

Rock and Roll Saturday Night

By Char Strong
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PITTSBURG, Kan. —Music aficionados were in for a treat this weekend when Oklahoma singer Erin Fitzgibbon played the Kansas Crossing Casino Friday and Saturday nights.

Erin started his career with Uncle Thumbtack. In 2007, Erin moved onto the creation of his own band Solace. Erin has played in 17 countries, and 28 states. Erin took 2nd place in the Colgate Country Showdown, made it through the 3rd round on X-Factor, 3rd round on Nashville Star, 2nd out of 450 bands in a Philadelphia Music Conference, has

had 8 songs published with Gusto/King Records in Nashville, Tennessee. Erin is a very seasoned musician and can play everything from Johnny Cash to Sublime including new and old country, red dirt, rock, blues, oldies, or just about anything the present crowd calls or asks for.

Fitzgibbon started in choir when he was 12 years old and was hooked on music since then. In the 1980s, when he first became interested in music, he wanted to be a great guitar player like Eddie Van Halen. At 19, he started playing acoustic guitar and putting bands together. He enjoyed writing his own

music as well.

As life moved on, he joined the Army. During deployments, he played with the USO. Fitzgibbon played in Kosovo, Macedonia, and Bosnia.

Fitzgibbon loves getting to meet different people while touring. He sometimes misses family gatherings because of touring.

One of his favorite venues to play was the Cadillac Ranch in Nashville, which is unfortunately closed down. He also enjoys playing in Monkey Island, Oklahoma live music scene.

His favorite song to play live is the pop classic "I'm Yours" by Jason Mraz. He also loves to



Erin Fitzgibbon and his band played the Kansas Crossing Casino this weekend with a blend of rock, Americana, and classic country. BY CHAR STRONG

play the Americana classic "Cover Me Up" by Jason Isbell, which was famously covered by Morgan Wallen.

He said the best part of the music community in this area is getting to connect musicians with each other. He has been in the music

community for a long time and enjoys helping bring new people into venues by recommending good musicians.

Fitzgibbon plays solo acoustic sets and with his band. They play everything from 90s alternative rock like the Violent Femmes, the Blues,

to Red Dirt country. He plays venues all within a 100 mile radius of Pittsburg and has played the Kansas Crossing Casino several times.

Follow Erin Fitzgibbon on Facebook for more information on his current tour.

U.S.-China deal eases burden on cheap packages

WASHINGTON (AP) — Online shoppers in the U.S. will see a price break on their purchases valued at less than \$800 and shipped from China after the Trump administration reached a truce with Beijing over sky-high tariffs.

An executive order Monday from President Donald Trump said the tariffs on low-value parcels originating from China and coming through the U.S. Postal Service will be lowered to 54%, down from 120%.

It also says a per-package flat rate — as an alternative to the value-based tariff — will be kept at \$100, rather than being raised to \$200 on June 1 as previously

decreed. Packages shipped by commercial carriers are subject to the general tariff, which also has been cut.

The new rules go into effect Wednesday.

They are part of a broader agreement by the Trump administration to drastically lower import taxes on all Chinese goods from 145% to 30% following weekend talks in Switzerland with Chinese officials. China issued a public notice on Tuesday lowering its own tariffs on U.S. goods to 10%, down from 125%.

However, the reductions are temporary, allowing the two sides to negotiate a longer-term deal in the next 90 days.

Izzy Rosenzweig, founder and CEO of the logistic company Portless, said U.S. brands are "very excited" about the broader tariff cut. The import tax is still high, but not as prohibitive as when it was 145%, which amounted to a trade embargo.

On the low-value shipments, online purchases had been coming into the U.S. duty-free for several years under the de minimis rule, which exempted them from the import tax.

Popular shopping sites such as Shein and Temu that offer ultra-low prices took advantage of the duty-free rule by shipping directly from China to

U.S. buyers, bypassing more cumbersome customs paperwork.

President Donald Trump terminated the exemption on such parcels originating from China and Hong Kong on May 2, following criticism that it not only resulted in lost tariff revenue but also allowed illicit drugs and unsafe products to flow into the U.S. without adequate scrutiny.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said as many as 4 million low-value parcels were coming into the U.S. every day — many of which originated from China.



U.S. Trade Representative Jamieson Greer, left, and U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Scott Bessent take part in a press conference after two days of closed-door discussions on trade between the United States and China, in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday. (JEAN-CHRISTOPHE BOTT/KEYSTONE VIA AP)

GOP

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first Trump administration, Colyer was sworn in as governor in 2018.

Colyer sought a full term as governor but narrowly lost the 2018 primary to Republican Kris Kobach, who was defeated in the general election by Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly. In terms of the 2026 race, Colyer has yet to formally register as a

candidate with the secretary of state.

Colyer did announce selection of state Rep. Kyle Hoffman, a Coldwater Republican, as treasurer for his gubernatorial campaign.

"Kyle is a leading voice for rural Kansas and a great advocate for fiscal responsibility and conservative values," Colyer said. "He's going to be a huge asset as we carry our winning message to every county in

Kansas."

Kelly, who followed her defeat of Kobach with a victory over former GOP Attorney General Derek Schmidt in 2022, cannot seek reelection. Colyer was poised to seek the Republican nomination for governor in 2022, but withdrew following a diagnosis of prostate cancer.

Democratic Governors Association spokesman Sam New-

ton said in a statement Colyer was the "failed right-hand man" to Brownback.

"Besides reminding Kansans of the broken budgets and underfunded public schools of the Brownback era, Colyer's announcement confirms that the GOP primary field is going to be crowded, chaotic and focused on extreme partisan policies," Newton said.

Newton said Kansas

would be better off with a governor like Kelly who took a middle-of-the-road approach to leadership, balanced the state budget, promoted business investment and ended the state's sales tax on groceries.

Hoffman, treasurer of Colyer's campaign, said Colyer was "more than a politician, he is a humanitarian — selflessly serving those in need around the world. He'll make a great governor."

Colyer, a surgeon in the Kansas City area who served international medical missions, was the state's 47th governor from January 2018 to January 2019.

He was lieutenant governor under Brownback from 2011-2018. He was in the Senate from 2009-2011 and the Kansas House from 2007-2009. In 2002, he unsuccessfully sought the GOP nomination for U.S. House.

ROTARY

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construction management."

"Aislin and Blake have already graduated, and they are done with school, and they still showed up," joked Pittsburg Noon Rotary President Bryce Anderson. "Thank you very much for being here."

Along with its scholarships for the high school students, the Pittsburg Noon Rotary Club awarded its Col. Bill Hollenbeck Scholarship Award, named after a former Rotarian, to two PSU ROTC members.

PSU ROTC approved the division of the scholarship between two cadets, who are scheduled to receive \$500 each. Students honored on Tuesday were Xavier J. Perkins and Owen M. Numata.

"I'm a sophomore this year," said Perkins. "I transferred to Pitt State this year actually and I've fallen in love with the ROTC program for sure. I played basketball my freshman year in college, so this is a pretty easy transition because same thing with sports, it's a bunch of like-minded individ-

uals who want to work hard and achieve what they want to achieve.

"I am an exercise science major. Just recently switched to being an exercise science major so I'm pretty pumped about that. I'm going to air assault school this summer. I was honored to be selected to go to air assault school this summer. There's only about three of us total ... That'll be at West Point which'll be a pretty good experience for sure. I'm excited and I appreciate the scholarship very much, it means a lot."

"I'm a sophomore at Pittsburg State University majoring in mechanical engineering technologies with a minor in automotive and a minor in military science," Numata said. "I'm from Carl Junction (Mo.). I come from a long line of military family, got a lot of cousins in the Navy, and I finally decided to go to the right branch, the Army. I'm just very thankful for your guys' contribution to the ROTC program so thank you very much."

This week's meeting also featured Lieutenant Colonel Dustin Blum, a professor and chair of PSU's military science

program, who offered insight into the university's ROTC program.

"We fall under a different command, so our brigade headquarters were in Chicago, but now we've moved under from the training and doctrine command, which is a two-star command, and now we are under the recruiting command, which is a three-star command," said Blum. "... Our mission numbers have gone down, the requirement has gone down, we are still commissioning 28 this year.

"Between Pittsburg State and Wichita State, 28 cadets are commissioned to be second lieutenants in the Army. That's the third largest program in all of the third brigade. So if you think of all the Big 10 schools like Nebraska, University of Minnesota, Iowa, Iowa State, so we are the third biggest program. So 28 second lieutenants are going to come from Pittsburg State and Wichita State, so we are really proud of that.

"... We have 121 (cadets). 61 here in Pittsburg and 60 at Wichita State. They all fall under Pittsburg State, we



PHS seniors Isabel Johnston and Alycia Cosens (not pictured) along with SMC seniors Aislin Tyler and Blake Wilkes earned \$1,000 scholarships Tuesday afternoon as part of a presentation during Pittsburg Noon Rotary's weekly meeting at Block 22. AARON PYLE / THE MORNING SUN

are the host school ... I would say in the freshman (ROTC) class that we started this year, we probably have a 60 to 40 (ratio) towards the females, we have more females than males. I would say we are probably the other way for overall program. We are probably at 60 percent males and 40 percent females, so we are definitely seeing a growth of young females that want to be leaders in the Army."

Aside from the scholarships and ROTC discus-

sion, Rotarian and PSU Associate Vice President Jon Bartlow provided an update on the "Rotary Rocks Out Hunger" event that took place on May 3, which benefitted The Lord's Diner.

"We are approaching the \$5,000 mark, so that's pretty awesome," said Bartlow. "It's about three times more than we've made in the past. So once again, thanks to everybody that played ... All the volunteers that came out that day, it was a great success, so I appreciate everybody

very much. We do have quite a few t-shirts left."

Meetings are held weekly in the Block22 Community Room at 4th and Broadway, starting at noon every Tuesday. For more information on the Pittsburg Noon Rotary Club, visit pittsburgrotary.com or facebook.com/pittsburgnoonrotaryclub/.

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