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KENOSHA COUNTY FAIR | DAY 4



JILLIAN CRAIG, KENOSHA NEWS

2023 Fairest of the Fair Wylie Jackson crowns 2024 Fairest of the Fair Katrina Cain during the Saturday morning ceremony at the Kenosha County Fair Creekside Stage.

Cain crowned the Fairest

Westosha Central grad to reign in 2024; fair keeps setting records

JILLIAN CRAIG
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Katrina Cain, a 24-year-old Salem resident, was crowned the 2024 Kenosha County Fairest of the Fair at the Kenosha County Fair Saturday.

Cain, a Westosha Central High School graduate in the class of 2016, will reign as Fairest of the Fair from January 2024 to January 2025.

Cain said she has always wanted to enter, but the timing was not right until this year.

"It felt good," she said. "I'm excited to see what this year holds."

Outside of her role as 2024 Fairest of the Fair, Cain works at Shopko Optical and Kwik Trip, and is working toward becoming an American Sign Language interpreter. She has been a frequent fairgoer throughout her life, and presented educational projects at the fair in grade school.

Cheering her on at the fair were her mother, her aunt, her grandmother, her friend Kim and her boyfriend Chase.

As winner of Fairest of the Fair, Cain received a crown and sash, a \$1,000 cash reward at the end of her term, an expense stipend, lifetime membership to the Kenosha County Fair, gifts from sponsors, and escorts for public appearances, if needed.



SEAN KRAJACIC, KENOSHA NEWS

Andrew Rettig, 4, left, and Ryann L'Hoir, 2, enjoy ice cream cones at the Kenosha County Fair in Wilmot.

"I'm excited for everything," she said. "Learning about the 'ins' and 'outs' of the fair, seeing it all, I'm excited about that."

2023 Fairest of the Fair Wylie Jackson, who crowned Cain on Saturday morning, will compete in the Wisconsin State

Fairest of the Fair competition in January.

Cain will have the opportunity to compete in the state level competition in January 2025.

Please see **CAIN**, Page A8

SOMERS DISCOVERY

Creating quite a big buzz

Endangered rusty patch bumble bees found nesting locally

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SOMERS — An nest of endangered rusty patched bumble bees was recently located at a private residence in Somers, just the fifth such gathering documented in Wisconsin over the last 20 years. While doing property maintenance, the landowner heard buzzing and located the nest. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is not disclosing the exact location in an effort to protect the endangered bees. Locating the endanger species' nest, in particular, is considered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

"We don't know when they're going to disperse," said Bumble Bee Brigade and Terrestrial Insect Ecologist Elizabeth Braatz. "This is an incredibly important find. It's really, really rare and really valuable."

Braatz gives credit to the local Root Pike Watershed Initiative Network in attracting the bees to the site, as restoration work to the Pike River set the right kind of conditions to attract the specific bumblebee species.

"In 2019, the pollinator patch program started, and that was all an effort to rally around this endangered bee," said Kristi Heuser, pollinator patch program manager and stormwater resource consultant for Root-Pike WIN.

The bee was listed as a federally endangered species in 2017, when 90% of the population was lost. The rusty patched bumble bees, identified by a small rusty-red colored patch on their second abdominal segment, could once be found in eastern and midwestern United States, along with southern Canada. Over time, that range shrunk to southeast Wisconsin and areas of Minnesota.

"To see the nest is a dream come true for the watershed I live in and work in," Heuser said. "It's just extra special."

Heuser and Braatz said it was vital to identify

Please see **BEE**, Page A8



JILLIAN CRAIG, KENOSHA NEWS

A queen rusty patched bumble bee rests on a leaf and suns herself in Somers Friday morning. A nest of the endangered species was recently discovered on private property locally.

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Lessen the severity of the COVID-19 virus. Get vaccinated.

The public health emergency may have ended in May, but an increase in hospital admissions in mid-July is a reminder that the virus is still a public health challenge. Expecting another wave this fall and winter, the Food and Drug Administration anticipates approval of a new vaccine in September to bolster waning immunity. People with a higher risk of severe COVID-19 include older adults and those with underlying conditions and weakened immune systems. *CDC.gov -- August 2023*

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Cain

From A1

Cain was the only Fairest of the Fair contestant this year. Jenny Hesse, the outgoing Fairest of the Fair coordinator, said she does not foresee any changes to the competition, but there will be more of a focus on recruitment to the competition next year.

"We recently made some changes (a few years ago). We've been really trying to like just embrace those changes and build off of (them)," Hesse said. "The biggest thing we're going to try to keep doing is recruitment more and more and figuring out how to get the word out more, because some people didn't even know it was happening."

Record-breaking attendance

The 2023 Kenosha County Fair has seen record-breaking attendance so far, with 13,500 people frequenting the fair Friday versus the 12,900 that attended on Friday last year.

Hesse, who is also the new fair manager, said Thursday and Friday were record breaking days, which can be attributed to the temperate weather this year.

"We are up every single day this year," she said. "A lot of our fair is dependent on weather. If it's nice out people come, and it's the best bang for your buck for when you look at what to do in the county. It's \$10 and you can do food, fun, animals, activities and grandstands."

Community organizations

...serving food at the fair — including the Kenosha Noon Lions and the Knights of Columbus St. John Neumann Council — also saw an increase in people at their respective locations this week.

Deb Wamboldt, director at the Kenosha Noon Lions, said their stand has been "crazy busy" all week. The sales were record-setting for the club, as they had gone through 10 cases of burgers in two days.

"We were out of burgers and chicken Thursday night at 7 p.m.," she said. "Normally we go through about 5 1/2 cases (but) we went through 10 in two days."

Nick Hartnell, financial secretary of the Knights of Columbus, said the higher volume of people at the fair led to nearly 2,000 ears of corn being sold each day

to fairgoers.

"We had records every single day. Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, so far, were all higher volume. Turnout has been great just due to great weather," Hartnell said. "More popular this year is corn-in-a-cup. We put two ears of corn and shave it off into a cup and add some butter and salt."

For both organizations, the food stands at the fair are their biggest fundraisers.

Kenosha County Executive Samantha Kerkman said Saturday that the fair was a great place to bring information about county services available to residents, and a great place to ask questions and receive feedback.

Sunday schedule

Sunday is the last day of the 2023 Kenosha County Fair, and

will include a demolition derby with vehicles ranging from garden tractor to truck size. Exhibits will be open until 7 p.m. Sunday.

More of Sunday's events include:

11 a.m. Parade through the Fairgrounds

Noon Cookies & Crowns with the Fairest of the Fair in tent east of Poultry Barn

1 p.m. Small Animal Livestock Auction in the Show & Sale Arena

1 p.m. International Demolition Derby at the grandstands.

2 p.m. Kenosha County Sheriff's Demonstrations

4 p.m. Kenosha County Sheriff's Demonstrations

7 p.m. Fair closes

At Creekside Stage: Noon—Doo Wop Jukebox; 3:30 p.m.—Class of 62

Bee

From A1

and report sightings of the bees and their nests, as the data is important for research and conservation.

"It's very hard to protect what you don't know about and don't see," Braatz said.

Small but mighty, the rusty patched bumble bee plays an important role in the ecosystem because it is a very effective pollinator for plants and

contributes to food security and the healthy functioning in ecosystems, officials explained.

The species has an annual cycle, meaning the bees documented by the Department of Natural Resources Friday morning will overwinter, which is the process of waiting through the winter season, under leaves start growing next spring.

"Hopefully all these bees will survive and come out and do it again," Braatz said.

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