

MARCONI  
NOMINEES

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Q4 MUSIC  
PREVIEW

POWER  
31  
DOUBLES UP

TOWNSQUARE'S  
KURT  
JOHNSON  
THE INTERVIEW



# COUNTRY AIRCHECK

SEPTEMBER 2017



BRAD PAISLEY



TIM MCGRAW & FAITH HILL



CAM



LANCO



SETH ENNIS



WALKER HAYES



KENNY CHESNEY



MAREN MORRIS



LUKE COMBS



TYLER FARR



LEVON



OLD CROW MEDICINE SHOW



MIRANDA LAMBERT



CHRIS YOUNG



KANE BROWN



OLD DOMINION



RYAN HURD



DOLLY PARTON



JAKE OWEN

THE POWER OF  
SONY MUSIC  
NASHVILLE  
FALL 2017





WARNER MUSIC NASHVILLE PROUDLY PRESENTS

# MORGAN EVANS



*Rolling Stone*  
**COUNTRY**

ARTIST YOU NEED TO KNOW

**CMA GLOBAL**  
ARTIST OF THE YEAR

**7** NO.1 SINGLES  
IN AUSTRALIA

**5** CMC MUSIC  
AWARDS

**TOURED WITH**  
COLE SWINDELL + LEE BRICE  
TAYLOR SWIFT + OLD DOMINION

*NEW SINGLE*  
**"KISS SOMEBODY"**  
**1** MILLION  
1ST WEEK STREAMS

**"ENERGETIC & INTENSE"**  
***MUSICROW***

**THE DEBUT SINGLE "KISS SOMEBODY" GOING FOR ADDS 10/23**







# Mark of Excellence

## COUNTRY NOMINEES SPEAK

The National Association of Broadcasters' prestigious Marconi Awards recognize stations in all formats based on ratings success, awards won, community involvement and promotions. And as in years past, Country stations are well represented, with several of this year's nominees highlighted below. Not featured: WYCD/Detroit's

**Linda Lee** (Large Market Personality), WQHK/Ft. Wayne's **The Dan & Dude Show** (Medium Market Personality), **KKBQ/Houston** (Major Market Station), **WYCT/Pensacola, FL** (Medium Market Station) and **WUBE/Cincinnati** (Country Station), which have all been profiled within the last year.

### WHO OWNS US NOW?

#### WXTU/Philadelphia

##### Country Station Of The Year

VP/Music Programming **Shelly Easton** is unfazed by her station's trade to CBS Radio by Beasley and subsequent merger with Entercom. Though that's a lot of transition since 2014, she says the station is taking care of business ... and business is good.

**I am excited for our team.** The U in XTU represents "you," which is an inclusion and outreach directed toward our community and listener family. We would only be X-T without "you." The air staff is amazing and has been together for nearly 10 years. They are a group of true professionals always striving to perfect their craft. Their talent and work ethic are unwavering and the impact of their caring and character extends far beyond the walls of the radio station. Each has a charity they champion. **We consistently raise funds** and supplies for the USO, the American Heart Association, Boys



**More Filled: Darius Rucker at the Red White and Blue XTU Concert at the Fillmore in Philadelphia in April.**

and Girls Clubs and America's 911 Foundation. [APD/Afternoon host] Razz rides in The Armed Forces Freedom Ride. This year we will throw a pajama party on-air to raise money for the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. We celebrate survivors of breast cancer with a private luncheon and performance each October. Frank and Andie [morning show co-hosts] participate in the Big Climb for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. In late April, we hosted a show with Darius Rucker called **Red White and Blue XTU** to celebrate Military May, during which we collected supplies for the troops through our local USO and raised \$5,000. Our Annual **Toy Truck Parade** collects more than 4,000 toys each year.

**I am proud to be a small part** of the life cycle of a song, from the first listen in the office to watching everyone singing it in a stadium. I am proud to be a part of the Country format and part of the community our radio station serves. Mostly, I am proud as a team we have been entrusted with a radio frequency with which we positively impact someone's day, feelings or outlook right out of thin air.

### ROCKY MOUNTAIN HIGH

#### KYGO/Denver

##### Large Market Station of the Year

PD **John E. Kage's** return to Denver and transition from Rhythmic Top 40 to Country is working well – for him and the station.

**Ecstatic!** Getting nominated for a Marconi was on my list of things to achieve when I arrived – it's just one of those special achievements in radio. From the music we play to the way we go to bat for our troops, first responders, teachers and, of course, St. Jude, KYGO is a big part of our community.

**Winning St. Jude Radio Partner of the Year** is No. 1 for us. The Marconi nomination is right there with it. Hitting two record 6+ PPM books in the past six months and overall performance in all the major demos has made me very proud for our team. The

ratings are there and SM Kristen Organ, DOS Darlene Park and staff have done a great job from there.

**In terms of events,** *Beyond the Badge* is a program we run to recognize police officers. Our St. Jude radiothon and *St. Jude Jam* concert are key. *Tickets for Teachers* is an idea we piggy-backed off of Valory's Delta Rae. Aaron Watson donated 250 tickets to his show to help fix the Colorado Freedom Memorial, which contains the names of Colorado troops who gave their lives but was recently vandalized with \$55,000 worth of damage.

**A great radio station is well branded,** has personality and is hit driven. The ingredients that go into that are the work we do in our community, being involved in the lives of listeners and artists, and how we image that. The timeliness in which we execute and social media are the glue that binds it all as we brand and tell our story.

**We have a credenza** in our lobby with all the Marconis



**Mile High Smiles: KYGO personalities Fizz, Melissa Moore, Guy David, Paul Donovan and Tracy Dixon (l-r).**

KYGO has won over the years. It's definitely been a while and I would love to add one for the current team to take pride in for their hard work.



**Billy Clubbin': Wolf staff and artists backstage at the station's 10 Man Jam at Billy Bob's Texas. Mac Daniels, Jon Pardi, Randy Rogers, Lisa Taylor, Raelynn, Randy Travis, Smokey Rivers, Josh Abbott, Casey Donahew, Trey Morgan and Mark Phillips.**

### FLYING THE TEXAS FLAG

#### KPLX/Dallas

##### Country Station of The Year

PD **Mac Daniels** oversees both Cumulus Country stations in the market. Both have had ratings increases this year and Daniels is preparing for the 20th anniversary of *The Wolf* brand next year.

**We're so incredibly proud of this nomination.** It's been such a great year as far as ratings success, so to be recognized by the NAB is icing on the cake. If I had to describe the station with one word it would be "experiential." The Wolf isn't about just turning on the radio to hear your favorite song. We want to grab our listeners and have them feel the passion of the station: Texas loud and Texas proud.

**With a seasoned staff,** it is very rewarding to see them work so hard day in and day out, and then be recognized by their peers. Smokey River's two decades of dedication to St. Jude is remarkable. He's our historian and tells me we won in 2001 and 2003. Lisa Taylor's SPCA connection and what the station did raising money for families affected by the police ambush this year also make our commitment to the community stand out. And our Dir./Mktg. Rebecca Kaplan and her street team knock it out of the park every day. None of them do it for the awards, but it sure is nice when it all comes together.

**I will be in Austin** with Jeff Catlin, the PD for our sister station The Ticket, that is nominated in the Sports category. Market Manager Dan Bennett is flying in from his vacation for the dinner. This is a big deal.



*Mark  
of  
Excellence*

**LIVE AND LOCAL**  
**WIL/St. Louis**  
*Country Station of the Year*

*Hubbard's WIL/St. Louis PD **Scott Roddy's** team is nominated following his first full year at the station.*

**This is such an honor** and so inspiring. It's also humbling because this is what everybody strives for. We've had ACM and CMA nominations, but this is the cherry on top.

**Local is the key word.** [Hubbard CEO] Ginny Morris' mandate is that we are a reflection of our community in every single market. Hubbard is the platinum standard for live and local talent. [Morning Show] Bud and Broadway were there bagging sand during the horrendous flooding we had. I sent Broadway a text that weekend and he replied he was in South County. I told him to put it on the radio, but he



**Bump Up The Jams: WIL's JT, Danny Montana, Bud Ford, Jerry Broadway, Kelly from Arnold, Scott Roddy and Bo Matthews.**

replied, “I’m not doing it for that – these people are really struggling.”

**Those guys also picked up** more than 5,000 toys in 36 hours for the Salvation Army. Danny Montana has been here for two decades and is so much a part of this community. Bo (afternoons) and Josh (nights) are also a reflection of the community and genuinely care about St. Louis. Every single personality volunteers to work the crowd at every single show.

**Right after the Pulse Nightclub shooting** in Orlando,

Tim McGraw had the hit and we decided we would do an entire week being “Humble And Kind.” We were asking people to open the door or call their mom. Listeners called in with examples. The mayor of St. Louis proclaimed it to be *Humble And Kind Week*. I have that proclamation hanging on our wall.

**This team works together** like none I have ever experienced and each and every one of them truly earned this nomination. All of us are humbled to work for the good guys at Hubbard.

**WHO'S IN CHARGE?**  
**WWKA/Orlando**  
*Country Station of the Year*

*As PD/midday host **Drew Bland** moved to KKWF/Seattle in March, OM **Stevie Demann** and MD/Morning show co-host **Ashley Stegbauer** checked in from Cox WWKA/Orlando.*

**SD: It's the wild wild west here!** The fact that we have four brands in the building that were nominated is so huge – K92.3, [News/Talk] WDBO, [Classic Rock] WMMO and [Urban AC] WCFB. And the work the staffs put in at each station has created something amazing. It is enormously exciting for K92.3. When Drew left, I told the staff they were a great machine, so tight knit and contributing every day. That was the environment Drew created and my philosophy has long been to make everyone a part of the process. We transitioned Obie from our Hip Hop station to mornings with Ashley in October. They are passionate and excited about the new dynamic. This staff gets more done with five people than some of our larger stations. It's pretty special. Part timer Melissa is filling in on middays. [Former morning show co-host] AJ is in afternoons and Slater is on at night, as well as producing the morning show and



**Show Time: WWKA's Country Strong concert drew 10,000 fans and raised \$250,000 for the Pulse nightclub shooting families and victims.**

voicetracking our Dayton station.

**AS:** The *K92.3 All Star Jam* had 11 artists on it this year with Jake Owen headlining and benefitting Ronald McDonald House of Central Florida. Over 22 years we've donated more than \$1 million for their three houses serving three different hospitals.

**SD:** We just started Obie and Ashley's Boatload of Toys. The idea was to take a boat around the community and fill it with toys. We ended up filling up three boats! It's a cool way to do a toy drive with the Country audience.

**AS:** Those toys filled the “Treasure Closets” at all three of those Ronald McDonald House locations for patients and their siblings, too. We also do a breast cancer survivor celebration every October with Florida Hospital Medical Group. We have an exclusive show and lunch at our performance studio.

**SD:** *The Country Strong Concert* we did

was just nine days after the Pulse Nightclub terror attack. There's no playbook that tells you how to reach out and engage the community for something that horrific. It was an amazing and special night that spoke to the power of K92.3 and this community. I have been here for 20 years and had no idea the Orlando community was so tight knit. We raised more than \$250,000 for the Pulse families and victims.

**CAC**

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## Going for Adds Now



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**- Captain Jack, Program Director/Owner  
Renegade Radio Nashville**

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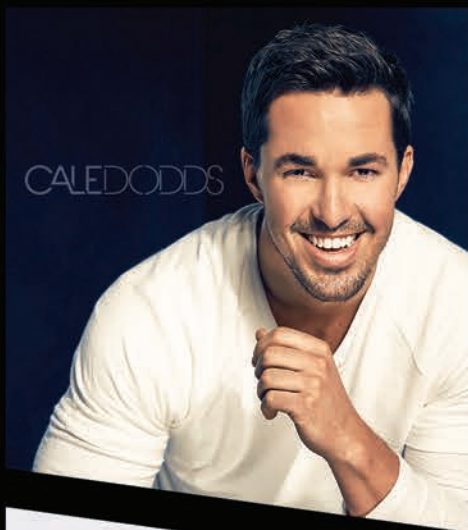
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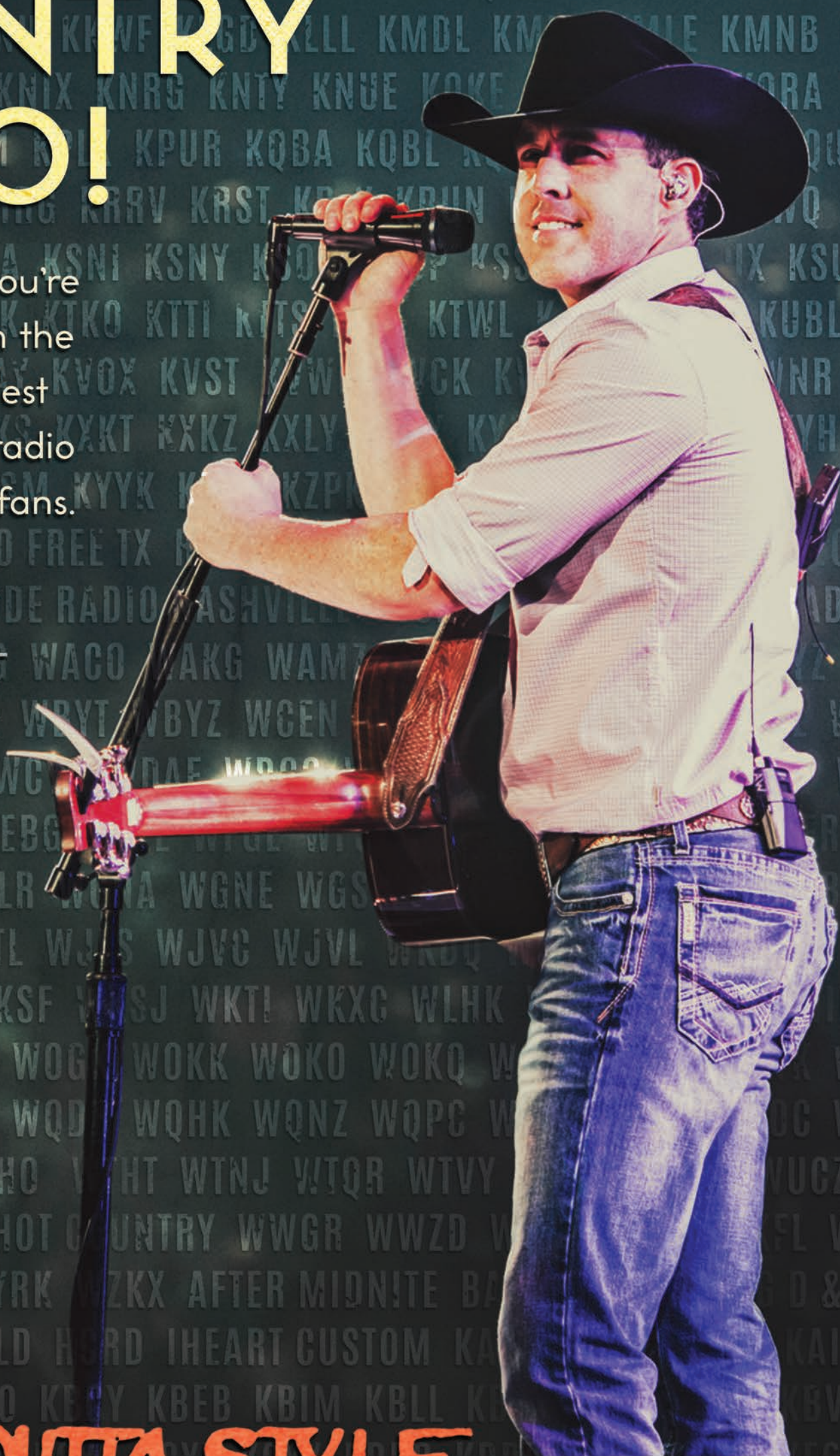
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RADIO & STREAMING



# THANK YOU COUNTRY RADIO!

“It doesn’t matter if you’re  
the largest station in the  
country or the smallest  
stick in the county, radio  
is the bridge to the fans.  
Thank you for your  
continued support!”

AARON WATSON



## OUTTA STYLE

GROWING WEEKLY, COAST TO COAST!

FROM THE CHART-TOPPING ALBUM VAQUERO.

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# POWER 31 DOUBLES DOWN

## Things That Go Together

Over Country Aircheck's first decade, the Power 31 readers' poll has ranked industry power brokers with the most influence over airplay decisions. Moving forward, it's high time to recognize the symbiotic relationship between radio and the music business with the addition of a Power 31 focused on those who develop careers and oversee the creation of music fueling that airplay. Airplay with no music is as untenable a position as music with no airplay. In a sense, they're two great things that go great together.

Speaking of things that go together, each decision maker was asked to spotlight a member of their organization who might not ordinarily make one of these types of lists – an unsung hero who represents the team effort it takes to get the job done. Their selections are below.

### AIRPLAY

#### 1 ROD PHILLIPS iHeartCountry RSVP/Brand Manager

"**Jackie Tighe** (Coord./Artist Content) joined the iHeartCountry team in early 2016 and has helped change the game with our efforts to partner on new and exciting ways to highlight artists. She immediately started establishing quality relationships with label teams, managers and artists, and has truly found a new home, both personally and professionally in Nashville."



#### 2 ROYCE RISSE UMG/Nashville SVP/Promotion "Chris Schuler (Dir./ Promotion & Radio Marketing) is absolutely critical to our success and probably doesn't get enough credit for all he does. He is the guy I go to with just about any request for analytics, stats, chart reports, or anything else, really. He always finds a way to get the info we need. At one

point, I asked him to delve into a particular syndicated show to find out their methodology. Later that week, his office looked like a crime scene investigation. Seriously. Cards on the ground, graphs and timelines on the white board. Brilliant mind. Team player. Passionate about his work. Attention to detail. All of these things and more."

### ARTISTS/MUSIC

#### 1 MIKE DUNGAN UMG/Nashville Chairman/CEO

"This is **Ellen Powers**. Ellen is Universal/Nashville's longest tenured employee, having recently celebrated her 30th anniversary. She is our VP of Recording/Marketing Administration. She pays all the bills and collects all the money. I have no idea how any of it gets done. She is my hero."



#### 2 JOHN ESPOSITO Warner Music Nashville Chairman/CEO

"**Torie Nugent** (Sr. Dir./Research & Analytics) is the most engaging data nerd I've ever met. I know she won't even mind that description, because she loves analyzing our business up and down and all around, and helping inform our decisions. And Torie loves music on a profoundly deep level. In the six years that she's been here, Torie has become one of our most invaluable resources. Knowledge is power

and Torie knows how to take vast amounts of information and distill it into a simple-to-understand playbook for every person in every department to execute their jobs better. Everyone in the building views her as a go-to person to help them do their jobs better. She's an owner!"



## AIRPLAY



### 3 CHARLIE COOK Cumulus VP/Country, Cumulus/Nashville OM, WSM-FM PD

"It's obvious that programming and promotion go hand in hand at radio stations, but I am fortunate to have someone in charge of promotions for the Nashville Country stations who I can lean on. I often say that if it were not for **Marie Miscia**, I wouldn't come in to work every day. She makes my job easier because I have confidence in her to stay on top of things. I depend on Marie to keep us focused in social media, promotions and public appearances."

### 4 KURT JOHNSON Townsquare SVP/Programming



Johnson



Pain

"In addition to wearing multiple hats in Abilene, TX, OM **Frank Pain** takes on projects and volunteers when he sees a need. Mostly, he's always looking for new ways to make his stations better. Apparently, he finds some pretty good ways, because he currently has three stations tied at No. 1. Who's ever even heard of that?! But that's Frank. He makes great things happen. So here's to The Painman!"

### 5 STEVE HODGES Sony/Nashville EVP/Promotion & Artist Development

"**Lauren Thomas** (National Director) embodies every spirit of our three promotion teams' vision, work ethic, respect for each other and passion for our artists and their music. She works tirelessly at making sure all the Ts are crossed and Is are dotted on everything from helping to guide our syndication plans, to overseeing the radio prep/content creation/delivery department, to assisting in developing single and album launch plans on multi-platform levels. She does all that and more while maintaining and growing her fabulous relationships at radio. If you're around her for five minutes and you're not affected by her positive personality and infectious laughter, then you must not be alive!"



### 6 KRISTEN WILLIAMS Warner Music Nashville SVP/Radio & Streaming

"**Tim Foisset** (VP/Streaming) is the yin to my Radio & Streaming yang. He paints the perfect picture of what I want my team to represent – smart, humble and confident but, most importantly, ferociously tenacious when it comes to our artists. I depend on Tim every single day and in a fast-paced and ever-evolving music industry, he is leading the charge in new music discovery by exposing our artists in new and meaningful ways. There is no one else I would want by my side."

### 7 TIM ROBERTS CBS Radio/Detroit VP/Music Programming WYCD PD

"One of our greatest assets at WYCD is Production Dir. **Terry Phillips**, who is an all-around genius in writing and producing, and is a great idea man as well. He's been my right hand in producing WYCD imaging, promos, promotions and more for over a decade. He even helps us do our jingle packages and just has a great ear and mind for great radio. In addition to WYCD duties, Terry also images sister station WOMC and helps on numerous other projects within the CBS/Detroit family, and even helps the CRS Agenda Committee."



Roberts

Phillips

## ARTISTS/MUSIC

### 3 SCOTT BORCHETTA Big Machine Label Group President/CEO

"From the very idea of starting Big Machine Records in 2005, **Andrew Kautz** (COO) has been a pillar in the foundation of BMLG. He's my get-it-done guy where no idea is too big or too crazy. On the legal side, he and Malcolm Mimms have built a solidarity that competes at the highest levels. Operationally, the Machine runs at full capacity, with a calm and a grace that has so much to do with AK. Thank you for allowing me to push him out front for some much-deserved recognition."



Borchetta

Kautz

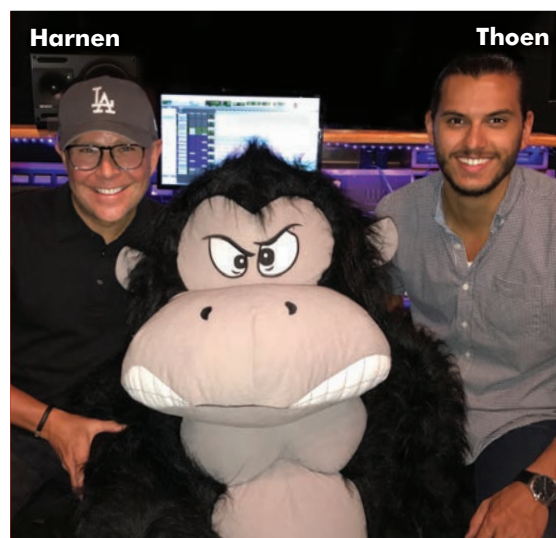


### 4 CINDY MABE UMG/Nashville President

"**Tony Grotticelli** (Dir./Digital Development & Analytics) started with me back when we were just Capitol/Nashville. His approach to digital marketing came from that of an independent contractor, and it took him a minute to understand how a major record label operated. Since that time, Tony has quietly become an expert at digital marketing, web analytics, CRM, digital advertising, fan clubs, D2C and business development. He's a team leader and a marketing-minded man. He's nothing short of my right hand. He is my hero and one of the important reasons UMG is as successful as it is."

### 5 RANDY GOODMAN Sony/Nashville Chairman/CEO

"Sr. Analyst/Insights & Reporting **Emilie Gilbert** technically works for Sony Distribution, but sits in our offices. She works locally for Caryl Healey, our VP/Sales. She's a young, smart woman in our core demo. Passionate P1 country user. Feeds us crucial analytics so that we can make the best decisions possible on behalf of our artists and business. Unsung outside our office, but highly valuable."



Harnen

Thoen

### 6 JIMMY HARNEN Big Machine Label Group EVP, BMLG Records President

"Exec. Asst. **Andrew Thoen**. Loyalty, dedication, hard working, a real 'get it' factor, attention to detail and respect are a must for an executive assistant. When you realize you have all of that while developing a true friendship with your EA, who also has great 'ears' – well, ain't I the lucky guy! Even if he is a Washington Redskins fan."

### 7 CORAN CAPSHAW Red Light Management Founder

"I've always said that the strength of our organization is built on our strong individuals, and **Megan Wilson** has been and continues to be an incredibly strong member of our team. She oversees global tour marketing efforts for our RLM artists working closely with our radio partners to develop integrative tour promotions. Her depth of touring experience combined with her close radio relationships has provided invaluable insight and advantage to our artists."







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## AIRPLAY



**8 CARSON JAMES**  
**BBR Music Group**  
**SVP/Promotion**  
"There is no one in our entire building who keeps me and every department focused and on deadline like our Dir./ Creative Services **Jen Joe**. The path she has chosen is not one of accolades, only the appreciation that, without her, not a damn thing would be delivered on time! She's our rock and, speaking for everyone in the company, I am indebted to her on behalf of the entire BBRMG family. Thank you, Jen. We'd be f-ed without you!"

**9 MIKE MOORE**  
**Entercom Dir./Country**  
**Programming Portland VP/**  
**Programming, KWJJ PD**  
"Alicia Shroyer started at our Portland radio stations as an intern a number of years ago. Over time she has worked her way up to serve as Dir./Mktg. & Promotions for 99-5 The Wolf and our sports station, 1080 The Fan. She works tirelessly at various concerts, fairs, festivals, sporting events and golf tournaments while raising a four-year-old little boy, and being a tremendous help to me."



**10 BOBBY YOUNG**  
**Capitol VP/Promotion**  
"While everyone at UMG runs full tilt all the time, **Donna Hughes** (Dir./Radio Marketing) runs in the red zone 24 hours a day, scheduling, booking and orchestrating satellite tours; writing, producing and clearing radio specials; securing, editing and distributing artist liners; booking and escorting artists for syndicated radio interviews; feeding radio press stories; and booking and writing trade advertising. Oh yeah, she also works closely with Chris Schuler (above)

and together they are instrumental in the setup of new singles and every album launch. She does this for our roster of more than 30 very busy artists and, amazingly, gets it all done by deadline and with a smile! I'm sure I'm forgetting something, but you get the idea."

**11 BECKY BRENNER**  
**Albright & O'Malley & Brenner**  
**Consulting Partner**  
"Mike O'Malley has been my mentor and partner for the past six years. He has been a major market PD in Baltimore, Washington, DC and New York, where he launched WYNY as a Country station for NBC in 1987, and programmed it for five years. We are both very passionate about the music and balance each other perfectly when it comes to finding hits and building winning radio stations."



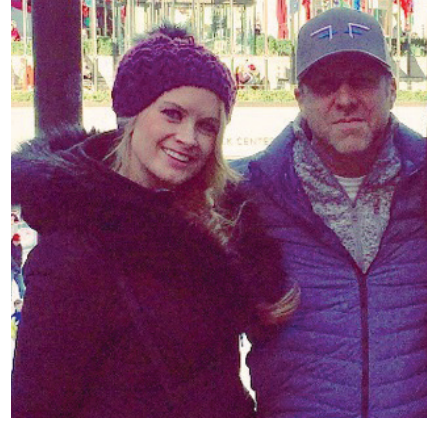
**12 JEFF GARRISON**  
**Cox Country Format Leader, Cox/San Antonio Dir./Operations**  
**KCY PD**  
"Programming Asst./morning & midday personality **Beth Chandler** demonstrates every day what it means to get it done! Not only is she an unbelievable talent on air, Beth's contribution to the Y100 team is exceptional, from her positive attitude to relentless execution. She is an example for the whole team!"



Garrison,  
Cole Swindell,  
Chandler

## ARTISTS/MUSIC

**8 JON LOBA**  
**BBR Music Group EVP**  
"There is a reason I wanted to hire **JoJemie Hahr** (VP/Mktg.) the first day I met her as a promotion assistant at WWKA/Orlando. You can teach the technical aspects of the business, but you can't teach passion and heart. JoJemie was bursting with it that first day and it has only grown every moment since. The good news for me is she has the creativity and organizational skills to match – a true triple threat. She was an important part of building BBR, as well as launching Valory, and will play a critical role as we write the next chapters of the BBR/BMG story. I tell her often I can't imagine doing this job without her and I mean every word of it."



**9 KERRI EDWARDS**  
**KP Entertainment Owner/President**  
"VP **Dustin Eichten** has always been a behind-the-scenes kind of employee. I consider him my follow-through guy. Once our team develops ideas and plans, he makes sure each one is seen through. He works countless hours on behalf of our entire roster and I couldn't image running my business without him."

**10 TROY TOMLINSON**  
**Sony/ATV Publishing**  
**President/CEO**  
"A 20-year veteran of our company, SVP/Creative **Terry Wakefield** is 'unsung' because his humility causes him to avoid drawing any attention to himself, no matter how great the accomplishment. He's willing to serve in any capacity that betters the team and takes seriously the mentoring of young songpluggers. He's our 'hero' because he fought cancer and won. He dealt with hearing damage due to the treatments and won. And he did all of this while still remaining the go-to guy to get a song recorded."



Tomlinson

Wakefield



**11 SCOTT HENDRICKS**  
**Warner Music Nashville**  
**EVP/A&R**  
"I don't think our department would function without **Stephanie Davenport** (Dir./A&R). She is a tireless partner who looks for ways to make us more competitive, more innovative, and all the while does it with grace, patience, and kindness to everyone. Her talents lie not only in finding talent and helping to create music, but also

in mentoring. For years she has commandeered our intern program, and selflessly gives of her time to educate new team members daily. She is building our team for tomorrow, and every day she goes above and beyond to make sure we are the best we can be."

**12 CLARENCE SPALDING**  
**Maverick**  
**Management**  
**President**  
"Head of Mktg./ Digital Strategy **Amanda Cates** has been with us for nine years now and has become an invaluable part of our team. She is highly intelligent, motivated, forward thinking and passionate; and she makes all of us better at our jobs."





"everything about it stops you in your tracks" - Whiskey Riff

NEW ALBUM: THIS RIDE - AVAILABLE OCTOBER 6TH

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## AIRPLAY

## ARTISTS/MUSIC

**18 GREGG SWEDBERG**  
**iHeartCountry Brand Coord.**  
**Western Great Lakes RSVP**  
**KEEY/Minneapolis OM/PD**

"McKaila Granning handles a lot of jobs – Digital PD for k102.com and social engagement for the station. She's also worked herself into a sidekick role with Chris Carr & Company and is becoming very popular with the audience. She's exactly the type of employee you'd want – someone not afraid to take on new challenges and who has her roots into many different departments here. As seen in the picture, she also wanted to make sure everybody on the team got credit, too."

**19 JOSH ESLER**  
**Arista VP/Promotion**

"There is simply no way to properly express how valuable Promotion Specialist **Olivia Laster** is to our team. She manages every detail for us, the artists, artist managers, as well as managing relationships within the Sony Music Nashville family. I've never met anyone in my life with better attention to detail. I can't count how many times a day I say, 'Olivia!' and she has the answer for whatever it is I need. She's truly an asset to our team and our company."

**20 JR SCHUMANN**  
**SiriusXM Sr. Dir./Country Programming**

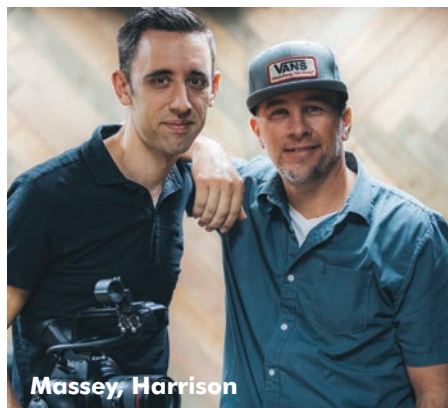
"SVP/GM, Music Programming **Steve Blatter** has a vision for our subscribers' desire and need for music discovery that allows me and the other programmers at SiriusXM to truly experience radio from the good old days. We break records and play music. We get to be on the cutting edge. Music meetings are exciting. Showcases mean something. That's not something you find everywhere. Having a leader who understands the importance of music discovery allows me to do what I do. I love radio all over again because of it."

**21 CHRIS PALMER**  
**Warner Music Nashville VP/Radio & Streaming**

"VP/Brand Management **Lisa Ray** is like 'one stop shopping' for anything to do with an artist. She and her staff deal with every single department in the building as well as all of the artist managers. If there is ever anything I need to present to our radio and streaming departments, she will either already have something that's perfect, or start the ball rolling with great suggestions and then execute the final product. Also, when we're doing a radio tour for a new artist I can let Lisa know what assets we'll be needing and she will work with all the appropriate departments to tie everything together and make sure it all stays on brand. Lisa and her department make me and my department look like rock stars ... er, country stars."

**22 GATOR HARRISON**  
**iHeartCountry Brand. Coord., iHeartMedia/Nashville SVP/Programming**

"iHeartCountry Dir./Digital Content **Zack Massey** is that guy. Innovative and creative with a broad knowledge of programming, sales and digital, combined with unparalleled character and passion for music. Technically he connects iHeartCountry to country music fans via national events, websites, editorials, original video content, photography and social media. But what he accomplishes pales in comparison to how he does it and who he is. The real honor is being able to call him friend as well as co-worker."

**23 BRUCE LOGAN**  
**KILT/Houston VP/Programming**

"I have the best APD/MD in the country. I'm not kidding. **Chris Huff** has major market PD experience and is the smartest person I know. He's a walking encyclopedia of music information and the best thing is, he makes me laugh. There are many at The Bull who make the team special, but every one of them would point to Chris Huff as our secret weapon."

**18 KENT EARLS**  
**UMPG/Nashville EVP/GM**

"**Tammy Helm** has been with the company for almost 24 years and is vital to our day-to-day operations. She handles Nashville administration in step with our global and North American administration team. Tammy's a very detailed and dedicated manager who also likes to play the banjo in her spare time. Our office wouldn't run as smoothly without her expertise."

**19 SHANE MCANALLY**  
**SmackSongs Owner Monument Records Co-President**

"**Robin Palmer** was listening to and pitching my songs when nobody else would. She saw something in me that even I couldn't see, and she has done that with an endless list of writers and artists who came long before me, and she continues with all of the current Smack roster. She is a talent nurturer and a lover of songwriters and songs who goes far beyond the call of publisher or plugger. Above all of this, she is a friend I am proud to have and a person I am better for knowing."

**20 ROD ESSIG**  
**CAA Agent Co-head Nashville**

"**Lucy Kozak** (Tour Marketing) has long played a pivotal role in developing innovative marketing strategies that keep CAA's clients at the forefront of the ever-changing music business."

**21 JASON OWEN**  
**Sandbox Entertainment President/CEO, Monument Records Co-President**

"Sandbox Head of Touring **Leslie Cohea** has this infectious energy that is contagious within Sandbox and with all our employees. She pushes us to think outside of the normal mindset of touring, marketing and routing. To name some recent examples of her incredible contribution to Sandbox, Leslie was instrumental in the creation and execution of Little Big Town's sold out 10-show residency at the Ryman, as well as coordinating the entire *Tim and Faith: Soul 2 Soul The World Tour* alongside our partners The Messina Group. She also picks the best places for lunch."

**22 JIM ED NORMAN**  
**Curb CEO**

"**Becky Judd** has worked as Mike Curb's Exec. Asst. for 23 years and carries the well-deserved title Vice President. Perpetually avoiding the limelight, she manages not only the day-to-day personal, office and administrative affairs for the Chairman and owner of an exceptionally successful independent entertainment company, but also orchestrates the many other daily challenges surrounding the Curb companies, operating in philanthropy and motorsports as well. She has also carefully and thoughtfully provided counsel and comfort to employees who needed either a helping hand, a sympathetic ear, shoulder on which to cry or sage advice. She does it all with a grace not often displayed in times of high energy and exacting demands. If you were out at the moment of eclipse totality and saw a bright light shining in the distance, it was Becky."

**23 KEN ROBOLD**  
**Sony/Nashville EVP/COO**

"In the two years since the newly announced executive structure at Sony, there has been a complete overhaul of the artist roster, with nearly 20 new signings, as well as the crucial renegotiation of Miranda Lambert's deal. While it all starts with the incredible artists our A&R department brings in, it takes an awful lot of deft negotiation and diligence to complete the deals. SVP/Legal & Business Affairs **Angie Magill** has been instrumental in our rebuilding and our ability to get more artists into the marketplace."



## AIRPLAY

## ARTISTS/MUSIC

**13 JOHN MARKS**  
**Spotify Global Head of Country Programming**

"**Xavier Jernigan** heads up our North American team. He faces his myriad of activities and constituents always with smarts, a smile, positivity and passion for music and artists. It's an honor and pleasure to work with him."

**14 JOHNNY CHIANG**  
**KKBQ/Houston Dir./Ops**

"Imaging Director **Maureen Cooper** or 'Mo,' as we call her, has been with me for around 10 years. She takes all the crazy ideas I have in my head and crafts them into beautiful reality on the air. I've always thought that running a radio station is very much like producing a

film. The PD is the director, and the Imaging Director is the director of photography. Mo's my partner."

**15 JOEL RAAB**  
**Joel Raab Associates Country Programming Consultant**

"**Barry Mardit**, a former major market programmer in his own right, is an integral part of my company. We've been close friends and business associates for many years. His attention to detail, creativity and understanding of great radio are invaluable to both me and our radio partners."

**16 BOBBY BONES**  
**Premiere's The Bobby Bones Show**

"My co-host, **Amy**, is the real star of the show. The luckiest thing to happen to my career was meeting her at a restaurant. She is all the things I'm not – human, likable and not insane. She's the real MVP and I wouldn't be whatever I am without her presence."

**17 GEORGE BRINER**  
**Valory GM**

"Coord. **Lauren Simon** is the one who supplies myself and the entire Valory team all the data that we need on a daily basis. She goes above and beyond what is required and she brings an extra creative sense that only helps in our goals to have new music heard every day."

**13 BEN VAUGHN**  
**Warner/Chappell President**

"**Matt Michiels** (Sr. Coord./A&R & Production) is a foundational element of what makes Warner/Chappell special. The company was introduced to Matt via Rusty Gaston in 2004. Around the office, Matt is truly a jack of all trades, contributing excellence in A&R, synch, catalog and production capabilities. We are blessed that Matt calls W/C home and is an important part of our team culture."

**14 DANN HUFF**  
**Producer**

"Ever since I started making records, **Justin Niebank** has been integral to 98% of what I've done. That's not to take away from other recording and overdub engineers I've used, but the way Justin mixes and tracks has shaped the way I think about music. Because he's a musician, we can speak in those terms and production doesn't devolve into a technical process. Music is always at the front. The famous Justin Niebank quote is, 'Do you like the singer or not?' Which always brings things back to the subject at hand."

**15 CRAIG WISEMAN**  
**Big Loud Owner/Managing Partner**

"Mine is **Kimberly Gleason**, Co-Dir./Publishing Operations. We had worked together and were friends when, 15 years ago, she came to wish me well at my new company and never left. We have been through it all and I cannot imagine a day of my career without Kimberly's quiet, steady, smart, fun, patient, loyal friendship and teamwork."

**16 BRIAN O'CONNELL**  
**Live Nation President/Country**

"**Brian Pittman** is the pure definition of the unsung hero. He not only drives my bus, but is my constant companion on the road. He makes what I do possible by getting us where we need to be safely, working insane hours in adverse conditions and, most of all, being the friend I need to keep me sane while on the road 46 weeks a year."

**17 ROB BECKHAM**  
**William Morris Endeavor Entertainment Partner**

"I could not do my job without **Greg Oswald**. Greg was my first boss when I moved to Nashville, and throughout my career he has been a mentor and a friend. I now have the privilege to run WME's Nashville office with him, and I still feel like I learn so much from him every day."



CRANK UP YOUR  
TAILGATE SEASON!

EVERYBODY HOP ON  
**THE BUS SONGS**

FEATURING "WACKY TOBACCY" & "SH\*\*\*Y GOLFER"!



AVAILABLE  
SEPTEMBER 8<sup>TH</sup>

**WATERLOO  
REVIVAL**  
"WHAT GUY  
WOULDN'T"  
IMPACTING NOW!



**EXPLOSIVE  
SPOTIFY  
NUMBERS!**





**AIRPLAY****24 JOHN SHOMBY**  
**Cumulus Nash Dir./Programming**  
**WKDF/Nashville PD**

"Without a doubt, Ty, Kelly & Chuck Board Op/production guy/engineer **Matt Bradshaw** is someone who gets it done, day in and day out, here at the Nash Campus. He gives off that 'inner intensity' that lets you know the show, technically, is in very capable hands. Equipment issues? He works on them until they are handled, and that could mean a 16 to 18-hour day. He's the first in the building every day at around 2:30am, always smiling. He's responsible for all of the timing on the network for the show. I've been here 18 months and have never had a situation where we had a timing issue. This guy rarely if ever gets the credit he deserves. It's about time!"



Matt John

**25 LEE ADAMS**  
**Broken Bow**  
**VP/National Promotion**

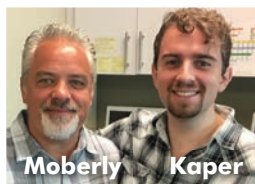
"West Coast Regional **Layna Bunt** and I have worked side by side for nearly 16 years. In that time, we've taken more than 25 singles to No. 1, from Jason Aldean, Dustin Lynch and Craig Morgan; and logged many hours on the road and phone together. I nicknamed Layna 'Add Queen' and know I can always count on her. Layna is a huge part of BBR's success."



Bunt, Dustin Lynch, Adams

**26 DAMON MOBERLY**  
**Mercury VP/National Promotion**

"**Nick Kaper** (Coord./Promotion) is invaluable to our operation. Whether it's planning showcases, managing budgets or handling weekend artist travel emergencies, we couldn't do it without Nick. One of the most impressive things about this young talent is that while handling all these things, he's also been able to forge relationships with radio programmers, artists and managers. Our jobs in promotion can be stressful, sometimes hectic, but always rewarding. Nick and the other coordinators at UMG don't get enough credit for all that they do to keep us moving forward."



Moberly Kaper

**27 NATE DEATON**  
**Empire KRTY/San Jose GM**

"The KRTY Music Committee has 16 to 18 members, the great majority of whom are listeners. These folks come to the station every Wednesday at 9:15 for an hour and listen to new music. They assist in the decisions of adds and conversions and provide invaluable insight into real listener opinion on new songs. These same folks



come to all the shows and artist showcases we have and are the very fabric of the radio station."

**28 MATTHEW HARGIS**  
**BMLG Records SVP/Promotion**

"**Leah Fischer** is our Coord./Promotion and also unofficially known as 'Head Of Air Traffic Control.' As all of our artists and the promotion team crisscross the country on a daily basis, Leah is the nexus of our communication system. The entire team leans on her day in and day out for support in every facet of promoting Florida Georgia Line, Brett Young, Drake White, Ryan Follese and Danielle Bradbery."

**29 DJ STOUT**  
**Beasley Format Captain/Country**  
**WSOC & WBCN/Charlotte OM/PD**

"Dir./Mktg. & Promotions **Chele Fassig** has been with me since 2002 and there is no doubt that WSOC would not be the station it is today without her. Chele is the hardest working person I have ever seen and she is completely committed to making sure our station is always represented with class and that we do exactly what we say we will do. It would take pages to completely describe her



importance to WSOC and to myself. Chele is my Siri, my Outlook, my ear to bend, my voice when I'm not there, my kick in the butt when needed and most of all, one of my best friends. I can say without a doubt that Chele makes me and everyone on my WSOC team better and makes all of our jobs easier."

**30 KATIE DEAN**  
**MCA VP/Promotion**

"At any label the promotion department and the A&R department have to work together to break artists. I've known [VP/A&R] **Stephanie Wright** for 12 years and she was the first person to turn me on to Kacey Musgraves, Sam Hunt and so many other artists and songs that have become staples in my music collection. She's also a great friend and confidant."



Wright

Dean

**31 KRIS LAMB**  
**Big Machine**  
**VP/Promotion**

"**Erik Powell** has been employed by Big Machine Records for 11 years and he is the *spirit* of our imprint. He's one of the most loyal, hard-working and dependable executives I've worked with and it's beyond a privilege to have him as our National Director. If anyone 'knows' Erik, they know they have a friend for life. There's no one else I'd rather have in my corner than E to The Power Of Rock."



Powell, James Marsh, Lamb

**ARTISTS/MUSIC****24 CLINT HIGHAM**  
**Morris Higham President**

"**Mike Betterton** and I have known each other since day one of college. He's now our GM and VP of our agency. He never looks for the spotlight but is the backbone of our company. He wears so many hats and knows how to pivot from a complex issue, going from problem to resolution. Keeping up with me is not easy, but he's good at keeping me on my leash when I go too far."



Betterton

Higham

**25 SETH ENGLAND**  
**Big Loud Partner**

"As we've built Big Loud, we've consistently looked for employees with *hustle*. We've always felt if we had to choose, choose *hustle* over anything. **Stacy Blythe-Waugh** (National Dir./Promotion) exemplifies the hustle and drive we are looking for. She has been with Big Loud for two years now and quarterbacked our radio promotion efforts. We've all seen new start-ups who can't put one on the board early, and they are forced to learn from their mistakes. Stacy told us she had a vision for a promotion team she wanted to build, and truly lead. She hasn't let us down. She took our first artist and first single straight to No. 1. That is all due to her dedication to this format, but also because she has as much hustle in one person that I've ever met."

**26 BRIAN WRIGHT**  
**UMG/Nashville Mgr./A&R**

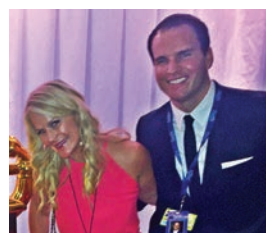
"**Sarah Marie Burke** (TITLE) is one of the most important members of our A&R team. I have been fortunate enough to work alongside her for 10 years. Her passion for artists, songwriters and love for country music is second to none."

**27 PETER STRICKLAND**  
**Warner Music Nashville**  
**Chief Marketing Officer**

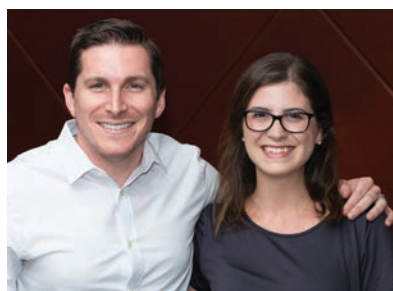
"**Clark Mims Tedesco** (Exec. Asst.) is a go-to for all things that anyone in the company needs, including me. Day to day, she challenges me to stay in line and on time. She has grown within and beyond her role and always takes on everything at full speed."

**28 ALLISON JONES**  
**BMLG SVP/A&R**

"**Jake Basden** (VP/Head of Publicity) works 24-7 to make sure all of our artists, staff, label and brand are positioned and amplified at the highest level. You won't find a bigger champion for our artists or a better person. He's always behind the scenes making sure everyone else looks good and receives accolades, while he should be the one on the top of these lists!"

**29 JOHN ZARLING**  
**Sony/Nashville EVP/**  
**Marketing & New Business**

"From my first day at Sony, **Chloe Doyle** (Coord./Marketing Administration) was ready to help. Her dedication to what she does is evident by the loose ends that always get followed through on – even if it is via text at 8pm at night. Being pulled in a million directions each day, she has been a beacon of consistency for me. Some may not



understand Chloe's contributions immediately because she isn't the loudest one in the room; she knows listening is just as important as speaking in order to control a situation."

**30 KOS WEAVER**  
**BMG EVP**

"**Daniel Lee** (VP/Creative) is one of the best all-around champions of creators I have ever worked with. Whether he is helping to develop an artist like Carly Pearce or working with songwriters like Busbee and Hillary Lindsey, his results-based approach has yielded an incredible amount of great music. Our ever-growing success is due to having buildings full of people who are intent on getting everything right on behalf of the writers and artists we represent. You can't get things right if you don't respect both the creative and business side of music. Daniel is equally adept at both, making him a great example of everything we strive for."



Weaver

Lee

**31 BETH LAIRD**  
**Creative Nation Music Co-Owner/CEO**

"**Kelsey Granda** has been with us longer than any employee and was our first intern when we opened the doors. She is Sr. Dir./Creative Administration, but we call her the detail expert. Songwriters and creative executives aren't always the most organized, so she is our secret weapon. She keeps our publishing catalog organized, oversees demo billing, production coordination, parties, gifts, writer calendars, Dropbox, spreadsheets, travel, expenses and knows how to communicate with and motivate creatives. I can't say enough wonderful things about her and everyone at my company would say the same!"



Laird

Granda



PASSION IS OUR WHY  
CREATIVITY IS OUR ETHOS  
GREAT A&R IS OUR “POWER”



THE EXECUTIVE STAFF AND SONY MUSIC NASHVILLE  
WANT TO THANK JIM CATINO FOR HIS PASSION, CREATIVITY & POWER.

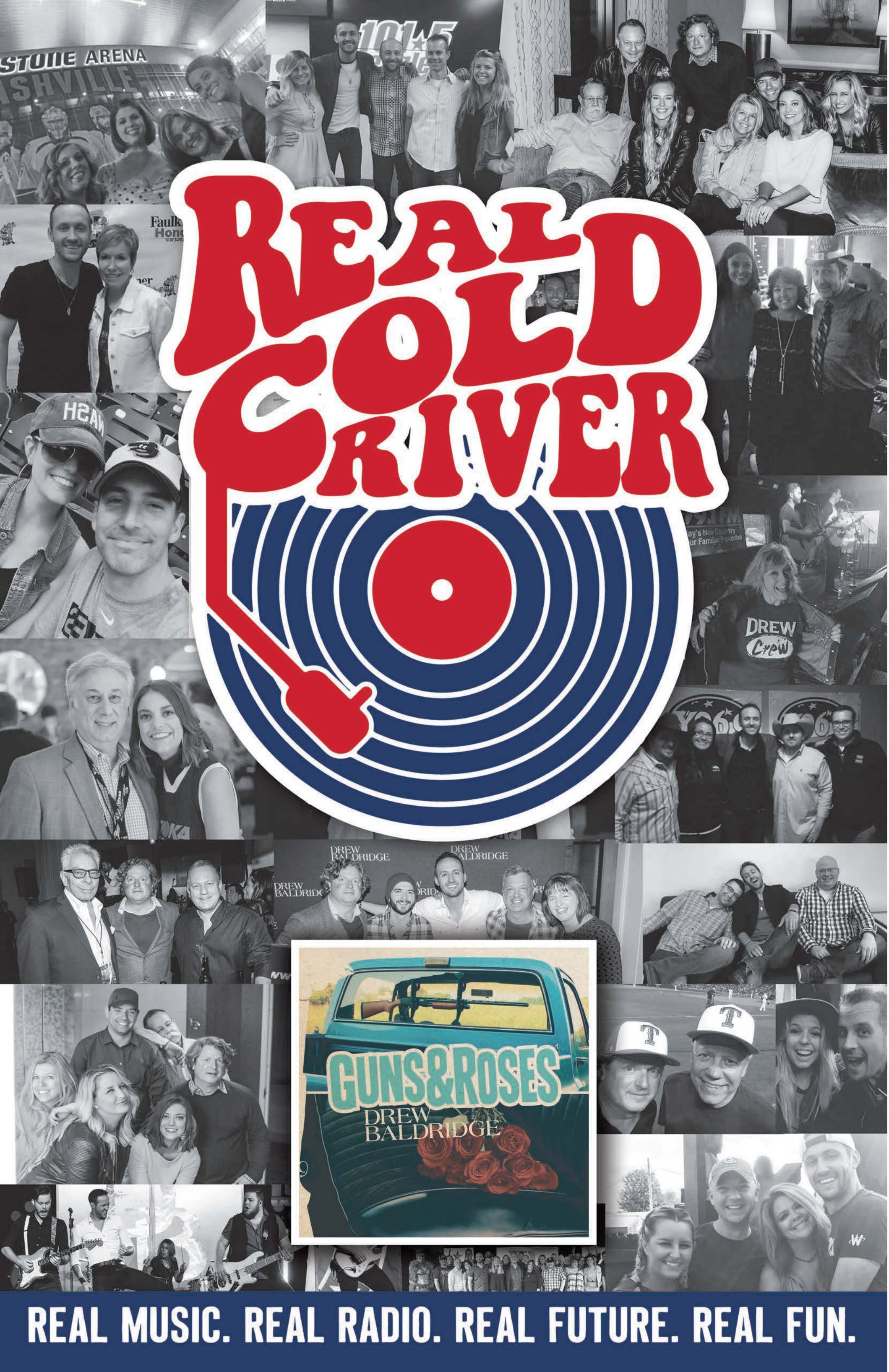


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# REAL COLD COUNTRY



REAL MUSIC. REAL RADIO. REAL FUTURE. REAL FUN.



# IN THE Q

Here's a line on what's falling into place for label and promotion teams in the fourth quarter.

## 2017 FOURTH QUARTER MUSIC PREVIEW

### ARISTA

**LanCo** are telling the "Greatest Love Story" as that single climbs the charts, as well as "You Broke Up With Me" from **Walker Hayes**, and **Brad Paisley's** "Last Time For Everything." "**Tim McGraw** and **Faith Hill** return to the charts with their powerful single 'Rest Of Our Life,'" says VP/Promotion **Josh Easler**. Expect a new album from McGraw and Hill in November. "Also coming this fall will be new music from **Cam** as we prepare for her much-anticipated sophomore album," adds Easler.



BMLGR's  
Danielle Bradbery

ible momentum propelled by the successes of new artists **Midland** and **Carly Pearce**." Midland's debut album *On The Rocks* is out Sept. 22 and features the gold single "Drinkin' Problem" and their latest release "Make A Little." Lamb reports Pearce's debut single "Every Little Thing" continues to climb inside the top 10, "a breakthrough for a solo female artist – and only one of four active on the chart." Pearce's debut album is out Oct. 13. "Big Machine Records is also home to the most awarded band in country music, **Rascal Flatts**," says Lamb. "Yours If You Want It" marked the first back-to-back No. 1 singles from the band since 2011." The group's latest single is the title track of *Back To Us*. The label's Q4 also includes music from **The Cadillac Three** from their new album *Legacy*, the debut single from **Lauren Jenkins**, "Give Up The Ghost," and new music from **Tucker Beathard**.

### BLACK RIVER

SVP/Radio Promotion **Mike Wilson** says while new artist **Jacob Davis** continues to make strides with radio, they'll also be dropping **Kelsea Ballerini's** second album *Unapologetically* Nov. 3 while promoting its first single "Legends."

### BMLG RECORDS

"Like I Loved You," **Brett Young's** follow-up to two No. 1s, continues to climb the charts. Additionally, Young's debut self-titled album was RIAA-certified gold, his debut single "Sleep Without You" was certified platinum, and second single "In Case You Didn't Know" was certified double platinum. **Florida Georgia Line's** "Smooth" arrives after 13 consecutive chart toppers. Their current headlining tour bearing the same name continues to sell out nationwide including three stadium dates – Boston's Fenway, Chicago's Wrigley, and Minneapolis' Target Field. VPP **Matthew Hargis** reports **Danielle Bradbery** is back with a new single "Sway" and a Dec. 1 release date for her sophomore album *I Don't Believe We've Met*.

### BROKEN BOW

"Small Town Boy" **Dustin Lynch** is headed for his fifth chart-topper and has huge fourth quarter plans with the *Ride Or Die Tour* and his third studio album *Current Mood*," says VP/Natl. Promo **Lee Adams**. While **Jason Aldean's** "They Don't Know" climbs high, Aldean counts 19 No. 1 singles to his name and is finishing his eighth studio album. Newly signed **Chase Rice's** current single is "Three Chords & The Truth" from his upcoming album *Lambs and Lions* (also the name of his headlining tour).

### CAPITOL

"We released a new **Luke Bryan** single Aug. 23, 'Light It Up,'" says VP/Promo **Bobby Young**. "While there is still a ton of Luke's music on radio, everyone has missed seeing his name on the charts this summer. He's been busy writing and recording the new project and touring, as well as planning another *Farm Tour* this fall. We're hoping we can get the new album out before the end of the year." **Lady Antebellum's** "Heart Break" will be released September 11, the follow-up to the band's most recent hit, "You Look Good." Both are from the *Heart Break* album, which debuted at No. 1 earlier this year after their brief hiatus. "We're so glad to have them back writing, making records, touring and on the radio!" says Young. While **Keith Urban** works on his next album, look for a new single

soon. Urban's *Ripcord* has already notched five chart toppers. The label hopes **Jon Pardi's** top 10 "Heartache On The Dance Floor" will become his third No. 1 from his gold album *California Sunrise*. Pardi's been on the road all year with **Dierks Bentley**, Bryan and also headlining his own tour. Other ascending singles include Bentley's "What The Hell Did I Say" from his gold album *Black*. Bentley's prepping for studio time in early 2018. **Little Big Town** followed the multi-platinum No. 1 "Better Man" with "When Someone Stops Loving You," also from *The Breaker*. **Darius Rucker's** "For The First Time" is on the radio now and is the second single and title cut of his new album, set for release Oct. 20. "**Carrie Underwood** is working on her first Capitol Nashville album," adds Young. "We're planning on a first quarter release. She was featured this year on Keith Urban's 'The Fighter.' It was an honor to welcome her to the family with her first Capitol/Nashville No. 1."

### COLD RIVER

Flagship artist **Drew Baldridge's** new single is "Guns & Roses," the lead cut from his forthcoming album. "The team at CRR has taken to calling him 'a whole new Drew,'" says SVP/**John Ettinger**. Newcomer **Maggie Baugh** has been writing and recording in preparation for her launch next year. Her song "Catch Me If You Can" has been given placement on platforms including CMT, Radio Disney and various Spotify playlists.



Cold River's  
Maggie  
Baugh

### AVERAGE JOES

"We have an exciting fourth quarter coming with the release of **Montgomery Gentry's** long-awaited new single scheduled for late September," says Promotion/Marketing Mgr. **Wix Wichmann**. "They are in the studio finishing their new album, which will be released in early February." In addition, **Sarah Ross** has been working on her new EP, set for release early next year. Newcomer **Devin Burris** will debut next spring.

### BIG BIG

**Eric Chesser's** single "Good Times & Summer Days" is also the name of his current tour. "Many fans are becoming believers in Eric's unique and special country personality, especially when at the meet and greets at the festivals, county and state fairs," says Pres. **Tom Carey**. "Silly and funny, the fans love **Johnny Rogers**, and his big 'Stetson Hat,'" says Carey of Rogers' new single, out Oct. 30. This fall finds Rogers on radio tour throughout Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico. Carey reveals Big Big will open an office outside of London next spring. "Our goal is to bring a bigger presence to England, as many of the younger fans truly love country music," he says. "As a native of England and a citizen of the USA, I am most excited."

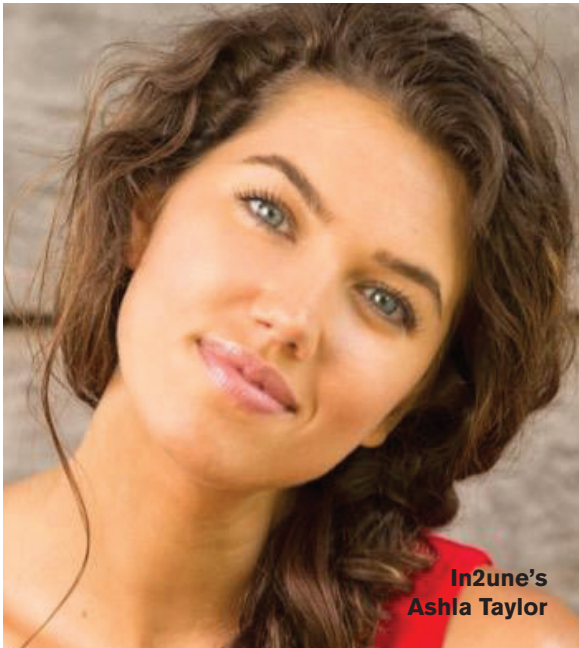
### BIG MACHINE

"The state of the Machine is strong!" says VP/Promotion **Kris Lamb**. "Thanks to our partnership with radio, we're entering the fourth quarter with incred-



**COLUMBIA**

"#ColumbiaRising2017 is in full swing!" says SVPP **Shane Allen**. **Kenny Chesney's** "All The Pretty Girls," **Maren Morris'** "I Could Use A Love Song" and **Luke Combs'** "When It Rains It Pours" will all be pushing for peak airplay. **Tyler Farr's** "I Should Go To Church Sometime" and **Levon's** "Ms. Marianne" will continue their chart ascents. **Old Crow Medicine Show's** *50 Years of Blonde On Blonde The Concert* is out on DVD/Blu-Ray Sept. 15, while **Dolly Parton's** children's album on Dolly/RCA, *I Believe In You*, is out Sept. 29. Allen says Chesney's *No Shoes Nation: 10 Years of Concert Hits* drops just in time for trick or meet n' greeting on Oct. 27. "Speak with your friendly Columbia rep about other stuff we have Maren-ating," he adds.



In2une's  
Ashla Taylor

**CURB**

"Hooked" is **Dylan Scott's** follow-up to his first No. 1, "My Girl." Shipping in early Sept. and scheduled to impact radio Sept. 25 is the debut from **Jackson Michelson**, "Rollin'." "Jackson has been winning over crowds on the west coast for several years," says VP/Promo **Ryan Dokke**. "We have felt some incredible enthusiasm about him during his radio tour. Critics love his magnetic personality and hooky melodies." Also this fall, look for **Jerrold Niemann's** *This Ride* Oct. 6 and **Lee Brice's** self-titled album Nov. 3. "Curb is extremely excited to put out both of these projects from two incredible artists," says Dokke.

**EMI NASHVILLE**

New artist and Jackson, TN native **Brandon Lay** offers "Speakers, Bleachers and Preachers," his first single. Lay wrote or co-wrote every song on his debut album. "Whether you are getting ready for a game or remembering the days you played, I think we can all agree that the majority of our life lessons have come from a speaker, bleacher or preacher," says VP/Promotion **Jimmy Rector**. "With a uniquely recognizable voice and a stage presence that ranks with some of our format's top performers, Brandon is quickly becoming a recognized force in our format." Reigning CMA and ACM Duo Of The Year **Brothers Osborne**

are marching toward the top with "It Ain't My Fault" and enjoying the success of current album *Pawn Shop*, while putting the finishing touches on a new album. **Eric Church** continues to climb with his current single, "Round Here Buzz." "With research, sales and streams getting stronger every week, this one is going to be 'round here' for a while," says Rector. "Catch Eric this fall on the road as we continue the 'Mr. Misunderstood' saga." Multi-platinum **Gary Allan's** current single "Mess Me Up" is from a new album on the horizon. "This proven hit maker continues to establish himself as one of the coolest artists in our format," adds Rector. "Last but not least, **Eric Paslay** is in the studio working on new music that we hope to have to you soon."

**IN2UNE/WEST END**

**Fiona Culley's** single "Act Like A Lady" will still be moving along through the end of 2017. **Matt Gary** will be releasing his EP and next single this fall. Additionally, two new female artists make their debut, including **Kaylee Rutland**, whose first single debuts in 2018. "And captivating audiences with her contagious confidence and electrifying personality onstage and off, Nashville singer/songwriter **Ashla Taylor** is equal parts southern belle and honky tonk angel," says VP/Promo./Mgt. **Jamice Jennings**.

**MCA**

**Sam Hunt** will follow his record-breaking "Body Like A Back Road" with a new single in Q4. **Kip Moore** releases *Slowheart* Sept. 8 and a second single follows "More Girls Like You" late in the quarter. On the heels of "Hometown Girl," **Josh Turner** is back with a tempo song directed at his core with "All About You." VPP **Katie Dean** reports there's more where **Jordan Davis'** "Singles You Up" comes from. "We are planning to release more music into the marketplace so radio and consumers can get even more of a sense of how deep this project is," she says. "Early metrics point to Jordan having a huge hit and we have a stable of solid singles to follow."

**MERCURY**

Fourth quarter brings new music from **Shania Twain** as she will be "Swingin' With My Eyes Closed" in mid-September, launching her album *Now* Sept. 29 and embarking on a 2018 tour. Look for **Tyminski's** *Southern Gothic* Oct. 20. The album is a critically acclaimed collection of original work by Union Station's **Dan Tyminski** and producer **Jesse Frasure**. **Easton Corbin's** "A Girl Like You" will continue climbing the charts as he readies a new album. **Chris Stapleton's** sold-out *American Road Show* tour is crossing the country and the current single "Broken Halos" is proving to be a favorite. As *From A Room Vol. 1* continues to sit atop the country albums chart, look for *From A Room Vol. 2* in December. "We expect to give radio a big hit that will mirror Stapleton's success as a touring artist and sales giant," says VPP **Damon Moberly**. **Lauren Alaina's** newest single "Doin' Fine" climbs the charts as fall approaches. Alaina's toured with country's biggest stars including Luke Bryan, Rascal Flatts, Keith Urban and Darius Rucker. "She continues to blow away fans, listeners and programmers alike as she invests with radio at their benchmark events," says

Moberly. "There's a bright future for this full-package female powerhouse."

**NASH ICON**

GM **Jim Weatherson** says **Reba McEntire** will re-release last year's holiday album *My Kind Of Christmas* Oct. 13, including bonus songs with Vince Gill and Amy Grant, Darius Rucker, and Lauren Daigle.

**NINE NORTH RECORDS LABEL GROUP**

Belmont University singer/songwriter **Linde La-Chance** makes her debut with "Where We'd Be." East Tennessean **Pebo Wilson** will be playing his flaming guitar ("For real, y'all," says Pres. **Larry Pareigis**) all over the nation on radio tour behind his single "Barn Burns Down," co-written by his cousin, hit songwriter Chris Wallin. Australian country star **Micks'** second single is "Chasing Forever." "We'll be radio touring **Clark Hill** behind his debut single 'Perfect To Me,'" says Pareigis. "Hope you have a most excellent fall book, Country radio – thanks for an amazing 10 years together (and counting)!"

**PEARL**

The last few months of the year will find the CMA Entertainer of the Year **Garth Brooks** wrapping up the North American leg of his *World Tour*, including the inaugural concert at the Mercedes Benz Stadium in Atlanta Oct. 12. "Garth sold 73,000 tickets in just 67 minutes for that show," reports VP/Promo **Andy Elliott**. "While Garth is approaching his six-millionth ticket sold on this tour, the Pearl Records staff will also continue to watch his current single 'Ask Me How I Know' climb the chart."

**RCA**

As **Old Dominion's** "No Such Thing As A Broken Heart" from their new album *Happy Endings* moves up and **Jake Owen's** "Good Company" keeps the summertime vibes alive, SVP/Promo **Dennis Reese** says, "The Kane train is rolling. We are proud to have one of this year's biggest breakthrough stories with 'What Ifs' w/ Lauren Alaina. **Kane Brown** has it all – sales, streaming, consumption, social engagement and passion." Look for a deluxe version of Brown's self-titled debut featuring four new tracks Oct. 6. **Chris Young** is on the road with Jason Aldean and Brown, while "Losing Sleep" (the title cut of his Oct. 20 album) strives to become his 10th No. 1. **Miranda Lambert's** *Weight Of These Wings* was recently certified platinum. "She continues to be truly one of the biggest superstars in the format and we thank all our supporters so far," says Reese. "And **Ryan Hurd** has written and toured with some of the biggest artists. Now he's ready for everyone to find 'Love In A Bar' and become the next star on RCA/Nashville."

**REBEL ENGINE**

**Lucas Hoge** will release his holiday album *Christmas Is Here* this fall, with classics as well as his originals. Look for him on *The Dirty South Tour*, performing pop-up shows at southern locations including the National Corvette Museum and Sun Studios. **Stephanie Quayle** continues on *The Winnebago Tour*, a cross-country road trip from the Empire State to the Golden Gate. "She is living the lyrics of her single 'Winnebago' on the

MCA's  
Jordan Davis





# Big & Rich

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## CALIFORNIA

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Today Show **9/18**

Fox & Friends **9/19**

Kimmel **10/2**





RCA's  
Ryan Hurd

open road with impressive partners Winnebago, KOA (Kampgrounds of America), Polaroid, The RV Loft and Summerfield Farms," says Pres./CEO **Laura Lynn**.

### RED BOW

Says VP/Promo **Shelley Hargis Gaines**, "Chase Bryant just delivered the contagious ear worm 'Hell If I Know' to radio. He is currently on Brad Paisley's *Weekend Warrior Tour* and will be releasing his debut album in late 2017." **Joe Nichols** recently released new single "Never Gets Old," the title of his second album for the label. Nichols' new project also includes his rendition of Sir Mix A Lot's "Baby Got Back." The video featuring Nichols and Mix garnered nearly five million views in 30 hours. The label's latest signee is **Kid Rock**. "He's currently working on his upcoming project, and a new single will be coming very soon," promises Gaines.

### REDNECK RECORDS

**Bob Mitchell** reports **Gretchen Wilson** is working her new single "Summertime Town" from her recent album, which came out in June.

### REVIVER/1608

The label is all-in on **Michael Tyler**'s "They Can't See." "We're convinced that research/Shazam/sales stories prove we have been right!" says SVP/Promo **Bob Reeves**. "This is a hit single from a burgeoning star of the format. We know it's a rare sight these days, but this is artist development before your very eyes." Look for **LoCash**'s debut single from their next

album this fall, with the album in 2018. **BlackJack Billy** have been in the studio this summer, prepping a new project slated for a fourth quarter release. "Also shipping in Q4 on *Reviver* – a collaboration between one of Nashville's greatest all-time songwriters with one of the format's biggest stars," says Reeves. "**David Lee Murphy**'s latest project is produced by Kenny Chesney and Buddy Cannon.

### SHOW DOG

VP/Promo **Rick Moxley** reports the label will continue offering songs from **Toby Keith**'s new album *The Bus Songs*, while working **Waterloo Revival**'s "What Guy Wouldn't," with additional music to come.

### STAR FARM

Pres. **Michael Powers** says they'll continue to work music from Rebel Engine's Lucas Hoge and Stephanie Quayle, and SSM Nashville's **Alexandra Demetree**'s "Outta my Head." Dreamlined's **Davisson Brothers Band** returns to Country radio with a new single and album, while Average Joe's **Colt Ford** has a new single "Young Americans" featuring Charles and Josh Kelley. Lastly, Red Star Label Group's **Denny Strickland** hits radio with "We Don't Sleep."

### STONEY CREEK

"**Lindsay Ell**'s collaboration with producer Kristian Bush has given us a new hit single, 'Waiting On You,' and a No. 1 debut album, *The Project*," says VP/Promo **Chris Loss**. "**Parmalee** upped their game with their new album *27861* and current single 'Sunday Morning.' And after touring with Luke Bryan throughout 2017, **Adam Craig** is poised to have a breakout hit with 'Just A Phase.'"

### TRIPLE TIGERS

"All of us at Triple Tigers Records are so proud of our debut artist **Russell Dickerson** and his first single, 'Yours,'" says SVP/Promo **Kevin Herring**. "It has already achieved gold status with 60 million streams and well over 200,000 digital downloads." Find Dickerson on the road with Florida Georgia Line; look for his debut album Oct. 13. The label's newest signee, **Scotty McCreery**, charted with "Five More Minutes" before his TTR deal, "which is a testament to a great song being sung by a true hit artist," says Herring. "We are excited to bring this talent to the marketplace. Expect an album from Scotty in early 2018."

### VALORY

**Thomas Rhett**'s "Unforgettable" – the second single from his Sept. 8 *Life Changes* – continues to prove its title. Look for him on the *Home Team Tour* this fall. "**Brantley Gilbert**'s 'The Ones That Like Me' is off to a great start and we could not be prouder of his global campaign with Apple Music," says SVPP **George Briner**. Find Gilbert on *The Devil Don't Sleep* tour through the fall, and eagerly awaiting the arrival of his first child in November. Emmy-nominated **Justin Moore** is coming off the second No. 1, "Somebody Else Will," from his current album *Kinda Don't Care*. Moore's third single is the title cut. **Delta Rae** are on *A Long and Happy Life Tour* and their new single is "No Peace

In Quiet." The group's social media campaign *Top Ten Tuesdays* covers current Top 10 songs they admire. "Be sure to catch Delta Rae when they come to your city – it is an incredible live experience," says Briner.

### WAR

"**Zac Brown Band**'s second *Welcome Home* single 'Roots' is proving to be the mainstream country sound the format has been missing," says Natl. Dir./Radio & Streaming **Tom Martens**, "with over six million on-demand streams on the single and 50 million on the album." ZBB are on the road this fall on their *Welcome Home Tour*. **Chris Janson**'s summer song "Fix A Drink" continues into the fall. It's his first single from *Everybody*, out Sept. 22. Janson is currently on tour with Sam Hunt and Maren Morris. **Dan + Shay** recently

WEA's  
Morgan Evans

celebrated the duo's third consecutive No. 1. "Their latest, 'Road Trippin',' continues to make country fans crave those long summer nights as it ascends the chart," says Martens. "These guys have done nothing but deliver No. 1 records lately and they are quickly establishing themselves as a core artist for the format."

### WEA

**Michael Ray** follows up his two chart-topping singles from his debut album with "Get To You." Ray will take **Devin Dawson** out on the road this fall. Dawson's "All On Me" ascends as he winds down summer dates with Tim McGraw and Faith Hill. "Devin is shaping up to be the artist development story of the year," says Natl. Dir./Radio & Streaming **Adrian Michaels**. "His brand of country is resonating with the fans in an extreme way." **High Valley** will headline a national SiriusXM tour to support their single "She's With Me." "Team WEA is incredibly excited to introduce **Morgan Evans** and his American debut single, 'Kiss Somebody,' this fall with an Oct. 16 radio impact date," says SVP/Radio & Streaming **Kristen Williams**. "The CMA Global Artist of the Year is no stranger to the stage and has seven No. 1 singles in Australia as well as five CMC Awards."

### WHEELHOUSE

"**Granger Smith** – who has 250 million total social media views – continues with the No. 1 most-added 'Happens Like That,' the first single from his upcoming sophomore album, out later this fall," says VP/Promo **Teddi Bonadies**. New duo **Walker McGuire**, whose debut single "Til Tomorrow" has 20.2 million streams, will release their debut album in Q1 2018. **Runaway June**'s second single "Wild West" hits in September. They're the first female trio to have a top 25 since the Dixie Chicks and are on tour with Jon Pardi and Midland this fall. Look for the military-praising "Soldier" from **Trace Adkins**' *Something's Going On* in November.

### WMN

**Brett Eldredge**'s self-titled album, co-written and co-produced by Eldredge, features the title cut and its follow-up "The Long Way," which he describes as "a look into what I want to find in love." Look for him on the road on Luke Bryan's *Huntin', Fishin', And Lovin' Every Day Tour*. **Cole Swindell** celebrated his seventh consecutive No. 1 with "Flatliner" in August. "He remains the only artist in Mediabase monitored airplay history to have every single released top the chart," says Natl. Dir./Radio & Streaming **Katie Bright**. "Stay Downtown" is the fourth single from the gold *You Should Be Here*. Swindell wraps 2017 on Dierks Bentley's *What The Hell Tour* and plans a new album and headlining tour in 2018. Following her No. 1 debut album *WildHorse*, **RaeLynn** continues with single "Lonely Call" and her *RaVe Tour* through the end of the year. Look for "Vinyl" from **William Michael Morgan** this October. "Vinyl" has always been radio's favorite single on the album and we're listening," says VP/Radio & Streaming **Chris Palmer**. "And finally, look for new music from superstar **Blake Shelton** soon!"

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# KURT JOHNSON

## Elevating The Experience

**W**hile still in high school, Kurt Johnson began working at an AM Country daytimer in his Wisconsin farming community. The station was located on the town square. Today, he's SVP/Programming for Townsquare, a company with more than 300 radio stations at the center of a multiplatform strategy focused on small and mid-sized markets. The poetic irony isn't lost on Johnson, whose career took him to major markets (New York, Chicago, Dallas), top companies (Clear Channel, CBS Radio, RKO) and several formats. His six years at Townsquare have in some ways brought him home as he's become embedded in the Country format as never before. Recently named Board President for Country Radio Broadcasters, Johnson also serves as Secretary/Treasurer for the CMA.

**CA:** Looking back over your career, it's really an interesting thumbnail of the evolution of radio – RKO, Viacom, AM/FM, CBS and now Townsquare. When you look back and even forward, what's your view of this journey radio has been on over these decades?

**KJ:** Yes, I've traveled that road, starting at a small AM and now I'm at Townsquare, where we're on multiple platforms. Radio originally started as serials and comedy, then evolved into music; technology grew from AM to FM and now you have digital

started in the business – telling stories on the radio with songs and with our personalities.

**How has Townsquare evolved during your tenure?**

We started with a multi-platform strategy and that hasn't changed. Wherever the audience is consuming content on a device, we want to be there. The core of our business is broadcasting on 312 stations in 66 markets, with 63 of them Country. Our core strategies have our programmers creating fantastic music experiences, our DJs creating fantastic content and then we move that across devices listeners use. We're rolling out individual apps to more and more stations every week, offering a deeper experience and interaction.

**How has your job evolved?**

Well, we've gotten bigger since I started. I think we had 143 stations then, so my to-do list is longer, but I've always said, "More radio, more better." We have fantastic programmers who do the daily work of making great content. We have some of the best DJs in the business. I couldn't do what I do without them. My job is to help get them what they need to get their job done, to help sort through any issues that come up and to help create new opportunities. A good part of my week is the brainstorming and either helping a market create a great new promotion or contest, or helping a group of stations use the power of their group to reach an audience in a much bigger way. I love that part.

The company started in 2010, I started in 2011, and even in that time, technology has raced ahead. The advancement of social media has been tremendous, and we have pivoted to meet that audience where they are. If anything has changed in the six years, it's keeping abreast of where the audience is moving, and what they're thinking of doing. We are always working to keep our finger on the pulse of the tastes and needs of the audience.

**I have a sense of a very nomadic existence you might lead. How does your day, week or month play out, and how much is proactive versus reactive?**

It changes week to week, and I like that about it. For 24 years, I was a PD, OM or DJ. You go to an office, work there every day and people come to you with issues, challenges and opportunities. This job has a lot of variety, change of scenery and unexpected challenges. I once said this job is 50% executive, 50% help desk and 50% first responder. It's 150%. But whenever you endeavor to create entertainment, you signed up for unpredictability. If you can take that unpredictability and turn it into a profitable venture, then you've done it.

Yes, there's a lot of travel. I get out to see the stations as much as much as I can, but during the ratings books I try to stay out of their way and let



## THE INTERVIEW

devices and streaming delivering audio. We're constantly finding better ways to do things – consuming music just keeps getting better. And I gravitate toward the new. I buy every new tech device and have a closet filled with old radios, cassette players, CD players, Zunes, iPads. And what's fascinating with all the evolution is radio still reaches 93% of consumers every week, and has for decades. At its core, radio delivers what it always has – free entertainment that's easy to find and easy to use. Those basics don't change. I don't want to jump ahead on your questions, but radio is set apart in its local, original content offerings.

**That's the secret sauce?**

Yeah. No other medium does that as well as radio. That's what Townsquare still does in its small and mid-size markets. Radio really matters in those towns. Our DJs are centers of the community. As long as that continues, radio will be strong.

**You mentioned having a gravitational pull toward the new. Is that the trait that has allowed you to grow with and through decades of upheaval in the business?**

Everybody's got their thing, and for me it's seeing people moved by an experience. That's what this job is about. If a great music set plays on one of our Country stations and really hits the listener on their drive home. Or if it's an amphitheater where the artist gets the crowd to their feet, losing their minds ... that's the motivation for me. I'm watching the audience as much or more than the artist. All of us in the business play a part in that, and the new and better ways of reaching people just give us more ways to create that experience.

I love technology. I love identifying new strains of music or channels to deliver it, but really it's about the emotional experience. We're reaching millions every week at Townsquare, making their lives better every day. Sometimes, we do that in big ways, but usually we're elevating their lives a little bit with a song, a joke, a great story or some information they need. That is what's kept me moving forward in terms of platforms because if you stop evolving and you say, "This is the only place I will tell my story," the audience will move on.

If they're online or using an app and you're not there, then there won't be as many people to listen to your story. So much has changed, but at the same time I'm doing the exact same thing I did when I



them do their job. Early on, as we were building the company, it was a lot. You can't do the job without getting out, spending time with everybody and seeing what their situation is. I don't know if nomadic is the word, but I definitely know my way around DFW.

**Broadcasting is the core, but how involved are you in integration with Taste of Country as an online platform and the events division?**

Very involved. We work together constantly because, as I said, it's a cross-platform experience. We don't view it as different ventures. All of it together is what's creating an experience for the listeners.

*Taste of Country* is the world's largest country website with more than 1.5 million visitors per month. *Taste of Country Nights* is a national syndicated radio show produced daily out of Nashville and airing on more than 100 radio stations. Taste of Country is the brand of several of our music festivals around the country, including Hunter Mountain, Buffalo, Albany, and others. And then it's a huge social platform – a YouTube channel. When you have a brand like that, everybody needs to work together on a consistent presentation across the board. So I interact on a daily basis with our digital team and our events teams to get our content created and distributed as intended.

For instance, there's a lot of incredible new talent, but the challenge is getting it exposed. So we developed the Risers program to give a huge push to de-

## THE INTERVIEW

serving new acts. We launched last year and have had fantastic success with Aubrie Sellers, Runaway June, Brett Young, Jacob Davis and several others. We feature the artist online as well as on the radio with *Taste of Country Nights* – all intended to help create critical mass. We've had a great first year, we're looking forward to the second and that's a perfect example of how we work cross-platform.

**What's the overall management and programming style? Is Townsquare more of a top down or bottom up company?**

Since I got here, we have operated the way I grew up in radio – and I do mean grew up. I walked into a radio station where my dad got hired when I was 10 years old. From that moment, I never wanted to do anything else. I finally cajoled them into putting me on the air when I was 14, and the evolution of the business keeps propelling me forward.

The very best radio is originated and produced locally, so we have as much live and local programming as we possibly can because that's how you connect with people. We provide resources for our brand managers, insights on new music and what we see as potential hits. In every case we want the local programmer creating a sound that he or she hears is right for their market.

They're the ones who are expected to build a product and get the ratings. My job is to provide guidance and resources that help them get to the goal, which is to be the biggest radio station in town.

**Across the company, your Country stations do well and many are top-rated in their markets. Is there a common thread you see there?**

Every one is different, but they all excel at being deeply connected locally. At WGNA/Albany, we brought Brian and Chrissy in for mornings from a Top 40 across the street in April. The show and station shot back to No. 1 in the spring. The community just embraced them as country. There were a lot of questions about how they would adapt. Apparently, pretty well.

And then you have the *Good Morning Guys* at KUAD/Fort Collins, CO – Brian Gary, Todd Harding and Susan Moore. People are still talking about their Country Radio Hall of Fame acceptance speech. And you can see why. These are local people. Northern Colorado loves them, and they love their community. I can't think of a better example of Townsquare in action. They reach people on the air, online and they're the center of attention at events.

Likewise, Clay, Dale and Liz who do mornings at WYRK/Buffalo. Clay is like the mayor up there and I don't know anyone who loves country music more. He came down for the *CMA Awards* a couple years ago and he was beside himself. There was literally no place else he would rather be. Those are just three examples and we have dozens and dozens.

**Even in the name Townsquare, you see that reflected so, I'll ask you to widen the angle out from just the company for this: In a culture and business climate that often seems to be rushing toward national brands, how is the local media business doing?**

The connection, the value, we are able provide at the local level is an incredible service to clients in building their businesses and serving the community. We're in small and mid-sized markets where our radio stations have great relationships all around the community. That can't be done solely out of Dallas or New York or anywhere. It all comes down to people and the relationships that build community. Local businesses are evolving and changing, as well, and we're there to provide multi-platform solutions as they need them.

Streaming is the latest thing we're seeking to get our arms around. We're really starting to see some



traction in online radio. It's exciting to see TSL growing. I'm not surprised.

**Staying at 30,000 feet, how is Country doing as a format and a genre?**

Never been stronger. The most recent expansion – 2009-2014 – is the fourth one in my radio life and in many ways, each was bigger than the last. Each cycle is the same as it grows, becomes white-hot, spills over formatic boundaries and everybody says this will never end. Then it ends. Ratings were off a bit in '15 and '16, but we're really seeing those graphs starting to turn back up. This is why identifying new stars is so important.

Country is the strongest format because it's the most authentic. The best songwriters in the world, a music business community like nowhere else, radio partners being part of the process – it all speaks to the

**“I grew up in a little town in Wisconsin instilled with that idea of serving and helping. To the extent that I can, I want to help in as many ways as possible.”**

strength and future of the format. And then around that you have some amazing organizations.

**What's drawn you to become so deeply involved on that level?**

I would argue CMA is the best trade organization in any industry. There's nothing else like it that supports the artists, distribution partners, managers and radio, plus has a yearly celebration unlike any other. And now it is developing global outlets for country music. The people involved have a great sense of stewardship toward the music, and yet think very progressively. Rarely do you have an organization that balances that sense of history with that very keen sense of where things are going. The boldness to try new things, evolve and grow as the audience evolves and changes is done better nowhere else.

**And Townsquare's commitment to St. Jude is pretty significant, right?**

We raised \$1.7 million this year and I couldn't be more proud of that. *Country Cares* has such tradition and history, and our stations own it and look forward

to it every year. Their communities step up and we've grown that number every year. We're very proud of that accomplishment.

**You were also recently elected President of the CRB Board and have been on the executive committee for a few years. How do you walk under all those hats? Where does that desire to serve come from?**

I grew up in a little town in Wisconsin instilled with that idea of serving and helping. To the extent that I can, I want to help in as many ways as possible. As the programming leader for Townsquare, I have a tremendous opportunity to help our programmers every day. You couldn't ask for a better job than that. At CMA, I get to work with some of the most brilliant minds in the music industry, solve problems and develop new opportunities. CRB is kind of in the middle of all that.

There's nothing like Country Radio Seminar. We just got done with agenda committee meetings for next year, and they blew me away with their ideas. The educational aspect of the event is phenomenal. Gathering a huge number of radio and music business professionals to celebrate this great musical form is fantastic. Who wouldn't want to be involved in that?

If I can make a difference, if there's a need I can come to bear on, I want to do it. I have a lot of energy for this business, because I love this business. And I'm not slowing down. I'm speeding up, if anything. Everybody's too busy, it's just a question of whether you really love what you're doing or not.

**This business can really draw a person in.**

Nashville is so welcoming. I ran into a CHR programmer I've known forever shortly after he took over a big Country station. We were at a label party during CRS and I called out to him. He just looked at me and I could see it on his face. I said, "So. Nashville." I knew what he was thinking. He said, "I never knew this existed!" That said it all. He's about as wired a radio guy as there is, but if you're outside working in other formats, you don't even realize what's going on here.

**Did you have a moment like that where CRS really hooked you?**

The obvious joke is, I don't remember my first CRS. But that's not true. I was working with Viacom as national PD. We had 12 stations so I was working with WMZQ, Charlie Ochs, Gary McCarty and Mac Daniels. I came to CRS and was absolutely blown away. The combination of thoughtful industry discussion, education and flat-out fun was electric. There are other great radio gatherings, certainly there were many more at the time, but nothing like CRS. I've recommended it to a thousand people over the years. To be able to be involved in putting it together is a great honor and something I take really seriously. Again, it goes back to experience – seeing people moved and elevated. CRS is all about that.

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