

COMPETITIVE EXHIBITS

PHOTOGRAPHY INFORMATION GUIDE

Department P



Superintendents:
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EXHIBIT LOCATION | HOSKINS BUILDING

For mail-in instructions, please review the *Competitive Exhibits General Information Document (click here to view)* IMPORTANT: Please Review the *Photography Important Updates on Page 5 (click here to jump to page)*.

Credentials are not required to enter the Fairgrounds. Entrants drive to their respective exhibit building, enter items, and leave to accommodate others.

Guidelines Class:

- Monday, July 14, 3pm – 7pm
Learn how to properly prepare your entry. This is a class to help new entrants mount their photos according to the guidelines and rules. Please bring in your printed photos during these hours and we will help you. We will NOT be accepting entries during this time.

Exhibit Entry:

- Friday, August 1, 11 am – 7 pm
- Saturday, August 2, 11 am – 7 pm

Exhibit Pick-up:

- Tuesday, September 2, 1 pm – 6 pm
 - Saturday, September 6, 1 pm – 6 pm
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All judging decisions are final. Judges are handpicked professional photographers and artists from the community. Some judges may be an elected representative from Special Donor Companies who donated prizes to a specific class. Superintendent reserves the right to disqualify and/or not display an entry at any time, for any reason.

The Fair and superintendents are not responsible for damaged, misplaced, or stolen items. All entries are submitted at your own risk.

The Alaska State Fair reserves only the right to display your photo publicly and to release your name in a press release should you win a premium. You must claim your entries at the end of the fair at the designated places and times. You need to show the yellow ticket provided during entry drop-off, to pick up your entry.

DIVISION 01: PHOTOGRAPHY

Only one entry per class; up to 3 entries per entrant. *No exceptions.* Entrants submitting more than 3 entries risk disqualification of all entries. Each of the classes listed below includes all forms of photography (black & white or color from either film or digital sources).

Please note that judging is based solely on the photograph, not the mounting or matting.

If you have any questions or for more information, please contact the Superintendent.

SUB-CATEGORIES:

A: Junior, ages 12 and under

B: Junior, ages 13 through 17

O: Adults ages 18 +

If a sub-category is not specified, the entry will be classified as OPEN.

Class:

- **01 Alaska State Fair Theme: “Reach for the Stars”** – Using any photographic technique in Classes 02-18.
- **02 Aerial / Drone Photography** – Aerial or drone images of landforms, buildings, people, and wildlife.
- **03 Astrophotography / Astral Photography / Aurora Photography** – Photos of celestial objects and events and photography of the aurora.
- **04 Architectural** – Includes building interior and exterior as well as architectural detail photos.
- **05 Birds in the Wild** – images of non-captive birds in their natural habitat.
- **06 Digital Photographic Art** – Heavily enhanced, morphed, or manipulated photographic art and graphics. Entries may include writing or text but cannot identify the photographer.
- **07 Landscapes** – includes scenic, horizon, sunset, geographical, climatological, aurora borealis, or intimate landscapes.
- **08 Macrophotography** – includes extreme close-ups of flora, insects, textures, etc.

- **09 Flora** – Includes photos in which flora are the major focus.
 - **10 Panoramic** – Includes images from panoramic cameras and those assembled from multiple frames.
 - **11 Portraits of People** – Includes formal and candid photos of people
 - **12 Portraits of Pets** – Includes formal and candid shots of pets.
 - **13 Sports** – Sports of all kinds
 - **14 Life in Alaska** – Tell a story about life in Alaska. Any technique, restricted to Alaskan subject and theme. Photos must be taken in Alaska.
 - **15 Those Who Serve** – Tell us a story of someone who serves and what they do: military, emergency, health, and human services.
 - **16 Wildlife** – Includes animals and fish in the wild as the major focus.
 - **17 Superintendent’s Challenge: “Things in Motion”**
Using any technique from other classes, create a photo that illustrates this idea.
 - **18 Miscellaneous** – Open category.
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2025 Superintendent’s Challenge theme: Things in Motion.

Planes, trains, automobiles, or even people! Think about what best represents this theme AND how are you going to get there? Subject, image quality, print quality, editing techniques, and use of imagination will all be required for a blue ribbon here. We will be looking for your interpretation of the challenge.

DIVISION 02: PROFESSIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Unlike Division 1 entrants, Division 2 entrants can enter up to 3 entries in a single class; up to 3 entries total per entrant. *No exceptions*. Entrants submitting more than 3 entries risk disqualification of all entries. Each of the classes listed below includes all forms of photography (black & white or color from either film or digital sources).

Please note that judging is based solely on the photograph, not the mounting or matting.

Class:

- **01 Alaska State Fair Theme: “Reach for the Stars”** - Using any photographic technique in Classes 02-06.
 - **02 Landscape** – Includes scenic, horizon, sunset, geographical, climatological, aurora borealis, and intimate landscapes.
 - **03 Portraits** – Includes formal and candid photos of people or pets.
 - **04 Wildlife (non-captive)** – Includes animals, fish, and birds in the wild as the major focus.
 - **05 Digital and/or Graphic Art** – Heavily enhanced or manipulated images, advertising, digital art. May include text and graphics, but cannot identify the entrant as a visual element in the photo.
 - **06 Miscellaneous** – Open category
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Qualifications / Guidelines:

Entries must meet the following guidelines to be considered for judging and display:

- All entries must be the work of the person making the entry.
- Photographs should have been taken within two years.
- Images must be securely mounted on foam-core board (no thinner than ¼".)
- Finished sizes of entries must be either 8"x10" or 11"x14". Sizes pertain to the total size, including foam-core board, print, and any matting.
- Entries in **Panoramic Class** (Class 10) ONLY: Entries can be a maximum size of 12"x24".
- **IMPORTANT:** Completed mounts must be in a fitted clear sleeve or properly shrink-wrapped. Many frame shops can mount and wrap your photos or sell clear fitted sleeves.
- **Label the back** of each entry with the following information and in the following format:
 - **Full Name**
 - **Address**
 - **Phone**
 - **Title of Work**
 - **Division/class/sub-category**

(Entries without entrant contact/ mailing information on the back will not be accepted)

You Could:

- Shoot in a manner that fits the challenge.
Costumes, lighting, subjects - setting the scene.
- Process the print to represent the theme.
Sepia toning, changes in color, filters, basic cropping, and editing.
- Advanced processing
Creative effects, filters, added art, and digital enhancement.

You can be creative on every step of the challenge. ***What will you do?***

Disqualifiers:

No framed or glass-mounted images will be accepted.

Do not apply hangers to the back of entries. Fair-provided Velcro will be used to hang all entries.

Do not place any identifying text, watermark, or logo on the front of the entry.

Do not enter any lewd or illicit images. They will not be judged or displayed, as determined by the superintendent. Tasteful representations may be entered. Contact the superintendent with questions, concerns, or for clarification.

Do not use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create or heavily edit your image.

Do not try to enter the same image in multiple classes.

Do not try to enter the same image from previous years.

Do not use 8 1/2" x 11" document sleeves AND clear plastic food wraps. They are bulky, off-size, difficult to hang, and break down during fair display.

Judging criteria generally include the following:

- **First impression** – *artistic merit. How well does this photo capture your interest?*
- **Focal Point** – *is there a main point of interest that is in focus and dominant?*
- **Impact or Mood** – *photos should tell a story or evoke a mood or an emotion.*
- **Lighting/Contrast** – *proper lighting techniques define the art of photography.*
- **Quality** – *technically correct in such areas as composition, exposure, focus, printing, and grain.*

Judges differ in their approaches. Sometimes a judge will go through and gather first impressions from the class being adjudicated. Any that stand out clearly as superior are separated, then the rest are more carefully examined and additional prints are selected to move on. At the same time, definite rejects will be removed. The first impression isn't the final one, it does, however, measure the wow factor of an image and its technical merit. Oftentimes photos that initially stand out will go on and win, but not always.

Surviving this first cut is a matter of two things: artistic merit and technical merit. Your first questions when looking at the photo you want to enter should be:

- *Is it artistic in nature? Does it stand out and seem a cut above a snapshot?*
- *Is it well-composed? Does it follow the **rule of thirds**¹ and is there a focal point?*¹

The **rule of thirds** is a basic premise of art. Look at your print and divide it into thirds both horizontally and vertically. This creates a tic-tac-toe board on the print. Elements of most interest should be placed in the four intersections created. Careful placement of these elements enhances the quality of your composition and gives a photo the look human beings instinctively expect.

- *Does it tell a story or evoke a mood? You may see it, but do others? Ask a friend.*
- *Does the lighting enhance that mood or story?*
- *How do the technical aspects look? Is it focused and well-lit? Is it grainy or pixelated? Is it clear or muddy?*
- *Is the printing high quality? Are the colors correct, the details clear, and the contrast, correct? Often a bad print will cover up your hard work. Don't skimp on printing.*

Further technical adjudication in the "Panoramic" and "Digital Photographic Art" will focus on the quality of the integration of multiple images. Panoramic entries should be sharp and not be pixelated. They need to have smooth transitions from image to image. Digital Art entries should have a smooth blending of photographic and artistic elements. The key in either of these classes is to make the final entry look like one image, not an assembly of multiple images even though it is.

SPECIAL AWARDS - PHOTOGRAPHY

Outstanding entries will be recognized by these generous donors:

