

Jam / Diverse offerings

FROM PAGE 7

Boys," opens off-Broadway in January.

Festival Jam brings members of Joe's Pet Project together each summer — one member lives in Chicago — so the group can write and record for several days.

"It's an amazing opportunity," Tyson said.

Steve Hanson of SM Hanson Music, 333 S. Clark, has been organizing Festival Jam since he first put it together 22 years ago.

"I don't know of anybody else in the country that tries to do what we're doing," Hanson said.

What he's been doing is line up more than a dozen local and area bands — originally it was two dozen — and give them just 15 minutes on stage. The bands don't get paid.

"It's the official kickoff of the river festival," Hanson said.

Tom Jones, 54, owns the Ace Hardware store in Salina, but he also knows music. He's been the drummer for such country heavyweights as George Jones, Lee Greenwood, Dolly Parton and Crystal Gayle. After he officially retired from music and returned to Salina, he took his turn with the Blades, a Salina band that has the distinction of having performed in every Festival Jam.

"When I was younger and playing music in high school, there were lots of places to play," Jones said. "I don't see near as many any more for these bands and younger people to go showcase their talents. I think (Festival Jam) is a really nice venue for them to go out and show people what they can do."

Loren Banninger is a founding member of the Blades. When he's not playing bass, he teaches leadership and multimedia technology at Salina South High School. Festival Jam lets mere mortals sample stardom.

"I think we all had that hope. We all wanted to be that rock star," Banninger said. "But we also knew that most of us were getting married and had families and wanted to provide for our children."

It's not only star wannabes who have played Festival Jam. Mark Selby, a songwriter and musician who has shared the stage with some of country's biggest names, has played it. So did Ben Romans, before

he became part of The Click Five. And there was Dana Messing, who today is a principal of The Fabulous CruiseTones, a Los Angeles area band (one of the reviews posted on the group's Web site: "We flew them back here to play at my inaugural ball and they were a huge hit with everyone ... (Kansas) Gov. Mike Hayden").

Hanson said he works hard to ensure musical diversity every year.

"We want the show to be versatile," he said. So there will always be some country, classic rock, bluegrass, Christian rock. And he's been known to ask some of the bands to choose songs that round out the musical genres.

So if one act doesn't suit your taste, odds are another will soon.

"All I have to do is wait 12 minutes and it's going to be a different group up there," Hanson said. "It's just total entertainment, all night long."

■ Reporter Duane Schrag can be reached at 822-1422 or by e-mail at dschrag@saljournal.com.

Needfire's back

Popular Celtic rock band returns to festival to do closing honors

By GARY DEMUTH
Salina Journal



Courtesy photo

Celtic rock band Needfire got a strong response from fans at last year's festival.


NeedFire, the Dallas-based Celtic rock band that became one of the more popular music acts at last year's Smoky Hill River Festival, was invited to close this year's festival.

But first, the group had to find a new drummer.


In December 2006, NeedFire's original drummer, former Salinan Matthew Henthorn, announced he was leaving the band.

It seemed a surprising move. After all, 2006 was NeedFire's


See ROCK, Page 9




physiological footwear
Exercise your entire body!



Exercises your thigh, buttock & lower limb muscles!



Lightweight



Solid, Sandals Beach Style!

Brown's SHOE *Fit Co.*

785-823-2146
2150 Planet Ave., Salina
Mon.-Fri. 9-7, Sat. 9-6, Sun. 12-4



Big Band Dance

featuring Bobby Layne & His Orchestra

Friday, 7-10:30 p.m., Bicentennial Center

Take a turn around the floor to the lush sounds of days-gone-by as Bobby strikes up the band. Big band music lovers will thrill to an evening of stardust-laden melodies when Bobby Layne & His Orchestra make their return.



Sponsors:





