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## Pop star Andy Grammer to headline at balloon festival



*Pop star Andy Grammer is the first concert series headliner announced by the 36<sup>th</sup> annual QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning. He will perform 8 p.m. July 27 on the main stage.*

### Bob Makin

Andy Grammer, the first male pop star since John Mayer a decade ago to reach the Top 10 in Adult Pop Radio on his first two singles, "Honey, I'm Good" and "Smoke Clears," is the first headliner to be announced by this summer's 36th annual QuickChek New Jersey Festival of Ballooning in Association with PNC Bank.

Grammer, who has taken the music world by storm with a succession of six gold and platinum records, will perform on the opening evening of the festival's concert series July 27 on the Progressive Insurance Main Stage at Solberg Airport in Readington.

"As someone who likes to write happy, positive songs, I know they can come across too sweet," said Grammer in a news release. "It's way easier to write sad songs — you play minor chords and instantly it's cooler. It takes a lot of effort to make something happy not sound cheesy, but I feel like that's my life's work. And right now, in the world, we need love in all forms."

That spirit can certainly be felt in Grammer's "Give Love," featuring rapper LunchMoney Lewis. Culled from his recently released third album, "The Good Parts," the hot track follows the success of his platinum hit, "Fresh Eyes," which has racked up more than 300 million total streams and became his sixth single certified gold or better. "Smoke Clears" is his latest new hit single.

Grammer's self-titled debut album featured the platinum singles "Keep Your Head Up" and "Fine By Me." His second album, "Magazine or Novels," featured the triple-platinum smash "Honey, I'm Good," one of the best-selling songs of 2015, reaching No. 9 on the Billboard Hot 100, as well as the certified gold anthem "Good To Be Alive (Hallelujah)."

It will be a homecoming of sorts for the pop star, who grew up in the metropolitan area and graduated from Monroe-Woodbury High School in Central Valley, New York. His father is Red Grammer, an East Orange native and Grammy-nominated children's recording artist.

"We're thrilled to have Andy Grammer, one of pop's biggest stars, open our headlining concert series," said Festival Executive Producer Howard Freeman in a news release.

"He is the type of contemporary artist who reflects how our concerts continue to grow. We work very hard to present an array of musically diverse artists year after year. Our attendees cover a very wide age range with different tastes, and we're proud we can continue to produce talent that they'll enjoy."

The largest summertime hot air balloon and music festival in North America was named the premiere family entertainment attraction in New Jersey by Gannett and the USA TODAY Network.

In addition to a concert series, which will feature two other soon-to-be announced headliners, the three-day Balloon Fest features 100 sport and special-shaped hot air balloons from around the world taking to the skies twice each day in mass ascensions over the scenic Hunterdon County countryside.

Fireworks displays, a nighttime hot air balloon glow, children's amusement rides and entertainment, the running with the Balloons 5K, interactive exhibits, and hundreds of crafters and food vendors also are among the family fun.

The Festival's first mass inflation and ascension of 100 hot air balloons is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. July 27 at 6:30 p.m., followed by Grammer's concert at 8 p.m. and a fireworks extravaganza at 9:30 p.m.

Tickets, which include Blue Sky Club VIP packages, go on sale 10 a.m. March 1 at [www.balloonfestival.com](http://www.balloonfestival.com).

The festival previously announced that Grammy-nominated, Princeton-raised children's artist Laurie Berkner will return to open the concert series at 1:30 p.m. July 27 on the main stage. More headlining acts will be announced soon.

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