAIN Thrivin Here/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Gavin Adcock	1.250	+0.184	805	104	50
55	52	11	USE ME Leo33	Zach Top	1.104	-0.076	83	6	-
56	54	3	SEVENTEEN Columbia Nashville	Kameron Marlowe	1.004	-0.063	565	52	58
57	57	8	EASY TO LOVE Broken Bow	Dustin Lynch	0.954	+0.053	702	23	53
58	56	6	I WISH YOU WOULD Valory	Mackenzie Carpenter Featuring Midland	0.923	-0.030	659	0	55
59	58	4	WE CAN ALWAYS MOVE ON Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Cole Swindell	0.865	+0.014	622	28	57
60	59	5	NO TELLIN' True To The Song/Nashville Harbor	Caroline Jones	0.799	+0.018	742	8	52



Carly Pearce and Rascal Flatts were among the acts that participated as Big Machine Label Group celebrated its 20th anniversary with an Aug. 29 concert on Lower Broadway in Nashville. From left: Rascal Flatts' Jay DeMarcus, BMLG chairman/CEO Scott Borchetta, Pearce and Rascal Flatts' Gary LeVox and Joe Don Rooney.



Songwriter Lee Starr ("My Boy") signed a publishing deal with Eclipse Music Group. From left: Eclipse creative coordinator Anna Thiel and vp of publishing Courtney Crist, Starr and Eclipse partner Penny Gattis.

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TOP LATIN POWER PLAYERS

On Oct. 11, *Billboard* will profile the most influential people in Latin music, from label executives, music publishers and management companies to radio and TV stations and live entertainment.

Join *Billboard* in congratulating this year's Latin Power Players.

CONTACTS

East Coast/Midwest Joe Maimone | joe.maimone@billboard.com

Southeast Lee Ann Photoglo | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Los Angeles Aki Kaneko | moishekaneko@gmail.com

Latin Marcia Olival | marciaolival29@gmail.com

Touring & West Coast Cynthia Mellow | cmellow615@gmail.com

International Ryan O'Donnell | rodonnell@pmc.com

ISSUE DATE 10/11 | **AD CLOSE** 9/30 | **MATERIALS DUE** 10/2

NASHVILLE & NATIONAL TOM ROLAND tom.roland@billboard.com

JAY WITSKEN



Brian Kelley performed "Spend Some Time There" during an Aug. 25 appearance on NBC's *Today*. From left: NBC reporter Laura Jarrett, *Today* personality Dylan Dreyer, Kelley and *Today* co-host Craig Melvin.

LATE HALL OF FAMERS FIND NEW LIFE

Better "Late" than never.

StarVista released a new version of late Country Music Hall of Fame member **Lefty Frizzell's** "Always Late (With Your Kisses)" on Sept. 5 that pairs him with brothers **David** and **Allen Frizzell** ahead of a tribute album due later in September.

The update is just one of several collaborations or covers hitting the market in honor of late Hall of Fame members, including a full **Willie Nelson** album paying tribute to **Merle Haggard**; *Opry 100: Country's Greatest Songs*, which boasts two tracks that mix living Opry members with voices from the past; and two projects that involve the late **Waylon Jennings**.

Opry 100 and Nelson's album, *Workin' Man: Willie Sings Merle*, share a Nov. 7 release date. The Opry collection pairs a 1993 **George Jones** performance of "He Stopped Loving Her Today" at the Grand Ole Opry with **Alan Jackson's** version of the song at the Possum's 2013 memorial. *Opry 100* also mixes **Marty Robbins'** 1981 Opry rendition of "El Paso" with **Marty Stuart's** 2024 cover of the song. Additionally, the project includes covers of hits by late Hall of Fame members **Hank Williams**, **Charley Pride**, **Kenny Rogers** and **The Carter Family**.

Nelson's *Workin' Man* appears to be fairly straightforward with versions of the Haggard classics "Silver Wings," "If We Make It Through December," "Mama Tried" and "Ramblin' Fever." It also represents the final in-studio performances by two late members of Nelson's band: pianist (and sister) **Bobbie Nelson** and drummer **Paul English**.

David Frizzell Presents Frizzell & Friends: A Tribute to Brother Lefty Frizzell arrives Sept. 26, with Haggard, **Gene Watson**, **Jimmy Fortune** and **Shelly West** among the guests on the 15-track set.

Margo Price's *Hard Headed Woman*, released Aug. 29, finds her singing songs associated with Jennings and Jones and drops **Kris Kristofferson's** voice faintly onto the end of "Don't Let the Bastards Get You Down."

Additionally, Jennings' *Songbird*, produced by son **Shooter Jennings**, is expected Oct. 3. The title track, released in June, layers new harmonies by **Ashley Monroe** and **Elizabeth Cook** around a Waylon vocal performance of a **Christine McVie** song.

RADIO & RECORDS®

Big Machine Label Group promoted four members of its U.K. division and added one new member to the team. Head of U.K. **Alex Hannaby's** role expanded to include vp of international marketing and operations, **Iren Coutiel** was boosted to senior international digital and commercial manager from label intern, **Roxanne Gwilliam-Kelly** moved up to international marketing and promotions manager from international marketing manager, and international marketing and promotions manager **Flo Myerscough-Harris** expands her role to include other foreign territories. **Cary Dal-Lago** also joined the team as international label intern after graduating from the University of Westminster with a master's in music business management... **Cameron Moore** took on the PD role at **WSOC** Charlotte, N.C., adding to her existing position as PD at top 40 sister **WNKS**... Connoisseur Media announced it completed the purchase of 205 Alpha Media stations, giving the chain

216 stations in 47 markets. Of those signals, 40 carry a country format, including **WCEN** Saginaw, Mich.; **KLLL** Lubbock, Texas; and **KUPL** Portland, Ore.... iHeartMedia extended the contracts of chairman/CEO **Bob Pittman** and president/COO **Rich Bressler** through the end of 2029, RadioInk.com reported... Cumulus/Nashville swapped midday hosts on its two country stations, with **Amy Paige** now on **WSM-FM** and Atlanta-based **Lucas Phelan** moving to **WKDF**, according to RadioInsight.com... **KHSB** Kingsland-Marble Falls, Texas, adopted a red dirt country format, RadioInsight.com reported, flipping from religious programming. **Jim Nash** takes the PD reins while continuing to host mornings at online station theheartoftexasradio.com... Early-bird registration for the 2026 Country Radio Seminar opens Sept. 9 with a one-day rate of \$599, a \$99 reduction from the full \$698 price. CRS is slated for March 18-20.

'ROUND THE ROW

Gibson named **Anne Rohosy** its chief commercial officer, expanding on her existing roles as chief human resources and impact officer and Gibson Amplifiers managing director... **Kacey Musgraves** renewed her publishing agreement with Warner Chappell Nashville... Artist-writer **Peytan Porter** signed a joint publishing deal with Jody Williams Songs and Sony Music Publishing Nashville... The Neal Agency added **Chandler Walters** to its artist roster... **Preston Cooper** makes his Grand Ole Opry debut on Oct. 24... **Shaboozey** recorded "Let 'Em Know," a new theme song for Amazon Prime Sports' presentations of *Thursday Night Football*, premiering in full on Sept. 11 when the Green Bay Packers meet the Washington Commanders... The Surf Music Experience Center was slated to open Sept. 5 in Clear Lake, Iowa, featuring artifacts related to **Buddy Holly**, **Ritchie Valens** and **The Big Bopper**, all of whom died in a plane crash in 1959 following their performance at the Surf Ballroom, which is next door to the new attraction. **Brothers Osborne** plays the venue the same day the Experience Center launches... **Luke Bryan** will headline the Music Health Alliance fundraiser *Coulda, Shoulda, Woulda: An Intimate Evening of Stories and Songs* on Oct. 22 at Nashville's Cannery Hall... **Kelsea Ballerini** fans banded together to develop the Dibs Forever Home Fund at the Pet Community Center, a nonprofit veterinary clinic in Nashville... The Society of Leaders in Development donated \$40,000 to the CMA Foundation after raising \$77,000 total during its backstage auction at the Country Music Association's CMA Fest... Wildflower Entertainment Group's first Backstage Access Presents: Heartland raised more than \$100,000 for the Iowa State University Foundation with an event held Aug. 28-30, capped by a **Tim McGraw** performance at the *Field of Dreams* movie site. **Drew Baldridge**, **Annie Bosko** and **Allie Colleen** were among the nine additional artists who participated... **Russell Dickerson**, **Ashley Cooke** and **Tucker Wetmore** will participate along with more than 20 MLB players in the Burger Family Foundation's *The Lucky Classic* on Nov. 16 at Nashville's First Horizon Park... Music Row veteran **Glen Richard "Rick" Rockhill**, 80, died Aug. 29 at his home in Panama City, Fla. His career included promotion work for Capricorn, Curb and DreamWorks Nashville, as well as a partnership with **Tari Laes** in Tandem Promotions. A celebration of life is being planned for October. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the Lowcountry Autism Foundation of Bluffton, S.C., [here](#). 📍



Jason Aldean (center) appeared on the Sept. 1 edition of the *Armchair Expert* podcast, co-hosted by Dax Shepard and Monica Padman.

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SUMMIT + AWARDS

In November, *Billboard* will honor the most powerful people in the live entertainment industry at the Billboard Live Music Summit & Awards, which returns to Los Angeles on Nov. 3 as a must-attend event for the decision-makers and thought leaders shaping the future of the touring industry.

The 2025 Touring Power Players will be recognized in the Oct. 25 print issue of *Billboard* and celebrated at the Live Music Summit, which will include panel discussions and award presentations to the year's most visionary leaders worldwide.

Advertise in this issue to reach agents, artists, managers, venues, promoters and event producers and to congratulate the **2025 Touring Power Players**, as well as the **Legend of Live**, **Touring Artist of the Year** and **Executive of the Year**.

BONUS DISTRIBUTION:

Billboard Live Music Summit & Awards: 11/3

ON SALE: 10/25

AD CLOSE: 10/14 / **MATERIALS DUE:** 10/16

CONTACT:

East Coast/Midwest: Joe Maimone
joe.maimone@billboard.com

Latin: Marcia Olival
marciaolival29@gmail.com

Touring and West Coast: Cynthia Mellow
cmellow615@gmail.com

Southeast: Lee Ann Photoglo
laphotoglo@gmail.com

International: Ryan O'Donnell
rodonnell@pmc.com

Los Angeles: Aki Kaneko
moishekaneko@gmail.com

billboard Country Airplay Index

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billboard



TOP BUSINESS MANAGERS

On Nov. 15, *Billboard* will showcase the most in-demand business managers, whose financial expertise ensures their music industry clients invest (and spend) their money wisely.

Making money in the music industry is hard enough for artists and executives, which is why they turn to an elite few to help with financial profit and investment.

As a result of the rise of branding deals and streaming services, the task of managing artist income has become more complicated than ever, making the role of a music business manager invaluable.

Advertise in this issue and reach an elite group of influencers who guide their clients' financial fortunes and know a thing or two about how to invest their own money.

CONTACTS

East Coast/Midwest Joe Maimone | joe.maimone@billboard.com

Southeast Lee Ann Photoglo | laphotoglo@gmail.com

Los Angeles Aki Kaneko | moishekaneko@gmail.com

Latin Marcia Olival | marciaolival29@gmail.com

Touring & West Coast Cynthia Mellow | cmellow615@gmail.com

International Ryan O'Donnell | rodonnell@pmc.com

ISSUE DATE 11/15 | AD CLOSE 11/4 | MATERIALS DUE 11/6

COUNTRY

REWINDING
THE
COUNTRY
CHARTS

40 Years Ago

Rosanne Cash Used A No. 1 Song To Turn
A Grammy Loss Into A Grammy Win

In 1985, "I Don't Know Why You Don't Want Me" was the genre's most wanted

Sure, it's an honor just to be nominated, but most Grammy Award finalists go home empty-handed.

A day after **Rosanne Cash** lost out at the Grammys in February 1983, she processed the experience by writing a song, enlisting then-husband **Rodney Crowell** for an assist on the hooky "I Don't Know Why You Don't Want Me." Released as the

lead single from her *Rhythm & Romance* album, it debuted on *Billboard's* Hot Country Songs chart dated June 1, 1985, and crested at No. 1 on the Sept. 7 list, becoming the fourth of her 11 chart-toppers.

Produced by **David Malloy** (**Eddie Rabbitt**, **Kenny Rogers**), it featured backing vocals from **Vince Gill**, whose own "If It Weren't for Him," with supporting

vocals from Cash, reached No. 10 three weeks later.

"I Don't Know Why You Don't Want Me" ultimately won Cash a Grammy for best country vocal performance, female in February 1986. It's one of 40 tracks on *The Essential Collection*, a 2024 retrospective released on her Rumble Strip label.

—TOM ROLAND



Cash at the Grammy Awards in 1986.

PRODUCER (SONGWRITER)					LABEL & NUMBER/DISTRIBUTING LABEL	
①	3	4	15	I DON'T KNOW WHY YOU DON'T WANT ME D.MALLOY (R.CASH, R.CROWELL)	1 week at No. One	◆ ROSANNE CASH COLUMBIA 38-04809
②	4	5	14	MODERN DAY ROMANCE M.MORGAN, P.WORLEY (K.BROOKS, D.TYLER)		◆ NITTY GRITTY DIRT BAND WARNER BROS. 7-29027
③	5	6	14	USED TO BLUE R.SCRUGGS (F.KNOBLOCK, B.LABOUNTY)		SAWYER BROWN CAPITOL/CURE 5477/CAPITOL
④	8	9	11	I FELL IN LOVE AGAIN LAST NIGHT J.L.WALLACE, T.SKINNER (P.OVERSTREET, T.SCHUYLER)		THE FORESTER SISTERS WARNER BROS. 7-28988
⑤	7	8	12	DRINKIN' AND DREAMIN' J.BRIDGES, G.SCRUGGS (T.SEALS, M.D.BARNES)		WAYLON JENNINGS RCA 14094
⑥	9	13	0	LOST IN THE FIFTIES TONIGHT (IN THE STILL)		◆ RONNIE MILSAP