

# billboard Country Update

BILLBOARD.COM/NEWSLETTERS

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BILLBOARD COUNTRY UPDATE

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## Mike Curb's Belmont Partnership: Investing In Nashville's Future Music Business



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The anniversaries are piling up on Curb | Word Entertainment chairman **Mike Curb**.

This year is the 60th anniversary of Curb Records' founding. April 29 marked 30 years since Belmont University announced its highest-profile program was being renamed the Mike Curb College of Entertainment & Music Business. And the school just wrapped the 50th-anniversary campaign that celebrated the department's founding. All those milestones come as Curb approaches his 80th birthday on Christmas Eve.

"I like everything except the last statistic," he deadpans near the start of a three-hour interview.

The conversation acknowledges the landmarks, but it comes, more importantly, as Curb's latest investment wraps some of his deepest passions — education, music preservation and legacy — in a structure likely to enhance the relationship between Belmont and Music Row. Belmont announced April 9 that the Curb Foundation made a \$58 million donation that will seed a multipurpose

Curb College building on Music Circle South, wedged between the BMG offices and the historic Columbia Studios.

Neither Curb nor Belmont president **Greg Jones** could specify the breakdown of the \$58 million — both called it "complicated" — but the figure encompasses the value

of the land, which Curb donated; future rent; and cash. It also includes an expansion of the Buddy Lee Attractions building that's adjacent to Columbia, while the school attempts to raise an additional \$40 million for the project, which will encourage interplay between Belmont students and working music professionals. A 150-capacity performance space will provide an ideal

concert-audio learning facility and offer label showcase options. Songwriting rooms will serve the college and, perhaps, some independent writers. And a coffee shop is expected to lure lunchtime visits from nearby businesses, setting up the possibility for students that a springboard for their careers could be just a handshake away.



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The building is in the works at a time when large chunks of Music Row have been overtaken by non-music developers. Curb owns 12 properties on the Row — including RCA Studio B, Ocean Way and the former Masterfonics building — and he’s doggedly determined to maintain the character of the neighborhood, where he has control. That’s particularly true on Music Circle South, a block with numerous studios that have yielded hits by **Johnny Cash**, **Bob Dylan**, **George Strait**, **Tom T. Hall** and **Dan + Shay** — just for starters — through the decades.

“We made it impossible for the developers to get to it,” Curb says. “Even the **WNAH** radio building is just the way it is. Even the buildings that we’re using for Curb Records or for Word Records. Those are staying exactly the way they are. So we’ve got it pretty locked.”

Curb established his label as an 18-year-old college student at Cal State Northridge who was too young to sign the startup papers without a co-signer. He made a deal with Capitol, wrote a Honda commercial and landed a bundle of songs on movie soundtracks, including the 1968 **Clint Eastwood** picture *Kelly’s Heroes*. Curb became the president of MGM in his 20s, working with **The Osmonds**, **Lou Rawls**, **Sammy Davis Jr.** and **Hank Williams Jr.**, and by the end of the ’70s, he was California lieutenant governor, serving alongside **Ronald Reagan**.

Post-government, he extended the Curb label’s independent run by partnering with the majors in the careers of Williams, **The Judds**, **T.G. Sheppard**, **Lyle Lovett** and **Debby Boone**, among others.

“Back then, you could walk up and down Hollywood Boulevard or Sunset Boulevard, there were hundreds of independents,” he remembers. “Now they’re all owned by the three majors. That’s one of the big issues now, you know: The deep catalog of our industry is owned and controlled by three majors.”

Curb arrived in Nashville in the early 1990s, earning multiplatinum sales from **Tim McGraw** and **LeAnn Rimes** along with hits by **Sawyer Brown**, **Hal Ketchum**, **Jo Dee Messina** and, in the 2000s, **Rodney Atkins**. McGraw and Rimes had public spats involving their Curb deals, and Curb ended up in litigation with Big Machine Label Group over McGraw, who ultimately moved on. Despite that battle, Curb is on good terms with BMLG president/CEO **Scott Borchetta**, who has partnered with him in auto racing.

“I consider Mike a genius, I consider him a friend, I consider him misunderstood by a lot of people,” Borchetta says. “The guy’s a walking encyclopedia.”

Curb’s ability to maintain relationships, even amid sharp disagreements, is a skill he perfected during his political career. His relationship with Belmont, for example, continues despite his previous opposition to the university’s firing of a lesbian coach. (The school ultimately amended its policies.) In 1978, Curb helped defeat a California proposition that would have banned gay teachers from schools, convincing conservative icon Reagan to join the battle. Currently, he continues to speak highly of Sen. **Marsha Blackburn** (R-Tenn.), who agreed to a meeting with his gay employees, though they were unable to change her position on key issues. Writing people off, he reasons, is a poor long-term strategy.

“What I always tried to do was not criticize the people who disagreed with me, but tried to bring them together,” he says. “As I learned from Ronald Reagan, you just need 51%.”

Curb has certainly won over Belmont’s Jones. He suggested doing something with the Music Circle South property to benefit the music business program shortly after Jones became university president in 2021. The school already had an ideal location at the Southern edge of Music Row. With the new building, it will be in the heart of the district.

“We weren’t just thinking of the present and then making incremental changes,” says Jones. “We wanted the next 50 years of music business to be really transformational.”

It’s a goal that Curb shares. His label’s 60th anniversary will be celebrated June 6 with a CMA Fest show at Nashville’s Ascend Amphitheater featuring Atkins, Sawyer Brown, **Dylan Scott**, **Hannah Ellis**, **Kelsey Hart** and **Lee Brice**, among others. Curb is excited over the prospects of Brice’s new single — “Drinkin’ Buddies,” featuring **Nate Smith** and **Hailey Whitters** — which debuts at No. 26 on the Country Airplay chart dated May 11 (see page 4). But he’s just as enthusiastic about Brice’s collaboration with Christian band **for King & Country** on “Checking In,” which could — like Curb’s efforts for Belmont and for marriage equality — make a lasting mark. The anniversaries are important, but the future still beckons.

“We’re impacting the culture of Nashville, of country music — maybe pop music, the culture of the nation,” he says with youthful enthusiasm. “That’s what’s so exciting about what we do.” ●



Charley Crockett (center) was among the artists who attended a CAA Stagecoach Brunch on April 27 during the Stagecoach Country Music Festival in Indio, Calif. With him: CAA senior music agent Brian Greenbaum (left) and head of music Rob Light.



Kenny Chesney welcomed unannounced guest Kelsea Ballerini for three songs during his April 27 date at Bank of America Stadium in Charlotte, N.C.



Miranda Lambert (left) brought surprise guest Reba McEntire out for a three-song encore when she headlined the Stagecoach Music Festival on April 27 in Indio, Calif.



Corey Kent dropped by WWKA Orlando, Fla., on April 30. From left: WWKA music director Melissa Quinones, Sony Music Nashville national promotion and artist development specialist Nicole Walden, Kent and Cox Music Group/Orlando director of operations Steve Stewart.





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# billboard Country Airplay

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

## Ashley Cooke Finds Her 'Place' In Country Airplay Top 10; Sam Hunt Matches His Longest Reign; Shaboozey Debuts

Ashley Cooke notches her first top 10 on *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart as "Your Place" (Back Blocks/Big Loud) rises 11-9 on the list dated May 11. It advanced by 5% to 17.9 million audience impressions April 26-May 2, according to Luminate.

The song is the 26-year-old Parkland, Fla., native's second Country Airplay entry and first on her own. She co-wrote it with Jordan Minton and Mark Trussell, and Jimmy Robbins produced it. Her rookie entry, "Never Til Now," with Brett Young, reached No. 49 in December 2022.

Cooke's current single is from her LP *Shot in the Dark*, which arrived at its No. 14 best on *Billboard's* Heatseekers Albums chart in August 2023. She had a hand in writing 20 of the set's 24 tracks.

Notably, "Your Place" marks the first initial top 10 for a female artist, with no billed collaborators, on Country Airplay in almost a year, since Megan Moroney's "Tennessee Orange" hit No. 4 last June.



COOKE

ROBBIE KLEIN

**HUNT TIES HIS BEST** Sam Hunt's "Outskirts" (MCA Nashville) dominates Country Airplay for a career-best-tying third week (29.1 million, down 8%). His 10th No. 1, and second multiweek leader, equals the three-week command of his 2017 crossover smash, "Body Like a Back Road."

**SHABOOZEY RAISES 'BAR'** Shaboozey makes his Country Airplay debut as "A Bar Song (Tipsy)" (American Dogwood/EMPIRE) enters at No. 53 with 993,000 in reach (up 740%). The song, which interpolates J-Kwon's 2004 hip-hop classic "Tipsy," made history on the May 4-dated multimetric Hot Country Songs chart: As it hit No. 1, Shaboozey dethroned Beyoncé's "Texas Hold 'Em." It marked the first time that two Black artists have led back to back since the survey became an all-encompassing genre ranking in 1958. ●

## MOST INCREASED AUDIENCE

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN (IN MILLIONS)
WILDFLOWERS AND WILD HORSES Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	+5.377
DRINKIN' BUDDIES Curb	Lee Brice, Nate Smith & Hailey Whitters	+4.868
WHERE IT ENDS Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	+3.220
COWGIRLS Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring ERNEST	+2.494
DIRT CHEAP CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson	+2.223
HALFWAY TO HELL Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	+2.026
SHE'S SOMEBODY'S DAUGHTER (REIMAGINED) Patoka Sounds/Lyric Ridge	Drew Baldrige	+1.387
WE RIDE Average Joes	Bryan Martin	+1.333
BACK THEN RIGHT NOW Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	+1.173
LET YOUR BOYS BE COUNTRY Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	+1.143

## MOST INCREASED PLAYS

TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	GAIN
WILDFLOWERS AND WILD HORSES Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	+1557
DRINKIN' BUDDIES Curb	Lee Brice, Nate Smith & Hailey Whitters	+1079
WHERE IT ENDS Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	+851
HALFWAY TO HELL Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	+720
COWGIRLS Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring ERNEST	+680
DIRT CHEAP CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson	+648
SHE'S SOMEBODY'S DAUGHTER (REIMAGINED) Patoka Sounds/Lyric Ridge	Drew Baldrige	+438
YOUNG LOVE & SATURDAY NIGHTS RCA Nashville	Chris Young	+340
BULLETPROOF RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	+333
LOVE YOU, MISS YOU, MEAN IT Row Crop/Capitol Nashville	Luke Bryan	+326

## RECURRENTS

THIS WEEK	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	TOTAL AUD. (IN MILLIONS)
1	WORLD ON FIRE RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	19.506
2	TRUCK BED Big Loud	HARDY	16.949
3	FAST CAR River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	16.898
4	THINKIN' BOUT ME Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	16.333
5	SAVE ME Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll With Lainey Wilson	14.168
6	LAST NIGHT Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen	13.806
7	MAN MADE A BAR Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring Eric Church	12.988
8	DANCIN' IN THE COUNTRY Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	9.211
9	MAMAW'S HOUSE Valory Thomas Rhett Featuring Morgan Wallen		8.817
10	BURN IT DOWN MCA Nashville	Parker McCollum	8.517



# TEXAS REGIONAL RADIO REPORT

WEEK ENDING MAY 2, 2024

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	2	25	PROMISE YOU ME (Independent) ★★ 1 Week at 1 ★★	Grant Gilbert	1503	198	11	12	13	\$10 COWBOY (Son of Davy/Thirty Tigers)	Charley Crockett	1034	92
2	5	23	TEQUILA & JESUS (Independent)	Amanda Kate Ferris	1346	90	12	16	10	THE RESCUE (Independent)	Bri Bagwell	1005	104
3	3	9	RUNNING OUT OF TIME (Almost Country) Casey Donahew ft. Pat Green, Randy Rogers & Wade Bowen		1316	42	13	13	16	8 SECONDS AT A TIME (Independent)	Ryder Grimes	981	50
4	6	21	SOMEBODY'S BABY (Independent)	Jon Stork	1210	-5	14	17	12	TE NECESITO (Independent)	Matt Castillo	951	54
5	7	13	MILWAUKEE (Island/DJMG)	Wyatt Flores	1172	47	15	14	15	NEON (Independent)	Mikayla Lane	919	-4
6	9	16	ALL THE ANGELENOS (Boo Clap/Thirty Tigers)	Uncle Lucius	1104	86	16	19	7	DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS LIKE THAT (Flatland Cavalry/Interscope Records)	Flatland Cavalry	895	95
7	8	23	HE SINGS FOR MARY (Independent)	Hayden Haddock	1074	-18	17	1	20	RIGHT NOW KINDA GIRL (Get Joe)	Billie Jo Jones	871	-495
8	4	16	WAY IT GOES (Independent)	Mike Ryan	1067	-195	18	18	16	I WON'T GIVE UP (Independent)	Randy Rogers Band	832	-17
9	11	19	HELLO TEXAS (Flying C)	Brooke Graham	1060	66	19	21	14	BLUE SKY GOODBYE (Independent)	Drew Fish Band	824	45
10	10	14	SOMETHING OUT OF NOTHING (Independent)	James Robert Webb	1060	49	20	22	8	HUNT YOU DOWN (Independent)	Kaitlin Butts	812	67

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 2024, Texas Regional Radio Report

# 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
1	1	41	OUTSKIRTS MCA Nashville	Sam Hunt	29.089	-2.572	7033	-839	5
2	3	34	BACK THEN RIGHT NOW Hubbard House/EMI Nashville	Tyler Hubbard	27.199	+1.173	7388	245	1
3	4	37	TUCSON TOO LATE MCA Nashville	Jordan Davis	26.818	+0.999	7057	178	4
4	5	31	WHERE IT ENDS Elektra/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Bailey Zimmerman	26.120	+3.220	7068	851	3
5	10	25	WILDFLOWERS AND WILD HORSES Broken Bow	Lainey Wilson	24.423	+5.377	7119	1557	2
6	6	25	TAKE HER HOME Blue Chair/Warner Music Nashville/WEA	Kenny Chesney	22.809	+0.810	5828	272	7
7	9	16	HALFWAY TO HELL Bailee & Buddy/Broken Bow/BMG/Stoney Creek	Jelly Roll	22.361	+2.026	5998	720	6
8	8	43	PRETTY LITTLE POISON 717/Warner/WEA	Warren Zeiders	19.893	-0.696	4890	-155	9
9	11	20	YOUR PLACE Back Blocks/Big Loud	Ashley Cooke	17.927	+0.796	5011	139	8
10	2	37	CAB IN A SOLO Triple Tigers	Scotty McCreery	17.678	-10.120	4577	-3125	10
11	12	66	FEARLESS (THE ECHO) Big Machine	Jackson Dean	15.235	+0.018	4278	28	11
12	13	23	LET YOUR BOYS BE COUNTRY Macon/Broken Bow	Jason Aldean	15.176	+1.143	4184	244	13
13	15	31	WE RIDE Average Joes	Bryan Martin	14.056	+1.333	4070	242	14
14	14	46	WE DON'T FIGHT ANYMORE Big Machine	Carly Pearce Featuring Chris Stapleton	13.949	+0.120	4246	84	12
15	17	12	BULLETPROOF RCA Nashville	Nate Smith	11.652	+0.943	3413	333	15
16	16	34	YOUNG LOVE & SATURDAY NIGHTS RCA Nashville	Chris Young	11.646	+0.722	3342	340	16
17	18	49	LOVE YOU AGAIN Chase Matthew/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Chase Matthew	10.611	+0.403	3219	115	17
18	21	16	DIRT CHEAP CoJo/Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cody Johnson	10.445	+2.223	2873	648	20
19	20	39	I'M NOT PRETTY Megan Moroney/Columbia/Arista Nashville	Megan Moroney	9.420	+0.569	3003	149	18
20	19	32	CAN'T BREAK UP NOW Columbia Nashville	Old Dominion & Megan Moroney	8.969	-0.121	2922	-28	19
21	22	21	CHEVROLET Broken Bow	Dustin Lynch Featuring Jelly Roll	7.534	+0.890	2325	222	21
22	26	4	COWGIRLS Mercury/Republic/Big Loud	Morgan Wallen Featuring ERNEST	7.289	+2.494	1873	680	25
23	23	27	SHE'S SOMEBODY'S DAUGHTER (REIMAGINED) Patoka Sounds/Lyric Ridge	Drew Baldrige	6.665	+1.387	2294	438	22
24	24	15	ONE BAD HABIT McGraw/Big Machine	Tim McGraw	5.822	+0.673	2216	290	23
25	28	25	THIS IS MY DIRT Valory	Justin Moore	4.989	+0.446	1725	31	28
26	NEW		DRINKIN' BUDDIES Curb	Lee Brice, Nate Smith & Hailey Whitters	4.868	+4.868	1079	1079	35
27	27	37	DANCE WITH YOU Nashville Harbor	Brett Young	4.765	-0.002	1719	58	29
28	25	26	RODEO MAN Pearl/Big Machine	Garth Brooks & Ronnie Dunn	4.747	-0.139	1957	-116	24
29	29	26	GONNA LOVE YOU Stoney Creek	Parmalee	4.745	+0.342	1799	85	27
30	30	9	MESSED UP AS ME Hit Red/Capitol Nashville	Keith Urban	4.302	+0.298	1668	177	30

## 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 © 2024, 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-bulleted) 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.



# 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	43	DRINKIN' PROBLEMS Riser House	Dillon Carmichael	4.194	+0.255	1801	125	26
32	36	4	LOVE YOU, MISS YOU, MEAN IT Row Crop/Capitol Nashville	Luke Bryan	4.070	+0.956	1250	326	33
33	33	13	BIGGER HOUSES Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Dan + Shay	3.967	+0.398	1560	217	31
34	32	6	TIE UP Home Grown/Warner Music Nashville/WAR	Zac Brown Band	3.708	+0.055	909	16	41
35	35	17	SOUNDS LIKE THE RADIO Leo33	Zach Top	3.702	+0.394	1419	173	32
36	34	6	AUSTIN VERSION III/Warner <b>★★ Breaker ★★</b>	Dasha	3.573	+0.246	1067	132	36
37	37	10	AMERICAN GIRL Tom Petty Legacy/Capitol Nashville/Valory	Dierks Bentley	3.125	+0.227	1100	159	34
38	38	9	COWBOY SONGS RECORDS Nashville	George Birge	2.670	-0.120	1029	-24	39
39	39	27	FIND ANOTHER BAR Voyager/Red Street	Chris Lane	2.147	-0.160	1040	-47	38
40	40	17	BOYS BACK HOME PIA/Curb/Columbia Nashville	Dylan Marlowe & Dylan Scott	2.028	-0.029	902	41	42
41	43	7	DAMN GOOD DAY TO LEAVE Nashville Harbor	Riley Green	1.985	+0.224	776	80	46
42	42	8	WHATCHA SEE IS WHATCHA GET Nashville Harbor	Chris Janson	1.941	+0.007	842	-6	44
43	41	8	THIS TOWN'S BEEN TOO GOOD TO US Curb	Dylan Scott	1.931	-0.021	767	14	47
44	52	6	CALLED CRAZY Interscope/MCA Nashville	Kassi Ashton	1.917	+0.938	458	216	52
45	46	16	BREAKIN' IN BOOTS RECORDS/Columbia/RECORDS Nashville	Matt Stell	1.790	+0.163	933	71	40
46	45	3	FOREVER TO ME Warner Music Nashville/WMN	Cole Swindell	1.778	+0.147	540	0	51
47	44	32	IN YOUR LOVE Hickman Holler/RCA	Tyler Childers	1.771	+0.028	1056	57	37
48	47	23	LOVE YOU BACK Nashville Harbor	Lady A	1.721	+0.163	819	19	45
49	48	13	I TRIED A RING ON Monument	Tigirlily Gold	1.472	-0.018	877	58	43
50	49	11	I THINK I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU Sound/Mercury Nashville	Chris Stapleton	1.322	-0.040	595	9	50
51	50	29	I'M IN LOVE Songs & Daughters/Pigasus/Big Loud	Hailey Whitters	1.292	+0.045	643	10	49
52	51	5	LIFE WITH YOU Curb <b>★★ Breaker ★★</b>	Kelsey Hart	1.265	+0.025	685	6	48
53	NEW		A BAR SONG (TIPSY) American Dogwood/EMPIRE	Shaboozey	0.993	+0.875	231	196	-
54	60	2	FRIENDS LIKE THAT Night Train/Broken Bow	John Morgan Featuring Jason Aldean	0.885	+0.411	424	217	56
55	53	10	LAST RODEO 1021/RCA Nashville	Restless Road	0.819	-0.134	432	-35	54
56	54	16	KING OF COUNTRY MUSIC Red Street	Ryan Larkins	0.780	-0.022	365	-8	58
57	56	2	WINE INTO WHISKEY Back Blocks	Tucker Wetmore	0.761	+0.048	234	43	-
58	55	6	SINGLE AGAIN The Core/Universal Music Canada/Mercury Nashville	Josh Ross	0.754	+0.030	443	-21	53
59	58	2	COUNTRY BACK Magnolia Music	Randy Houser	0.750	+0.092	427	76	55
60	57	14	MAKE ME WANNA SMOKE Quartz Hill	Runaway June	0.724	+0.057	407	26	57



CHRIS HOLLO

Josh Turner announced April 23 that he has extended his recording contract with Universal Music Group Nashville. The renewal continues a two-decade relationship. From left: Modern Management executive Renee Behrman-Greiman, UMGN chair/CEO Cindy Mabe, Turner and Modern Management president/owner Ted Greene and artist manager/touring and digital media director Kelsey McMahan Williams.



KKGO Los Angeles hosted a pre-festival party on April 24 ahead of the Stagecoach Country Music Festival at Tukut Lounge in Highland, Calif. From left: KKGO morning personality Tim Hurley, Tigirlily Gold's Kendra Slaubaugh, Annie Bosko and Tigirlily Gold's Krista Slaubaugh.





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ZACH WHITMORE

George Birge performed three songs, including current single “Cowboy Songs,” for Country Music Association staff at the organization’s office on April 25. With him are CMA CEO Sarah Trahern (left) and senior vp of industry relations and philanthropy Tiffany Kerns.

## RADIO & RECORDS®

Black River grew its digital department by hiring manager of digital marketing **Lizzie Greene**. She was previously social media marketing manager for Beautiful | Digital. Reach her [here](#) ... Concord Music Group promoted Nashville-based **Joe Dent** to executive vp of operations from senior vp and boosted Los Angeles-based **Jill Weindorf** to executive vp of marketing from GM of recorded music ... Warner Music Nashville announced the signing of South African singer-songwriter **Roan Ash** on May 3 in conjunction with the release of a new track, “Holy Ground” ... Big Machine Label Group reached an agreement with Gas Station TV that will bring promotional content from the label’s artists to screens at more than 29,000 gas stations across the United States ... Cumulus/Savannah, Ga., promoted **Sarah Hamilton** to **WJCL** PD from assistant PD. She also holds down a six-hour midday shift on the station and does weekends on classic rock sister **WIXV**, plus on-air duties for a Westwood One syndicated format ... **WWWF** Long Island will introduce the syndicated *Big D & Bubba* as its morning team on May 6 ... Beasley/Boston hired **Kyra Ringer** as chief engineer for the six-station cluster, including country **WKLB**. She previously owned independent New Hampshire-based firm New England Broadcast Engineering ... **MARC** Radio/Gainesville-Ocala, Fla., hired general sales manager **Lance Ballance**, **RadioInk.com** reported. Ballance will be responsible for six stations, including country **WPLL**. He was previously an account executive for Ramar Communications/Lubbock, Texas, which maintains two country signals ... **Bob Lawrence** started May 1 as Seven Mountains/Parkersburg, W.V.-Marietta, Ohio, market manager, according to **RadioInk.com**. He steps into the role after a stint as GM for the Radio Advertising Bureau’s National Radio Talent System. The seven signals in the Seven Mountains gig include country **WGGE** and classic country **WLYQ** ... **KVWF** Augusta-Wichita, Kan., rebranded as a classic country station, **RadioInsight.com** reported. The Storm Report president/co-founder **Dan Holiday** is on-board as PD/morning host, with former **KFDI** Wichita personality **Carol Hughes** handling middays. Nashville-based **Becca Walls** fills the afternoon slot ... **WNNF** Cincinnati installed **Austin “Tater” Ratacliff** in middays, according to **RadioInsight.com**. He was already employed as Cumulus/Cincinnati promotions director ... The Radio Hall of Fame tabbed four country nominees among its finalists for 2024: syndicated personalities **Sean “Bubba” Powell** and **Derek “Big D” Haskins**, longtime duo **Lorianne Crook** and **Charlie Chase**, **WPOC** Baltimore morning personality **Laurie DeYoung** and **KVST** Huntsville, Texas, host **Mary McCoy**. Go [here](#) for the full list ... A dozen new members joined the Country Radio Seminar Agenda Committee, including **Samantha DePrez** (Curb Records), **Sarah Kay** (**WQMX** Akron, Ohio) and **Jordan Pettit** (Opry Entertainment Group). Go [here](#) for the complete list.

## ‘ROUND THE ROW

**Diana Garcia** joined Brown Sellers Brown as director of streaming relations and marketing. She was previously Verge director of marketing. Reach Garcia [here](#) ... **Chris Poole** joined Ace High Music as vp of publishing and artist development in tandem with the company’s rebrand from its former name, SoNash Publishing. He was previously BBR Music Group senior director of A&R.

Reach Poole [here](#) ... **Chris Owen** joined Cornman Music as creative director. He was previously a **WYRK** Buffalo, N.Y., personality ... **Julien’s Auctions** hired **Cristy Barber** as vp of pop culture and business development for its new Nashville office. She was most recently with legacy firm Iconoclast as vp of global marketing and brand partnerships ... Songwriter **Kat Higgins** (“The Painter,” “Knowing You”) renewed her publishing deal with **BMG Music** ... Artist-writer **Hannah McFarland** signed a joint publishing contract with Warner Chappell Nashville and The Core Entertainment ... Indie artist **Vincent Mason** signed with **WME** for representation ... The Familie and Workshop Music Group signed **Owen Riegling** to a management deal ... **Fender** will open a new office and artist showroom in Nashville later in May ... The International Bluegrass Music Association named German act **Johnny & the Yooahos** as the recipient of its 2024 international band performance grant ... **Dolly Parton** will launch CMA Fest’s Fan Fair X on June 6 with a conversation at the CMA Close Up stage. Other Fan Fair X artists of the day will include **Cody Johnson**, June 7; **Thomas Rhett**, June 8; and **Lainey Wilson**, June 9 ... **Jason Aldean**, **Miranda Lambert** and **Jelly Roll** are among the acts set to perform at the Academy of Country Music Awards on May 16 in Frisco, Texas. The ACM announced additional preliminary events, including a May 14 ACM Country Kickoff and a May 15 ACM Songs & Stories songwriter event hosted by **Charles Esten** ... The Country Music Association will email initial ballots for its 58th annual awards on July 8. The second ballot will be open Aug. 6-20, and the final round of voting is slated for Oct. 1-29. Nominees for the CMA Broadcast Awards are being accepted through June 30 ... The American Music Awards, long associated with ABC, shift to CBS with this year’s Oct. 6 telecast ... Songwriter **Anthony Smith** (“Tomorrow,” “What About Now”) earned a star in the Alabama Music Hall of Fame in Tusculumbia on April 27 ... **Bill Anderson** received the Dr. David Godbold lifetime achievement award from the South Carolina Entertainment and Music Hall of Fame on April 25 ... **Blake Shelton** sings the end theme, “Unknown Stuntman,” for the new movie *The Fall Guy*, starring **Emily Blunt** and **Ryan Gosling**. The film opened May 3 ... The paperback version of **Craig Morgan**’s autobiography, *God, Family, Country*, arrives May 7 ... National Music Publishers’ Association president/CEO **David Israelite** will address numerous current issues in “State of the Union for Music Publishing” at 2 p.m. on May 16 at the CMA office in Nashville. The presentation is free to Association of Independent Music Publishers members and \$20 for nonmembers. Sign up [here](#) ... The Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum and Warner Music Nashville will reissue an expanded version of the box set *From Where I Stand: The Black Experience in Country Music* on May 31 ... The Hall of Fame will host a two-day All for the Hall Dallas campaign, with **Midland** performing at a private residence in Dallas on Sept. 9 and **Vince Gill** headlining a Sept. 10 benefit at Gilley’s Dallas ... **Darius Rucker**’s 15th annual Darius & Friends benefit concert is set for June 3 at Nashville’s Ryman Auditorium ... The T.J. Martell Foundation announced Big Loud CEO/partner **Seth England** will receive a lifetime music industry award on Sept. 17 in New York ... Guitar legend **Duane Eddy** died April 30 in Franklin, Tenn., according to the Associated Press ... **Tom Foote**, who spent four decades as **George Strait**’s road manager, died April 29. His passing followed the March deaths of Strait’s manager, **Erv Woolsey**, and fiddler, **Gene Elders**. 🍎



**BRELAND** (center) guested April 24 on ABC’s *Good Morning America* with hosts DeMarco Morgan and Rhiannon Ally.





ON SALE: JUNE 1, 2024

# 40 UNDER 40

On June 1st, *Billboard* will publish its annual 40 Under 40 Issue, celebrating the next generation of leaders in the music industry. This issue will profile 40 power players who are making their mark in music, touring and live entertainment.

These progressive young leaders' innovation and creativity will continue to create excitement in the music business.

**Advertise in this issue to reach the music industry's most influential and affluent - from the young disrupters to the seasoned veterans - who paved the way.**

**ON SALE:** 6/1  
Issue Close: 5/21  
Materials Due: 5/23

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2024

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# INDIE

## LABEL POWER PLAYERS

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On June 8th, *Billboard* will publish its annual Indie Label Power Players List. This special feature in advance of A2IM Indie Week (6/10–6/14) and the 14th Annual Libera Awards will profile leading executives at top independent record labels, publishing companies and distribution companies. Positioning themselves as the driving force behind the success of independent music, these executives contribute to the independent music sector and to the world of music at large.

Take this opportunity to advertise and congratulate this year's 2024 Indie Label Power Players.

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ISSUE DATE 6/8 | AD CLOSE 5/28 | MATERIALS DUE 5/30

# OLD

5 Years Ago

## Old Dominion Found Its 'Sweet' Spot

In 2019, the group earned its sixth of seven Country Airplay No. 1s

On May 4, 2019, **Old Dominion's** "Make It Sweet" hit No. 1 on *Billboard's* Country Airplay chart, becoming the sixth of the band's seven leaders. The confection was released from the group's self-titled third LP, which entered at the Top Country Albums summit as the act's second of two No. 1s.

All five members of Old Dominion —

**Matthew Ramsey, Trevor Rosen, Whit Sellers, Geoff Sprung and Brad Tursi** — penned the track with its producer, **Shane McAnally**. "We feel that the song captured the spirit of this band in a way we hadn't been able to do in the past," Ramsey told *Billboard* upon its chart coronation. "Having [it] go all the way to No. 1 will go down as one of our proudest moments."

The band's current single, "Can't Break Up Now," with **Megan Moroney**, ranks at No. 20 on the May 11-dated Country Airplay chart (9 million impressions). It's also nominated for music event of the year at the 2024 Academy of Country Music Awards (May 16), while Old Dominion is up for group of the year, which it has won six times.

—JIM ASKER

From left: Old Dominion's Tursi, Rosen, Ramsey, Sprung and Sellers at the 2019 iHeartRadio Music Festival in Las Vegas.



THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	ON CHART	TITLE Imprint/Label	Artist	AUDIENCE (IN MILLIONS)		PLAYS		RANK
					THIS WEEK	+/-	THIS WEEK	+/-	
1	3	29	MAKE IT SWEET RCA Nashville	Old Dominion	37.970	+2.793	7851	459	1
2	4	37	EYES ONLY YOU Dack Janiels/Broken Bow	Chase Rice	36.371	+3.252	7557	605	2
3	1	32	HERETONIGHT BMLG	Brett Young	34.768	-5.388	6929	-1313	3
4	2	25	BEAUTIFUL CRAZY River House/Columbia Nashville	Luke Combs	34.431	-1.299	6333	-324	6
5	5	46	LOVE AIN'T Valory	Eli Young Band	31.968	+3.080	6700	581	4
6	6	17	GOOD AS YOU Zane 4/RCA Nashville	Kane Brown	30.974	+2.469	6472	594	5

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