

FULL HOUSE

Phil Houseal

PICKUP TRUCK TEXAS



There's a place called Pickup Truck, Texas. You won't find it on any map, and you can't go there.

But it does come to you. It's a two-hour Internet radio show unpretentiously performed by Maggie Montgomery ("we're kinda laid back") and unexpectedly produced by Jeff Heyen ("I didn't plan on becoming a radio station owner") out of Fredericksburg.



Jeff Heyen took his idea for a streaming radio station from the kitchen table to TABC Radio, broadcasting 24/7 and welcoming guests in his spacious studio on Fredericksburg's Main Street. Here he shows off the antique chairs he bought just for visitors.

These days, anyone with an Internet connection and a laptop can start a radio station. So Heyen—who boasts actual experience working on terrestrial radio—decided to start up his own online broadcast. He began rather modestly—inside his RV.

"It was right here in the Hill Country RV Park next to the police station," he said of his very first broadcast location. "We didn't have a kitchen table, because I had the radio equipment covering the table, benches, and counters. It was the

only spot in the RV to do it."

Three years later, he is more comfortably ensconced in a spacious studio above El Milagro Restaurant on Fredericksburg's famous Main Street. There, he welcomes a daily stream of musicians and supporters who are harnessing the accessibility of the Internet to reach an eager audience as far away as Australia, the Philippines, Italy, and Kerrville. What are those listeners seeking?

"It's Hill Country music; it's Texas music," said Montgomery, who named her show after the song she wrote—"Pickup Truck, Texas"—that appeared on Gary P. Nunn's greatest hits album. "Fredericksburg has become such a mecca for live music. We want people when they hear 'Fredericksburg' to think, let's go hear live music."

Heyen has the same mission, but from the other side of the microphone.

"One of the neat things is young people who don't get any chance to get on the air, I put them on the radio," he said. "I like doing that for local musicians and our venues. I'm doing my best to help keep this music scene alive."

Heyen is doing such a good job that his success ironically almost shut him down. By the end of summer, TABC Radio's daily listenership had grown into the thousands, so the streaming company demanded more money.

On September first they sent a message that unless he came up with a



Using modern technology while staying true to his musical roots, Jeff Heyen streams Texas music to listeners around the world from Fredericksburg's TABC Radio. Behind him is the "Door of Fame" that all live guests get to sign.

sizeable chunk of "cash money" in 30 days, they would stop streaming.

That's when he found out how important his station had become to local artists and club owners, who spread the word that he needed cash.

"Local listeners started donating when they heard about it," he said. "One venue owner called and said, how much do you need? He said, come over and the check will be waiting."

The whole money thing is not what drives Heyen. He is so passionate to keep the station running that he goes out and takes other jobs to fund it.

"But it's a lot of fun," he said. "I would love it if it ever made money, then I could quit trimming trees and carpentry. I started it as a fun little hobby, but it grew so quickly as people started listening."

Even without sponsors, Heyen streams 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. He fills that airtime with recorded Texas music, daily live shows hosted by local musicians (see lineup), and input from pretty much anyone who drops in.

Literally.

"Yes, we have an open door policy," he said, pointing to four antique oak chairs he bought just for visitors. "While a live show is on, we want people to come up and walk in. You can sit and listen, get something to drink downstairs, order some food. We can bring more chairs in, and anybody who wants to, we'll put 'em on the air."

Meanwhile, back in Pickup Truck, Texas, Montgomery picks a little, talks a little, and spins her philosophy.

"My mission is to help local musicians, to promote and showcase them," she said. "These people are top notch talent and we don't want them to move to Nashville or New York to try and make it."

She laughed. "We're doing the best we can, hanging in there, and having a lot of fun here in Pickup Truck, Texas."



Maggie Montgomery presides over her live TABC Radio show Pickup Truck, Texas, featuring Texas musicians on Thursday afternoons.

Find TABC Radio online at tabcradio.com. Contact Jeff Heyen at 830 307 9166.

TABC DARE TO AIR

LIVE SHOW LINEUP

Monday, 7 pm

Blue Monday with Graham Warwick

Tuesday, 2 pm

Troubadour Road with Kathy Bauer and Michael Broussard

Every other Wed, 2 pm

Jerialice's Restaurant with Jerialice Arsenault

Thursday, 2 pm

Pickup Truck, Texas with Maggie Montgomery

Saturday, 2 pm

Boone Holding for The Grind focusing on young new local artists
Sunday, 9:30 am—Hill Country Gospel Hour with the Fredericksburg Cowboy Church

Sunday Afternoons—Stephen Morris

Schedule subject to change as new shows are added. Check www.tabcradio.com for most current lineup.

Photos by Phil Houseal
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