



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Queen and Court Selected for 91st Annual Florida Strawberry Festival

PLANT CITY, Fla. (Jan. 18, 2026) – Layla Rothman was crowned queen of the 91st Annual Florida Strawberry Festival Queen’s Scholarship Pageant, held Saturday evening, January 17, on the Festival grounds. Rothman was selected from a competitive field of 32 contestants. Marley Mueller was named First Maid, with court members Cadence Cape, Addison Griffin, and Addison Pope rounding out the royal court.

Brooke Browning was named Miss Congeniality, an honor voted on by fellow contestants and awarded to the participant who best exemplifies kindness, sportsmanship, and camaraderie throughout the competition. Browning is a junior at Strawberry Crest High School.

“Words cannot describe how incredibly blessed I am to have this opportunity to serve a community that has been nothing but gracious to me my entire life,” said Florida Strawberry Festival Queen Layla Rothman. “I have dreamed of being able to represent the Florida Strawberry Festival and make every single person who walks into those festival gates feel seen and cared for. God has been with me throughout this entire journey, and I pray He will continue to shine through me. Thank you so much, everyone, for the unwavering support — I couldn’t be more excited for BerryFest26!”

Rothman is the daughter of Mark and Rebecca Rothman and a senior at Plant City High School. Among her awards and accolades, she is dual enrolled at Hillsborough Community College, ranked in the top 7% of her class, and is a member of the National Honor Society.

The Florida Strawberry Festival Queen’s Scholarship Pageant is sponsored by the Plant City Lions Club. The competition includes five components: a personal interview, on-stage speaking, casual wear, evening wear, and an impromptu question.

“The Queen’s Pageant remains one of the most meaningful traditions of the Florida Strawberry Festival, and this year’s contestants set a remarkable standard,” said Florida

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Strawberry Festival President Kyle Robinson. “Each young lady displayed impressive talent, confidence, and poise, making the selection process especially difficult. We are honored to welcome our new queen and court and are confident these five young ladies will represent the Festival with pride and professionalism throughout their year of service.”

Throughout the year, the queen and her court will make more than 80 appearances, representing the Florida Strawberry Festival and the Plant City community at various local and regional events. The Festival serves as their home base, where they will meet visitors and participate in a variety of activities during the 11-day celebration.

The 91st Annual Florida Strawberry Festival will take place February 26 through March 8, 2026, in Plant City, Florida. Festival hours are 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily and will feature a wide variety of entertainment, exhibits, food, livestock shows, rides, games, and competitions. Headline entertainment on the Wish Farms Soundstage includes Alabama, Jo Dee Messina, Jamey Johnson, Lonestar, Ty Myers, Riley Green featuring Hannah McFarland, The Oak Ridge Boys, Legends of Love, Sandi Patty, Lauren Daigle, Forrest Frank, The Offspring, Joan Jett & The Blackhearts, and more.

“We are also incredibly grateful to the Plant City Lions Club for their hard work and dedication,” Robinson added. “Their organization plays a vital role in creating an event that is exceptional year after year, and their commitment to this tradition does not go unnoticed.”

About the Florida Strawberry Festival

The Florida Strawberry Festival is a time-honored tradition in Eastern Hillsborough County, celebrating the strawberry harvest with agricultural showcases, live entertainment, and community festivities. Each year, the Festival attracts more than 650,000 visitors to Plant City for 11 days of fun, food, and entertainment. For more information, visit www.flstrawberryfestival.com, and follow the Festival on Facebook, Instagram, X, TikTok, and YouTube (#BerryFest26).

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