



PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Competitive Exhibits Office
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ONLINE ENTRY REGISTRATION STARTS APRIL 1, 2026

ONLINE ENTRY REGISTRATION CLOSES JULY 13, 2026

ENTRY DROP OFF JULY 18, 2026, 9AM-3PM and JULY 21, 2026, 12PM-6PM

ENTRY REMOVAL AUGUST 26, 2026, 12PM-6PM and AUGUST 27, 2026, 3PM-7PM

Entry Fee: \$25.00 allows entries throughout Departments in Creative Arts, Ag-Grange, and Environment and Sportsman. A promo code redeemable for three (3) admission passes will be emailed to the exhibitor on Tuesday, August 11, 2026

Ages: 18 & Up

Prize Checks: Available Tuesday, August 18, 2026, between 11:00 AM – 10:00 PM at the Creative Arts Info Desk along with satin ribbons earned. Checks not picked up by Sunday, August 23, 2026, will be mailed.
***Checks are VOID 60 days from issue date and WILL NOT BE REISSUED. Ribbons will not be mailed.**

Photography Competition Rules:

1. Please read and abide by all The Erie County Fair rules and regulations.
2. **All entries must be registered by Monday, July 13, 2026.** For more information see the Important Entry Information page at www.ecfair.org.
3. Anyone 18 years old and older is eligible to enter this competition. Team members may be younger than 18 years old.
4. An exhibitor can only participate in **ONE (1) DIVISION ONLY**. You must identify non-professional or professional. All photos must have been taken by the exhibitor.
5. Exhibitors are **limited to a total of two (2) entries in Photography. There is a limit of one (1) entry per class in all fair competitions.**
6. Non-Professional photographs must be 8" x 10" or 8" x 12". Other sizes will be disqualified.
7. Professional photographs must be 11" x 14" or 16 x 20". Other sizes will be disqualified.
8. Photos must be mounted FLUSH on 1/4" or 3/16" **FOAM CORE BOARD ONLY. NO BORDERS WILL BE ACCEPTED**, unless printed on the print itself.
9. All Artwork will be inspected upon arrival to make sure the artwork adheres to all rules & requirements (size, framing, etc.) If any artwork does not meet the requirements, it will not be accepted. Please go to the website: www.ecfair.org to see tutorials on requirements.
10. The photographer's name will be placed under each photograph after judging. Write your name and phone number in ink on the back of each photo, in case the tag is separated from the photo. In addition, please write the location of where the photo was taken.
11. Any work not picked up in a timely fashion will be donated to a community cause (names will be removed from photos).
12. **Works shown in former years will not be accepted. All work must have been completed by the exhibitor in the last five (5) years.**

Judging Criteria

The Erie County Fair's Photography competition will be judged using the Professional Photographers of America's standards of excellence. The twelve (12) Elements of a Merit Image include impact, technical excellence, creativity, composition, presentation, color balance, center of interest, subject matter, technique, and storytelling.

- 1.) Impact is the sense one gets upon viewing an image for the first time. Compelling images evoke laughter, sadness, anger, pride, wonder or another intense emotion. There can be impact in any of these twelve elements.
- 2.) Technical excellence is the print quality of the image itself as it is presented for viewing. Retouching, manipulation, sharpness, exposure, printing, mounting, and correct color are some items that speak to the qualities of the physical print.
- 3.) Creativity is the original, fresh, and external expression of the imagination of the maker by using the medium to convey an idea, message or thought.
- 4.) Style is defined in several ways as it applies to a creative image. It might be defined by a specific genre or simply be recognizable as the characteristics of how a specific artist applies light to a subject. It can impact an image in a positive manner when the subject matter and the style are appropriate for each other, or it can have a negative effect when they are at odds.
- 5.) Composition is important to the design of an image, bringing all the visual elements together in concert to express the purpose of the image. Proper composition holds the viewer in the image and prompts the viewer to look where the creator intends. Effective composition can be pleasing or disturbing, depending on the intent of the image maker.
- 6.) Presentation affects an image by giving it a finished look. The mats and borders used, either physical or digital, should support and enhance the image, not distract from it.
- 7.) Color Balance supplies harmony to an image. An image in which the tones work together, effectively supporting the image, can enhance its emotional appeal. Color balance is not always harmonious and can be used to evoke diverse feelings for effect.
- 8.) Center of Interest is the point or points on the image where the maker wants the viewer to stop as they view the image. There can be primary and secondary centers of interest. Occasionally there will be no specific center of interest when the entire scene collectively serves as the center of interest.
- 9.) Lighting —the use and control of light—refers to how dimension, shape and roundness are defined in an image. Whether the light applied to an image is manmade or natural, proper use of it should enhance an image.
- 10.) Subject Matter should always be appropriate to the story being told in an image.
- 11.) Technique is the approach used to create the image. Printing, lighting, posing, capture, presentation media, and more are part of the technique applied to an image.
- 12.) Storytelling refers to the image's ability to evoke imagination. One beautiful thing about art is that each viewer might collect their own message or read their own story in an image.

PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION CLASSES

Premiums Offered: Non-Professional: 1st Place Blue \$10, 2nd Place Red \$5

Professional: 1st Place Red \$20, 2nd Place Red \$15

Tri-Color: \$25 & Eligible for *Best of Tri-Color Award*

*Tri-Color is an honorary award chosen by the judge for the outstanding article among those entered in competition in each section.

Non-Professional-1

Non-Professional: For those with very little training and those who do not sell their work.

1. Abstract
2. Animal Portrait - Pets (1 Animal)
3. Animal Story - Pets (2+ Domestic Animals)
4. Animal Story - Wildlife (2+ Wild or Zoo Animals)
5. Architectural & Industrial (Cities, Buildings, Factories)
6. Digital Art (Graphic Design and Digital Illustration)
7. Flowers
8. Food & Cooking
9. Forest Close-Up (Forest Floor, Foliage, Trees, etc.)
10. Ghosts & Graveyards
11. In Motion (Sports, Automobiles, Animals, etc.)
12. Picturing America (photos of famous landmarks in America)
13. Portrait (1 person)
14. Landscape (Includes Seascape and Cityscape)
15. Nature (Trees, Foliage, Insects, etc.)
16. Night Sky & Stars

Professional-2

Professional: For the artist who sells his/her work, takes photos for commission, lectures about photography, has a degree of training or belongs to any professional photographer organization.

1. Animal Study-Domestic or Wild Animals
2. Human Interest-Portrait or Scene with People
3. Fair Theme-Photos from previous Erie County Fairs
4. Nature-Trees, Foliage, Insects, etc.
5. Landscape-Includes Seascape or Cityscape