



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chris Joslin Steps Down as Executive Director of the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum

Board of Trustees to Launch National Search for New Leader

Owensboro, Kentucky, July 9, 2024 – After nine years, Chris Joslin is stepping down as Executive Director of the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum and ROMP Festival to oversee development and fundraising for Mission Lazarus, a faith-based nonprofit with operations in Honduras and Haiti. The leadership transition will begin later this month as the Board of Trustees begin the search for a new Executive Director.

This news comes on the heels of the 21st annual ROMP Festival where 24,500 people attended the music festival over four days traveling from 42 states and 10 countries. The success of this year's festival contributed to June's highest hotel occupancy rates in history according to Visit Owensboro and generated a tangible economic impact for Owensboro and Daviess County.

The list of accomplishments under Joslin's leadership include transitioning the organization to a new building in 2018 along with rebranding the music-centric non-profit with a new name and logo to compete more effectively with other prominent music destinations around the country.

Joslin said of his time with the organization, "When relocating to Owensboro for this opportunity in 2015, I was excited about the potential of the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum. However, the opportunities created have absolutely exceeded my expectations! Pursuing the growth of this organization in an entrepreneurial fashion has been very energizing to say the least, and I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to our talented staff, leadership from the Board of Trustees, and the support and advocacy of so many entities and individuals here in Owensboro and Daviess County."

Despite challenges during and in the wake of the pandemic, the organization began publishing *Bluegrass Unlimited* magazine in 2020, created an Emmy-nominated television show for RFD-

TV titled *My Bluegrass Story*, created the Great American Bluegrass Jam incorporating a relaunch of the Kentucky State Fiddle Championship, expanded educational programming, and developed the group travel market with operators from around the country. The Hall of Fame also developed and opened an exhibit garnering national attention titled “Jerry Garcia: A Bluegrass Journey”, created Kentucky Guitar Works at the Center for Lutherie, helped facilitate Owensboro Community and Technical College’s effort to launch the Bluegrass & Traditional Music program, anchored Owensboro’s claim as the Bluegrass Music Capital of the World, further strengthened ROMP Festival as a destination event, and more.

Chris Love, Board Chair of the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum commented, “Chris led our organization through a crucial era, and under his stewardship the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum has flourished into a destination point for bluegrass music fans from all over the world. And for his leadership and friendship, we will be eternally grateful. While we will certainly miss Chris, I wish him nothing but the best in his future role. I know he will do great things.”

Many feel the increased popularity of bluegrass music is driven by current and emerging artists who are attracting a diverse and younger audience. Artists like Billy Strings, Molly Tuttle, Sierra Hull, and others who have played the Hall of Fame’s signature event, ROMP Festival, are defining bluegrass music for their generation while pointing them to the origins of the music and pioneering artists like Bill Monroe and Ralph Stanley.

Chris Joslin observed, “Bluegrass music artists have a history of celebrating the legacy of this music and honoring their heroes. I feel this is why the work of the Hall of Fame is so relevant because we preserve the history and artifacts of bluegrass music while also working collaboratively with the artists who are shaping the genre today. We strive to be the premiere destination for bluegrass music, and earning this reputation is something the Hall of Fame takes very seriously.”

Terry Woodward, a member of the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame, has been on this bluegrass journey in Owensboro since day one and continues working to advance the mission of the nonprofit. Reflecting on Joslin’s work with the Hall of Fame, Terry Woodward commented, “We have been blessed to have Chris Joslin as our Museum director for the past nine years. Chris joined us in a very pivotal time for our Museum, and his dedication and leadership has put our Museum and Owensboro on the world map. He will be greatly missed.”

Joslin further stated, “I have learned so much during my time in Owensboro, and my decision to accept this new role was not an easy one to make. I love this community and bluegrass music and could be happy working here the rest of my career. However, I feel drawn to the work of Mission Lazarus and simply want to be faithful to this calling.”

Mission Lazarus is a faith-based nonprofit headquartered in Franklin, Tennessee. Operating in Honduras in the region of San Marcos De Colon, Mission Lazarus takes a holistic approach to ministry focusing on education, community health, economic development, and spiritual development. The organization also operates an orphanage in Honduras. In addition, Mission Lazarus launched a mission effort in Haiti in 2011 and operates a K-12 school in the northeast part of the country.

Joslin further commented, “The best is yet to come for the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum, and I cannot wait to see where this team and Board of Trustees, with new leadership, takes it. I will be cheering on the effort every step of the way.”

More information about the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum can be found at: www.bluegrasshall.org.



About the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum:

Located in Owensboro, Kentucky, the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum is a nonprofit dedicated to the history and preservation of bluegrass music. Among the many community and educational events produced by the Hall of Fame is the annual ROMP Festival, a four-day bluegrass music festival attended by over 25,000 annually. Learn more about the Bluegrass Music Hall of Fame & Museum at bluegrasshall.org and connect with us on social media [@bluegrasshall](https://www.instagram.com/bluegrasshall).

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