

About The World's Longest-Running Cigar Box Guitar Festival

Huntsville, Alabama is home to the World's Longest-Running Cigar Box Guitar Festival. Since its inception in 2004, the Festival has drawn over 65,000 spectators. It has been recognized by the City of Huntsville in a proclamation from Mayor Tommy Battle as "an important aspect of Huntsville's music ecosystem" that "provides a truly unique family-friendly music experience" and "supports music tourism efforts in the region." In 2024, the Festival enters its 20th year of sharing cigar box guitar music with the greater Huntsville community, as well as visitors from throughout the Southeast from May 31 through June 2.

The 19th Annual Festival, held June 2-4, 2023, was a free, family-friendly event featuring seven musical acts and served as a fundraiser for arts programs in local public schools. Festival expenses were covered by sponsor dollars, while a team of 20 volunteers dedicated their time to the event's preparations, and day-of activities. An estimated 3,000 people experienced some portion of the Festival in person, while more than 590,000 were exposed to the event promotion and sponsor information in through print and broadcast media, social media/online and at in-person venues throughout North Alabama. The event raised \$4,600 for the Microwave Dave Music Education Foundation and Arts Huntsville's Creative Launchpad. [Watch a video showing Festival highlights here.](#)

Because cigar box guitars are traditionally made out of cigar boxes and other discarded materials, the 2024 Festival will once again feature an array of children's activities focusing on a recycled music theme in addition to multiple acts in varying music genres. Activities will include stations for children to make instruments out of recycled and upcycled materials and the opportunity to perform on stage in the Junior Junk Jam with Festival musicians. Proceeds from the event will once again be donated to the Microwave Dave Music Education Foundation and Creative Launchpad, both of which bring arts and music education to classrooms in North Alabama.

Studios and restaurants throughout Lowe Mill will participate in the event offering special meals, art and music-themed activities. Among the studios at Lowe Mill is The Cigar Box Guitar Store. Founded in 2010 by John and Pat Nickel, it is the only brick-and-mortar cigar box guitar store in the world. Jeff and Tara Mello are the store's current owners and it is their mission to build community within a diverse group through the experience of sharing music. They offer free lessons every Saturday from Noon-2:00pm with loaner cigar box guitars available to anyone who wants to participate. "There's no obligation to buy," explained Tara. "We just want to share the joy of how easy it is to make music on a cigar box guitar."

For sponsor and vendor opportunities or media inquiries, please contact Tara Mello at 805-587-8690 or cbguitarstore@gmail.com.