

2026

LITERATURE

Exhibitor Handbook



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www.sdstatefair.com/participate

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**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

STATE FAIR PARK DIVISION

1060 3RD St. SW

Huron, SD 57350

Phone: 605.353.7340 Fax: 605.353.7348

www.sdstatefair.com



Dear Exhibitors,

Thank you for being a part of the 2026 South Dakota State Fair! We are thrilled to invite you back to Huron for the 2026 South Dakota State Fair on September 2-7! You are important to our fair, whether you are a long-time exhibitor or a first-year competitor. We love to see the Arts & Education Building brimming with your accomplishments and talents for fairgoers of all ages to enjoy.

In this book you will find familiar and new avenues of showmanship. Review the guidelines to entering your exhibits for display, judging and exciting prize winning opportunities.

The South Dakota State Fair exists to showcase the best of the great state of South Dakota and bring people together. We thank you in advance for sharing your ideas and talents with us. It is amazing every year to see how much creativity there is in our great state! We will be looking for you at the 2026 South Dakota State Fair.

The South Dakota State Fair will accept Static Exhibits entries between April 1- July 31. Literature entries will only be accepted through July 10.

Sincerely,

The South Dakota State Fair Staff and Commission

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE FAIR EXHIBITORS

ARTS & EDUCATION BUILDING

DEPARTMENT 370: LITERATURE

- Friends of the Huron Public Library \$25 Premium
- Literature Sweepstakes Award Plaque
- Best of Show \$15 Premium sponsored by the South Dakota State Fair

DEPARTMENT 371: ART/ PHOTOGRAPHY

- Lewis Southgate (Huron, South Dakota) \$10 Gift Certificate
- Lewis Southgate (Huron, South Dakota) \$10 Gift Certificate
- Best of Show \$15 Premium sponsored by the South Dakota State Fair

HIGHLIGHTS

- Featured Artists and Authors
- Jr Achievement Award sponsored by the South Dakota State Fair
- Sweepstakes Literature Contest
- Coloring Contests
- Lego Building Contest sponsored by the South Dakota State Fair

EXHIBIT CHECK-IN

- **Department 370 Literature:** Exhibits must be submitted by July 31 to the South Dakota State Fair office or postmarked by July 31 to be eligible for judging.
- **Department 371 Art/ Photography:** Exhibits may be checked in:
 - Friday, August 21– 10 AM to 6 PM
 - Saturday, August 22– 9 AM to 4 PM

EXHIBIT RELEASE/PICK-UP

- **Department 370 Literature & Department 371 Art/ Photography:** Exhibits will be ready for release:
 - Tuesday, September 8 from 9 AM to 5 PM

Mary Helen Wipf, Art & Education Building Superintendent,
rmhwipf@gmail.com

STATIC EXHIBIT GENERAL RULES

1. Starting in 2024, entries must be completed online at <https://sdsf.fairwire.com> . A step-by-step video with instructions on how to navigate the online entry platform, ShoWorks can be found here (<https://vimeo.com/922566991/66f0110c64?share=copy>). If you require further assistance after watching the instructional video, please contact the SD State Fair Office. For those with no access to a computer to make entries, please contact the State Fair office for a paper entry form. If using a paper entry form, please keep to 25 entries or less.
2. The South Dakota State Fair office will accept Static entries between April 1-July 31 in all departments except Literature which closes July 10.
3. REFUND POLICY: The fair may refund entry fees paid by an exhibitor if the exhibitor requests the refund in writing two weeks prior to the opening day of the fair and states the reason for requesting the refund. Following that timeframe, NO refunds will be issued.
4. Only one entry may be made in each class unless stated otherwise in rules for that division/class.
5. The entry must be exhibited in the name of the person doing the work and completed since the last South Dakota State Fair entry period between August 17, 2025, and August 22, 2026.
6. Junior is defined as 18 years of age and under prior to the 2026 State Fair. Junior may also enter in adult categories. Exhibits will be judged according to rules of the division.
7. Computerized entry tags will be mailed to exhibitors **immediately after the entry deadline**. Tags should not be altered. Exhibits having altered tags will not be accepted and will be disqualified.
8. For exhibit check-in and release information, refer to Horizons Hall, Horticulture, and Arts/Education Building Static Exhibit Premium Books. There will be no early releases. No exhibits will be released without claim tag.
9. Entries may be mailed to the South Dakota State Fair. Entries must be securely wrapped and boxed to prevent damage. Exhibitor is responsible for insurance and shipping costs. Entry tag must be attached to exhibit with a copy of Static Exhibit Entry Form to serve as packing slip and for check-in purposes. Draw a line through any item on the entry form not included with mailed exhibits. Entries must be received by the South Dakota State Fair office by August 22 to qualify for judging, except literature which must be received by July 31.
10. The South Dakota State Fair is not responsible for any loss or damage that may occur.
11. Exhibits may not be sold. Sales tags or advertising logos on exhibits will not be allowed.
12. Superintendents of the Horizons Hall, Horticulture, and Arts/Education Buildings may determine the eligibility of exhibits and may disqualify exhibits.
13. A division or class may be deleted if no entries are made for three years.
14. Items not claimed by December 31 will become property of the South Dakota State Fair.
15. Premium checks will be mailed to exhibitors within 60 days of the State Fair. If an exhibitor's earnings total \$600 or over, a W-9 must be completed by the exhibitor before their check will be issued. Premium checks for the amount of \$5 and under will not be mailed out (some exceptions apply). Affected exhibitors will receive instructions on how to collect premium winnings.

LITERATURE RULES

Entries are qualified for competition in Literature when the following rules are met in addition to the South Dakota State Fair General Static Exhibit Rules.

1. Literature entries must be completed between the dates of August 1, 2025, and July 31, 2026, by the exhibitor.
2. Exhibitor need not be a resident of South Dakota.
3. Literature entry forms must be submitted by July 10. Only one entry may be made in each class.

Entry fees are as follows:

- **Junior entry fee - \$2.00 per item**
- **Amateur entry fee - \$3.00 per item**
- **Professional entry fee - \$8.00 per item**

Required 5% processing fee to be added to total amount due for each exhibitor.

4. Poetry or prose may not be entered more than two consecutive years. No poetry or prose entry, which has been awarded a first prize at a prior fair, may be entered again.
5. When specified, prose and poetry exhibits must meet word counts and line counts.
6. All manuscripts must be typed on 8 ½" x 11" paper, double spaced, on one side of the paper. Do not put names on manuscripts. Do not fold manuscripts. All literature entries must include two copies, a judge's copy and an exhibit copy.
7. Staple entry tags to the upper left-hand corner of the manuscript.
8. Tagged manuscripts should be mailed to:
South Dakota Fair
1060 3rd Street, SW
Huron, SD 57350

Manuscripts must be received by July 31. Enclose a large, stamped, self-addressed manila envelope for return of manuscripts.

9. Critique sheets may be provided.
10. Manuscripts may be picked up on Tuesday, September 8 from 9 AM to 5 PM. Exhibitor must have claim check to remove exhibit from the Art/Education building. If personally unable to pick-up exhibit, exhibitor must sign a release authorizing an individual to pick-up exhibit. Manuscripts not collected on September 8 will be mailed in manila envelope supplied by exhibitor. Exhibitor must make arrangements with the superintendent if exhibit is to be returned COD.

MEDIA RULES

Entries are qualified for competition in Media when the following rules are met in addition to the South Dakota State Fair General Static Exhibit Rules.

1. Open to residents of South Dakota only.
2. This category is open to writers who have been published.
3. Entries submitted must be in published form. A tear sheet (full pages containing story or picture) must be submitted for newspaper or magazine entry sheets. Photocopies are permitted if they include the name of publication and date of issue.
4. Attach an 8 ½ x 11 sheet of paper bearing the class number and division description, title or headline of article, publication's name, address and date of publication, to each entry.
5. Each non-bylined entry must be accompanied by a cover letter of certification attesting to validity of authorship.
6. All entries must have been published between June 1, 2025, and May 31, 2026.
7. In the classes that require news photos or feature photos, the original photograph should be submitted with a tear sheet. This will allow the judges to have the original photo and is to the advantage of the exhibitor in case the newsprint is not of the finest quality.

Junior: Exhibitor is 18 years of age or younger prior to the start of the fair.

Amateur: Exhibitor writes for pleasure and does not derive the majority of income from writing.

Professional: Exhibitor writes primarily for the purpose of selling; or who has had 3 or more years of literature training; or teaches literature media. Exhibitor derives the majority of income from being a writer.

PROFESSIONAL – DIVISION 1 – PROSE

Premium: 1st - \$25 2nd - \$15

CLASSES

1. Adult short story, 600-1300 words
2. Adult short story, 1300 words or more
3. Humorous story
4. Story for pre-school children (*intended to be read to them*)
5. Story for primary children (*intended for first- third graders*)
6. Informal essay
7. Human interest story, *over 300 words*
8. Formal essay, *3-5 pages*
9. Anecdote, *under 300 words*

Best of Show: A \$15 premium will be awarded to the winner selected from PROFESSIONAL PROSE Division 1, Classes 1-9

AMATEUR – DIVISION 2 – POETRY

Premium: 1st - \$15 2nd - \$10

CLASS

1. Rhymed poem, not to exceed 24 lines
2. Rhymed poem, over 24 lines
3. Unrhymed poem, not to exceed 40 lines
4. Unrhymed poem, over 40 lines
5. Sonnet
6. Haiku, Tanka or Cinquain (*not more than one stanza*)
7. Lyric poem (*intended to be sung*)
8. Humorous poem
9. Poem for children (*not about children, but for children*)
10. Narrative poem (*tells a story, has characters such as people or animals etc.*)
11. Ode (*in praise of poem*)
12. Elegy (*meditation on any serious theme such as death, immortality, etc.*)
13. Nature poem (*descriptive*)
14. Definition poem (*basing the poem on a feeling such as loneliness, hate, love- even about things*)
15. Reflection or memories poem (*can be any type of reflection - for instance, of a decade, former days, growing up etc.*)
16. ***My 'South Dakota Home' (poet's choice of topics)**

Best of Show: A \$10 premium will be awarded to the winner selected from AMATEUR POETRY Division 2, Classes 1-16

***Friends of the Huron Public Library is awarding a \$25 premium to the 1st place winner in Division 2, Class 16**

AMATEUR – DIVISION 3 – PROSE

Premium: 1st - \$15 2nd - \$10

CLASSES

1. Adult short story, 600-1300 words
2. Adult short story, 1300 words or more
3. Humorous story
4. Story for pre-school children (*intended to be read to them*)
5. Story for primary children (*intended for first- third graders*)
6. Who-Dun-It, *mystery story for ages 10-14*
7. Dramatic script
8. Informal essay
9. Human interest story, *over 300 words*
10. Formal essay, *3-5 pages*
11. Travelogue
12. Anecdote, *under 300 words*
13. Character sketch, *not to exceed 300 words*
14. Character study, *over 300 words*

Best of Show: A \$10 premium will be awarded to the winner selected from AMATEUR PROSE Division 3, Classes 1-14

JUNIOR – DIVISION 4 – POETRY

Premium: 1st - \$10 2nd - \$7

CLASSES

1. Rhymed poem
2. Free verse (*not to exceed 40 lines*)
3. Haiku, Tanka or Cinquain (*not more than one stanza*)
4. Humorous poem
5. Narrative poem (*tells a story-has characters such as people or animals etc.*)
6. Ode (*in praise of poem*)
7. Nature poem
8. My 'South Dakota Home' (*poet's choice of topic*)

Best of Show: A \$5 premium will be awarded to the winner selected from YOUTH POETRY Division 4, Classes 1-8

JUNIOR – DIVISION 5 – PROSE

Premium: 1st - \$10 2nd - \$7

CLASSES

1. Short story, *600 to 1300 words*
2. Humorous story, *exhibitor's choice of length*
3. Informal essay
4. Story for primary school children
5. Human interest story
6. Formal essay

Best of Show: A \$5 premium will be awarded to the winner selected from YOUTH PROSE Division 5, Classes 1-6

MEDIA – DIVISION 6 – DAILY, WEEKLY, BI-MONTHLY OR MONTHLY PUBLICATION

Premium: 1st - \$25 2nd - \$15

CLASSES

1. Professional editorial, state interest
2. Feature story, human interest
3. News story, factual account of local interest
4. News story, factual account of state interest
5. News picture, with caption of on-the-spot-event
6. Feature photo, with caption of human interest

Best of Show: A \$15 Premium award will be awarded to the winner selected from MEDIA Division 6, Classes 1-6

SWEEPSTAKE & LITERATURE AWARD

The South Dakota State Fair awards the writer who accumulates the most points in any of the Literature divisions. Points will be calculated as follows:

- First Place – 3 points
- Second Place – 2 points
- Third Place – 1 point

No special entry is required for this award.

No person may be awarded the Sweepstake & Literature award two consecutive years.