

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

NEWS RELEASE

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2017 Minnesota State Fair is Best-Attended in History

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St. Paul, Minn. – A record total of 1,997,320 people attended the 2017 Minnesota State Fair, surpassing the previous record of 1,943,719 set in 2016. Labor Day attendance was 171,299. This year's edition of the Great Minnesota Get-Together had three record attendance days.

Daily attendance records were set on:
Monday, Aug. 28, with 144,504 visitors
Friday, Sept. 1, with 187,066 visitors
Sunday, Sept. 3, with 242,759 visitors

The Minnesota State Fair's agricultural and creative competitions drew more than 35,000 entries this year, with competitors vying for a share of ribbons, trophies and more than \$1.5 million in prize money. Competitions included events for livestock, horses, school projects, dog trials, baked and canned goods, fruit, vegetables, crafts, bee and honey products, fine arts, farm crops, flowers, butter, cheese and more.

The State Fair's Fine Arts Exhibition featured the largest juried art show in Minnesota. The People's Choice Award went to "Dawn Over Boundary Waters" Chinese ink painting on rice paper by Yudong Shen of Shoreview, Minn. Karen Brown of Minneapolis, Minn., won the Kids' Choice Award for a terracotta clay, glaze mixed media "Attitude."

The 4-H Purple Ribbon Auction on Saturday, Aug. 26, set 11 new record prices and raised more than \$655,000 to benefit 4-H programs.

In open class livestock competitions, supreme champion titles were awarded to the best grand champions out of all beef and dairy breeds, and breeding sheep and swine:

Open Class Supreme Champion Dairy Female: Lisa Demmer, Ellendale, Minn.
Open Class Supreme Champion Beef Female: Seth Kaehler, St. Charles, Minn.
Open Class Supreme Champion Beef Bull: Kip Wallace, Emerald, Wis.
Open Class Supreme Champion Boar: Dean Myhre, Caledonia, Minn.
Open Class Supreme Champion Gilt: Will Freking, Alpha, Minn.
Open Class Supreme Champion Ram, Wool Breeds: Isaiah Bauck, New York Mills, Minn.
Open Class Supreme Champion Ewe, Wool Breeds: Isaiah Bauck, New York Mills, Minn.
Open Class Supreme Champion Ram, Meat Breeds: Mike Caskey, Holland, Minn.
Open Class Supreme Champion Ewe, Meat Breeds: Kristina Zander, Shakopee, Minn.
Open Class Supreme Champion Dairy Goat Doe: Mary Thompson, Houston, Minn.

FFA Supreme Champion Breeding Female premiums were also awarded:

FFA Supreme Sheep Champion Breeding Female: Gabe Geiser, New York Mills FFA Chapter
FFA Supreme Dairy Champion Breeding Female: Erin Gudknecht, Kenyon-Wanamingo FFA Chapter
FFA Supreme Beef Champion Breeding Female: Paige Netzke, Wabasso FFA Chapter
FFA Supreme Swine Champion Breeding Female: Bailey Schneekloth, Jackson County Central FFA Chapter
FFA Supreme Market Lamb Overall: Scott Dingels, Redwood Valley FFA Chapter

Supreme and Signature winners in the Minnesota State Fair Horse Show were:

Supreme Champion Open English Pleasure, Western Breeds: Anna Thron, Hugo, Minn.
Supreme Champion Western Pleasure, Western Breeds: Andrew Ablen, Lakeville, Minn.
Supreme Champion Western Horsemanship, Western Breeds: Jackilyn Thayer, Kasson, Minn.
Supreme Champion Hunt Seat Pleasure, English Breeds: Val Gordon, Princeton, Minn.
Supreme Championship Western Pleasure, English Breeds: Madissen Gileen, Hudson, Wis.
Supreme Championship Saddle Seat Pleasure, English Breeds: Roberta Famestad, Sioux Falls, S.D.
Supreme Champion Stallion Draft Horse: Becky & Steve Fevold (TF Clydesdales), Gladbrook, Iowa

Supreme Champion Mare Draft Horse: Albert Cleve & Jim Day (Blue Ribbon Days), Farmington, Mo.
Supreme Champion Gelding Draft Horse: Harold Schumacher (Schumacher Farms), Plainview, Minn.
Supreme Draft Horse Six-Horse Hitch: Albert Cleve & Jim Day (Blue Ribbon Days), Farmington, Mo.
Draft Horse Supreme Cart Classic: Dianna Marquardt (Shining Stars Percherons), Pleasant Hills, Iowa

Signature Driving Spotlight Champion: Dede Disbrow, Edina, Minn.
Signature Liberty Champion, English Breeds: Bridget and Olaf Edgar, Forest Lake, Minn.
Signature Liberty Champion, Western Breeds: Rebecca Glewwe, Elk River, Minn.
Signature Tandem Bareback Champion Team: Grace & Maggie Gruba, Lake Elmo, Minn.
Signature Northwoods Trail Cup Challenge: Michele Leqve, Rochester, Minn.
Signature Mounted Costume, English Breeds: Barbara Knoth, Cannon Falls, Minn.
Signature Mounted Costume, Western Breeds: Lois Greiman, Spring Valley, Wis.
Signature Youth Horsemanship: Kylie Moeller, Somerset, Wis.

Supreme Champion Light Horse Mare: Deanna Johnson, Brook Park, Minn.
Supreme Champion Light Horse Gelding: Lexi Hansen, Good Thunder, Minn.
Supreme Champion Light Horse Stallion: Gail Triden, Grandy, Minn.

The Douglas K. Baldwin Award for FFA livestock show participation and leadership went to co-winners Abby Donkers of Faribault, Minn. (Kenyon-Wanamingo FFA Chapter) and Malory Mattson of Albert Lea, Minn. (Alden-Conger FFA Chapter).

Emily Annexstad of St. Peter, Minn., representing Nicollet County, was crowned the 64th Princess Kay of the Milky Way and will serve as the official goodwill ambassador for nearly 3,000 Minnesota dairy farm families this year.

The award-winning CHS Miracle of Birth Center welcomed 145 newborn animals, including 113 piglets, 12 calves and 20 lambs.

The brand new Great Big Wheel, sponsored by Cricket Wireless and the tallest traveling Ferris wheel in North America, carried a total of 124,958 riders 15 stories high into the sky over the 12 days of the fair.

Total Grandstand attendance was 120,383 – a new record for the venue (not including MSF Amateur Talent Contest Finals). Previous record was 111,319 in 2016. John Mellencamp with special guest Carlene Carter (Aug. 29), Pentatonix with special guest Us The Duo (Aug. 30), and Sam Hunt with special guests LANCO and Ryan Follese (Sept. 4) were sold-out shows.

Nearly 8,000 fans cheered on the best amateur talent in the state at the 45th Annual MSF Amateur Talent Contest Finals, sponsored by JACK'S[®] Pizza, held Sept. 3, at the Grandstand. Contestants were competing for more than \$20,000 in cash awards and JACK'S[®] Pizza prize packs. Winners were:

Open Division

First place: Russ Parrish of Burnsville, Minn., vocal/guitar performance, "Holding On"
Second place: Jeffrey Johnson of Minneapolis, Minn., vocal performance, "Dancin' On My Own"
Third place: Cameron Laitinen of Elk River, Minn., beat boxing, "Beatbox Mix"

Teen Division

First place: 612LIVE of Minneapolis, Minn., band, "The Thrill Is Gone"
Second place: Lauren Senden of North Mankato, Minn., vocal performance, "Ah, Je Veux Vivre"
Third place: Clara Schubilske of Shoreview, Minn., violin performance, "Chinese Tambourine"

Preteen Division

First place: Aurora Wang of Shoreview, Minn., piano performance, "Piano Sonata No. 2 - Prokofiev"
Second place: Carley Jensen of Prior Lake, Minn., dance performance, "Bloom"
Third place: Gigi Bragg of Coon Rapids, Minn., vocal performance, "Don't Rain On My Parade"

Joe Pond of St. Louis Park, Minn., and Carrie Tollefson of Bloomington, Minn., were the overall male and female 5K Milk Run winners with times of 17:50 and 18:35, respectively.

The 2017 Outstanding Senior Citizen Awards were presented to Gwen Smith of Itasca County and Terry Marsh of Wright County. A ceremony was held at the Leinie Lodge Bandshell on Thursday, Aug. 31, to honor 73 seniors representing 43 Minnesota counties. This year's ceremony was sponsored by AmericInn Hotels & Suites.

New additions and highlights for 2017 included: An eat-shop-sip destination in the upper level of the Grandstand called the Veranda; Dress A Sheep Contest; An Evening of Equine featuring We Can Ride and Windy Ridge Riders Drill Team; an elevator on the west side of the Grandstand to increase accessibility; renovations to the Swine Barn, increasing pen capacity and ventilation; rocking chairs, phone charging, free water and daily entertainment at the Relax & Recharge Station sponsored by AmericInn Hotels & Suites in the Ramberg Center; the Great Minnesota Knit Together on the Grandstand Ramp, which was our state's largest yarnbomb; and more.

The State Fair 2017 Best Awards recognized outstanding vendors, attractions and commercial exhibits. Winners were: Air Maxx, American Craftsmen, Balloon Pop Water Race, Chan's Chicken on-a-Stick, Driven to Discover, Great Big Wheel, Katie's Sweet Tea, LuLu's Public House, MakeShift Accessories, Quesadilla Junction, Sota Clothing, Twin City Jacuzzi and Wacky Shack Kiddie Fun House.

The 2017 fair featured 31 new foods: Bacon Fluffernutter, Bacon Up Pup, Bowl O' Dough, Breakfast Buddy Bowl, Brown Ale and Onion-Gouda Topsy Pie, Cheesy Nacho Corn on the Cob, Cherry Bombs, Chocolate Popover with Peanut Butter Spread, Cranberry Wild Rice Meatballs, Deep-Fried Avocado, Deviation Stout Steak Taco Naan, Double Dose of Pork Belly, Duck Bacon Wontons, Fall Guy Breakfast Panini, Honey Puffs (Loukamades), Italian Bomba Sandwich, Maple Cream Nitro Cold Press Coffee, Memphis Totchos, Mini Sconuts, Mobster's Caviar, Pie'n the Sky Malt & Sundae, Pizzarito, Slow-Roasted Pork Mole Tamale, Sonoran Sausage: ONE.BAD.DOG, Spicy Thai Noodles, Sweet Corn Blueberry Éclair, Sweety's Churros, Swine & Spuds, Swing Dancer Sandwich, Triple Truffle Trotters and Wild Bill's Breakfast Bake.

The 2018 Minnesota State Fair will run Aug. 23 through Labor Day, Sept. 3. For more information, visit mnstatefair.org.

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