



Moyer Is Finalist, Macy Waters Junior Division Talent Show Winner For Miss Illinois County Fair Pageant

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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SPRINGFIELD - The Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs recently held its 112th annual convention at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield. One of the highlights of the annual event is the Miss Illinois County Fair Queen Pageant.

Paige Van Dyke of Lewisville, IL, 20, was crowned the 63rd Miss Illinois County Fair Queen. Paige represented Clay County at the 112th Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs Convention on Sunday. Van Dyke is the daughter of John and Katrina Van Dyke and is currently attending Oklahoma State University majoring in ag communications with a minor in special education. She hopes to someday start an agriculture program for special needs students.

MacKenzie Moyer of Macoupin County was a finalist.

Van Dyke will be a summer employee of the Department of Agriculture. She will travel to about 30 county fairs and will be the official hostess of the Illinois State Fair in Springfield and the DuQuoin State Fair. As queen, Van Dyke's main duty is to emphasize the importance of agriculture and county fairs in Illinois.

Caroline Smith of Edgar County was named the first runner-up, Avery Osman of Union County was named second runner-up, Kyla Epplin of Perry County was named third runner-up, and Charlie Weishaar of Schuyler County was named fourth runner-up.

"I grew up showing sheep and cattle," said Van Dyke. "I want to be an advocate for all those in the livestock barns. I prefer my cowboy boots and cow in hand, but I wanted to step outside my comfort zone."

She traded those cowboy boots for a pair of heels and a teal dress to win the crown.

"My heart did start beating faster as they started naming the fourth, third, second runner-up, but I felt really calm overall," she said. "I knew anyone (in the competition) would be deserving. I was really shocked when they called my name. I know God works in magical ways."

The top 15 finalists were: Allison Stewart of Macon County; MacKenzie Moyer of Macoupin County; Charlie Weishaar of Schuyler County, Bailie Krause of Mason County; Madeline Blaesing of Warren County; Abby Riechmann of Okawville Fair, Caroline Smith of Edgar County; Avery Osman of Union County; Mollie Bennett of Henry County; Paige VanDyke of Clay County; Kyla Epplin of Perry County; Faith Maxwell of Pana Tri-County; Lauren Phillips of Christian County; Naomi Dolan of Vermilion County and Selah Brimmer of Coles County.

Non-finalist awards went to Bekkah Schemonia of Williamson County, Ruby Crum Memorial Award; Maci McCoy of Boone County, Best Personal Interview; Morgan Wilderman of Bond County, Best in Communication Skills; Julia Kerkhoff of Moultrie-Douglas County, Best in Stage Presence; Anna Cerrell of Effingham County, Best in Beauty and Physique competition. Sydney Schnitker of Washington County was the People's Choice Award Winner.

Earlier at the IAAF annual convention, Talent Show winners were chosen. The winner in the senior division went to Cristian Gibbs of Lake County with a vocal solo; second place went to a dance theater team from Mercer County made up of Autumnn Marston, Laney Baugh, Josie Bruning, Sophia Carlson, Mikella Cornell, Karlee Gerber, Lexi Glancy, Leah Johnson, Zaydee King, Malaynie McIntosh, and Kaylee Plohr; third place went to Sierra Lucie of Hancock County with a tap dance solo; fourth place went to Lydia Cunningham and Norah Willis of Schuyler County with a vocal duet.



In the Junior Division Talent Show, Macy Waters of Calhoun County was the winner with a jazz dance; second place went to Jaycee Bates of Morgan County with a lyrical dance; third place went to Autumn Skye Braxton of Boone County with a vocal solo; fourth place went to Molly Lindeman of Clay County with a vocal solo.

In total, this year's convention had more than 2,500 in attendance.