

Miss Illinois This Year Is From Jacksonville, IL. - Natalie Evans, Calhoun's Sievers Earns Best Personal Interview

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SPRINGFIELD, IL. - The Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs held its 113th annual convention at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield, Illinois January 12-14, 2024, and Natalie Evans of Jacksonville, IL., 19, was crowned the 64th Miss Illinois

County Fair Queen. Natalie represented Morgan County at the 113th Illinois Association of Agricultural Fairs Convention.

“I’m a passionate girl,” said Evans. “I love cows, my family, the Lord. I hope I can follow in Paige’s (Van Dyke, her predecessor) footsteps and continue to show cattle while I’m queen.”

Evans is the daughter of Sean and Amy Evans and is currently attending Murray State University majoring in pre-veterinarian with a minor in chemistry. She hopes to complete her education at the University of Illinois and become a large animal vet.

Evans 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, Evans’ main duty is to emphasize the importance of agriculture and county fairs to Illinois.

Tessa Sargeant of Hancock County was named the first runner up, Audrey Moran of Clinton County was named second runner up, Elaina Kessler of Clay County was named third runner up, and Maci Kingren of Ford County was named fourth runner up.



The Ruby Crum Memorial Award went to Ella Sievers of Calhoun County, Best Personal Interview.

When Evans isn't showing Red Angus cattle, you can find her boating, swimming, going to concerts, Bible studies, spending time with family or playing with her four dogs. She also is self-employed at Natalie's Pet Services. She's also an 11-year 4-H member and attended Routt Catholic High School.

"I'm the first state queen from Morgan County – I'm proud to represent Morgan County," she said. "I was so surprised when they called my number. I thought I did well, but I was honestly surprised.

The top 16 finalists were: Morgan Binder of Macon County; Ella Luna Drone of Fisher Fair in Champaign County; Addisyn Switzer of Warren County; Cayla Krueger of Washington County; Maggie Goodson of Bond County; Natalie Evans of Morgan County; Londen Fulks of Henry County; Tessa Sargeant of Hancock County; Klare Flynn of Brown County; Belle Carlock of Cass County; Railan Clark of Williamson County; Reggan Smith of Moultrie-Douglas County; Lily Troyan of Lake County; Brook Stuebs of Sangamon County; Maci Kingren of Ford County and Audrey Moran of Clinton County.

Non-finalist awards went to: Kaitlyn Banning of Marion County, Ava Leitze of Heart of Illinois Fair in Peoria County, Best in Communication Skills; Hailey Durham of Pana Tri-County, Best in Stage Presence; Lillian Russell of Mercer County, Best in Beauty and Physique competition. Kaitlyn Banning of Marion County also was the People's Choice Award Winner.

Earlier at the IAAF annual convention, Friends of Illinois County Fairs were chosen. Receiving the award was Ruth Blasingame of Boone County, Sen. Tom Bennett of Gibson City and Kate Boyer of Stephenson County.

On Saturday, Talent Show winners were chosen. Winner of the Senior Division went to Macy Waters and Avery Wyatt of Calhoun County with a jazz dance duet; second place went to Lexi Willms of Fairbury Fair (Livingston County) with a piano solo; third place went to Katie Stiedinger and Lucas Clinton of Ford County with a vocal duet; fourth place went to Julia Hilgeman of Iroquois County with a vocal solo.

In the Junior Division Talent Show, Jaycee Bates of Sangamon County was the winner with a contemporary dance solo; second place went to a dance group from Morgan County. Members included Jayden Batty, Paislee Gear, Maddy Klendworth, Eady

Brickey, Hadley Gray, Parker Geer, Aubrey Kunzemen, Malina VanMatter. Third place went to Parker Silverman of Boone County with an instrumental violin; fourth place went to Laila Smith of Clay County with a vocal guitar.

Dave Hake of Hoyle in Washington County was elected president of the IAAF, Gary Mielke of Ridott in Stephenson County was elected vice president. In total, this year's convention had more than 2,500 in attendance.