



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **STATE FAIR QUEEN VISITS FAYETTE COUNTY**

**Uniontown, PA** – Grace VanSciver’s reign as Pennsylvania State Fair Queen has been anything but ordinary.

Each year, the state fair queen is required to tour county fairs statewide to meet her outreach requirements. However, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic hampered those plans.

Although VanSciver could not fulfill her typical duties, she chose to visit Fayette County as part of an experience other state fair queens have never had.

“It’s a really incredible opportunity to come to Fayette County. If the fair was going on, I would’ve just been able to visit the fairgrounds and then leave, so it’s been really amazing to tour different places throughout the county and see things outside of the typical agricultural settings,” VanSciver said. “Still, everywhere I go, it’s cool to hear all the stories of these different places and see how everything kind of comes back to agriculture in the end.”

VanSciver, 17, of Belleville became Mifflin County’s Youth Fair Queen before going on to win the Pennsylvania State Fair Queen Contest. She competed against current Fayette County Fair Queen Jessica Wolfe and 58 other contestants to claim her title.

On Thursday, Fayette County Fair Queen Contest Coordinator Charlotte DeCarlo first welcomed VanSciver to her home for a tour of her family’s horse facilities. They then traveled to the fairgrounds for a tour conducted by Wolfe and Fayette County Fair Princess Trudy Diamond.

“She toured the grounds, and they told her what would have actually taken place in the buildings had there been a fair this year,” DeCarlo said. The Fayette County Fair Board voted to cancel the 2020 fair last month, among growing COVID-19 concerns.

VanSciver’s next stop was the Fayette County Courthouse, where Commissioner Scott Dunn presented her with a certificate of appreciation and recognition on behalf of himself and fellow commissioners Dave Lohr and Vince Vicites.

Vicites was able to video chat via phone with VanSciver to thank her for choosing to visit Fayette County and learn about its agriculture and history. She also received a Fayette County “swag bag” full of local tourism information, a t-shirt and other local goodies only available in our area.

Fayette County Law Librarian Barbara Pasqua led the group, which also included VanSciver’s mother Holly, Fayette County Fair Queen Contest Co-coordinator Debbie Stanish, and 2005 Pennsylvania State Fair Queen Kristi Rooker Kassimer.

Kassimer is the only Fayette County Fair Queen to ever go on to win the state competition. She resides in Fayette County and is the public relations and digital media specialist for the Fayette County Public Relations Initiative.

“The girls who run for their county queen contests and then move on to the state competition are the voice of agriculture. They not only represent agriculture for the 10 days of our fair, but for the entire year,” DeCarlo said. “They visit schools and churches; do a lot of community service; and are out there promoting and educating their counties on how important agriculture is in our everyday lives.”

After the courthouse tour, VanSciver strolled to Storey Square in downtown Uniontown for interviews and photos with local media.

The group then headed to Jackson Farms, where owner and Fayette County Fair President Bill Jackson gave the current queens and princess a tour of his dairy parlor and ice cream plant, where they learned how his famous ice cream and milk are made. The party was then joined by State Sen. Pat Stefano, R-Bullskin Township, for lunch at Jackson’s store.

“It’s very important for Grace to see the different parts of agriculture in the various counties. Each county specializes in their own form of agriculture and raises various livestock that she isn’t used to seeing,” DeCarlo said. “It’s important that she explore the different counties and see what makes each one special.”

VanSciver said she is extremely grateful for the opportunity to travel around southwestern Pennsylvania, where agriculture is one of the top industries.

“Obviously, this is not the year that many of us envisioned, but we’re still finding ways to do other things, instead of just visiting fairs. I’ve met a lot of people that I maybe wouldn’t have met if this year wasn’t so different,” she said. “That’s what agriculture is all about - coming together and showcasing the love of community.”

To learn more about Fayette County, visit [www.FayetteCountyPA.org](http://www.FayetteCountyPA.org).

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