WESTERN FAIRS ASSOCIATION
ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS PROGRAM

WHY WE DO IT!

- ✓ The goal of Western Fairs Association's Achievement Awards Program is to recognize excellence, and share new successful ideas and programs, as many of the best ideas are inspired by others. When we are able to facilitate, share and promote great ideas, we all win!

RULES

Please read carefully. Changes have been made to the program in an effort to make entering as easy as possible. For more information, refer to the Achievement Awards page on the WFA website: **HERE**

- **Eligibility:** Any member fair in good standing is eligible to participate. All entries must have been produced, presented, and executed between November 1, 2025, and November 1, 2026. Entries cannot be a duplicate of a previous submission.
- **Deadline:** All entries must be registered and received by **November 6, 2026.** Entries will not be accepted after this time.
- **Limit:** One entry per fair, per class. An individual entry may not be entered in more than one class.
- **Division Definitions:** Each division is based on fair-time attendance. California fairs should note that the division associated with achievement awards ***does not*** usually correlate to the class size of fair assigned by CDFA. Division definitions for this program are:
  - **Division 1: Small Fair** *Less than 50,000 in total fair attendance*
  - **Division 2: Medium Fair** *50,000–150,000 in total fair attendance*
  - **Division 3: Large Fair** *150,000–500,000 in total fair attendance*
  - **Division 4: Mega Fair** *Over 500,000 in total fair attendance*
  - **Division 5: Service, Foundation or Affiliate Members**

HOW TO ENTER

- To register online, submit your entries online through Cognito Forms: **HERE**
- OR send in a flash drive along with 'hard copy' entries by mailing to WFA, 1776 Tribute Road, Suite 210, Sacramento, CA 95815. Entry forms and must be received by November 6, 2026. Physical entries may be delivered to the WFA by November 6, 2026.
- Entry fees are $50.00 per fair or service member regardless of size and can be paid by sending a check payable to Western Fairs Association with your entry form. In order ensure all entries have been received, please complete the entry form included in this packet and also email the completed entry form to awards@fairsnet.org by November 6.

- **Prepare your entry:**
  - Provide a title and/or header including name of Fair/Service Member Organization, Division and Class.
  - Summary (Goal, execution, results/ROI)
  - Supporting materials such as photos, marketing pieces, etc.
  - File Format unless otherwise noted: PDF maximum 8 pages and 5 MB for all Cognito Forms uploads. See Feature Programs and Media/Marketing categories for alternate file formats. For LARGER THAN 5 MB FILES, save on flash drive and mail to WFA.
  - Give It Your Best Shot entries must be submitted as a JPG. Max 5 MB.
  - For hard copy items (as noted in class descriptions), mail to WFA.

JUDGING

- **Placing of Entries:** Entries in each class will be judged using the Danish system, with each entry being judged on its own merit. First, Second, Third Place, and Honorable Mention may be awarded. Judges are not required to select a first place if the criteria is not met.
- **Awards:** Firsts, seconds, and thirds will receive certificates.
- **Judges:** Experts from fair industry and related fields, selected for fairness and expertise. Rubrics are utilized for judging.
- **NEW THIS YEAR:**
  - Give it Your Best Shot People's Choice Award! All first-place winners will be eligible for inclusion. Judging will take place at the 2027 WFA Convention & Trade Show.
  - Division Sweepstakes Awards! Points will be awarded for each 1st, 2nd & 3rd place entry. The overall winner per Division will be presented with the Division Sweepstakes Awards at the Industry Awards Dinner.

RETURN OF ENTRIES

Entries will NOT be returned. WFA reserves the right to post entries on the website, publish in the Fair Dealer magazine or otherwise distribute. WFA will always portray any published entry positively.

QUESTIONS

Please contact the WFA Office via awards@fairsnet.org or give us a call at (916) 927-3100 for assistance.

MERRILL AWARD ELIGIBILITY

Fairs who participate in the Achievement Awards Program must also enter their Merrill Award nomination into an eligible division and class. Merrill Award nominated program must be entered in a Division/Class in order to be considered. Participating fairs and judges may recommend outstanding programs for Merrill consideration. Nominations must be made by fair representatives by **November 1, 2026**. Forms with instructions are available on the WFA website westernfairs.org.

SECTION A. 2026 FEATURED PROGRAMS

These programs will be used to recognize outstanding achievement at the Industry Awards Celebration and for special programming during the WFA Convention. File Format: PDF maximum 12 pages and 5 MB for all uploads. For large files, save to a flash drive and mail to the WFA office.

CLASS 1: HISTORICAL OR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

2026 is the year of so many celebrations! America's 250, California's 175, The International Year of the Woman Farmer and more. Describe a historical or anniversary celebration for your facility, county fair, interim event or partnership with another organization's anniversary celebration. What types of events were created to promote and publicize the celebration and how did this impact your facility?

CLASS 2: FAIR AND NON-PROFIT ASSOCIATION COLLABORATION

How has your fair collaborated with its 501c3 Friends of the Fair/Heritage Foundation? Describe an event collaboration, fundraiser, capital campaign, grant writing, etc. Give other fairs a chance to learn from your success! This entry can be anything within the last five years and/or a project still in progress. Entry can not have been previously entered in any other category of the Achievement Awards.

SECTION B. MEDIA AND MARKETING CATEGORIES

Class 3: TELEVISION ADVERTISING

Submit a commercial. File must be MP4 or provide YouTube or video link. Must not exceed 60 seconds.

- **3a. Single Television Ad**
- **3b. Television Ad Series** - 2 or more ads in the same file
- **3c. Television Ad in a Foreign Language**

Class 4: RADIO ADVERTISING

Audio advertisement used to promote your fair. Audio produced for online, satellite or traditional radio is acceptable. File must be MP3. Must not exceed 60 seconds.

- **4a. Single Radio Ad**
- **4b. Radio Ad Series** - 2 or more ads in the same file
- **4c. Single Radio Ad in a Foreign Language**

Class 5: SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Social Media advertisement used to promote your fair. PDF, MP4 or Jpeg.

- **5a. Single Social Media Ad**
- **5b. Social Media Ad Series** - 2 or more ads in the same file
- **5c. Single Social Media Ad in a Foreign Language**
- **5d. Self-Produced Videos** – Examples are Tik Tok videos, Instagram Reels.
- **5e. Email campaign** – a series of no less than 3 marketing campaign emails for fair or interim event.

Class 6: LOGO CONTEST

Submit a logo. PDF or JPG. Max 5 MB.

- **6a. Fair Logo** – Annual Fair Event Logo
- **6b. Special Event Logo**
- **6c. Service Member Logo**

Class 7: WEBSITE

Submit your annual County Fair website, year-round website and/or Fairgrounds produced special event website. Enter as web URL.

7a. Annual County Fair website
7b. Year-round facility website
7c. Fairgrounds produced special event website

Class 8: FAIR PROGRAM

Must be a free publication. A fair program is typically a magazine/booklet style publication including advertisements, stories, descriptions, as well as full schedule of events. Adhere label listing Fair name, Division and Class on the lower right corner on the **back** of the program**. Mail** only one hard copy.

Class 9: FAIR SCHEDULE

A fair schedule is typically a one-page document and/or foldable gate handout. Adhere label listing Fair name, Division and Class on the lower right corner on the **back** of the program. **Mail** only one hard copy.

Class 10: FAIRTIME POSTER

Adhere label listing Fair name, Division and Class on the lower right corner on the **back** of the poster. **Mail** poster in a mailing tube. You cannot enter the same poster in both categories.

10a. Fairtime Commemorative Poster – Fair artwork and dates only.
10b. Fairtime Advertising Poster
10c. Poster created with Artificial Intelligence

Class 11: ANNUAL COUNTY FAIR SOUVENIR ITEM

A souvenir item given away to sponsors and/or sold at the county fair. Service Members - A 'souvenir cup' or other item used to market your business! Adhere label listing Fair/Service member name, Division and Class on the item. Mail to WFA office.

Class 12: OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

Outdoor advertising for fair promotions including billboards, bus advertising, LED signage, 4 x 8 road signs, bus boards, etc. Any advertising that is outdoors and viewed by the public. Submit JPG not to exceed 5 MB.

Class 13: PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN

List any unique and different PR campaign used to promote and advertise your fair and/or service organization. Submit written documents in pdf format.

Class 14: OVERALL FAIR MARKETING CAMPAIGN - Include samples of your Printed, Outdoor, Foreign Language, Cultural, Digital, Social Media, and any other Marketing materials: May include: Print ads, Social Media Campaigns, Outdoor ads, Radio scripts, TV, Digital and any other examples of your marketing.

Class 15: OVERALL BRANDING OF FACILITY/EVENT CENTER OR COMPANY

FOR SERVICE MEMBERS Include samples of your Printed, Outdoor, Foreign Language, Cultural, Digital, Social Media, and any other Marketing materials: May include: Print ads, Social Media Campaigns, Outdoor ads, Radio scripts, TV, Digital and any other examples of your marketing.

Class 16: ANY OTHER MEDIA AND MARKETING ENTRY NOT LISTED ABOVE

Anything goes that does not fit in a class listed above. Please describe and adhere to submission requirements.

SECTION C. INNOVATIONS & MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

Class 17: **BEST USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**:
Artificial intelligence (AI) is rapidly revolutionizing various industries. The innovative use of AI is reshaping every aspect of the fair and festival industry, from the planning and organization stages to the actual event experiences and post-event analysis. Describe your use of AI in the exhibits program, advertising and public relations or overall fair experience. This is also open to service members and their use of AI with their business.

Class 18: **CREATIVE PROMOTIONS TO COMBAT INFLATION IN THE FAIR INDUSTRY**
The effects of inflation have impacted everyone in today's world. How do we maintain customer satisfaction and keep things affordable for our patrons? Describe what creative promotions your fair or service member organization has done to make things more affordable such as ticket flash sales, free or low-cost admission, reduced price concessions, carnival ride promotions, and more.

Class 19: **FAIRTIME EVENT, EXHIBIT OR PROGRAM DURING THE FAIR**
Appeal, creativity, success of the program. Plein air, on site art and/or projects. Fairtime photo contest during the fair.

Class 20: **COMMUNITY OUTREACH - EMBRACING DIVERSITY**
Programming/Event designed to accommodate the disabled community or to celebrate diversity. One or more ways your organization embraces and celebrates diversity at your Fair, Fairgrounds or within events hosted by your organization. Include results, photos, and a detailed summary.

Class 21: **OVERALL FAIR SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**
Creativity, overall value to fair and sponsor, execution at fair and off site. Submit description of program and any collateral materials such as forms, blank agreements, pamphlets, and other solicitation materials.

Class 22: **VOLUNTEERS**
Tell us how you use them, how you recruit and reward them, how you train them, etc. We want to hear about a successful way or ways you incorporate volunteers into your fair.

Class 23: **STORAGE SOLUTIONS**
Describe how hour fair/service organization stores supplies in the off season. Exhibit supplies, ribbons, awards, audit boxes, concession supplies and more. Please include a detailed write up and at least two pictures of storage area.

Class 24: **MAKEOVER – FAIR EDITION!**
Describe how your fair/organization has taken an unusable space and renovated it in order to utilize the space for fairtime and/or an interim event. The renovated space can be utilized temporarily or permanently. Must include a detailed write up of steps taken including estimated costs and at least two before and after pictures. Project must be safety compliant/fire marshal approved.

Class 25: **BEST WAY TO CELEBRATE STAFF**
Describe your fair/service organization's best way to celebrate staff – through a luncheon, badges, gifts, years of service award, etc. Include estimated costs, staff feedback and any photos.

Class 26: **INTERIM EVENTS**
Tell us about a successful event held at your fairgrounds. Include information on why it was successful, how it was marketed, and what the benefits were to the fairgrounds and/or community.

Class 27: **DARE TO BE DIFFERENT**
This class spotlights bold thinking powered by shared insight. Using the AI model developed from the SWOT analysis conducted during the *Dare to Be Different Educational Series at the 2026 WFA Convention*, demonstrate how you used this collaborative tool to problem solve.
Rather than focusing on the technology itself, this class emphasizes how the model was applied to drive distinct outcomes—whether in exhibits, marketing, guest engagement, operations, or overall experience design. Entries should clearly explain how the AI model informed decision-making, uncovered new perspectives, or helped shape a concept that stands apart from traditional approaches. Participants must include the prompt(s) they developed and used with the model, showing how their inputs guided the results. For example: "Using the data in this model generate an outline for ways to increase attendance on slow mid week afternoons." (This is a very short and non complex example)

Class 28: **NEVER AGAIN!**
What is an event and/or program tried at your facility/fair and/or service member organization that was tried once and will never be done again! Describe the event or program, successes, failures and why it was a ONE AND DONE. This class can describe anything from the last 5 years, but nothing that has been previously entered in the Achievement Awards (exception to the one year rule).

Class 29: **THE BIG OOPS**
Describe an event and/or program during the annual county fair that could have/should have gone wrong and what was done to fix it/resolve the issue and ultimately make it work out. This class can describe anything from the last 5 years, but nothing that has been previously entered in the Achievement Awards (exception to the one year rule).

Class 30: **ANY OTHER INNOVATIONS AND MANAGEMENT EXCELLENCE ENTRY NOT LISTED ABOVE** Anything goes that does not fit in a class listed above. Please describe and adhere to submission requirements.

SECTION D. COMPETITIVE EXHIBITS

Class 31: **MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF YOUR COMPETITIVE EXHIBITS PROGRAMS**
Submit a written description of how you marketed your competitive exhibits. Include results such as entry numbers. Include samples of your Printed, Digital, Social Media, and any other marketing materials.

Class 32: **AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMMING**
Tell us about a unique program your Fair did in the area of agriculture education, livestock programs, celebrating a local agricultural commodity, consumer awareness or any of the above. Explain how the program was planned and executed, what partners may have been involved and what the outcome or results were.

Class 33: THEME PROGRAM
Describe ways the theme was presented and carried out in your competitive exhibits program. How was the theme applied to displays, special exhibits, decorations, etc. Judging Criteria: Appeal, execution, collaborative opportunities, and overall success.

Class 34: NEW COMPETITION
(Animal or Still) Creativity, participation, ease of execution.

Class 35: BEST SOLUTION FOR A DISPLAY METHOD
Describe a challenging item or items that you had to display in your competitive exhibits hall and how you solved the problem. Include before and after photos.

Class 36: BEST WAY TO CELEBRATE EXHIBITORS
Describe how you celebrate your award winners in the livestock or non-livestock departments. This could be examples of your 'Parade of Champions,' signage used to celebrate award winners, awards ceremonies, etc. Submit photos and descriptions of what was done and the positive effect it had on your exhibitors and exhibits program.

Class 37: DEMYSTIFYING THE FAIR ENTRY AND RECEIVING PROCESS
How do you make this process easier for your community members with a special focus on assisting the Senior (62+) demographic. Do you still print an entry guidebook? Assist with online entries? Have a special 'How to enter the fair day'? Describe all the ways to make it easier to enter the fair!

Class 38: ON THE SPOT ENTRIES
Most fairs have an entry deadline. Describe anything your fair does for 'On the spot entries' accepted either on fair entry receiving day and/or during the fair competitions. This could include group/school entries, baking contests and more.

Class 39: AWARDS, TROPHIES, BANNERS AND MORE
Share pictures of the awards such as trophies, buckles, banners, etc. given away for your competitive exhibits/livestock programs. Be sure to list where the item was purchased. Enter as JPG not to exceed 5 MB.

Class 40: ANY OTHER COMPETITIVE EXHIBIT ENTRY NOT LISTED ABOVE
Anything goes that does not fit in a class listed above. Please describe and adhere to submission requirements.

Class 41: HOW TO INCREASE COMPETITIVE EXHIBITS
How has your fair increased competitive exhibits numbers? Through mailings, make it and take it classes at your fairgrounds throughout the year, new classes, partnering with local organizations and more. Describe steps and strategies taken, any costs associated with the campaign and increased numbers by specific exhibit department.

SECTION E. “GIVE IT YOUR BEST SHOT” PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

“Give It Your Best Shot” entries will be judged on Overall Composition, Creativity, Clarity (photo in focus) and Relevance to Category. Submit up to one photo in each category as a JPG file. (minimum 300 dpi, file size not to exceed 5 MB). Title your photo(s) and include your fair/service member company name in title.

Class 42: **FOOD & BEVERAGE**

Class 43: **FIRST RESPONDERS**

Class 44: **ANIMALS (with or without people)**

Class 45: **CARNIVAL**

Class 46: **EXHIBITS (Competitive and Educational)**

Class 47: **FAIRTIME BUILDING LAYOUT**

Class 48: **ENTERTAINMENT & GROUNDS ACTS**

Class 49: **PEOPLE AT THE FAIR**

Class 50: **VENDOR BOOTH – COMMERCIAL OR FOOD**

Class 51: **INTERIM EVENT**

Class 52: **BEST THEME PHOTO (Highlighting Annual Fair Theme)**

Class 53: **BEST TEAM SELFIE WITH STAFF OR SERVICE MEMBER**

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2026 ENTRY FORM

Email form to **awards@fairsnet.org** by November 1.
Entry Fee $50 per Fair or Service Member

Name of Fair or Service Member

Address | City | State | Zip

Contact Person | Phone Number | Email Address

Signature | Date

- ❑ Check is mailed with this form to Western Fairs Association
- ❑ Please send me a payment link to pay via credit card.

By signing and submitting this form, I understand my entry is not accepted until payment is received.

LIST ENTRIES (DIVISION NUMBER, CLASS NUMBER AND TITLE)

DIVISION	CLASS	ENTRY TITLE

Please use a second entry form, if needed