

Route 905 Country Festival: A Vision for Hamilton, The City of Music

Jovan Popovic

Founder & CEO

Break First Entertainment



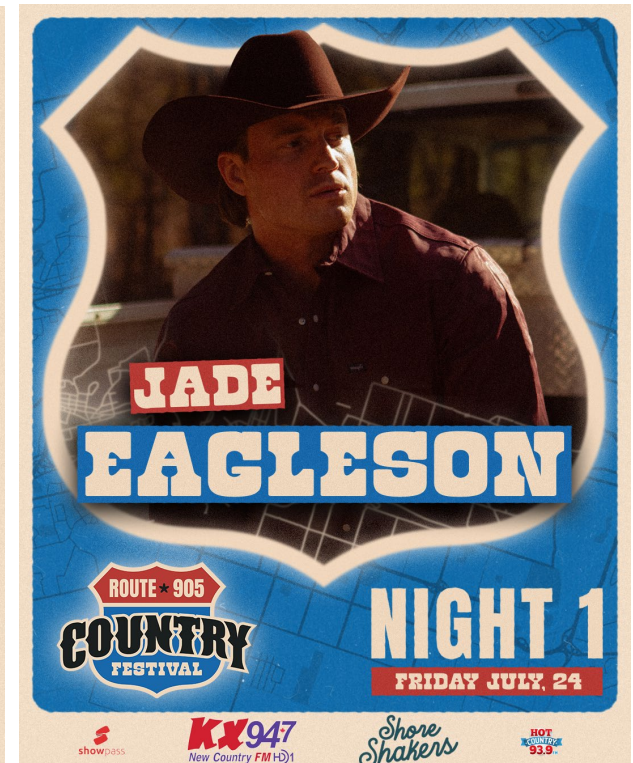
Route 905 Country Festival

- Inaugural outdoor country music festival, taking place July 24-25 at the Ancaster Fairgrounds, Ward 12
- Projecting 4k-6k attendees each day, capacity of more than 10k
- Bringing together major international talent, while showcasing local artists through an affordable experience close to home (home by midnight)
- Expecting a significant local draw, while also bringing people from the surrounding area (Toronto, Niagara, London, Kitchener) to Hamilton

Today's objective: To brief the council on event scope, community benefits, and seek a collaborative path forward

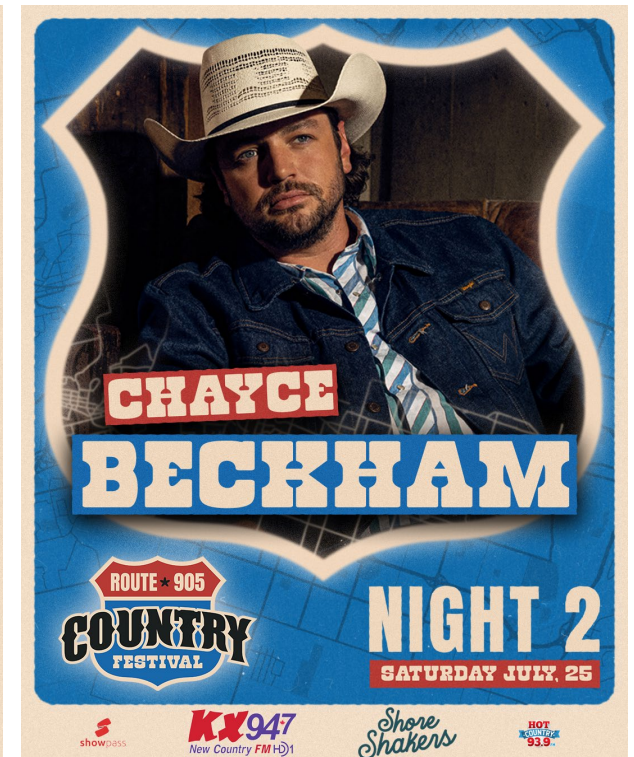
July 24: Canadiana Night

- A fully Canadian lineup, headlined by 23x CCMA award winner and 3x JUNO winner, Brett Kissel
- Supported by 5x CCMA award winner and the reigning CCMA Male Artist of the Year, Jade Eagleson
- Other acts include 3x CCMA award winner, Madeline Merlo, Ryan Langdon, Cam Brown, and an eventual Breakout Artist Showcase winner



July 25: Major International Talent

- Headlined by 10x RIAA Platinum-Certified artist, Chase Rice
- Supported by Chayce Beckham, most well-known for his No. 1 radio and Country Billboard hit, "23"
- Other acts include Platinum-Certified artist, Tyler Braden, as well as local talents, Angelica Appelman (2026 CMA Ontario Female Artist of the Year Nominee), Andy Colonico, and Cam Brown



Professional Management: Experienced Leadership & Industry Leading Partners

- Executive lead:
 - Jovan Popovic, Founder & CEO of Break First Entertainment; former two-term McMaster Students Union President
 - Jason Kim, CFO; Former executive at Queens AMS, active Reservist Infantryman with the Canadian Army
 - Thomas Saab, Director of Operations & Fan Experience; Former Campus Events Director at the McMaster Students Union
 - Hayden Lawrence, Corporate Partnerships Director; Former Manager of Corporate Partnerships with Hamilton Sports Group
- Specialized Technical Subcontractors (including but not limited to):
 - **EchoAV**: Significant experience at McMaster University events, as well as various local festivals - leading high-end audio-visual production & permitting
 - **12 Mile Event Productions**: 35 years of experience, including high profile events such as the Shaw Festival, MLB & NHL All-Star Games, the Super Bowl, Fallsview Casino and more – leading back of house operations & general site plan consultation
 - **Sonic Unyon**: Larger scale event producer in Hamilton, including spearheading Supercrawl – leading bar and alcohol distribution, as well as permitting

Economic Impact: A Catalyst for Local Prosperity

- **Hamilton-First" Job Creation:**
 - Priority hiring for over 100+ temporary positions, including event security, technical production crews, and hospitality staff.
- **Hospitality & Tourism Multiplier:**
 - With an anticipated attendance of 4,500 each day, but potentially up to 10,000 per day, we project a high "heads-in-beds" impact, driving peak-season occupancy rates for local hotels and short-term rentals.
- **Localized Supply Chain:**
 - Commitment to sourcing as much as possible, between food and beverage vendors, corporate partners, equipment rentals, and site services from Hamilton-based businesses.
- **Ancillary Spending:**
 - Significant secondary economic benefits for local gas stations, retail outlets, cafes, and restaurants as thousands of visitors transit through the city.
- **Long-Term Tax Base Contribution:**
 - Building a recurring annual marquee event that enhances Hamilton's status as a premier tourism destination, supporting long-term municipal revenue growth.

The Route 905 Experience



- We have a strong foundation in place, with the budget for top-tier performers and core festival infrastructure. We're prepared to invest further to expand the overall experience
- With a strong turnout, we are ready to scale quickly, investing in both immediate enhancements and long-term growth of the festival
- Early audience growth is critical; helping us drive attendance earlier allows us to confidently reinvest into building a bigger and better experience
- We're building Route 905 for the long run: focused on brand awareness and audience growth now, with the goal of delivering a world-class, family-friendly festival where increased volume allows us to keep prices accessible

Seeking Your Support & Guidance

A Collaborative Partnership

- Purpose of Delegation: To inform Council of the event, and to seek their feedback, including the City's priorities, so that we can align our operations with Hamilton's strategic goals.
- Our Request: Guidance on navigating city-wide protocols and your support in facilitating a successful, high-profile event.
- Open Communication: Establishing a direct line of contact for transparent, ongoing updates throughout 2026.

Looking Ahead

Restoring a Musical Legacy:

- **The Mission:** Beyond a single event, we aim to revitalize Hamilton's historical musical roots, continuing to boost Hamilton's reputation as the city of music.
- **The Vision:** Strengthening Hamilton's brand as a national hub for country music, reclaiming a cultural title that has been part of our city's DNA for decades.



ROUTE ★ 905

July 24-25, 2026 Ancaster Fairgrounds

COUNTRY
FESTIVAL

SATURDAY

Chase Rice
Chayce Beckham
Tyler Braden
Angelica Appelman • Andy Colonico

FRIDAY

Brett Kissel
Jade Eagleson
Madeline Merlo
Ryan Langdon • Emerging Artist Winner

Multi-Day Acoustic Set From Cam Brown

showpass KX947 New Country FM HD1 Shore Shakers HOT COUNTRY 93.9

Contact

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Website

- www.route905.ca
- [Tickets](#)

Social Media

- @Route905CountryFestival
- [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#)