



# OFFICE OF ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER

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MICHAEL W. FRERICHS

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**CONTACT:**

Adriana Colindres 217.558.1920

Eric Krol 312.814.1252

## **State Treasurer Michael Frerichs Encourages Students to Submit Entries for Cream of the Crop Photo Contest by June 14**

### **Top Winners Will Receive Bright Start Scholarships**

**SPRINGFIELD** – As the end of the school year approaches for many Illinois students, State Treasurer Michael Frerichs reminds young photographers to submit photos for the 2024 *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest* by June 14. The contest is for students ages 8 to 18 and provides them with an opportunity to share their unique vision of agriculture in our state.

Bright Start scholarships of \$1,000, \$500 and \$250 will be awarded to students who place first, second or third in each of the three age categories.

“My office sponsors the Cream of the Crop Photo Contest to put a spotlight on agriculture and to inspire young people to share their creativity through photography,” Frerichs said. “We encourage students to explore the beauty and diversity of Illinois agriculture, and we celebrate our great state’s status as a leader in the agricultural industry.”

The Treasurer’s Office is accepting electronic submissions for the *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest* at [www.CreamoftheCropContest.com](http://www.CreamoftheCropContest.com). Top photographs will be chosen in three age-based categories: ages 8-10, 11-14 and 15-18. Each student may submit up to two photos by **June 14, 2024**.

To read the rules, terms, and legal conditions associated with this contest, visit our website at [www.CreamoftheCropContest.com](http://www.CreamoftheCropContest.com) or contact Teri Whitfield at 217.900.0075.

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Now in its 12<sup>th</sup> year, the photo contest offers Illinois students an opportunity to highlight their most innovative or scenic pictures that depict their vision of agriculture in our state. More than 700 students have participated in the contest since it debuted in 2013, and they have submitted over 1,200 photos.

Illinois agriculture encompasses the growing of corn, beans and so much more. For example, specialty crops such as pumpkins, apples, peaches, horseradish, and grapes are all cultivated in Illinois' rich soil. You can find agriculture in fields, on rooftop farms, and in community gardens throughout the rural and urban areas of our state.

The *Cream of the Crop Photo Contest* is part of the Illinois State Treasurer's Ag Invest program. Winning photos will be featured in Ag Invest marketing material and next year's Cream of the Crop calendar, as well as at the 2024 Illinois State Fair.

Ag Invest is one of the nation's largest agricultural linked deposit programs, celebrating 41 years in 2024. It helps hundreds of Illinois farmers and agriculture professionals. The State Treasurer's Office, through Ag Invest, partners with eligible financial institutions to offer farmers and ag businesses operating lines of credit and long-term, low-interest loans which can be used for operating costs, equipment purchases, construction-related expenses and livestock purchases.

### **About the Illinois Treasurer**

The Illinois State Treasurer's Office is a powerful economic engine that invests in people to drive prosperity, development and growth throughout the state. As State Treasurer, Michael Frerichs (FRAIR'iks) is the state's Chief Investment and Banking Officer and actively manages approximately \$60 billion. The investments help families pay for college and trade school; workers save for a dignified retirement; and local governments process bill payments more efficiently so they can pass along the savings to taxpayers. The office provides financial institutions money to loan to farmers, small business owners, and qualified individuals at below-market rates because better jobs create stronger communities. The office operates the state's largest consumer-protection initiative, the missing money I-Cash program, which has returned a record-breaking \$1.9 billion since Frerichs was elected.

For more news about the State Treasurer's Office, please follow Treasurer Frerichs on X (formerly Twitter) at [@ILTreasurer](#), Threads [@iltreasurer](#), Instagram at [ILTreasurer](#), [LinkedIn](#) and on Facebook at [Invested in You – Treasurer Michael Frerichs](#).

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