



Photo Credit: "Juniper Tree Overlooking Fall Colors Along the Mississippi," Suhaib Khan of Glendale Heights, IL

First Place Iowa Landscape

Stepping into Fall

As the air turns cooler and the leaves begin to change, September is a great time to slow down and appreciate the beauty of Iowa.

Our Annual Photography Contest is open for submissions, inviting photographers to capture the best of Iowa on camera. Paint Iowa Beautiful projects are popping up as volunteers take advantage of the last months of good painting weather. And Hometown Pride continues its momentum, with the completion of long-awaited projects and the excitement of a brand-new Hometown Pride community!

Whether you're submitting your favorite photo, painting a local landmark, or cutting the ribbon on a new park feature, thank you to all the volunteers who are keeping Iowa beautiful this fall!

With gratitude,

The Keep Iowa Beautiful Team





THE 17th ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST IS OPEN!

Frame Iowa Through Your Lens!

Through the lens of local photographers, Iowa's beauty and character shines!

Our 17th Annual Photography Contest is officially open for submissions, and we're looking for images that capture the beauty, vibrancy and pride found across Iowa; from busy main streets to rural landscapes. Whether you're an amateur shutterbug or a seasoned professional, we invite you to submit your best shots to this annual contest, which offers more than \$2,000 in cash awards.

Contest Categories:

- **Iowa Landscape:** Farm fields, rolling hills, wooded forests, and more.
- **Iowa Water:** Rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes.
- **Iowa Cities:** Urban centers, street scenes, and landmarks.
- **Iowans in Action:** People living, working, and playing.
- **Iowa Wildlife:** Mammals, birds, fish, bugs, and other critters.
- **Hometown Pride:** Photos of participating Hometown Pride towns.

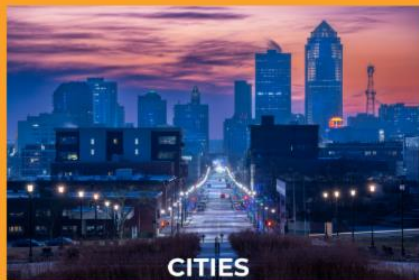
Deadline to Enter: Friday, December 11, 2026

Participants may enter photos in as many categories as they like. To view past winners, read complete rules, and submit your entries, visit the [Keep Iowa Beautiful website](#) today!

[Submit Your Photos TODAY!](#)

Check out these winning photos from our 15th Annual Photography Contest.

[Click here](#) to view all the winning photos from previous contests!



Top Row (L to R): "Rodeo," Lee Navin, "Early Morning in July," Katie Kettering, "Cliff Swallows Arguing," Sharon Scarff

Bottom Row (L to R): "Hazy Des Moines," Scott Howe, "Little George Park," Svitlana Kay, "Floating Dock," William Beardsley



Hometown Pride Highlights

Fonda Pickleball Courts

A huge congratulations to the Fonda Hometown Pride Committee on the grand opening of their brand-new pickleball courts! This project was a couple of years in the making, relying on hard work from local volunteers, including the Fonda Hometown Pride Committee, as well as funding from local donors and a sizeable grant from Iowa Economic Development Authority.



Want to read more? The Pocahontas Record-Democrat recently covered this story, and you can [read the full article here](#).



New Vienna Unveils New Banners

Visitors and residents traveling along Columbus Street (Highway 52) through the center of New Vienna are now greeted by eye-catching new light pole banners! The display proudly celebrates local landmarks, featuring the historic, 127-year-old Old Stone Water Tower and the striking gothic architecture of St. Boniface Catholic Church.

Newell Hometown Pride Kicks Off First Meeting

The Newell Hometown Pride committee officially launched with its inaugural meeting on August 13! Members elected officers and began shaping their new community plan. Newell will be guided by existing Hometown Pride Community Coach Margo Underwood as they embark on this exciting journey.



Refreshing Iowa Communities, One Gallon at a Time

Recent Paint Iowa Beautiful Projects

Take a look below at a few of the many Paint Iowa Beautiful projects that have been completed so far this year. And make sure to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) to read more about the projects across the state as they are completed.



(L to R): Floyd County Conservation, Main Street West Branch, City of Beaman



Sponsor Spotlight

Thank You Prairie Meadows!

Keep Iowa Beautiful was proud to continue our annual partnership with the Iowa State Fair by supporting the "OK Crew," the dedicated team responsible for keeping the grounds pristine every day.



Our ability to support the OK Crew this year was made possible through a **Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant!** Because of their generosity, we were able to supply the OK Crew with t-shirts, buckets and trash grabbers, making the important work they do a little easier.

In addition to the Community Betterment Grant, Prairie Meadows was also a lead sponsor of our golf tournament this summer!

HUGE THANKS to Prairie Meadows Casino, Racetrack & Hotel for their support in keeping Iowa beautiful!



Pictured above: Keep Iowa Beautiful staff and board with members of the OK Crew at the 2026 Iowa State Fair

Community Mural Opportunity

IEDA Iowans Create Community Mural Program

Iowa Economic Development Authority is offering an opportunity through the Iowans Create Community Mural Program. Through this initiative, the Iowa Arts Council matches a selected Iowa artist and community to plan, design and create an original mural that showcases the community's unique creative and cultural identity and builds civic pride and engagement.



The application deadline is October 28, 2026, at 4pm. [Click here](#) to learn more about grant guidelines and find the online application.

Mural pictured: 2024 program winner "Spring Branch" by Iowa artist Thomas Agran in Manchester

Your Support Matters!

Consider Giving to Keep Iowa Beautiful

From painting the state beautiful to instilling civic pride in our communities, the programs we provide are thanks to donations from supporters like you!

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