



Sarah Calhoun



Owner, Red Ants Pants
Executive Director, Red Ants Pants Foundation
Producer, Red Ants Pants Music Festival

Sarah Calhoun has decades of leadership experience in both the non-profit and small business sectors, working in the outdoor education industry before founding Red Ants Pants in 2006.

Raised on a farm in rural Connecticut, Calhoun was inspired to move to Montana by Ivan Doig's *This House of Sky*. From her home in the small town of White Sulphur Springs, she has become an inspiration to entrepreneurs nationwide and is known for her dedication to supporting rural communities.

Tired of wearing men's work pants that didn't fit, Calhoun designed pants that would fit, function and flatter working women. Red Ants Pants are made in the USA and that will not change. Red Ants Pants is based out of White Sulphur Springs, Montana where the storefront, distribution center, and international headquarters all reside in an historic saddle shop. Known for their grass roots marketing efforts, including 'Tour de Pants,' the direct sales business model is proving effective.

To show support for the hard-working side of Montana and beyond, the Red Ants Pants Foundation was born in 2011. The Foundation supports women's leadership, working family farms and ranches, and rural communities - the three things most important to Calhoun and the Red Ants Pants Community. That same year the Foundation launched its first program - the Red Ants Pants Music Festival. In 2011, over 6,000 fans came to celebrate rural Montana in a cow pasture. Over the years, attendees have enjoyed headliners including Merle Haggard, Emmylou Harris, Dwight Yoakam, Wynonna Judd, and Keb' Mo. The festival continues its success into its tenth year on July 22-25, 2021 aiming to improve upon the authentic, rich community culture the 16,000 attendees enjoyed during the 2019 festival.

Calhoun's grit has brought her enterprises national recognition over the years - in 2018 she was named to the Montana Business Hall of Fame and the Festival received the prestigious Event of the Year award from the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development. In 2016, featured in *The New York Times* and *The Huffington Post*. In 2015, selected as one of only 100 businesses nationwide to participate in the Small Business Majority's Small Business Leadership Summit in Washington, DC. In 2012, named the National Women in Business Champion for the Small Business Administration. In 2011, invited by President Obama to attend a White House forum on jobs and economic development after serving as a US Delegate to the APEC Women in Business Summit in San Francisco. Closer to home, she was honored when Governor Schweitzer named her the 2011 Entrepreneur of the Year for the State of Montana. Calhoun and her company have been featured in many national publications including Entrepreneur, National Geographic, Delta Sky, Country Woman, and Sunset.

Calhoun has been called a "revolutionary figure in rural business today" and a "powerhouse of inspiration for women in business." Her dynamic style and inspiring experiences as an entrepreneur make her a highly sought-after keynote speaker. She has given two TEDx talks, dozens of keynote addresses, and has been featured on national television programs such as CNBC, CNN, and Bloomberg.

As Calhoun has risen to the top echelons of success as a rural entrepreneur, she is paying it forward by actively encouraging and mentoring other women starting their own businesses.