

Atlanta-Based Black Buckle Records Launches the First AI Hybrid Record Label merging Country Music and Technology

Atlanta-based company blends country storytelling tradition with ethical use of artificial intelligence

ATLANTA, GA, UNITED STATES, February 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- ATLANTA — [Black Buckle Records](#) officially launched this week in Atlanta, introducing a new independent record label

positioned at the intersection of country music tradition, cultural inclusion, and emerging technology. Led by President and CEO [Carl Ray Williams](#), the company enters the industry as the first Black-owned hybrid AI country music label.

Founded by Williams—an award-winning songwriter, recording artist, and entrepreneur—Black Buckle Records was created to expand access, ownership, and creative opportunity in country, Americana, and roots music while preserving the genre's long-standing emphasis on

“This is truly Black History in the making. Our world is always changing. Let's embrace the changes.”

Carl Ray Williams / President and CEO Of Black Buckle Records

authenticity, craft, and storytelling. “Country music has always been rooted in truth and lived experience,” Williams said. “This label is about honoring that foundation while responsibly using modern tools to open doors for voices and stories that have too often been left out.”

Country Music's Audience and Market Reach:

Country music remains one of the most powerful and far-reaching genres in the United States. According to industry data, more than 60% of U.S. adults identify as country music fans, spanning urban, suburban, and rural markets. Country consistently ranks among the top three most-consumed music genres in the U.S., with particularly strong engagement among listeners aged 25–54 and significant crossover growth among younger and more diverse audiences through streaming platforms.

Despite this broad and evolving listenership, ownership and representation within the genre have remained narrow—making the launch of Black Buckle Records a notable moment in country music's business and cultural evolution.

Historical Context and Industry Legacy:

Black participation in country music has deep roots, even if often overlooked. In the late 1960s, Motown Records quietly entered the country space with the launch of Melodyland, its country-focused imprint. Melodyland released country recordings from artists including Dorsey Burnette and others, marking one of the earliest efforts by a Black-owned music company to engage the country market at the label level. Black Buckle Records builds on that legacy—bringing modern tools, transparency, and a renewed focus on ownership and authorship into a genre that continues to shape American culture.

Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence:

Black Buckle Records will release music from both human and AI-assisted artists, operating under a transparency-first model that emphasizes ethical use of technology. Artificial intelligence is used as a collaborative creative resource, not a replacement for songwriters, musicians, or artistic intent. All projects prioritize songwriting integrity, clear credits, and responsible innovation. Beyond recorded releases, the label plans to support songwriter development, publishing initiatives, visual storytelling, and strategic partnerships that connect Nashville's songwriting heritage with Atlanta's entrepreneurial and cultural influence.

Black Buckle Records' inaugural roster includes AI-driven artists designed to represent distinct lanes within country and Americana storytelling:

Reign — Cinematic modern country focused on resilience, faith, and redemption

South Park — Blue-collar, small-town country rooted in grit, humor, and everyday life

River Oaks — Americana-leaning storytelling centered on nostalgia, family, and reflection

Cane — Outlaw-influenced country exploring temptation, consequence, and survival

Jessie Raye — A soulful female voice emphasizing vulnerability, growth, and emotional clarity

Sage — Introspective, roots-forward songs focused on wisdom and lived experience

Drahgo — Cowboy to the heart with songs about the cowboy life.

About Carl Ray Williams:

Carl Ray Williams is an award-winning country songwriter, recording artist, and cultural curator with decades of involvement in country, bluegrass, and Americana music. His work is grounded in traditional songwriting values and long-form storytelling, shaped through years of



Black Buckle Records

collaboration within the Nashville songwriting community alongside respected hit writers and industry veterans.

Williams has received multiple songwriting and creative achievement honors for his contributions to independent country and roots music and is widely recognized for his advocacy around inclusion, songwriter rights, and artist ownership.

He is also the creator and curator of Carl Ray's Black Country Music Radio Playlist, a groundbreaking discovery platform featuring more than 1,500 country songs performed exclusively by Black country music singers. The playlist has gained national attention for challenging long-held assumptions about who makes country music and who listens to it—while introducing audiences to both legacy and emerging artists.

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