

Community Arts & Crafts

Home of the Competitive Exhibits Department

Highlands County Fair

February 6th- 14th, 2026

Welcome to the Community Arts & Crafts Competitive Exhibits Department! All entries will be displayed in the Alan Jay Arena. The Arena will close nightly at 10 pm and remain secured during off hours.

Registration and Exhibit Entry is free and open to all residents of Highlands County. Please go to www.hcfair.net to register in the Community Arts & Crafts. This Department is for all Arts & Crafts and other Contests offered at the Highlands County Fair. **Entries must be registered online. NO PAPER ENTRES.** Contact the Fair Office if you need assistance with registering online. Pictures will be requested at the end of registration.

Pre-registration is required and closes on Thursday, Midnight, January 22rd, 2026.

Exhibit Drop Off:

Friday,	January 23 th , 2026	in the Fair Office	3 pm-6 pm
Saturday,	January 24 th , 2026	in the Fair Office	9 am-12 pm
Sunday,	January 25 th , 2026	in the Fair Office	10 am-2 pm

Exhibit Release Date:

Sunday, February 15th, 2026 in the Alan Jay Arena from 10 am-2pm.

Claim tickets must be presented in order to claim items. The Fair Association is not responsible for and will dispose of any remaining articles not picked up by 2pm on Sunday February 15th, 2026, unless prior arrangements have been made. Please remember, ***items and ribbons will not be available until after 10 am on Sunday February 15th. Premium monies will be mailed to the exhibitor after the close out of Fair.***

General Rules:

1. Online pre-registration is ***mandatory***. Online registration is available at www.hcfair.net and will close at **Midnight on Thursday, January 22rd, 2026**. **NO PAPER ENTRES**. A picture or PDF of each entry will be asked for when you complete registration. Contact the Fair Office if you need assistance with registering online at info@hcfair.net or call to set-up an appointment at 863-382-2255, option1.
2. The Community Arts & Crafts is for competitive exhibits that are open to the public, exhibitions, education, and demonstration purposes. Sale(s) of exhibited items is prohibited during the Fair.
3. The Highlands County Fair Community Arts & Crafts is open to all amateur and professional artists, hobbyists and crafters who reside within Highlands County (including winter residents with a local address). There are **NO ENTRY FEES**. All items will be judged on individual merit (with the exception of Best of Show winners). Explanation of ribbons and prizes can be found within the Explanation of Prizes section.
4. All items entered must be completed, clean, odor free, in good taste, and the handiwork of the exhibitor listed on the Entry Form. Any items that do not meet the requirements will not be accepted. If an item is accepted as an oversight, it may later be disqualified and/or not judged or displayed.
5. Each entry will be judged on its own merit. Judging is done by the most qualified judges available; all judges' decisions are final. The name of the exhibitor is concealed during judging to ensure that each entry will be judged fairly on its own merit. The entry of only one item in a division does not necessarily guarantee the top award for that entry. Items will **not** be accepted for judging that have been previously exhibited in the Highlands County Fair.
6. Entries must have been completed within the 2025-2026 Calendar Year to be eligible for judging.
7. All exhibits are under the management of the Fair Association. The Fair Association will take every precaution to protect exhibits, however the Association, its Officers or Agents will not be responsible for accident, loss, or damage of any entry. The Fair Association reserves the right to display or not display any item.

Important Dates:

2026 Dates	Time	Description/Location
Thur 1/22/2026	Midnight	Online Entries Close
Fri 1/23/2026	3 pm-6 pm	Exhibit Drop Off in Fair Office
Sat 1/24/2026	9 am-12 pm	Exhibit Drop Off in Fair Office
Sun 1/25/2026	10 am-2 pm	Exhibit Drop Off in Fair Office
Sun 2/16/2026	10 am-2 pm	Exhibit Release- must present Claim Ticket

Age Categories for all Amateur Divisions:

Category I	Category II	Category III	Category IV	Category V
Small Sprouts	Junior Youth	Senior Youth	Adult	Senior Adult
2-6 years	7-12 years	13-18 years	19-64 years	65 and older

Age Categories for all Professional Divisions:

Pro I	Pro II	Pro III
18-35 years	36-55 years	56 and older

Explanation of Prizes:

Blue Ribbon	Red Ribbon	White Ribbon	Green Ribbon	Best of Show
\$15.00	\$10.00	\$5.00	Ribbon Only	\$20.00

1. Exhibitors may enter a maximum of 3 exhibits in any one class and 3 in any one Division or less by division rules. Not more than a total of 10 exhibits in all Divisions.
2. Judging: All items within a class will be judged on a points-based system according to their own merit. Placings will be awarded based on the highest points in each class. All first-place class winners in the respective Division will be judged for Best of Show.
3. All Premium Monies will be mailed by check to the Exhibitor within two weeks of the Fairs closing date.
4. All Amateur and Professional Entries will qualify for Premium payouts.
5. All Best of Show Winners will be listed on social media to compete in a People's Choice Voting category. People's Choice Voting will take place beginning Saturday, February 7th and will end on Friday February 13th at Midnight. Announcement of People's Choice Winner will take place on Saturday, February 14th on the Highlands County Fair Facebook page.

Division I: Fabric, Thread & Sewing

Class:	Description:	Specifics to Class:
1	Crochet & Knitting	
2	Cross Stitch, Needlepoint & Hand Embroidery	
3	Hand & Machine Quilting	Must have 4" sleeve for hanging
4	Sewing	
5	Weaving/Spinning	

Division II: Handcrafts & General Crafts

Class:	Description:	Specifics to Class:
1	Ceramics & Pottery	Interiors must be glazed, and bottoms of pieces must not be covered by felt or any other material.
2	Jewelry	
3	Origami/Paper Folding	No glue, staples, tape, or any other adhesive may be used to hold pieces together. Entries may not be cut or torn.
4	Wreaths/Basketry	
5	Clay Figurines	Open to modeling clay or Play-Doh. All pieces must be fired or baked to be eligible for judging.
6	Original Design	May be mixed media

Division III: Nature Arts

Nature Arts Rules:

1. All General Rules apply.
2. One entry per person, per class.

Class:	Description:	Specifics to Class:
1	Rock Painting	If multiple rocks are used in the piece they must be contained together in the display.
2	Terrarium	Entry must be an original creation, beready for display and be able to sit on a display table or to be hung. Max 20lbs.

3	Pinecone Art	Entry must be an original creation consisting of at least one variety of pinecone. Art piece can use a whole pinecone or pieces but must be ready for display.
4	Shell Art	Entry must be an original creation consisting of at least one variety of shell found within Florida. Art piece must be ready for display.

Division IV: Fine Art

Fine Art Rules:

1. All General Rules apply.
2. Limit 2 pieces per class per exhibitor.
3. All entries must be framed, except gallery wrap paintings- which must have **FINISHED SIDES**. The definition of a gallery wrapped piece of art is that the painting must extend all the way to the back of the canvas.
4. All entries except gallery wrap paintings must be ready to hang.
5. Only wire hangers all the way across the back of the frame or saw tooth hangers will be accepted.
6. (NOTE: 2 points will be deducted if not ready to be hung.)

Class:	Description:	Specifics to Class:
1	Acrylic	
2	Oils	
3	Watercolor	
4	Pastels	
5	Pen & Ink	
6	Pencils, Charcoal & Chalk	
7	Mixed Media	

Division V: Photography

Photography Rules:

1. All General Rules apply.
2. Limit 2 entries per class per exhibitor.
3. Pictures must be a minimum of 8"x10" and not larger than 16" x 20".
If photography entry is matted the full photo must show.
4. All entries must be ready to hang- only wire hangers all the way across the back of the frame or saw tooth hangers will be accepted.
5. If photo has been digitally enhanced in any way (black and white or color entries) they may only be submitted in the Digitally Enhanced class.
6. **NOTE: 2 points will be deducted if not ready to be hung.)**

Class:	Description:	Specifics to Class:
1	Black & White	
2	Color or Sepia	
3	Digitally Enhanced	May be Black & White or Color photos

Division VI: LEGO & K'NEX

LEGO & K'NEX Rules:

1. All General Rules apply.
2. Amateur exhibitors ONLY.
3. Limit to one (1) entry per exhibitor.
4. Entries can be LEGO, K'NEX or a combination of both.
5. All entries must be assembled offsite on a board or surface that can be moved, if necessary, without the entry becoming unstable.
6. No kits may be used to construct entries, individual pieces from a kit may be used but no entry may be completely constructed from a kit design.
7. Maximum entry size may be 2'x3' and no heavier than 20 lbs.

Class:	Description:	Specifics to Class:
1	Original Design	
2	Scene from Movie	
3	Scene from Book	

Division VII: Woodworking & Carving

Woodworking & Carving Rules:

1. All General Rules apply.
2. Limit to five entries per exhibitor.

Class:	Description:	Specifics to Class:
1	Turning	
2	Intarsia	
3	Furniture	
4	Miniatures	
5	Carvings or Reliefs	
6	Bird House or Feeder	
7	Original Design	

Division VIII: Penmanship

Penmanship Rules:

1. All General Rules apply.
2. Limit to one (1) entry per exhibitor. **Paper MUST be displayed in a clear plastic sleeve for judging- Name and Entry Division must appear on BACK, TOP RIGHT-HAND CORNER OF ENTRY.**
3. Amateurs Exhibitors ONLY.
4. Each entry may be no more than one page.
5. Locate the writing that pertains to your age group, **write exactly as it appears- including all punctuation!**
6. Printing or cursive is acceptable, but it must be the **same** throughout the writing.
7. Paper for all age groups should measure 8 ½ x 11" and have no decorations.
8. Lined white penmanship paper is suggested but unlined paper is permitted. Paper that is **not** acceptable includes paper with a dashed middle line (*except for Little Sprouts and Jr Youth Divisions*), paper from a spiral notebook and colored paper.
9. Use black or blue ink, not a felt tip pen. **For Small Sprouts and Jr Youth, a pencil is acceptable.**

Class:	Age Group:	Quote that must be used:
1	Small Sprouts; ages 2-6	Must use QUOTE #1
2	Junior Youth; ages 7-12	Must use QUOTE #2
3	Senior Youth; ages 13-18	Must use QUOTE #3
4	Adult; ages 19-64	Must use QUOTE #4
5	Senior Adult; ages 65 and up	Must use QUOTE #5

Judging Criteria Includes:

1. Correct formation of letters
2. Even spacing between letters, words and lines
3. Appropriate margins (at least ½” on all sides of the papers)
4. Adherence to one method of writing (all printing or all cursive)
5. Exactness to excerpt presented (punctuation, no omitted words, no misspelled words, etc.)
6. Overall neatness

QUOTE #1 (Small Sprouts; ages 2-6)

“The quick brown fox jumped over the lazy dog.”

-Unknown

QUOTE #2 (Junior Youth; ages 7-12)

“Common Sense in an uncommon degree is what the world calls wisdom.”

-Samuel Taylor Coleridge

QUOTE #3 (Senior Youth; ages 13-18)

“The measure of success is not whether you have a tough problem to deal with, but whether it is the same problem you had last year.”

-John Foster Dulles.

QUOTE #4 (Adult; ages 19-64)

“We are made wise not by the recollection of our past, but by the responsibility for our future.”

-George Bernard Shaw

QUOTE #5 (Senior Adult; ages 65 & up)

“Today is the oldest you’ve ever been and the youngest you’ll ever be again.”

-Eleanor Roosevelt

Division IX: Trending Arts

Trending Arts Rules:

1. All General Rules apply.
2. Maximum one entry per class per exhibitor.
3. Trending categories may change annually depending on popular art culture at the time.
4. Each class will be judged against only their own entries and the top winner in each class will receive a special rosette.
5. Premiums will be paid for blue, red and white ribbons. No premium for the top winner in each class.

Class:	Description:	Specifics to Class:
1	Button Art	Button art can be a wide range of things- please have entry ready to be displayed either on a table or by hanging.
2	Upcycled Painting	Add your personal flair to any previously painted art piece. Use your imagination to add new elements to an art piece done by a different artist. Thrift stores, garage sales and even your own home may have a perfect piece just waiting for a facelift. All art pieces must be submitted ready to be hung for display.
3	Word Art	Any word can be a piece of art! Use your imagination to create an original piece consisting of either a single word or multiple words.
4	Pipe Cleaner Animals	Create a creature out of only pipe cleaners.
5	Dollar Store Special	Attention Pinterest artists, this one is for you! Create any project using Dollar Store items that cost no more than \$10 (glue and other adhesives do not need to be included in the cost).
6	Clothespin Art	The sky is the limit with this class! Entries may consist of a single clothes pin or multiple. Additional media (paint, fabric, adhesives, etc) may be used if the clothes pins are visible for judging.
7	Blue Jean Art	Recycle a pair of blue jeans or parts of blue jeans into something useable. It must fit in a 12-inch X 12-inch cube.

Trending Art Helpful Tips:

1. Get creative! These categories are all about using your imagination!
2. Use Pinterest and other Internet search sites to help find unique ideas.
3. There are many useful videos on YouTube that will provide insight and helpful tips for your project.

Division X: Pre-School & Daycare Arts

Class:	Description:	Specifics to Class:
1	2-Year-Old	
2	3-Year-Old	
3	4-Year-Old	
4	5-Year-Old	

Pre-School & Daycare Rules:

1. All General Rules apply.
2. Art projects may consist of any material or subject, all entries in a specific age group will be judged against each other.
3. Limit one entry in this Division per exhibitor.
4. Exhibitor entry must be submitted with a Highlands County Pre-School or Daycare group.
5. Exhibitors may enter additional classes in Divisions I-IX but must enter under the Small Sprout Age Group.