



Kevin Skinner to headline Freedom Fest

By KYSER LOUGH
Staff Writer

The Freedom Fest big-name country music concert is back for 2010, bringing a well-known local performer to the stage along with a new sponsor.

Since winning America's Got Talent, Kevin Skinner has performed in Mayfield and Metropolis, Ill. but never made it to Murray. On Saturday, July 3, he will do just that and take the stage at the Regional Special Events Center at 8 p.m., sponsored by Murray State University and the Regional Special Events Center.

"The concert lineup is unique this year, in that we have a local celebrity putting on an amazing show," said Erin Carrico, executive director of the Murray Convention and Visitors Bureau. "This region was proud of Kevin Skinner and his victory on 'America's Got Talent.' We are looking forward to celebrating his success with a full RSEC and spectacular Briggs & Stratton fireworks afterwards."

In previous years, the big concert was held at Roy Stewart Stadium as an integral part of the Freedom Fest lineup and was sponsored by Froggy 103.7. More recently, the concert and sponsor became independent from Freedom Fest, but still occurred during the same weekend. This year, Freedom Fest organizers were told there would be no concert.

"When Froggy announced at our Freedom Fest meeting back in February that they would not be having a concert on Freedom Fest weekend, we were surprised," Carrico said. "The big Saturday night concert has been a long-standing staple in the Freedom Fest activities. Knowing the financial limitations of the Freedom Fest budget and the economic issues everyone is facing, we were afraid there would be no concert."

That is when MSU and the RSEC got involved, Carrico said, and offered to take on the challenge of bringing in a concert.

"We are lucky in the fact that all of the organizations in our community work together, especially when unexpected situations arise. Jim Carter (with MSU) and Joe Santiago (with the RSEC) have worked diligently in putting a concert together for us. I am not sure how he has managed to pull together a great concert line-up so quickly, but he has worked his magic, and essentially saved Freedom Fest," she said.

Opening for Skinner will be Sierra Hull and Highway 111, who will play at 7 p.m. Doors open at 6, Carrico said. Following the concert will be the traditional Freedom Fest fireworks, viewable outside.

Carrico said tickets will go on sale Friday, May 14 and will be available on ticketmaster.com or at the Regional Special Events Center box office. Tickets will be priced at \$10 and \$15.



KYSER LOUGH/Ledger & Times

In this September 26, 2009 photo, Kevin Skinner performs in the gym at Graves County High School. Skinner will appear in Murray on Saturday, July 3 as part of Freedom Fest.