

Brand new guitar the highlight of Nashville trip

Written by Darci Tomky

Tuesday, 27 March 2012 21:12 -

A recent trip to Nashville, Tenn. brought an unexpected surprise for one Holyoke couple. Steve and Jan Millage are now the proud owners of a brand new electric guitar, complete with a signature by Luke Bryan.

The Millages and Thom Simpson, their seed dealer from Grainland Cooperative, traveled to Nashville for the Commodity Classic during the first week of March on a trip sponsored by Monsanto, DEKALB and Grainland.

The couple earned the trip after a third-place finish in Colorado in the no till/strip till non-irrigated category in the 2011 corn yield contest, sponsored by National Corn Growers Association. Their yield was 133.7699 using DEKALB's DKC52-62.

While in Nashville, the Millages and Simpson attended the DEKALB awards ceremony with around 600 other people at the famous Wildhorse Saloon.

One of the first items of business was for everyone to check the back of their programs. Anyone with a guitar pick taped to their program was invited up to the stage to claim their brand new electric guitar.

To her delight, Jan was one of the lucky six winners!



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Steve and Jan Millage recently traveled to Nashville, Tenn. for the Commodity Classic and to accept their DEKALB corn yield award. To their surprise, they also brought home a unique DEKALB guitar, signed by Luke Bryan, that Jan won at the awards ceremony. —Enterprise photo

She said everyone on stage was asking themselves, “What am I going to do with this guitar?”

The shiny black Epiphone Special guitar has a unique DEKALB design and logo in white, with a signature by country singer Luke Bryan, who happened to be the evening’s entertainment at the awards ceremony.

Jan said she is planning to give the guitar to her daughter April, who is a self-taught guitar player and who will certainly play the guitar a bit more than Jan or Steve.

While at the ceremony, Steve also went on stage to receive his DEKALB trophy and a special DEKALB bottle of Jack Daniels.

The Millages said it was quite an experience to attend the Commodity Classic, a national event where they could network with other farmers and bring home new ideas.

It’s the only national agricultural convention and trade show put on by farmers for farmers, presented annually by the National Corn Growers Association, the American Soybean Association, the National Association of Wheat Growers and the National Sorghum Producers.

Over 6,000 people attended the event at Nashville’s Gaylord Opryland Hotel with close to 1,000 trade show exhibitor booths.

“The combination of excellent speakers and exhibits got me all pumped up to come home, pull my planter out of the shed and start planting corn,” said Steve. “The whole atmosphere of positive thinking and live entertainment telling us about their farming roots just gave me a boost

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about my life profession. Everyone's ego needs jacked up every once in a while."

The Millages were impressed with their whole experience and the wonderful way their sponsors treated them in Nashville, including a trip to the Grand Ole Opry.

They took advantage of their time in Tennessee and stayed a few extra days for some sightseeing. They experienced Andrew Jackson's plantation "The Hermitage," a house in Franklin, Tenn. that was the dividing line between the North and South in the Civil War, Jack Daniels distillery and the Belle Meade Plantation.

They especially loved their country music experience as they heard many local bands as they made their way down Lower Broadway in Nashville. "Nothing but music all day and all night," said Steve.

Holyoke Enterprise March 29, 2012