



the Miss Teen USA Pageant has helped her know what to expect in the upcoming weeks, she knows it is not the same. "As far as the competition goes I think Miss USA is in such a different caliber than Miss Teen USA," she said. "You

are going to be down there for two weeks and we were only there for five days with Miss Teen USA. So, I think it is going to be more strenuous. I think competing on the national stage before has given me more confidence." Even though the actual pageant doesn't begin until late June, her duties have been going on since the day she won the crown. "Throughout the year we are asked to do several appearances

around the state," she said. "I went to New York and attended a Sherry Hill Fashion Show. We were invited to a USO event, but I wasn't able to attend: just random stuff like that. Other duties included attending the Pageant Power Show up in the cities in Minnesota. Where we were introduced to different things like makeup and hair lessons."

She noted that the pageant is divided into three different categories swimsuit, interview and evening gown. Then the top five will have to answer an onstage question.

She also said if she is named a semi-finalist, Irene will be seen nationwide.

"There was a film crew who came to Irene to film about me, they did it for all of the 51 contestants, it is called 'Road To The Crown.' If I make the top 15 or 20 at Miss USA it will be played on television. If I don't they are still going to put them out on YouTube so everyone can see them."

Schenk said no one from South Dakota has ever won the Miss USA pageant and she thinks the last time a contestant from the state made the semi-finals was in 1974.

She also said for her family, Lonnie and Kathy Schenk and sister Lydia being involved is something they all take pride in. "My dad cries every time he watches my crowning video," Schenk said. "That a girl from small town South Dakota, Irene, South Dakota, to be exact can win two titles and compete on the national stage twice to represent the state is just amazing. I am so proud. It is cool that I get to go here."

❖ MISS SOUTH DAKOTA *continued on page 15*



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*Source: Colorectal Cancer in South Dakota 2012, Project In Check, South Dakota Council on Colorectal Cancer.