

# Local star still a friend

## Reba continues to show love for hospital



GARY CARTER / The (Sherman-Denison, Texas) Herald Democrat / Associated Press

**Country music star Reba McEntire speaks Monday outside Reba's Ranch House, a home-away-from-home for families and loved ones of critically ill patients at Texoma Medical Center in Denison, Texas.**

**By JASON COLLINGTON**  
World Scene Writer

DENISON, Texas — Reba McEntire is a lot of things right now — singer, sitcom star and clothing designer — but she hasn't forgotten how to be a friend.

McEntire came to this town just south of the Red River to see what a decade's worth of benefit concerts have done.

Since teaming up with Texoma Medical Center, where her doctors were based during her childhood, McEntire has raised \$4 million.

Her name is all over the hospital's campus, including the rehabil-

itation center and ranch house, which is a home-away-from-home for families of critically ill patients.

Since its opening in 1992, thousands of families have taken comfort in this home with a big front porch. More than 10,000 Oklahomans have stayed there.

"They're healing, and that is what the whole thing is about," McEntire said during a press conference.

The country music superstar had her press briefing a few hours before her performance in yet another benefit concert in Durant, the home of Southeastern Oklahoma State University, which McEntire attended before moving to

Nashville.

"From the music to the hospital to Reba's Ranch House, to the mammography unit, the rehab center — it's all about healing. If we can get everyone back on their feet back home, then we've done our job."

Proceeds from the Memorial Day concert are earmarked for the ranch house's endowment. Hospital leaders said McEntire's contributions over the years were "immeasurable."

"They do all the work," McEntire said of the hospital and the community, which isn't far from

SEE REBA A-21

# REBA:

This summer McEntire will tour with Terri Clark and Brad Paisley.

FROM A-19

her hometown of Chockie, population 18.

"I come in here one or two days and they treat me like a queen."

She said what motivated her to help this part of southeastern Oklahoma and northern Texas was a pledge she made during a lunch date with her doctor.

"It's important to me for these families to have someone to talk to," she said. "It's a wonderful, very comfortable place."

The reigning queen of country music is doing a lot of her work off stage these days. Some 48 million of her albums have been sold, she's the star of a highly rated sitcom, and McEntire received critical praised for her stint in the title role in the Broadway hit, "Annie Get Your Gun."

McEntire recently finished giving a voice to Betsy the cow in a new movie of the children's classic "Charlotte's Web," and she also did voice work as a character in the upcoming "Fox and the Hound 2."

Success in all those arenas has tagged McEntire with what marketers everywhere crave — mass commercial appeal.

In March, Dillard's launched a clothing line called Reba, which offers fashions that range in price from \$48 to \$289.

"As best as I could, I have put my own voice into the clothing line and the TV show," said McEntire, whose mother modeled a light blue sweater set from the collection during the press conference.

"Every time they come with a script, they ask me 'Would you say this?' I say, 'No. This is what I would say.'

"Same way with the clothes. I am now beginning to say,

'You know what, the Southern women I know wouldn't wear this, but they would wear this.' I think the reason the TV show and the clothing line are different from anyone else's is because I have a different way of doing things."

She isn't planning on just slapping her name on clothes. The cowgirl wants to make women's shoes as comfortable as the boots she wears.

"Curiosity motivates me to go on," she said about all her projects. "I love what I do. I am very blessed. I've always thought that if I didn't do the things God has given me the talents for, he would give them to someone else. So I sure took him up on it and thank him every day."

This summer McEntire will tour with Terri Clark and Brad Paisley. She's also going to do a benefit concert at Carnegie Hall later this month.

She'll soon return to Los Angeles, where she lives most of the year, and start the fifth season of "Reba." The WB Network recently picked up the series for two more years.

"Out of everything I have been able to do, I am very grateful for my family and my friends," she said. "That is the most important thing in life God has given me."

McEntire was happy that another Oklahoma girl from a small town has gotten her first big break by winning this year's edition of "American Idol."

"I am very proud of Carrie (Underwood), and I think she has done a great job," McEntire said of the Checotah native. "She is as sweet as a button. I think she is going to be a great 'American Idol.'"

McEntire doesn't make it back to Oklahoma much because of her schedule, but she said she always likes finding herself surrounded by familiar faces.

"Coming back home grounds you," she said. "It reminds you of your roots and your raising. People from Oklahoma and Texas are just very down to earth people who are loving and giving and supportive."

**'Curiosity motivates me to go on. I love what I do. I am very blessed.'**

Reba McEntire

Jason Collington 581-8464

jason.collington@tulsaworld.com