



OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

MICHAEL W. FRERICHS

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CONTACT:
Adriana Colindres 217.558.1920
Eric Krol 312.814.1252

Last Call: State Treasurer Michael Frerichs Reminds Students to Submit Photos for Cream of the Crop Contest by June 22

Winners Will Receive Scholarship Prize Money



SPRINGFIELD – Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs reminds young Illinois photographers, ages 8 to 18, to submit their best work for the 2022 *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest* by the deadline of **June 22**. As part of the contest’s 10th anniversary celebration, Bright Start scholarship funds will be awarded to the first-, second- and third-place winners in each of the three age categories, the treasurer announced.

The contest offers students an opportunity to share their vision of agriculture in our state.

“Our 2022 Cream of the Crop Photo Contest provides a great way for students to showcase their creativity and to help others appreciate the strength, diversity and beauty of Illinois’ rich agricultural landscape,” Frerichs said. “We encourage all eligible students to pursue this opportunity to win Bright Start scholarship funds and to share their photos with the public.”

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Contest photos should be submitted electronically to the treasurer's office at www.CreamoftheCropContest.com. Each young photographer may submit up to two entries by June 22. Winning photographs will be chosen in three age-based categories: ages 8-10, 11-14 and 15-18.

This year marks the 10th anniversary for the *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest*. To help celebrate, Bright Start scholarship funds will be awarded to the top winners in each of the three age categories. The first-place winners will receive \$1,000, second-place winners will receive \$500, and third-place winners will receive \$250.

Illinois' Bright Start 529 College Savings Plan is one of the highest-rated 529 plans in the country and has earned a Gold rating from Morningstar for five consecutive years. Money in 529 college savings accounts can be used to pay for tuition, books and other qualified expenses at eligible educational institutions, including public and private, two-year, four-year colleges and universities and certain technical and vocational schools. The investment grows tax-free when spent on qualified expenses. As state treasurer, Frerichs serves as Trustee and Administrator of the Illinois 529 College Savings Programs. For more information about the Treasurer's Office 529 College Savings programs, visit www.illinoistreasurer.gov.

In addition to receiving scholarship funds, this year's top Cream of the Crop winners will have their winning photographs featured in Ag Invest marketing material, including the annual Ag Invest calendar. Those photos also will be displayed at the Illinois State Fair and in the Illinois State Capitol.

The *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest* is part of the Ag Invest program in the treasurer's office. Ag Invest is one of the nation's largest agricultural linked deposit programs, and it helps hundreds of Illinois farmers and agriculture professionals. Through Ag Invest, the treasurer's office partners with eligible financial institutions to offer farmers and ag businesses annual and long-term low-interest loans that can be used for operating costs, equipment purchases, construction-related expenses, and livestock purchases.

To read the rules, terms, and legal conditions associated with this contest, visit our website at www.CreamoftheCropContest.com or contact Teri Whitfield at 217.900.0075.

About the Illinois Treasurer

As Illinois State Treasurer, Michael Frerichs (FRAIR'-ikz) is the state's Chief Investment and Banking Officer and actively manages approximately \$52 billion. The portfolio includes \$27 billion in state funds, \$16 billion in retirement and college savings plans and \$9 billion on behalf of local and state governments. Frerichs' office protects consumers by safeguarding more than \$3.5 billion in unclaimed property, encouraging savings plans for college or trade school, increasing financial education among all ages, assisting people with disabilities save without losing government benefits, and removing barriers to a secure retirement. The Treasurer's Office predates Illinois incorporation in 1818. Voters in 1848 chose to make it an elected office.

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