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## **Melanie Gardner and Rosalena Duncan named 2011 Marion County Fair Queen and Princess**

**INDIANAPOLIS-** Lawrence North High School student **Melanie Gardner** is queen of the 81<sup>st</sup> Marion County Fair.

She was crowned Saturday evening during the annual Queen Pageant. During the same event, 5-year-old Rosalena (Rosie) Duncan was named the fair's first-ever Princess.

Queen Melanie will represent Marion County during next month's Indiana State Fair Queen Pageant.

The 17-year-old has been an honor roll student throughout her high school career. She is an active member of the United States Equestrian Federation (USEF) High School Equestrian Athlete Program and the Lawrence North track team.

Gardner's community involvement includes the Indiana Eventing Association and Bits and Blazes Pony Club. She teaches horseback riding and horsemanship at summer camps, and was honored by the Indianapolis Zoo for 100 hours of volunteer service. She also is a volunteer at the Lord's Pantry with St. Louis de Montfort church group.

In her spare time, Queen Melanie enjoys ballet, pursues eventing and has a passion for rescuing and re-training thoroughbred horses for second careers off the track.

The newly crowned queen will be seen frequently out and about the fairgrounds carrying out a myriad of official duties. Throughout the year, she will help recruit contestants for next year's Queen competition, and help promote the 2012 Marion County Fair.

First runner-up was Sarah Layman, 16, while 19-year old Therese Sahn claimed second runner-up. Michelena Maio, 17, and Brittany Ignas, 18, took third and fourth runner-up respectively, and Allie Eberle, 17, was voted Miss Congeniality.

Rosie Duncan was crowned the very first Marion County Fair Princess. The 5-year-old attends pre-school at Irvington United Methodist Church and loves to sing, dance and cheer. She enjoys spending time with family, going to the beach and taking nature walks. Her favorite part of the fair is "winning goldfish," she says, because she wins "all the time."

Rosie always has aspired to be a princess so that she could own her very own crown. She now owns that crown, and bragging rights, until the 2012 fair.

Marion County Fair 2011 sponsors are Citizens Energy Group, Gentle Dentist, Marion County Farm Bureau, PNC Bank, DreamItDoItIndiana.com, Central Indiana Veterinary Medical Association, JD Byrider, Smoke Free Indy, Advantage Health Solutions, Indiana Autobody Association Drew Amusements, Mikes Express Carwash, RadioNOW, Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library, Meijer, Radio Disney and Circle City Pyrotechnics.

The Marion County Fair was established in 1930 as a street fair in New Bethel (now known as Wanamaker). Following several moves in the Wanamaker area, the fair's home was relocated to 123 acres at 7300 East Troy Avenue (corner of Troy Avenue and Fisher Road, near Five Points). There are presently 17 permanent buildings on the grounds. The event is owned and operated by the Marion County Fair Agricultural and 4-H Club Fair Association, Inc., a not-for-profit corporation. It is governed by a 14-member board of directors.