

By ROBERT PIERCE

• Daily Leader

She took home a Grammy for Yodeler of the Year in 2008. That year, she won the same award from the Western Music Association, and Friday, Chelsea Beck of Shattuck, Okla., took home \$1,000 from the Liberal High School Booster Club Country Showdown.



Understandably, the winner was quite excited following Friday's competition, and she had one destination in mind following the event.

"To the Bucky Covington concert tomorrow night," she said.

Beck was one of three showdown contestants, along with Hugoton's Matt Holley and Liberal's Denasa Rice, to open for the American Idol's concert Saturday in the James Maskus Auditorium.

Beck said following Saturday, she plans to continue her entertainment career.

“I’m actually a yodeler, and I travel the United States yodeling and performing,” she said.

Beck said she has had some influences in her career, including Jenna McBride.

“She taught Leanne Rimes to yodel when she was 7 years old, and she’s kind of been my mentor through this whole thing,” she said.

And what does the showdown winner plan to do with her prize money?

“I’m going to get me a Taylor guitar,” she said.

Beck said she has always been interested in singing.

“I started singing when I was 11,” she said. “I started singing Broadway. I kind of switched to country. Just kind of got into it. It’s my thing.”

Co-organizer Rhett Wettstein said he was pleased with Friday’s competition.

“I’d like to thank the people for coming out,” he said. “\$3,500 raised. Wow. Very excited about that. Look forward to continuing this for next year.”

Wettstein said the second year of the showdown was excellent.

“The crowd turnout was amazing,” he said. “I was not expecting these numbers. All 25 contestants are strong vocally. It was a good show for all involved.”

Wettstein said this year’s competition was stepped up a notch from 2009’s.

“The showdown’s going to be looked at as something as a very competitive competition,” she said.

The announcement of Beck as the winner came after 11 p.m. Friday, and co-organizer Joe Denoyer said he would like to see a way to speed up the process of deciding on a winner.

“When you have an audience vote, you’ve got to tally all those votes together,” he said. “The Booster Club did a great job. They had double the number they did last year and probably got out in less time. Figure out some way to speed things up, but overall, I think everybody in attendance had a great time.”

In fact, Denoyer said despite the late hour, few audience members left the auditorium.

“I think it was a great evening,” he said.

Wettstein and Denoyer both praised the Booster Club as well as other showdown supporters.

“I’d like to thank the Booster Club, the Leader, 102.7 The Legend and a special, special thanks to Joe Denoyer,” Wettstein said. “It’s not just one. It’s the both of us.”

Denoyer said it took a team effort to accomplish Friday’s competition.

“I would like to thank the Booster Club, all 40 contestants who submitted entries into the Country Showdown,” he said. “A great big thank you to all the sponsors who helped us kick it up a notch with the prize money.”

In addition to Shattuck, contestants came from communities from as far away as Protection and Pampa, Texas, according to Denoyer, who said making a decision on a winner was tough.

“Everybody was great tonight,” he said. “Judges, I want to thank James Jackson, Allison Bridget Chambers and Chris Jewell and everybody for coming out and supporting the showdown and the Booster Club.”