

Destiny Worley doesn't remember what she was thinking in the moments just before the winner of this year's Pekin Fourth of July Queen contest was read. Her first thoughts in the moments after hearing her name, however, bordered on suspicion.

"I thought they were kidding me," she said. "I didn't think I had won. I couldn't believe it."

As for what helped her stand out among a strong crop of other contestants, she can't say, but she said she did take the advice of last year's queen, Taylor Humphrey.

"She just told me to be very loud on stage and to always smile," Worley said.

Worley would have competed against Humphrey in 2013 if not for a family vacation that was planned during last year's festival.

This summer the dates worked and Worley was able to compete.

She said growing up in Pekin winning queen is something she has always wanted to do. It's also something her late mother wanted for her.

Worley said once the reality of her actually winning set in, her mother was the first person to come to mind.

Looking ahead to the next year, Worley said she really isn't looking forward to just one thing, but all the things that come with winning the crown.