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## Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival: Young musicians to display talents at the county fair

*Aldrich Tan*  
*The Desert Sun*

Five youth bands will have a chance to perform on opening day of the Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival.

At least 10 bands featuring 16- to 26-year-olds have applied to perform on the Magic Carpet Stage on Feb. 12 for a chance to win \$1,000. The deadline to apply is next week, contest organizers said Wednesday.

"This is another way to bring something back to the community and showcase local teens," said Veronica Helgeland, assistant fair marketing manager.

The band competition is the latest addition confirmed for the upcoming county fair, which will also feature rides, live entertainment and a nightly musical pageant.

A battle of the bands happened seven years ago at the fair, but Helgeland, who has been with the fair since 2006, is unsure why it was halted.

This year, the Fourth District Youth Advisory Council agreed to help the fair organize the return of the event.

It is a group of 40 high school teens from the valley and Blythe who do community service projects and advise county Supervisor John Benoit on youth issues, council coordinator Noel Loughrin said.

### Display of talent

The battle of the bands would give local youths "an opportunity to display their talent somewhere," said council member Brittany Boiko, 17, of La Quinta.

"The music scene is actually pretty big in the valley and the talented musicians are teenagers," she said.

Fair officials and youth council members will look through the applications on Friday and select their top five bands to perform, Loughrin said.

On Feb. 12, the winning band will be chosen by a panel of five judges comprised by the fair board, Youth Advisory Council members, and other people to be determined, Loughrin said.

Brittany said she hopes the event will become a recurring fair tradition.

"We hope that it will be a good kick start for the years to come," she said.

Glance: Battle of the bands 2010

Five youth bands will have a chance to perform at the upcoming Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival on Feb. 12 at the county fairgrounds in Indio. The top prize is \$1,000.

Band members must be Riverside County residents between 16 and 26 years old. No rap music, and foul language, inappropriate clothing and obscene gestures will lead to disqualification and removal from the stage.

To apply, download the application at [www.datefest.org](http://www.datefest.org). Send the completed application, a stage plot, a five-song set list with lyrics (three original songs and two cover songs), and a photo of the band to the Riverside County Fair and National Date Festival Battle of the Bands, Attn: Noel Loughrin, 73-710 Fred Waring Drove, Suite 222, Palm Desert, CA, 92260.

Deadline is Thursday.

Information: Noel Loughrin at (760) 863-2556.