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Choosing Creative Life Skills champions proves challenging



The grand champion and reserve champion exhibits in Creative Life Skills at the Suwannee River Fair are pictured. The grand champion is a jacket at the top and reserve wood podium at the bottom.

Story and Photos

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FANNING SPRINGS -- The hog and steer shows at the Annual Suwannee River Fair Youth Livestock Show and Sale often enjoy the most attention, but there is another competition that gives 4-H and FFA members an opportunity to show off their talents.

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Blue ribbon projects were placed on display to be judged for grand and reserve champion honors.



Photography judges Matthew Dettlof of Chiefland Middle School FFA and Darbi Meisner were co-superintendents of the Creative Life Skills competition. Here, they look closely at a photo.

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Grand Champion in Creative Life Skills was awarded Saturday (March 16) to Emily Mauer of the Eastside Explorers 4-H Club in Gilchrist County and Reserve Champion went to Lawson Davis of Dixie County Middle FFA.

Creative Life Skills covers a range of categories from photography to arts and crafts, food and sewing.

Mauer sewed a colorful denim jacket with stars. Davis built a pine podium with a small sign attached to the front that said SRF (Suwannee River Fair), established 1952.

Judges for the various project categories voted as a group to award grand and reserve honors.

The judges agreed Mauer showed great sewing skills on a difficult project. Mauer wrote a message describing how she made the jacket. She said an elder of the family was near her as she worked on the jacket.

“I enjoyed spending time with my memaw while I sewed,” she said.

Lawson said he picked out the best pine boards for his project. He cut the boards to the correct length and screwed them together with a device called a kreg Jig. He then sanded the wood and coated it with polyurethane.

Lou Jones, one of the food judges, lobbied for a jar of strawberry and wine jelly exhibited by Charlee Hines of Trenton FFA. Jones thought it deserved grand champion or reserve champion honors.

Hines wrote that she bought the strawberries at a Bell FFA fundraiser and her dad sold fertilizer used to grow fruit used in the recipe. Jones said the jelly was a local product and it stood out in the competition.

But Emily King, one of the judges of clothing and crafts for the show, said the sewing by Mauer showed considerable skill and she thought it deserved grand champion honors.

Exhibitors were not allowed to watch as the projects were judged.

After the show, many exhibitors crowded into the doublewide where the show was held to scour the shelves looking at blue ribbon projects and other exhibits. Many seemed fascinated by the two champion projects.