

R.E.M. Lends Itself To Land Aid 2000

Impromptu Courthouse Concert Draws A Crowd

■ For audio and video clips of R.E.M.'s performance at Land Aid, see www.onlineathens.com

BY LEE SHEARER
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More than 1,000 people gathered in front of the Clarke County Courthouse Sunday evening to hear music and speakers at "Land Aid 2000," organized by the Athens Grow Green Coalition.

Pro-environment messages from more than a dozen groups - mainly showing support for more green space, less uncontrolled sprawl and growth - weren't the only attraction of the day.

Several people in attendance admitted being there because they heard a rumor flashed around Athens Sunday afternoon that Athens' most famous citizens, the members of the rock band R.E.M., were going to put in a rare Athens public appearance.

At 7 p.m. sharp, the rumor changed to fact, as Michael Stipe appeared on



Jeff Blake/Photo Staff

Mike Mills, Michael Stipe and Peter Buck, of the Athens-based rock band R.E.M., perform outside the Athens-Clarke County Courthouse as part of the Land Aid 2000 event on Sunday. Land Aid was sponsored by the Athens Grow Green Coalition to raise awareness of environmental issues in Athens.

the steps of the Athens-Clarke County Courthouse.

"We're working on a new record over at (music producer) John Keane's and we wanted to come out and support what you people are working for,"

Stipe said.

After Stipe sang a solo number, an as-yet-untitled new composition with pre-recorded accompaniment, he was

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