



US-BOUND: Bluegrass music presenter Geoff Morris.

Bluegrass host takes study tour

By **ADRIAN LOWE**

BENDIGO bluegrass music legend Geoff Morris is heading to Nashville on an international scholarship.

Mr Morris, a blind radio and music announcer who achieved years of fame through his work on community radio, now hosts an online bluegrass program.

His work has become among the best in the world and he is traveling to the home of bluegrass music to advance his knowledge.

Mr Morris heard on April 12 that the International Bluegrass Music Association was offering funding for an international outreach event that anyone who was a member of the IBMA could apply for.

He had just four days to put his application and voice recording together before the deadline expired, and sent an urgent package to organisers in the US.

"I had to absolutely put the skates on — but I decided to have a crack at it," he said.

"I knew from past experience that they would have vastly more applications than they would ever have funding for, but I got it."

Mr Morris's scholarship covers his return airfare to Nashville and entry to a convention being held from October 1-7.

"The first four days of the convention are a mixture of showcases, where you get to see and listen to a whole lot of rising, emerging, bluegrass musicians," he said.

"But there are a lot of profes-

sional development seminars, where you study all aspects of promotion and marketing.

"Those things, you bring back here in order to further promote the music and learn how to market and promote it properly and set up a festival or convention here.

"There will be thousands of people there from all over the place, but I would be the only Australian going there and it's the number one bluegrass event in the world."

Mr Morris said he was looking forward to getting to learn from and share knowledge with people who grew up with bluegrass music.

"Here, of course, being a little minority sort of music, you have a whole lot of people who got into it later in life," he said.

"In America, you have a great number of people who grew up with it from infancy, virtually, and they know and love it with such depth."

Mr Morris hopes to stay in Nashville for about a month.

To do this, he requires additional sponsorship to cover the cost of accommodation and for his seeing-eye dog.

"I'd really like to stay over there and disappear into the whole bluegrass music scene for as long as I possibly can," Mr Morris said.

He said his internet show, while focusing on bluegrass music, was a promotional tool for Bendigo.

"I often say how wonderful Bendigo is on the show," he said.

Anyone interested in sponsoring Mr Morris can telephone him on 5446 9716.