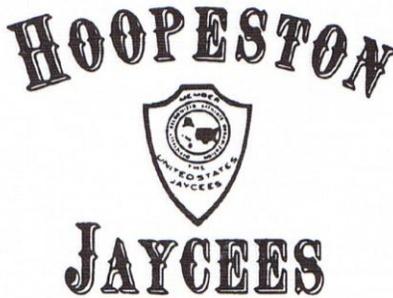


The  
National  
Sweetcorn Festival®



THE  
NATIONAL  
SWEETHEART  
PAGEANT

*Home Of 4 Henry Giessenbier Memorial Awards*

On behalf of the Hoopeston Jaycees, Hoopeston, Illinois, we are pleased to invite you to participate in this year's National Sweetheart Pageant (NSP) held over Labor Day Weekend. The Pageant is part of the 74th Annual Sweetcorn Festival in Hoopeston, Illinois. Hoopeston is a rural area of approximately 5,400 people with a charming small town atmosphere. Our very own 2017 Miss Hoopeston, Autumn Layden, will be the official hostess for your week in Hoopeston.

We will start by answering a few common questions we generally receive from potential contestants.

### **What are the qualifications to compete at Sweetheart? Is there scholarship money Involved?**

You must be a resident of your State for at least six months and a US Citizen. You must be between the ages of 19yrs (by 08/01//17) and 26yrs (under 27yrs by 09/04/17). Is and has always been a female and never married. You cannot be pregnant nor have children. If you have been a sweetheart competitor prior to 2016, you are eligible to compete again. If you competed in 2016 or after, you are no longer eligible to apply. Former sweethearts are eligible if competed prior to 2016 and did not compete in 2016. There is a \$25.00 on-line non-refundable application processing fee due by midnight on July 3, 2017. If only one application from a given state is received, it is at the discretion of the selection committee to decide whether or not to accept the applicant. In the event more than one application per State is received, the paperwork will be judged by a selection committee comprised of the National Sweetheart Pageant Directors, National Sweetcorn Festival Chairman, Hoopeston Jaycees President, Pageant Personnel and Community member to determine which applicant will compete. Paperwork judging criteria will consist of Previous Pageant and/or Performing Experience, Community Service, Expression of why you want to compete in the NSP, 90 second talent video, accomplishments, academic, extra-curricular and civic activities as well as a color headshot. The winner is given the title Miss National Sweetheart, receives Scholarship monies plus an assortment of gifts. Our first runner-up receives Scholarship monies and assortment of gifts. Our second runner-up receives Scholarship monies and assortment of gifts. Our Third and Fourth runner-ups receive cash prizes and assortment of gifts, as well as preliminary winners (prizes subject to change as donations are determined). Other notable awards include our Pat Musk non-finalist talent award, John Bitner Judges Award, Ronnie Reed Community Service Award, and Misti Runge Scholarship Award. The "Miss National Sweetheart 2017" is not affiliated with any other National Pageant. Once our winner is crowned, they are under absolutely no obligation after the Pageant is over; however, all appearances representing the National Sweetheart Pageant must be pre-approved by the National Sweetheart Pageant Executive Directors.

**Important Note: The Hoopeston Jaycees reserve the right to cancel the 2017 National Sweetheart Pageant if by the established deadline there are no more than 15 Applicants registered for the pageant.**

### **When is the National Sweetheart Pageant, what are participation requirements?**

If you are selected as a contestant in the National Sweetheart Pageant, you will be arriving in Hoopeston, Illinois, on Wednesday, August 30, 2017 and return on Monday, September 4, 2017 (Labor Day).

It is mandatory that each contestant participate in the entire week's activities in order to be eligible to compete in the National Sweetheart Pageant (no exceptions). Each contestant will be responsible for her own transportation to the airport or Hoopeston, IL (if you drive in), and an entry fee of \$250.00. On August 30, 2017 our Pageant staff or Representatives will meet you in the Baggage Claim area at the Indianapolis International Airport in Indianapolis, Indiana. Please restrict your flight times between the hours of 10:30 A.M. (EST) and 4:00 P.M. (EST) if you choose to fly as well as your return flight on Labor Day. We will provide transportation during those established time frames only. Important Note: If you are unable to book your flight within the restricted times above, you will need to make other arrangements in advance and it is your responsibility for covering the cost of your own transportation. Please keep in mind when booking your departure times, Indianapolis is Eastern Time Zone and Hoopeston, IL is Central Time Zone; therefore, Indianapolis is an hour ahead of us and it's a 2 hour commute. To avoid sitting in the airport all day 9/4/17, we suggest an earlier flight within the times specified above. If you prefer driving to Hoopeston, Illinois, our pageant staff will greet you upon arrival at a pre-determined time and location. Your vehicle will be parked at the host family residence and keys will be held during your stay, as you will be transported all week by your assigned chaperone. Your keys will be returned to you on Sunday once the finals are over. Our pageant preliminaries are held on Saturday, September 2, 2017, with finals on Sunday, September 3, 2017; each night beginning at 6:00 PM (CST). Following the last night of competition, there is a reception for the contestants, their families and friends, pageant personnel, Hoopeston Jaycees, and the general public. The Judges are present and may take the time to let you know what you need to work on in the future. However, do not press them for their comments. You may email Cliff and Michelle Crabtree about contacting the Judges after pageant is over for comments. You are free to leave right after the awards banquet following the finals on Sunday evening if you have your own transportation. Otherwise, if you are traveling alone, we will provide transportation to the Indianapolis, Indiana Airport leaving Hoopeston at approximately 6:00am (CST) on Labor Day for all flights from Indianapolis, Indiana between the hours of 10:30AM (EST) and 4:00 PM (EST). This will allow time to check your baggage and proceed to your gate.

**Where will I stay while I'm in Hoopeston? Where will my family or friends stay?**

Sweethearts will be matched with host families who live in Hoopeston or surrounding areas and most of them have been involved for several years. Many of them still keep in touch with their past sweethearts; some have even driven across states for weddings or vacations to visit each other. You will be receiving an email a week or two before leaving for Hoopeston with the name of your host family and contact information. Your host family will also be receiving your information and we encourage them to contact you prior to your arrival to begin a rapport. Housing arrangements are for the contestants only. A link will be available on the Hoopeston Jaycees website and contestant page for area hotels. Unfortunately we do not have hotels in Hoopeston so the closest accommodations will be in Danville, Illinois. Please make sure you have your housing families consent before inviting your family and friends to your host home.

If you have any special medical needs, allergies, or dietary restrictions, or prefer not to be around small children, please indicate this on your application paperwork. We try to place everyone with an appropriate housing family and take those things into consideration. Housing Families are required to complete a questionnaire as well so the best possible matches can be made.

**What are the schedule of events during Sweetheart Week (including interviews)?**

Once everyone arrives in Hoopeston on Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup>, luggage is sorted and accounted for then transported by the Hoopeston Jaycees to your host home. You will be transported by a chaperone to dinner sponsored by Miss Hoopeston, Autumn Layden and her family. After dinner we will have our Sweetheart Orientation and field any questions you may have for the week. You will receive your official contestant packet, Sweetheart Sash and then a chaperone will take you to meet your host family and unpack.

For scheduling purposes, you will be divided into groups. The weekly schedule of events will be determined by your assigned group and your assigned group is determined by your order of appearance. The order of appearance is decided on by the Executive Directors and will be provided to you prior to your arrival.

While in our community chaperones, transportation, housing and all meals will be provided. You will spend the week visiting our community and making preparations for the pageant. There is plenty of time for talent and production rehearsals prior to preliminary competition. Your family can attend rehearsals during the week but are not allowed backstage. Coaching is not permitted and if parents or coaches interrupt rehearsals they will be asked to leave. Our community puts so much effort into providing meals and making this experience enjoyable for you, we ask that you write out thank you notes throughout the day during pageant week and have them done for the various groups that provided the meals for that day before you return to housing that evening. You may give them to your personal chaperone or to head chaperone Angie Totheroh. We will ensure they are delivered after the pageant is over. We will provide you with some notes, but you may want to bring extra.

Interviews will be held on Friday, September 1, 2017 at the First Christian Church. There is a room upstairs to finish getting ready, mirrors are available but feel free to bring your own. You will be in the interview room for a total of 10 minutes including your introduction, interview and closing. You will enter the room as a group first to meet the Judges and then one by one for your personal interview. There will be a podium if you so choose to use it. Don't panic, you will be given these same instructions during orientation and again by our judges committee once you get to the church. All contestants will be separated once their interview is complete and will be instructed not to discuss the interview with the other contestants. While at the church, you will be asked to vote for Miss Congeniality, ALL contestants are required to vote. It's a long day but once it's over you can all relax!!!

There is a parade on Saturday morning so you will need to be creative and prepare a costume symbolic of your State as this will be judged prior to the parade and counts as 5% of your preliminary score (please keep in mind no short dresses as you will be riding on a corvette). The parade will begin at 10:00 A.M. and estimated to last approximately one hour. It can get quite hot on the parade route so dress accordingly. Let's all pray for no rain!

On Sunday there will be an autograph session with the general public. We will have festival program books available with all your photographs that you may autograph. If you want to bring personalized autograph photos to autograph and hand out, please feel free to do so. Contestants in the past have brought them to share with other contestants as well as public appearances throughout the community. It is suggested to bring approximately 200-300 if you want, but that's entirely up to you. Please remember you do not have to make special pictures for this purpose.

We will be putting together contestant videos to post online prior to your arrival. The “Hoopeston Chronicle” is putting together a video map and would like a 1 minute video from you to post on our website. In the video you should include your name, what State you represent, interesting facts about yourself or your State and why you decided to compete at the National Sweetheart Pageant. You can use your video camera or phone whichever you prefer, be creative. Instructions how to send videos will be announced at a later date. All videos are due by August 14, 2017.

### **What should I pack for the National Sweetheart Pageant?**

In the area of apparel, clothing must be professional for appearances. Bring a good pair of walking shoes (closed toed or tennis shoes) business casual attire (skirts, dresses, pantsuits, Capri's, dress pants- no jeans allowed) for luncheons and community events. For rehearsals you will want to wear comfortable clothing (shorts/yoga pants/sweats, t-shirts, tank tops, etc.). The rehearsals are held at the Civic Center, which is located at McFerren Park, at the corner of Route 1 and Penn Street in Hoopeston.

Other items to bring include competition swimsuit, evening gown, shoes for swimsuit and evening gown, dress or suit and shoes for interview, talent competition outfit and back-up CD of your talent music (if applicable), cocktail dress for awards reception that follows the final night of competition (this is semi-formal so a short length cocktail party dress is fine), Costume for the parade and cards for autograph session (if desired), and opening number outfit as instructed by producers. It might also be a good idea to include a jacket or sweater, umbrella or raincoat, our Illinois weather is very unpredictable. You will leave your housing each morning in your nice clothes and bring something to change into for rehearsals. Anything you determine that you will need throughout the day will need to be packed in your bag when you are picked up in the morning. There **will not** be an opportunity to return to housing during the day if you forgot something. Further instructions regarding production number attire will be sent by our production staff (Dana Kuntz and Katelin Crabtree) at a later date. Due to extra fees applied by most airlines, we encourage you to try and get by with minimal amounts of luggage. You may make arrangements to ship items in advance if necessary. Your week will be a busy one with community events, luncheons, and rehearsals. It is imperative that we have your full cooperation all week so everyone will get the most out of their visit.

### **National Sweetheart Pageant Registration Paperwork Requirements and Deadlines:**

#### Potential Applicants:

Non-Refundable Application Fee (\$25.00) is due by midnight July 3, 2017 (paypal online)

Application Requirements (to include 90 sec talent video) are due by midnight July 3, 2017 (online)

#### 2017 Sweetheart Contestants will be announced by Midnight July 10, 2017

#### Once chosen in the Sweetheart Class of 2017:

Contestant Registration Fee (\$250.00) is due by August 1, 2017

Piano fee (\$50.00) (if applicable) is due by August 1, 2017

Contestant's Travel Arrangements are due by August 10, 2017

Artwork and Ad Fees for program book due by August 11, 2017

Pageant on-line ticket sales end August 11, 2017

Contestant 1 minute Media Video due by August 14, 2017

Website: [www.nationalsweetheartpageant.com](http://www.nationalsweetheartpageant.com)

Pageant Contestants will be given a username and password to access a restricted 2017 Contestant Registration Center on the Hoopston Jaycees website [www.nationalsweetheartpageant.com](http://www.nationalsweetheartpageant.com). The **Online Registration Paperwork is found on the contestant application page for your completion and should be sent along with your 90 second talent video, if applicable your talent music accompaniment and color headshot (jpeg) by midnight on July 3, 2017. Paperwork will be judged by midnight July 10, 2017 (please include your State Represented and Full Name in the Subject Line of the Email)**. Please plan on bringing a back-up CD of your talent music with you for emergencies; all performances must be no longer than 90 seconds and this will be strictly enforced. **Registration Information received after midnight on July 3, 2017 will not be accepted.** An email confirmation will be sent to assure your registration is received. **All** registration requirements must be received to be an eligible applicant. All registration paperwork will be distributed to the Judges as well as your talent music to our sound production manager; therefore, changes cannot be made once they have been submitted. If you are a pianist, we have implemented a fee of \$50.00 due by 08/01/17 to offset the rental cost of the baby grand piano for your competition that will be available the entire week of rehearsals. Your registration fee of \$250.00 and piano fee of \$50.00 (if applicable) must be paid online through the contestant's page by August 1, 2017. If you have any questions our address, email and phone numbers are listed below.

### **What are the rules and regulations for the National Sweetheart Pageant?**

Please carefully read **ALL** contestant rules and regulations contained in the online registration paperwork. It is important to stress we **do not** allow cameras, laptops, cell phones, iPad or any other electronic devices that can take pictures in the dressing rooms. Due to the fact that you are changing clothes, we do not want to risk any inappropriate pictures mistakenly being taken and have them appear on the internet. We will; however, allow you to have your cell phones and cameras with you during the day, but you either need to give them to your chaperone or leave them in the chaperone's car once we get to the Civic Center for rehearsals/pageant. We have had several issues in the past with girls telling the chaperones they did not have their phones/cameras with them, yet we find out they are sending texts to their family/friends during the pageant from the dressing room or posting pictures from backstage on Instagram or Facebook. It has been discussed by the pageant personnel and if we discover you have any electronic devices in the dressing room or backstage or we see any posts on social media, you may be asked to leave and will no longer be allowed to compete. We take this rule very seriously, and it is your protection as well as ours that is of utmost concern. We hope you understand the importance of the need for this rule and appreciate your anticipated cooperation.

Everyone is responsible for steaming their own gowns at the Civic Center. We will provide the steamers in the dressing room with distilled water. We **do not** provide any hairdressers or makeup artists for the pageant and we **do not** allow any of your personal hairstylists or makeup artists in the dressing rooms. There will be a dressing room crew to help keep the production running timely and will be there to help place body mics or assist in getting into your competition gowns/talent costume.

We do not allow the use of any tanning beds here in town or spray tans. You may use self-tanner, but we ask that you please ask your host family for an old towel or blanket to sit on, so we do not have any of their linens ruined with the tanning lotion.

### **Who Judges Sweetheart? What are their qualifications? What is the Judging criteria?**

We will have an experienced panel of Judges. We will be posting an announcement of our Judges panel on the website as well as the National Sweetheart Pageant Facebook page so be on the lookout! Competition Phases and Judging Criteria for preliminary and final competitions: Preliminary Competition is Interview 25%, Talent 25%, Swimsuit 15%, Gown 25%, on-stage question 5% and parade wear 5% (high and low thrown out). On stage question comes from your personal interview or pageant paperwork. Final night competition is taken from a composite score of 30% and then your final performance is talent 30%, Swimsuit 15% and Gown 25% (high and low are thrown out). We announce top finalists who will compete in swimsuit, talent and evening gown. Top 5 will be asked as a group (on stage) a question by the emcee (this will not be judged) and then the winners will be announced.

### **How do I buy tickets to the National Sweetheart Pageant?**

Season ticket holders will have first priority to purchase tickets and then we will open up orders to the general public. We will offer pageant tickets for reserved (Saturday \$12 and Sunday \$15 or 2 night package \$22) or general admission (Saturday \$10 and Sunday \$12 or 2 night package \$17). Deadline for online ticket sales will be August 11, 2017. Any remaining reserved and general admission tickets will be available at the door. For Tickets visit [www.nationalsweetheartpageant.com](http://www.nationalsweetheartpageant.com)

### **How do I buy a space in the program book to wish a contestant Good luck?**

If you know anyone who would like to place an Ad or send good luck wishes to a contestant in our program book, all artwork and online fees must be submitted by August 11, 2017 to [pageant@hoopestonjaycees.org](mailto:pageant@hoopestonjaycees.org). Ad pricing: \$175.00 full page ad, \$125.00 ½ page ad, \$95.00 ¼ page ad and \$75.00 1/8 page ad. Please share with your family and friends. We encourage each contestant to sell one ad for our program book. If you have any questions just give us a call.

### **Conclusion:**

We have tried to answer most of the questions you may have. Our goal is to make your week memorable and provide as much valuable knowledge and experience as we can. Finally we ask that you be courteous and respectful to your host family, chaperone, pageant directors and pageant staff in general as they give up a week of their time just for you and although they enjoy and love doing it, they in no way get reimbursed or compensated for all they do. Take a minute of your time and thank them for opening up their homes to you or putting their families on hold to chaperone you for the week. It's an experience our town looks forward to each and every year and we open our arms and our hearts to you, our Sweetheart!

On behalf of the Hoopeston Jaycees Chapter "The organization of choice for young people" we encourage you to visit our National Sweetheart Pageant and Hoopeston Jaycees website at: [www.hoopestonjaycees.org](http://www.hoopestonjaycees.org). There you will find information regarding our Chapter, Sweetheart History,

Past Sweethearts and much more. Additionally please “friend” us on Facebook under the open group of National Sweetheart Pageant for photos, updates and announcements concerning the Pageant.

If you have further questions please feel free to contact us at the numbers or email address listed below and we will respond as soon as possible.

Thank you for your time and consideration and we hope to hear from you very soon.

Sincerely,

Clifford & Michelle Crabtree  
Executive Directors  
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Hoopeston, IL 60942  
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