

NEWS RELEASE

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Minnesota State Fair Marks Historic Return in 2021

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St. Paul, Minn. – After being shuttered last year, the Minnesota State Fair marked its historic return with the 2021 Great Minnesota Get-Back-Together. A stormy opening weekend and more rain later in the fair, the pandemic, a labor shortage and supply chain issues failed to dampen the spirit of exhibitors, vendors, agriculturists, performers, volunteers and 1.3 million guests.

“Thank you very much to everyone who attended, and hats off to the thousands of people who created State Fair magic for the first time in two years,” said State Fair General Manager Jerry Hammer. “We weren’t sure that there would even be a ’21 fair until early May, and we didn’t know what the fair might look like until mid-June. Everyone involved in producing the fair did amazing work pulling everything together in a very short time under difficult and changing circumstances.”

Labor Day attendance of 123,578 brought this year’s cumulative total to 1,301,584. Visit mnstatefair.org/about-the-fair/attendance for 2021 attendance numbers.

“Given the issues we faced, attendance was perfect this year,” Hammer added. “The vast majority of State Fair activities are outdoors, and the fairgrounds are huge, giving people plenty of space to enjoy the fair.”

The Minnesota State Fair’s agricultural and creative competitions drew more than 28,500 entries this year, with competitors vying for a share of ribbons, trophies and special awards. 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 2021 People’s Choice Award – Adults’ Choice went to “Unrest and Anger Takes the Street in Unity,” a photograph by Cody Wagner of Minneapolis, Minn. Shawn Broman of White Bear Lake, Minn., won the Kids’ Choice Award for “Charging Rex,” a sculpture.

The Purple Ribbon Auction on Saturday, Aug. 28, set nine new record prices and raised more than \$885,000 for the 115 4-H members that went through the auction. In addition, the auction awarded \$88,000 in scholarships to 48 4-H youths.

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

Open Class Supreme Champion Dairy Female: Cory & Kristen Salzl, Litchfield, Minn.

Open Class Supreme Champion Beef Female: Jens Lind, Rushford, Minn.

Open Class Supreme Champion Beef Bull: Cale Jensen, Plainfield, Iowa; Jensen Angus Farm, Plainfield, Iowa; Fair Acres Stock Farm, Waldorf, Minn.; and Ford Cattle Company, West Chester, Iowa

Open Class Supreme Champion Boar: Todd Skalbeck and Rodney Skalbeck Family, Sacred Heart, Minn.

Open Class Supreme Champion Gilt: Briggs Grove, Grove View Farms, Zumbrota, Minn.

Open Class Supreme Champion Ram, Wool Breeds: Isaiah Bauck, New York Mills, Minn.

Open Class Supreme Champion Ewe, Wool Breeds: Bill Poppen, Wolkow Dorsets, De Smet, S.D.

Open Class Supreme Champion Ram, Meat Breeds: Adriana Wendland, Northern Starr Livestock Services, Shakopee, Minn.

Open Class Supreme Champion Ewe, Meat Breeds: Randy Dombek and Dombek Family, Ivanhoe, Minn.

Open Class Supreme Champion Dairy Goat Herd: Mary Adamson Marran, Milton, Wis.

Open Class Supreme Champion Boar Goat: Brianna Ryan, Ryan Four Sisters Boer Goats, Goodhue, Minn.

FFA Supreme Champion honors were also awarded:

FFA Supreme Beef Champion Breeding Female: Beau Peine, Randolph FFA Chapter

FFA Supreme Dairy Champion Breeding Female: Olivia Gronholz, Sibley East FFA

FFA Supreme Sheep Champion Breeding Female: Rowland Dykhoff, New York Mills FFA

FFA Supreme Swine Champion Breeding Female: Tommy Lindstrom, Westbrook-Walnut Grove FFA

FFA Supreme Market Lamb Overall: Hannah Neil, Randolph FFA

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

Supreme Champion Stallion Draft Horse: Linda Klinger, Glenwood City, Wis.

Supreme Champion Mare Draft Horse: Scott Zube, Kiel, Wis.

Supreme Champion Gelding Draft Horse: Ames Percheron Farm Inc., Jordan, Minn.

Draft Horse Supreme Six-Horse Hitch: Ames Percheron Farm Inc., Jordan, Minn.

Draft Horse Supreme Cart Classic Series: Shining Stars Percherons, Altoona, Iowa

Youth Cart Classic Series: Kynseth Zubrod driving for Zubrod Percherons, Guthrie, Okla.

Signature Tandem Bareback Champion Team: Lydia Gonsales and Claire Sivigny, Cedar, Minn.

Signature Mounted Costume: Rider and Owner: Kylie Moller, Stillwater, Minn.

Four-In-Line Champion Team: Minnesota Valley Riders Saddle Club: Jan Deile, Madison Deile, Ginny Olson and Stephanie Wall

The Douglas K. Baldwin Award for FFA livestock show participation and leadership went to Hannah Neil of the Randolph FFA chapter.

Anna Euerle of Litchfield, Minn., representing Meeker County, was crowned the 68th Princess Kay of the Milky Way and will serve as the official goodwill ambassador for nearly 2,500 Minnesota dairy farm families this year.

Nearly 5,000 fans cheered on the best amateur talent in the state at the 48th Annual MSF Amateur Talent Contest Finals held Sept. 5, at the Grandstand. Contestants were competing for nearly \$20,000 in prize money. Winners were:

Open Division

First place: Elite Family Dance of St. Paul, Minn., dance group, "Big Energy"

Second place: Aurora Wang of Shoreview, Minn., piano solo, "Alborada del Gracioso"

Third place: North Ride of Woodbury, Minn., acoustic trio, "Gone South"

Teen Division

First place: Jacob Taggart of Blaine, Minn., piano solo, "The Torrent Etude"

Second place: Ashley Wongbi of Ramsey, Minn., vocal solo, "Stand Up"

Third place: Charlie Taylor of Arden Hills, Minn., vocal/piano solo, "Rise Up"

Preteen Division

First place: Angelina Elliot of Brooklyn Park, Minn., dance solo, "The Mind"

Second place: Tucker Kase of Apple Valley, Minn., piano solo, "Praeludium"

Third place: Sofia Morales of Maple Grove, Minn., dance solo, "Poker Face"

Jeremy Reichenberger of Minneapolis, Minn., and Margaret Ludick of Minnetonka, Minn., were the overall male and female 5K Milk Run winners with times of 16:50 and 17:42, respectively. The Milk Run was sponsored by Great River Energy, Midwest Dairy, Minnesota Farmers Union and Giggles' Campfire Grill.

The 2021 Outstanding Senior Citizen Awards were presented to Marianne Walker of Stearns County and Arthur Kaunonen of Isanti County. A ceremony was held at the Leinie Lodge Bandshell on Thursday, Sept. 2, to honor 41 seniors representing 22 Minnesota counties. This year's ceremony was sponsored by Humana.

New additions and highlights for 2021 included: Joyful World Mural Park, American Red Cross Blood Drive, Fraser Sensory Building, North American Six-Horse Hitch Classic Cart Central Regional Finals, Covid Community Vaccination Clinic at the Fair, Cattle Barn celebrating 100 years, Crop Art To Go Competition, new locations for 4-H Llama-Alpaca Costume Competition and Adventure Park, one new ride at Mighty Midway, nearly 75 brand-new vendors, and more.

The State Fair's 2021 Best Awards recognized outstanding vendors, attractions and commercial exhibits. Winners were: Angry Minnow Vintage; Baba's; Bailey Builds; Gopher State Expositions, operator of the Equinox, a Midway

ride; GoServ Global; Hanging Garden; The Hideaway Speakeasy; Kim O's Concession, operator of Lean & Toss, a Midway game; Latitude Studios Co.; Rutana's Hot Apple Dumplings; Solem Concessions Cheese Curds & Mini Donuts; Tinsley Amusements, operator of Charlie Chopper, a Kidway ride; and Waterstone Fire Tables.

The 2021 fair featured 25 new foods: Banh Minn Bun and Banh Minn Bowl, Bison Bites, Blue Raspberry Blitzed, Buffalo Chicken Doughscuit, Caramelized Banana Pudding, ChoriPop, Cracklin Prime Nachos, Cucumber Jalapeño Limeade, Dual Berry Shortcake, Esquites, Fudge & Fruit!, Greek Stuffed Ravioli, Island Hopper, Jumbo Donut Sundae, Kerala Fried Chicken Kati Roll, La Floretta, The Naughty Biscuit, Nordic Waffles – Chicken & Macaroni Nordic Waffle and I-Scream Waffle Sandwich, Paneer Pakora, Pizza Lucy, Sashimi Tuna Tacos, Sidecar Sandwich, S'Mores Funnel Cake, Summer Lakes Beverages in three varieties (Wedge-Hammer, Lake Storm Lemonade and Bama! Lemon Sweet Tea), and Waffle Burger. New food vendors included: Auntie M's Gluten Free, Baba's, Fluffy's Hand Cut Donuts, Libby's Ice Cream & Co., Midtown Global Market's Andy's Garage, Summer Lakes Beverage, Scenic 61 by New Scenic Café, Solem Concessions Cheese Curds and Mini Donuts, and Spinning Wylde.

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and best-attended expositions in the world. Showcasing Minnesota's finest agriculture, art and industry, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is 12 Days of Fun Ending Labor Day. The fair is a quasi-state agency that is self-supporting and has not received state government funding of any kind since 1949. The 2022 Minnesota State Fair will run Aug. 25 through Labor Day, Sept. 5. Visit mnstatefair.org for more information.

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