



## On Display

*The real stories behind the junior state associations' displays at the National Junior Angus Show.*

*Story & photos by Megan Silveira, editorial intern*

The hum of fans echoes through the air; cattle are arranged in tidy lines down the stall aisles. But it's not the children running through the alleyways or the noise of the blowers capturing my attention.

Instead, I find myself enamored by a sandy shoreline, a basketball court and a field of sunflowers. All of which were contained within the walls of the cattle barn at the 2018 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) in Madison, Wis.

Each year, junior state associations

create displays for their stalling areas. These displays stand proud for the entire show, claiming the focus and awe of patrons.

Many states use their displays to support and advertise their candidates for the National Junior Angus Board (NJAB).

"Since I ran for the NJAB this year, it was pretty much up to my family and I for what we wanted Kentucky's display to be," explains Caroline Cowles from the Kentucky Junior Angus Association. "And, if you

know my family well, you probably wouldn't imagine anything else other than basketball. And 'shooting for the board' just really fit. It was something I thought fit my family, fit myself, and fit especially well for this year."

Cowles says while she was able to dictate the display this year, she still worked to incorporate components from her state, such as the "Kentucky blue" color of the backdrop.

With the extravagant displays, the construction takes team effort. Cowles says when states do not have

*Above: People of all ages were eager to play in the sand at the Florida Junior Angus Association's display.*

a NJAB candidate, they often create a committee or elect someone to take charge of the display.

However, this year, Cowles describes the building of Kentucky's display as a family process. From Harvey, the helping hand at the Cowles family's operation, to "Grandy," Cowles' grandmother, the NJAB candidate enlisted a lot of help.

## Drawing the crowds

Equipped with bribes of candy and props for a photo shoot, these displays are only limited by the imagination of their designers. Candidates arm themselves with an arsenal of items meant to bring others to their display, giving the junior members a chance to conduct spontaneous meet and greets.

"I think a big thing about the displays is to show other people what kind of message you want to get across," says Dylan Denny, a member of the Texas Junior Angus Association. "It's a way to be creative and express yourself in a way words can't say."



*Kentucky blue and basketball were Caroline Cowles' costars at the Kentucky Junior Angus Association's display.*

Denny was another candidate for the NJAB and hoped his display would prove to the delegates he has a passion for his home state and Angus cattle, while still showcasing his unique love for graphic design.

"I think a display is really important in your campaign because it shows delegates how far you are willing to go. It doesn't decide your campaign, I think it has a deciding factor in it though," he says.

Interactive displays seem to draw the most attention and they were not in short supply for the 50th anniversary of the NJAS.

"I leave an open area, have some candy set out, have some hay bales where people can sit down," Denny describes. "Make it a welcome space so that if anyone comes by and wants to ask you questions it's kind of a space for them to talk to you."

But these fun set-ups serve a bigger purpose other than socializing. Since 1977, state displays have been the cornerstone of an extremely competitive contest. Once labeled the State Display Contest, the Best Herdsmanship award is given the state junior association with the best, jaw-dropping design.

Whether you're drawn to the displays for a chance to satisfy your sweet tooth or to get to know a potential NJAB member better, be sure you check out of one the most unique features of the NJAS. 🍬



*The Kansas Junior Angus Association's display surrounded a picture of their candidate for the NJAB, Grady Dickerson, with show-stopping sunflowers.*



*Visitors nabbed a piece of candy while getting to know Dylan Denny at the display for the Texas Junior Angus Association.*