

Trap Beckham makes things happen. As an independent act in Jacksonville, Florida, he released the hit singles “Top Of The Line” and “Ohh She Thick,” won a handful of awards, became a fixture on the local college scene and toured extensively. No wonder he earned the nickname “The Golden Boy Of The Hood.” Everything Trap Beckham touched became a movement.

With his buzz building thanks to his relentless work ethic and a steady stream of high quality material, industry powerhouse Def Jam Recordings is set to make Trap Beckham its next superstar and the first rapper from Jacksonville to break through nationally. “It meant a lot to me, for my city, for my family,” the rapper says of signing to the iconic imprint. “People from here don’t see that type of stuff. When we went out to LA for the first time, we were glassy-eyed ourselves, like ‘Look at all this stuff. Look at all these foreigners, these mansions, all this money. This is crazy.’ It’s just real big that somebody can do it verses nobody doing it.”

Def Jam was blown away by the buzz of Trap Beckham’s “Bday Chick” single, which has become a regional smash in the southeastern part of the United States. Its skeletal beat, energetic instrumentation and memorable chorus make it ripe for blockbuster success and Trap Beckham and his team are preparing to take the radio- and club-ready track national.

“We’re from the South, so that type of tempo is the ideal type of tempo for a twerk song,” Trap Beckham explains. “That’s what I was going for, so I already had my tempo down. I came up with it rapping to myself in the club. I went home, made the beat and three weeks later dropped the whole thing.”

“We already understand the art of pushing a record,” he adds. “I want to make it legendary. You’ve got to push it forever to make it legendary.”

Trap Beckham’s legend started growing exponentially in 2012. That’s when he released his smash self-produced single “Top Of The Line” featuring Young Cash. Trap Beckham kicked his verse off by paying homage to Yo Gotti’s “5 Star Chick” single, giving listeners a way to instantly gravitate toward the song. The cut’s hardcore production and smooth sonic accents made it the type of tune that endeared itself to male and female listeners. Trap Beckham says there’s a certain magic to his music when he makes his own tracks.

“For some reason, those are the ones that stick out,” he reveals. “I could record 30 songs with people, but when I start the beat and I let someone else finish it, they end up crazy. It’s kind of automatic once I get in the studio, especially if the vibe is right.”

“Top Of The Line” is featured on Trap Beckham’s 7.14.12 The Mixtape, the third in a series of mixtapes he releases on his birthday, July 14. The project, which also included the percolating cut “She Thick,” made Trap Beckham a local celebrity, one whose music meant something special to his native Jacksonville. “It’s like we created a whole holiday in the city,” he says. Indeed, Trap Beckham’s birthdays are now annual events that include the release of a new 7.14 mixtape and a series of celebrations surrounding his birthday.

It’s an excitement that’s possible thanks to the work Trap Beckham and his Backdoor Music team (DJ Pretty Ricky and Grand Prix) put in at HBCUs, as well as the region’s high schools. He

performed there at every opportunity, developing a legion of loyal fans who follow him religiously.

Now a seasoned performer, the rapper-producer-entertainer born Travis Cave got an early start in music. He spent much of his childhood around his cousins, who acted like they were a superstar rap group. By the time he was 8, Trap Beckham was following their lead and had already begun writing lyrics. At 12, he was recording himself. His goal at the time was simple. "I just wanted to be on the radio," he recalls.

Growing up listening to, being inspired by and admiring two of the most successful artists in music – T-Pain and Kanye West – helped shape Trap Beckham's music ear and his professional outlook. He was blown away by the simple yet hard approach T-Pain took on his Epiphany album, his favorite project of all time. Kanye West, on the other hand, inspired Trap Beckham by rapping and doing his own beats.

"Kanye is just raw," he says of his new labelmate. "He makes his own beats and raps on them. That's fire. He's got his own shoes. That's fire. I've got a pair. He just sets the bar every time."

Trap Beckham has been doing the same thing in his own way. In 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, he won Artist, Song, Mixtape and Performer of the year at the Duval Diamond Awards, which celebrate the best talent in the area. The accolades mark part of his growth from a shy kid to one who is on the brink of national stardom.

"I used to doubt myself all the time," he says. "But it is what it is. We're the movement. I used to be way more nervous as a person. People are people no matter where you go, where they are. I just had to start looking at stuff differently."

Once Trap Beckham changed his perspective, his world opened up. He now boasts a bevy of hit singles, the love of his home region and a freshly inked recording contract with Def Jam. With "Bday Chick" gaining popularity by the day and his debut studio album in the works, Trap Beckham is poised for national prominence.

"My goal is to take it as far as I can take it," he says. "I'm going for more awards, more hits on the radio. My goal is to stay consistent. I want to be in the game for a long-ass time. I want to be one of those artists that didn't really have to do anything but drop those hits."

He's well on his way.