

Carlton sophomore shares talent at Minnesota State Fair

By Teri Cadeau
Duluth News Tribune

Carlton sophomore Abrianna Schmidt has been dancing since she was 2 years old, and on Sunday, Sept. 5, she had an opportunity to sing and tap dance for one of her biggest audiences yet at the Minnesota State Fair Amateur Talent Contest.

Schmidt was just one of 26 performers in the final round of competition at the Grandstand.

"I'm definitely nervous, but I like to think that nervousness and excitement are the same emotion," she said in an interview before the competition. "It's just how you look at it. I'd say I'm more excited than nervous."

The Minnesota State Fair Amateur Talent Contest has been a traditional part of the fair for 48 years. Approximately 400 performers audition for the contest in late July in either the open, teen or preteen division. About 120 semifinalists compete for a

chance to perform in the final round. This was Schmidt's second time competing at the State Fair. Three years ago she made it to the semifinal round.

Schmidt sang and tap danced to the Bjork song "It's Oh So Quiet." She started working on her talent early in the year and said she's glad to be able to perform without a mask these days.

"It's definitely more fun to perform without a mask on. That was definitely more of a challenge," she said.

Since she's been dancing for most of her life, Schmidt dances in many different styles. She's done ballet, tap, jazz, contemporary, technique and lyrical dance. She competes with dance studio 218 Dance Project throughout the year.

While she's been dancing for a long time, Schmidt first added singing into her performances when she was 9 years old.

"My dance teacher Matthew

Wagner convinced me to do a song and dance solo," she said. "I was a little hesitant, but he really got me into singing and acting. I've loved performing ever since."

To build up the stamina to sing and dance simultaneously, Schmidt said she'll go for runs or exercise while singing so that it's easier to do when performing.

"And because you've done all this practice, in the moment, when you're up on stage doing it, the hard aspect of it goes away," she said. "Being up there in the moment feels amazing."

Unfortunately, Schmidt didn't earn a spot in the final three at the competition, but she did what her father said she set out to do — spread joy.

"She likes bringing joy to other people through her performances," Ryan Schmidt said. "The week before, as we were leaving, a lot of people thanked her for her performance. I feel so proud of her."



Contributed photos / Ryan Schmidt

Abrianna Schmidt shows off her Grandstand performer pass at the Minnesota State Fair. Schmidt competed in the fair's Amateur Talent Contest on Sunday.

Rep. Omar brings 'The Squad' to protest Line 3

By Sarah Mearhoff
Pine Journal

ST. PAUL — With the construction of Enbridge's Line 3 oil pipeline replacement project roughly 90% complete, Minneapolis Democrat U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar is making one final push to halt the completion and operation of the pipeline.

Standing before the mighty Mississippi River at a Fridaynews conference in Minneapolis, Omar rallied "The Squad" — her Congressional allies, U.S. Reps. Cori Bush, D-Missouri, Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., and Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich. — to pressure President Joe Biden to revoke Line 3's permits.

"We are here because nearly all of Minnesota is in a state of drought. We are here because wildfires are burning in northern Minnesota. We are here because the Twin Cities just had their hottest summer on record," Omar said Friday.

"The climate crisis is happening and the last thing we need to do is allow the very criminals who created this crisis to build more fossil fuel infrastructure," she continued.

Omar, along with U.S. Rep. Betty McCollum, D-Minn., and dozens of Democratic lawmakers from in and out of Minnesota, penned a letter earlier this week to Biden demanding his "urgent intervention" to halt the project, which is set to begin transporting oil as soon as the fourth quarter of this

year. They cite climate change, the potential for spills, tribal sovereignty, the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the crisis of murdered and missing Indigenous women as concerns around Line 3.

Tlaib on Friday pointed to the 2010 Kalamazoo River oil spill, in which an Enbridge-operated pipeline spilled 843,000 gallons of oil into tributaries of Lake Michigan. The oil flowed at least 35 miles down the river, according to the EPA. Tlaib called Line 3 "a ticking time bomb."

"Enbridge can't be trusted in Michigan, and it can't be trusted here in Minnesota, either," she said.

Ardent supporters of the pipeline, including northern Minnesota's Republican U.S. Rep. Pete Stauber, launched into a sparring match with Omar and her allies. Referring to his colleagues as "socialist Democrats," Stauber at a Friday news conference accused the congresswomen of coming to Minnesota "potentially to bring unrest" and protest "our way of life."

"The fact of the matter is, Enbridge replacement Line 3 is a good, safe project," he said. "It's been one of the most vetted projects in the entire state and it has successfully been defended in the courts."

State Rep. Anne Neu Brindley, R-North Branch, at Friday's news conference said Line 3 is "literally the most scrutinized infrastructure project in state history," meeting state permitting

requirements and holding up in courtrooms after dozens of legal challenges. With construction nearly complete and the pipeline set to begin operating in weeks, she said, "It's time to end this silliness and move this forward."

"It's time to stop the lies. It's time to stop the division. It's time to stop attacking the workers who are making this happen," Neu Brindley said. "Enbridge Line 3 is happening."

While the country transitions to alternative and renewable sources of energy — which Stauber said "is happening, we understand that" — he said there needs to be just that: a transition. In the meantime, he said Line 3's replacement is the safest way to transport oil through the state, and is good for northern Minnesota's economy and workers.

In response to Stauber's comments Friday, Omar said, "They say, 'Money talks and bullshit walks,'" suggesting he holds his views because of financial campaign contributions.

"He is out here advocating for them and not advocating for his constituents and the people of Minnesota who are going to suffer the consequences of the pollution that Enbridge is creating and has already created," she said of her colleague.

In a written statement, Enbridge said that "it's clear" Omar and her colleagues protesting the project "have been misinformed about



Sarah Mearhoff / Pine Journal

U.S. Reps. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., and Cori Bush, D-Mo., at a Friday news conference in Minneapolis urge President Joe Biden to revoke the permits for Enbridge's Line 3 oil replacement project.

Line 3, and the benefits of the project to northern Minnesota." They have refuted several of

the points in this week's letter, as did the office of Minnesota's Democratic governor, Tim Walz.

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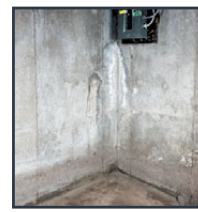
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