

2026 IOWA STATE FAIR
AUGUST 13 - 23
86th ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY SALON

Cultural Center - Third Level

SUPERINTENDENTS – Pam Deichmann, Winterset, IA & Christina Young, Indianola, IA

ENTRY DEADLINE

Saturday, June 13 and Sunday, June 14 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. in the Cultural Center.

Any photos received after 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, June 14 will NOT be judged.

(Mailed entries must be received by Friday, June 5. Do not mail before Monday, May 11. See page 2.)

ENTRY RULES – READ CAREFULLY

GENERAL RULES

1. **IDENTITY:** Under the penalty of being disqualified, by entering I certify that the photos being entered were taken by me and **NOT** by another person. I also certify that I have **NOT** submitted any additional photos under an assumed name.
2. **JURIED COMPETITION:** Only those photos selected by the panel of judges will be exhibited.
3. **ELIGIBILITY:** The same photo or similar photo previously exhibited at the Iowa State Fair is **NOT** eligible for entry.
4. **ORIGINALITY:** Photographers must use their own ideas and concepts when creating their photos. Do **NOT** copy, duplicate or replicate the ideas of other photographers or previous winners.
5. **ENTRY FEE:** Entry fee is \$5 per photo. Payment in the form of cash, money order, debit or credit card is due at the time of entry. **NOTE:** Any photo that does **NOT** meet the above requirements will **NOT** be judged. Entry fees will **NOT** be refunded.
6. **FAIRNESS:** In the fairness of competition, please carefully read the **General Guidelines For Entering Photos on page 2**. The goal is to make sure that the photos in each of the classes are judged as fairly against each other as humanly possible.
7. **CAMERAS:** We judge your photo **NOT** what you took it with. Photos can be taken with any camera, cell phone or tablet.
8. **REPRODUCTION:** The Iowa State Fair reserves the right to reproduce in any form any work submitted.
9. **LOSS OR DAMAGE:** Photos will be handled with care. However, the Iowa State Fair is **NOT** responsible for any loss or damage.
10. **GENERAL RULES:** General rules listed on the Iowa State Fair website also apply in this department.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

11. **ENTRIES:** Each photographer can enter up to four (4) photos. There is a limit of one photo per class.
12. **CLASSES:** Classes are determined by the main subject matter of each photo. **The same photo or similar photo cannot be entered in multiple classes.** To increase your chances of being exhibited, your photos should be of entirely different subjects.
13. **EDITING PHOTOS:** The Iowa State Fair photography competition is about the ART of Photography **NOT** Photoshop. Basic editing techniques are acceptable for any of the normal classes. AI may only be used as a filter capacity when applying it to an image that was taken on a camera and can only be entered in Class 41. Read the General Guidelines For Entering Photos on page 2.
14. **PHOTO SIZE:** Photos can be any size up to and including 11" x 14" but must be mounted on 11" x 14" foam core or gator board that is at least 3/16" thick per Rule #15.
15. **PHOTO BACKING:** All photos **MUST BE MOUNTED** on **11" X 14" FOAM CORE** or **GATOR BOARD** that is **AT LEAST 3/16" THICK**. Exception: Photos in the **PANORAMIC CLASS MUST BE MOUNTED ON 7" X 20" FOAM CORE** or **GATOR BOARD** that is **AT LEAST 3/16" THICK**. Do **NOT** use mat board or styrene! It is highly recommended that photos be dry mounted. It is available at photo labs, art supply stores and frame shops.
16. **ENTRY:** Photographer's name, photo title, date of photo and other text must **NOT** appear on front of entry.
17. **MATS:** We judge your photo **NOT** the mat. Mat colors should NOT compete with your photo. Mats are optional.
18. **TITLES:** We judge your photo **NOT** the title. The titles are for the public, **NOT** the judges. Please limit titles to three or four words.
19. **PRESENTATION:** All photos must be unframed. There should be **NO** hooks or wires attached to the back of entries. Do **NOT** cover entry with cellophane, acetate or glass. There should be **NO** spray adhesive or self-stick adhesive exposed that could damage another person's photo.

For questions, please contact the Iowa State Fair Entry Department at
515-262-3111 ext. 240 or entryintern4@iowastatefair.org.

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR ENTERING PHOTOS

FAIRNESS: In the fairness of competition, please note the comments below. The goal is to make sure that the photos in each of the classes are judged as fairly against each other as humanly possible.

CLASSES: If we showed your photo to a thousand people, where would their eye go to first? Classes are determined by the main subject matter of each photo. The same photo or similar photo cannot be entered in multiple classes. Photos that are the same or similar will be rejected. To increase your chances of being exhibited, your photos should be of entirely different subjects.

THEME CLASS: The theme class changes each year. It is used as a way to challenge photographers. It is also used as a way for them to learn a new skill set. It is a totally separate class from all the other classes. All your photos do **NOT** have to fit the theme each year. You only need to follow the rules of the theme class if you enter a photo in that class.

EDITING PHOTOS: The Iowa State Fair photo competition is about the ART of Photography **NOT** Photoshop. Basic editing techniques are acceptable for any of the normal classes. Some examples of basic editing include: cropping, sharpening, dodging, burning, increasing saturation, increasing contrast and removing dust spots. Be careful to NOT over-sharpen or over-saturate your photos. Photos must be from a single image. Objects from another photo cannot be added to your original image.

CLASSES 41 and 42: These are reserved for photos that have been edited beyond the basic editing techniques described above.

- Class 41: Anything Goes does **NOT** mean that you can enter any photo you want. This class is reserved for photos that have been dramatically computer enhanced or radically altered.
- Class 42: Reserved for Infrared, Toned, Tinted and High Dynamic Range (HDR) photos. They cannot be entered in any other classes

RAILROAD PHOTOS: Photos of people, including photographers, standing on railroad tracks or the right of way will be rejected.

ENTERING IN PERSON

ENTRIES ACCEPTED: Saturday, June 13 and Sunday, June 14 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. in the **Cultural Center**.

ENTERING BY MAIL

ENTRIES ACCEPTED: Monday, May 11 - Friday, June 5. Do NOT mail before Monday, May 11. Entries by mail must be received by Friday, June 5. To enter by mail you must include your entry form, entry fee and photos in the same package. Make sure to wrap your photos with plenty of packing materials to prevent them from being damaged during shipment. You can use either of the two shipping addresses below.

STANDARD MAIL: Iowa State Fair, Photography Salon, PO Box 57130, Des Moines, IA 50317.

UPS OR FEDEX: Iowa State Fair, Photography Salon, 3000 East Grand Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50317.

JUDGING PROCESS

JUDGING: It is **NOT** the judges' responsibility to pick out your best baby, dog, cat, bird, squirrel, flower, barn, bridge, building, sunrise, sunset, night or landscape photo. You need to prejudge your own work. During the first round of judging, all of your photos are lined up together in front of the judges. To increase your chances of being exhibited, your photos should be of entirely different subjects.

RESULTS: A results postcard will be mailed to entrants in July. Judging results will NOT be announced before the start of the Iowa State Fair. A list of exhibitors who have one or more photos accepted for display will be posted on the Iowa State Fair website at www.iowastatefair.org on Wednesday prior to opening day of the Iowa State Fair. The judges' decisions are final.

AMERICA 250 AWARD: All entries that showcase the patriotic spirit of America 250 (i.e. flags, Red, White, and Blue, etc.) will be eligible for a special America 250 premium of \$25 in addition to regular premiums. Awards will be selected by a panel of judge from blue ribbon recipients. Entries will be designated as America 250 award eligible by exhibitors at check in. Departments eligible for the America 250 Award include: Creative Arts & Crafts, Doll Houses & Miniature Rooms, Fabric & Threads, Fine Art, Floriculture, Food, Photography and Wood Projects.

RETURNING PHOTOS BY MAIL

PHOTOS RETURNED: Entries will be returned by mail **ONLY** if a return mailer is included with a pre-paid shipping label. Photos will only be returned via the United States Postal Service or UPS. Please do NOT use FedEx for your return mailer.

PICKING UP PHOTOS IN PERSON

1 OR MORE PHOTOS DISPLAYED: If any of your photos are accepted for display, you must wait until the end of the Fair to pick up all your photos. See times listed below.

NO PHOTOS DISPLAYED: If none of your photos are accepted for display, you can pick up your photos at anytime during the Fair at the Photography Salon in the Cultural Center or at any of the times listed below.

CULTURAL CENTER, IOWA STATE FAIRGROUNDS

RELEASE TIME: Photos will NOT be released until 7:15 p.m. on Sunday, August 23.

PICK UP TIMES: Sunday, August 23 from 7:15 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. or Monday, August 24 from Noon until 6:00 p.m.

ADMISSION: Admission will be charged at the gate on Sunday, August 23 with no on-site ticket sales and no entry/re-entry allowed after 7:00 p.m. You must be on the Fairgrounds by 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, August 23.

ENTRY DEPARTMENT, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

NOTE: Photos will **NOT** be available for pick up on Tuesday, August 25.

PICK UP DATES: Wednesday, August 26 - Friday, September 4

PICK UP TIMES: Weekdays from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. and Weekends from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m.

UNCLAIMED PHOTOS: After Friday, September 4, all unclaimed entries become the property of the Iowa State Fair and will be disposed of as deemed necessary.

DIVISIONS AND CLASSES

Each photographer can enter up to **four (4)** photos.

There is a **limit** of **one** photo **per** class.

Classes are determined by the main subject matter of each photo.

The same photo or similar photo cannot be entered in multiple classes.

Photos that are the same or similar will be rejected.

All photos **must** be **mounted** on **11" x 14" foam core** or **gator board** that is **at least 3/16" thick**.

Exhibitor age is determined by age on the entry deadline.

ADULT DIVISION: COLOR

(Must be 19 & over.)

FIRST PLACE - \$100, SECOND PLACE - \$75, THIRD PLACE - \$50 and HONORABLE MENTION

Class **Category**

- 11 THEME – AMERICA 250
- 12 PEOPLE
- 13 IOWA PLACES & LANDSCAPES (Place or Landscape **must** be the **main subject**.)
- 14 USA PLACES & LANDSCAPES (Place or Landscape **must** be the **main subject**.)
- 15 INTERNATIONAL PLACES & LANDSCAPES (Place or Landscape **must** be the **main subject**.)
- 16 THINGS & STILL LIFE (Inanimate objects. Things that are **NOT** living or breathing.)
- 17 PLANTS, FLOWERS & TREES
- 18 ANIMALS, INSECTS & WILDLIFE

ADULT DIVISION: BLACK & WHITE

(Must be 19 & over.)

FIRST PLACE - \$100, SECOND PLACE - \$75, THIRD PLACE - \$50 and HONORABLE MENTION

Class **Category**

- 21 THEME – AMERICA 250
- 22 PEOPLE
- 23 PLACES & LANDSCAPES (Place or Landscape **must** be the **main subject**.)
- 24 THINGS & STILL LIFE (Inanimate objects. Things that are **NOT** living or breathing.)
- 25 PLANTS, FLOWERS & TREES
- 26 ANIMALS, INSECTS & WILDLIFE

YOUTH DIVISION: BLACK & WHITE OR COLOR

(Must be 18 & under.)

FIRST PLACE - \$75, SECOND PLACE - \$50, THIRD PLACE - \$25 and HONORABLE MENTION

Class **Category**

- 31 THEME – AMERICA 250
- 32 PEOPLE
- 33 PLACES & LANDSCAPES (Place or Landscape **must** be the **main subject**.)
- 34 THINGS & STILL LIFE (Inanimate objects. Things that are **NOT** living or breathing.)
- 35 PLANTS, FLOWERS & TREES
- 36 ANIMALS, INSECTS & WILDLIFE

SPECIAL DIVISION: BLACK & WHITE OR COLOR

(Open to both Adults and Youth.)

FIRST PLACE - \$100, SECOND PLACE - \$75, THIRD PLACE - \$50 and HONORABLE MENTION

Class **Category**

- 41 ANYTHING GOES! (Does **NOT** mean **any** photo! For **dramatically** computer enhanced or **radically** altered photos only.)
- 42 INFRARED, TONED, TINTED & HDR (Infrared, Toned, Tinted & HDR photos **cannot** be entered in any other classes.)
- 43 NIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY (Images captured outdoors at night, between dusk and dawn. Images may **NOT** be stacked.)
- 44 TRADITIONS & CULTURES (Photos of events relating to or representing a specific culture or tradition.)
- 45 FAIRS, FESTIVALS & PARADES (Any photos where people come together to celebrate an event.)
- 46 PLANES, TRAINS & AUTOMOBILES (Any form of transportation. Do **NOT** stand on or take photos of **people** on tracks.)
- 47 ARCHITECTURE (Examples of American and International architecture, both past and present.)
- 48 FAMILY FARM (Examples of living, working, playing and way of life on a family farm.)
- 49 SPORTS (Any sports related photos, includes action and non-action photos.)
- 50 PANORAMIC (**Must** be mounted on 7"x20" **foam core** or **gator board** that is **at least 3/16" thick**. Photos **can** be stitched together.)

PRIZE SPONSORS

TOP FIVE ADULT AWARDS

Best of Show (Adult)	CHRISTIAN PHOTO, Des Moines	\$500
Best of Color (Adult)	GEORGE & PAULA DAVEY, West Des Moines	\$250
Best of Black & White (Adult)	KING & ANN AU, Des Moines	\$250
Superintendent's Choice (Adult - Color)	DIANE DARNIELLE MEMORIAL AWARD, Des Moines Camera Club, Johnston	\$150
Superintendent's Choice (Adult - B&W)	FRED & CHERYL YOUNG, Winterset	\$150

TOP FIVE YOUTH AWARDS

Best of Show (Youth)	JERRY & MARGIE RANCH, West Des Moines	\$250
Best of Color (Youth)	GERALDINE & JAMES THACKER, Sun City, AZ	\$150
Best of Black & White (Youth)	JEN HUNT PHOTOGRAPHY, Bettendorf	\$150
Superintendent's Choice (Youth - Color)	RAY ANDREWS MEMORIAL, Des Moines Camera Club, Johnston	\$100
Superintendent's Choice (Youth - B&W)	PAUL J. GRILLO, Parkersburg	\$100

ADULT DIVISION: COLOR

Class 11: Theme	KING & ANN AU, Des Moines	\$225
Class 12: People	BOB BROWN AUTO, Urbandale	\$225
Class 13: Iowa Places & Landscapes	PENNY ADAM, Ames	\$225
Class 14: USA Places & Landscapes	IOWA COFFEE COMPANY, Runnells	\$225
Class 15: International Places & Landscapes	GERALDINE & JAMES THACKER, Sun City, AZ	\$225
Class 16: Things & Still Life	SOUTHWEST IOWA SHUTTERBUGS, Creston	\$225
Class 17: Plants, Flowers & Trees	GERALDINE & JAMES THACKER, Sun City, AZ	\$225
Class 18: Animals, Insects & Wildlife	KEN BICKEL FAMILY, Anita	\$225

ADULT DIVISION: BLACK & WHITE

Class 21: Theme	JACK & LAURIE HOWELLS, Ankeny	\$225
Class 22: People	ED ZIMMERMAN, Keswick	\$225
Class 23: Places & Landscapes	NEED SPONSOR*	\$225
Class 24: Things & Still Life	DES MOINES CAMERA CLUB, Johnston	\$225
Class 25: Plants, Flowers & Trees	JOHN RYAN, Ames	\$225
Class 26: Animals, Insects & Wildlife	TERRY & ANNA ALLEN, Urbandale	\$225

YOUTH DIVISION: BLACK & WHITE OR COLOR

Class 31: Theme	AMY DOERRING PHOTOGRAPHY, Newton	\$150
Class 32: People	DIANE LOWRY, Ames	\$150
Class 33: Places & Landscapes	IN MEMORY OF STANLEY A. WILLIAMS	\$150
Class 34: Things & Still Life	PATTY FOSTER, Urbandale	\$150
Class 35: Plants, Flowers & Trees	DENNIS CRAIG & AMY CRAIG WILSON MEMORIAL, Des Moines	\$150
Class 36: Animals, Insects & Wildlife	HAMILTON'S FUNERAL HOME, Des Moines	\$150

SPECIAL DIVISION: BLACK & WHITE OR COLOR

Class 41: Anything Goes!	NEED SPONSOR*	\$225
Class 42: Infrared, Toned, Tinted & HDR	RYNO W. & ANNE S. OLSON, Muscatine	\$225
Class 43: Night Photography	TERRI DERMODY, Des Moines	\$225
Class 44: Traditions & Cultures	NEED SPONSOR*	\$225
Class 45: Fairs, Festivals & Parades	GERALDINE & JAMES THACKER, Sun City, AZ	\$225
Class 46: Planes, Trains & Automobiles	FENNER H. STEVENSON MEMORIAL, Boone Scenic Railroad, Boone	\$225
Class 47: Architecture	AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS, Des Moines	\$225
Class 48: Family Farm	GERALDINE & JAMES THACKER, Sun City, AZ	\$225
Class 49: Sports	BOB E. PERSON AWARD, Boone	\$225
Class 50: Panoramic	HAMILTON'S FUNERAL HOME, Des Moines	\$225

TOTAL AMOUNT AWARDED

\$8350

NOTE: The dollar amounts listed above in the class awards is the total of the prize money paid out to the First, Second and Third Place winners in each class.

Superintendent's Merits Award for Photographic Excellence is awarded upon achievement of successfully having all four photos accepted into the show. Exhibitor(s) will receive a Superintendent's Merit Award for Photographic Excellence rosette. In addition, **Photographic Society of America** will provide a Blue PSA Excellence Award Ribbon, Free one-year PSA Membership and Certificate.

***SPONSORS:** For information about becoming a sponsor, contact the Iowa State Fair Entry Department at 515-262-3111 ext. 242 or email competitiveevents@iowastatefair.org.

2026 Theme Class

America 250

“A camera teaches you how to see without a camera.” - Dorothea Lange

As the United States approaches its 250th anniversary (Semiquincentennial) in 2026, you are invited to explore and document the identity, heritage, and spirit of America during this historic moment. Through your lens, help capture the stories, symbols, emotions, and energy that define this milestone.

Photographers are encouraged to reflect on the founding principles of Equality, Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness by documenting events, programs, and daily life across communities in America. From patriotic traditions and ceremonies to the diverse stories of people from different backgrounds, cultures, and generations, this is your opportunity to visually express the American spirit—past, present, and future.

Use natural light whenever possible and be thoughtful in your compositions. Consider contrasts: past and present, solemn and joyful, rural and urban. Let your camera become a tool for discovery, pushing you to see America in new and meaningful ways.

We can't wait to see your vision of America in 2026.

