

# Tracy Lawrence Freedom Fest 2005



## Country star entertains at fairgrounds

By Kathryn Burke

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Flashes of lightning and dark storm clouds filled the background as Tracy Lawrence took the stage at a concert here Saturday.

The country singer belted out tunes including his new single, "Used to the Pain."

"I think it went really well," said Courtney Warden, Goodland Area Chamber of Commerce manager, who organized the event.

Even a few sprinkles didn't stop the bands from playing and the crowd from clapping and singing along.

Devoted fans started lining up at the fairgrounds at 4 p.m., even before some of the event staff showed up.

The gates opened at 5 p.m. and visitors poured into the grandstands.

Warden estimated the Chamber sold around 2,000 tickets, including 280 VIP tickets at \$50 and 30 meet-and-greet tickets at \$100.

Vendors set up at the fairgrounds sold everything from leather goods to funnel cakes.

A booth selling Tracy Lawrence items featured caps, cowboy hats, T-shirts, CDs, flashing buttons and more.

Fans could pick up an autographed copy of the CD or an autographed photo.

In front of the grandstands, a VIP area was set up with chairs for over 100 fans, including the 30 meet-and-greet positions.

The concert opened with Shad and the Minutemen, a local group.

As the band played, meet-and-greet concert-goers went around the back of the stage to meet Lawrence himself.

He signed autographs, answered questions and posed for pictures with his fans.

After the Shad and the Minutemen played, the Chamber drew Skyler Goodwin's name for a Lawrence autographed guitar and gave away a T-shirt to Nancy Valentine of Weskan.

Seven-year-old Darian Gibson, granddaughter of Chuck Lutters and Marian Lutters and niece of the late Derrick Lutters, sang "Proud to be an American," a honor to hometown heroes.

Gibson sang the song in tribute to her uncle, who was killed in Iraq, at his funeral last month.

The Con Man, a radio personality from Denver who is heard on KWGB, emceed the event and introduced the band.

Lawrence took the stage at 8 p.m. opening with a few of his 17 Top 10 hits.

Fans sang along to "Texas Tornado" and "Alibis."

Before he sang "Lessons Learned," Lawrence explained how his father inspired the song, teaching him right from wrong at an early age.

Lawrence played "Time Marches On," dedicating the song to grandmothers in the audience.

He sang "That's How a Cowgirl Says Goodbye," a song about cowgirl heartbreakers.

As the concert went on, the audience got to their feet, singing and clapping along to the music.

He played an encore, singing "Paint Me a Birmingham," from the "Strong" album.

Warden said the concert went off without any hitches and she would easily invite Lawrence back again.

"He's a very nice guy," she said, "very easy to work with."

