

**RUTHERFORDTON, N.C.** — Since 1971 the Hilltop Fall Festival has been an annual tradition in the historic Town of Rutherfordton, ushering in the season with family fun, good eats and blocks of local and regional artisans and community partners. This year on Saturday, October 5 from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm, the town and its nonprofit organization Rutherford Town Rising (RTR) are partnering with the Rutherford County Tourism Asset Foundation (TAF) to mint a new gold standard for the festival by celebrating the town's Bechtler legacy and its designation as the headquarters as the North Carolina Gold Trail by launching the first-ever NC Gold Album Live. The collaboration brings the organization's shared mission to preserve the town's unique gold history courtesy of Christopher Bechtler who minted America's first one-dollar gold coin in Rutherfordton in 1832.

During the Hilltop Fall Festival and piggybacking on what NC Governor Roy Cooper has declared "The Year of Music," the 12 national and regional artists featured on the NC Gold Album will perform their signature songs live on the main stage, plus their own fan-favorite hits.

The inaugural album will be available onsite for purchase and sales will help fund educational and tourism programs to bring America's First Gold Rush to light and kindle a passion to explore the history and heritage of the beautiful state of North Carolina. All of the artists in attendance including Si Kahn, Rick Scott, Kevin Bridges, Jim Huskins to name a few, will be on hand throughout the day to meet and learn more about their deep connection to this music project. The NC Gold album will release world-wide one week prior to the festival and can be found on Spotify, Google Play, iTunes, Apple, Amazon, Pandora and more.

TAF Director Deborah Millikan, and one of the creative forces behind the NC Gold Album developed by Debrick Media, is proud of the union formed between the Tourism Asset Foundation, Town of Rutherfordton and RTR stating, "The joint visions that have come together will create a new and exciting fall festival that will highlight the region's gold history founded here in Rutherfordton. The NC Gold Album is created to drive awareness about the state's gold history and raise funds for the NC Gold Trail through the sound of music of North Carolina artists and the participation of music industry professionals." The NC Gold Trail is a heritage destination trail that spans across more than 30 counties in the state whom have been identified as having a gold history bearing significance along this trail.

In an effort to enhance the festival experience for its attendees this year, Stephanie Rzonca, Rutherfordton Community Development Director said, "We are delighted with the partnership built with the Tourism Asset Foundation and thrilled to be welcoming the amazing talents of the album's NC artists. By improving the production value of our live musical entertainment, plus the heightened showcase of local and regional handmade artisans and fine crafters, the Hilltop Fall Festival will share the commitment and dedication we have for building a stronger sense of community and purpose for promoting our rich assets and economic vitality.

The Hilltop Fall Festival kicks off the day with its annual Purple Martin 7K run at 8:30 am followed by the Tour de Pumpkin bike ride at 9:00 am. Then, beginning at 11:00 am, residents and visitors from surrounding counties will enjoy a full day of festival fun. Shop for unique, one-of-a-kind finds from original, handmade artisans and fine crafters, and be entertained by demonstrators showcasing skills in woodturning, forging, painting and more. Watch and cheer on performances by our local dance groups. Savor the local fare from food trucks, homemade sweets, and beer and wine from the Gold Rush Tavern tent. There is a kid's zone featuring inflatables and rock climbing walls, plus a variety of interactive games and face painting. The 2nd annual Tractor and Truck Show will take place where enthusiasts get to gawk at the show-worthy entries as they compete for top prizes.

To learn more about the Hilltop Fall Festival and for information on becoming a vendor visit [www.myrutherfordton.com/hilltop-fall-festival](http://www.myrutherfordton.com/hilltop-fall-festival).

**About the Town of Rutherfordton:**

Established in 1787, Rutherfordton is one of the oldest towns in Western North Carolina. Our founding along a ridge-line offers vistas of a rolling countryside, leading to a backdrop of the great Blue Ridge Mountains. Our history runs deep here and we are a community of firsts. You can still sense our past in the traditional historic brick buildings in downtown, as well as the stately antebellum homes that line our streets. Today, we are known within the region for our unrivaled quality of life, the beauty of our place and our pride in our community. We provide a wealth of cultural and creative arts more commonly found in a large city and an abundance of outdoor recreation activities found only in more rural places. Our downtown is the heart of activity and energy in our community, where new discoveries are made everyday.

**About Rutherford Town Rising :**

A Main Street America Accredited program, Rutherford Town Rising (RTR) is a 501c3 organization dedicated to leading and preserving the unique character of the historic downtown while developing and enriching assets which promote economic vitality, sense of community, and quality of life. Working in partnership with local government, businesses, the North Carolina Department of Commerce and other agencies, and through the dedication of our board members and volunteers, RTR works to provide our businesses with the support, programming and promotional assistance they need to succeed and the vision to help our town flourish.

**About Tourism Asset Foundation:**

The Rutherford County Tourism Asset Foundation's mission is to develop permanent and tangible tourism assets as they relate to history, heritage, agritourism, outdoor recreation and local culture in Rutherford County, North Carolina, with the vision of enhancing the economic development of Rutherford County. Tourism is one of the largest grossing and growing industries in the state; the development of our community's tourism assets will increase visitation, enhance local businesses, and improve the quality of life of local citizens. As TAF's first project, the Bechtler Heritage Center and Headquarters of the NC Gold Trail is a great example of how our tourism assets can give back to the community.

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<https://media.visitnc.com/Hilltop-Festival-Celebrates-Rutherford-Gold-Legacy-with-New-Albums-Artists>