

Valley Professional Plays For His Cause

Charity Rock Concert To Benefit Nonprofits

By **CANDACE SIPOS**
Daily News-Record

HARRISONBURG — John Whitfield will represent his organization from behind a guitar and a mic Saturday night at the city's first Rocktown Rock-n-Roll Benefit Show.

"This is an interesting convergence of my day job and my rock 'n' roll adventures," said Whitfield, whose "day job" is executive director of Blue Ridge Legal Services. The organization provides free legal aid to low-income residents of the Shenandoah and Roanoke

valleys through four offices, including one in Harrisonburg.

After the organization survived a round of state cuts, the federal government slashed 4 percent of its funding last April and 15 percent more in November, leaving officials with \$180,000 less to work with in January.

Last year, the Harrisonburg office couldn't afford to replace three attorneys lost to attrition. Three full-time attorneys and one part-time lawyer are now ad-

ressing the same caseload that had been handled by twice as many attorneys.

"It's awful," Whitfield said. "We're limited essentially to

Want To Go?

The Rocktown Rock-n-Roll Benefit Show will be held Saturday from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at Court Square Theatre. Tickets at the door will be \$10.

taking emergencies now. ... We're turning away maybe three times as many people as we can help."

Two General Assembly bills would have provided monetary relief to the service but one failed, and the other was included only in the Senate's version of the budget, Whitfield said.

Officials will know once the

state's new budget is adopted whether they have to lay off three more attorneys: two in the Winchester office and one in the Lexington branch.

So, in an effort to offset some of those missing funds, Whitfield has partnered with the city's Community Resource Center, the Harrisonburg Redevelopment and Housing Authority and the Kappa Alpha Order of James Madison University to present a musical fundraiser downtown.

Whitfield will be playing guitar and singing for one of the show's three local acts, Little Walter and the Convictions, a '60s-style rock band.

Three Bands Set To Perform At Show

Guitar

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Concert Details

More than 300 people already have responded to the Rocktown Rock-n-Roll Benefit Show's Facebook page, according to Michael Wong, a board member for the Community Resource Center and the housing authority's executive director.

"If we can get 100 or 150 [people], we would be very happy," Wong said of the event's first year.

The center will receive half the proceeds from the show, with the other half going directly to Blue Ridge Legal Services.

Center officials hope to expand hours, as the office is only open about four hours for five days a week now, and perform more outreach activities.

But the funding comes almost solely from the housing authority, the Harrisonburg-Rockingham County Department of Social Services and other agencies.

In addition to Whitfield's band, the concert will feature a JMU student-led indie band called

The Two Alpacas and Submariner, a band that includes an ex-Blue Ridge

Legal Services attorney.

The concert will last from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at Court

Square Theatre. Tickets at the door will be \$10.

For more information, go to www.courtsquaretheater.com/rock-n-roll-benefit/.

on the
WEB

Concert Details

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