

By Micah Groves

Editor

HUGO — One of Hugo's own will be featured in an upcoming exhibit at the Oklahoma History Center in Oklahoma City.

The Five Americans, for which local resident Mike Rabon sang and played lead guitar, will be featured in the center's exhibit "Another Hot Oklahoma Night."

The exhibit will explore the Rock and Roll artists, radio stations, personalities, venues and fans that have called Oklahoma home. Beyond the facts of each story, the exhibit will show how growing up in Oklahoma affected the music. The stories will be displayed in an innovative style to encourage visitor participation and ensure that the visitor will take away a new perspective on the history of Rock and Roll in Oklahoma.

The exhibit will include early artists such as Woody Guthrie, Bob Willis and Charlie Christian. It will travel through the 50s and 60s with artists like Wanda Jackson and The Five Americans, all the way to present day groups such as the All-American Rejects.

The exhibit is set to open on May 2, 2009.

The Five Americans first met in Durant, Okla., at Southeastern Oklahoma State University in 1962. They were eventually discovered by a record label called Abnak Records. John Abdnor, president of the label, took them under his wing and provided them the resources to write and practice original songs.

In the summer of '65, they released an original song entitled "I See The Light." The song went to the top 20 in Billboard Magazine and paved the way for a string of hits by the five. "I See The Light" was followed by "Evol-Not Love" which also charted in the top 40 nationwide. Then came the group's biggest hit, "Western Union." This song, which was inspired by a Western Union telegram sign, went on to become number six in Billboard and sold in excess of 1 million records.

Representatives from the Oklahoma History Center were in Hugo Wednesday afternoon to interview Rabon for a documentary. Jeff Moore is the Oklahoma History Center Director of Exhibits.

"The Five Americans, as well as a lot of Oklahoma artists, have such amazing stories," Moore said. "We wanted to tell those stories. We are hoping to provide an amazing collection of Oklahoma artists. There is an amazing collection of Rock and Roll artists that people may not know about. We are giving a whole other side of history. This is a fresh new story of Rock and Roll. The Five Americans are a part of that history. They are a very instrumental part of Rock and Roll artists from Oklahoma.

Moore said the documentary will be separate from the exhibit.

"We don't know yet exactly how it will be released," he said. "But we are hoping it will be aired on OETA. We have interviewed more than 100 people so far."

As for Rabon, he said he is honored to be included among some of Oklahoma's most talented artists.

"I feel very proud to be among all these innovators in Rock and Roll," he said. "I feel like we

were innovators as well. And this kind of validates the fact that we made an impact on the music world. This is a pretty cool piece of Rock and Roll history and I am honored.”

Rabon said he hopes Choctaw County residents will visit the exhibit if they are ever in Oklahoma City.

“This is great recognition for Oklahoma musicians,” he said. “These artists are responsible for some of the most endearing and lasting music that has ever been written.”

The Oklahoma History Center is located at 2401 N. Laird Ave., in Oklahoma City.

