



Excellence Award Winners 2025

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The North Carolina Association of Festivals & Events is excited to announce the winners of the 2025 ShowFest Excellence Awards. The winners were unveiled during the ShowFest 2025 – Event Innovators Conference, which took place at the Hilton Charlotte University Place Hotel on January 27-28, 2025. Attendees at the conference included festival and event planners, as well as supporting members who provide goods and services to the industry. This awards program recognizes and honors festivals and events that occurred during the 2024 calendar year.

Congratulations to our winners!

Overall Awards

- Event of the Year: Charlotte SHOUT!/Charlotte Center City Partners – Charlotte, NC
- Director of the Year: Lynn Williams w/NC Pickle Festival – Mount Olive, NC
- Supporting Member of the Year: Emerald Owl Productions, Emerald Isle, NC
- Sponsor of the Year: Mediacom/Matt Bennett w/National Black Bear Festival – Plymouth, NC
- Volunteer of the Year: Bradley Cole Yates w/National Black Bear Festival – Plymouth, NC
- Rising Star of the Year: Bands, Brews and BBQ Festival/Town of Mooresville – Mooresville, NC
- Event Associated with an Event: Cheers to 20 Years-Selfie Contest w/NC Whirligig Festival – Wilson, NC
- Best Outreach Program: Little River ShrimpFest – Little River, SC
- Best Children’s Program: Autumn Fest/Pender County – Burgaw, NC

Event Awards

Andy Smith Exhibitor Award:	BrandSpeed/Ben Baker – Mooresville, NC
Best Supporting Member Website:	Mark Lippard Entertainment – Denver, NC
Best Non-Print Media:	North Carolina Seafood Festival – Morehead City, NC <i>for TV, Radio, Billboard or PSA</i>
Photo of the Year: <i>(two winners in 2025)</i>	National Black Bear Festival – Plymouth, NC North Carolina Seafood Festival – Morehead City, NC
Best Social Media:	Little River ShrimpFest – Little River, SC
Best Sponsorship Packet:	Ocean Fest/Oysterpalooza – Surf City, NC
Best Event website:	Ocean City Jazz Festival – North Topsail Beach, NC
Best Press Kit:	NC Whirligig Festival – Wilson, NC
Student Choice Award:	Lexington Barbecue Festival– Lexington, NC

Promotional Awards*

Best Merchandise – variety of items, including but not limited to pins, ornaments, cups, give away items, clothing (excluding t-shirts), etc...

- Small – Logo Hat by Pickles, Pigs & Swigs – Mount Olive, NC
- Medium – Dill Pickle Soda by NC Pickle Festival – Mount Olive, NC
- Large – 20th Anniversary Ornament by NC Whirligig Festival – Wilson, NC

Best Brochure - tri-fold, bi-fold, color or black & white

- Small – no entries
- Medium – NC Pickle Festival – Mount Olive, NC
- Large – Bands, Brews and BBQ Festival/Town of Mooresville – Mooresville, NC

Best Print Media - printed includes newspaper ad, magazine, billboard, flyers, handouts and additional print items such as programs, invitations, calendars, etc... (excluding brochures)

- Small – Program for Ghost Walk of Pender's Past/Pender County-Burgaw, NC
- Medium – Pickle Pictorial Postmark for NC Pickle Festival – Mount Olive, NC
- Large – Newspaper Tabloid for NC Whirligig Festival – Wilson, NC

Best Event Poster - promotional or fine arts image

- Small – Duck Derby/Crystal Coast Habitat for Humanity – Newport, NC
- Medium – NC Pickle Festival – Mount Olive, NC
- Large – Lexington Barbecue Festival – Lexington, NC

Best Event T-shirt - includes one and multi-color printed shirts

- Small – NC Blueberry Festival Chili Cookoff – Burgaw, NC
- Medium – OceanFest – Surf City, NC
- Large – Ocean City Jazz Festival – Sneads Ferry, NC

*Event categories are based on overall operating budget, not attendance.

- Small – festival overall budget of \$25,000 or under
- Medium – festival overall budget of \$25,000 - \$149,000
- Large – festival overall budget of \$150,000 or above