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Former Avondale man's single climbing charts

Shane McOwen
staff writer

A former Avondale resident has recently released a single that has landed on country music charts in the U.S.

Matt Farris, 25, released his single "Redneck Radio" to the acclaim of fans and the music industry alike. The song is currently charting in the top 50.

"I wasn't expecting it to move as fast as it did," Farris said. "I just got the chart report for [the week of Dec. 10-16]."



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30] and I'm sitting at No. 44 on the top-100 country songs."

Farris signed with his record deal in September 2011 and is currently working on a full-length album due out in late spring or early summer. The album will include "Redneck Radio."

"One of the songs on there is 'Party in the Making,' so it's great for a spring break release," Farris said.

Farris has been very busy with his career as of late, he said.

"I'm finishing up the album, been in the studio a lot, have a lot of shows coming up," he said. "I'm trying to find something in Avondale, but they don't have many big clubs to play."

Farris said he has six songs completed out of the 12 that will go on his debut album and is working with producer Frank Green.

"He actually got to produce Kenny Rogers awhile back," Farris said. He's worked with some big names in the industry and started his own record label."

Green, along with producing the record, owns the Skytone Entertainment record label and Digital Master Production company that Farris' album will be released from.

"I heard him about a year ago and got together with him," Green said. "Heard his voice, very big voice."

Single release

When Farris recorded "Redneck Radio," he had a good feeling about the song, he said.

"We recorded it, and I thought this is definitely going to be the single I release first," he said. "It was upbeat and it described me. I grew up having a good time off road and having bonfires and redneck suited me pretty well."

After the song was released, it gained popularity faster than Farris anticipated, he said.

"As soon as it got released, I had a huge following really fast," he said. "It ended up being the No. 1 requested song in the tri-state area [Arizona, California and Nevada region near Laughlin]."

"It's just an incredible feeling."

Green is hoping to use Farris' talents and the success of his record label to help propel Farris to stardom.



MATT FARRIS, left, formerly of Avondale, works with producer Frank Green on his debut album in Nashville, Tenn. Submitted photo

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"We just got some good news recently that it is climbing up the charts and is doing well," Green said. "The current record is doing well for a first artist."

Green said the challenges of a first artist are trying to establish who the artist is with the public, but the success Farris has already had is encouraging for the future.



Humble stardom, philanthropy

Farris made it into the top 35 contestants on the defunct NBC show *Nashville Star* in 2008.

In October 2010, he made the decision to move to Nashville, Tenn., to follow his musical dreams.

"I did Country Showdown in 2010, and a couple of industry people were there and asked if I have ever thought about moving to Nashville," Farris said. "Within 10 days of that conversation, I was packed and living in Nashville."

The decision has paid off for him in terms of a record deal and radio play, but most importantly, a job he loves.

"My favorite saying is, 'I love my job,'" Farris said. "I say it at every show, at every radio station interview. Seeing everyone smile makes it all worth it."

Farris, who earned his EMT certificate at Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, keeps his family close to him while he chases his dreams. His father, Jeff, and grandfather, Tom, occasionally sing back up at his performances, and other family members help run his merchandise table and are a part of his security team.

"It's three generations on stage together," Farris said. "It's cool to have family up there."

The family aspect is one of the things that caught Green's attention about Farris, as well as a frightening story involving Farris' father.

Both Matt and Jeff were victims of an attempted carjacking, and both ended up with gunshot wounds from the ordeal.

A bullet hit Farris after it traveled through his father, but because it was slowed down, it most likely saved Farris' life, Green said.



"I'm sitting there thinking, "You can't make this stuff up," Green said. "People would want to know this about the artist."

Farris is also using his newfound celebrity to give back to the community.

Four years ago, Farris set up Denise's Day to fundraise for his best friend's mother and her fight against breast cancer. It's a concert venue in Lake Havasu City.

Denise died shortly after the first Denise's Day, but the event goes on annually.

March 16 will be the fourth Denise's Day. The proceeds will go to help an Arizona family whose 5-year-old has been diagnosed with cancer.

"Knowing I'm able to use my music and my ability and what I've learned over the past several years to give back to the community that helped me get where I'm at is a good feeling," Farris said.

Green said it's refreshing when he meets an artist such as Farris, who's genuinely interested in giving back to the community.

"I've met a lot [of artists] who don't, who are very self centered so it's cool to meet someone like Matt," Green said. "Matt's got a good heart."

Farris will be performing at the Aquarius casino in Laughlin on Feb. 1 and 2. Those shows are the nearest to the West Valley area in the coming months.

Farris said he's been thankful for all the support from the West Valley, and that they've been very encouraging since day one.

Visit mattfarriscountry.com to view and purchase music and to search for tour dates.

Shane McOwen can be reached by email at smcowl@westvalleyview.com.

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