

Dave Russell

May 5: Taco Bell
Outdoor
Stage at
8 p.m.

Not just another band

By Andrew Green
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When it comes to making music, Dave Russell is no amateur. He and his five-member band have been touring the West Coast for years.

"We like to do a non-stop show as soon as we hit the stage," Russell said. "Once we hit the stage, we don't like to take a lot of breathing room. That's really our mantra."

"We're not just a band, we're a show. We've made it a focus to where our show and interaction with the audience is our number-one priority."

The Merced County Spring Fair will be the first California stop of Russell's

summer tour. The two-time 1994 Star Search Challenge winner and 2002 Nashville Star contestant will spend the year performing at festivals and rodeos throughout the western United States.

Other stops for the country musician will include Folsom, Stanislaus and Colusa counties.

"We've got multiple fair dates that are constantly rolling in for our tour," he said. "I do a very large festival tour all through the coastal area. Professionally, I've been going on my tenth year, and we're looking forward to coming down there."

A native of North Carolina, Russell moved to Nashville at the age of 25 to pursue his passion for music. His first self-titled album was released in 2000.

His career includes music videos with Chely Wright and the Bellamy Brothers, local feature shows and eventually, national television.

Russell's voice was also recently featured on 17 tracks of Konami's CMT

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Presents: Karaoke Revolution Country. The video game was released March 21 and is available at all major video game outlets and retailers.

"Music is my life. Ever since I was little I've always wanted to do it," he joked. "My first performance was when I was five years old at a Christmas pageant. After that I was hooked."

When not touring, the musicians spend the winter months perfecting their stage presence.

Russell hopes audiences will enjoy his unique blend of all-inclusive country rhythm. His band features a steel guitar, key-

board, drums and bass. Russell plans to make use of his acoustic guitar and harmonica throughout the performance.

"Not long ago, we were down in the San Joaquin Valley area. Some of the best responses we've got and the most fun we've had are down there," he said. "It's going out on stage and having as much fun as possible. That energy trade-off is like nothing in the world."

Russell and his band will perform 8 p.m. May 5 at the fairground's Taco Bell Stage. Country musician Kevin Sharp will also perform at the fair's Celebrity Headliner Concert.

For more information on David Russell, albums and tour dates, visit his Web site at www.daverussell.com.