

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EVENTS

Emmerson Building
P.O. BOX 19427
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9427
(217) 782-0777 or (217) 782-6661

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ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Admission Information

Day	Date	Featured Day	Adult (13-59)	Senior (60+)	Children (0-12)
Thursday	8-13	County Fairs & Horse Racing Day	\$5.00	\$3.00	Free
Friday	8-14	Agriculture Day	\$10.00	\$3.00	Free
Saturday	8-15	Kids Day	\$10.00	\$3.00	Free
Sunday	8-16	Veterans & Gold Star Families Day (Veterans and their immediate family get in free with proper ID)	\$5.00	\$3.00	Free
Monday	8-17	Senior Citizens/Scout Day (Senior Citizens (60+) and Scouts get in free)	\$5.00	Free	Free
Tuesday	8-18	Twosday	\$2.00	\$2.00	Free
Wednesday	8-19	Governor's Day	\$5.00	\$3.00	Free
Thursday	8-20	Republican Day	\$5.00	\$3.00	Free
Friday	8-21	First Responder & Healthcare Heroes Day (Police, Fire, EMS, and Healthcare Workers get in free with proper ID)	\$10.00	\$3.00	Free
Saturday	8-22	Park District/Conservation Day	\$10.00	\$3.00	Free
Sunday	8-23	Family Day	\$5.00	\$3.00	Free

Admission Booklets and Seasonal Parking Passes may be purchased online at StateFair.Illinois.gov. Parking Passes and admission booklets will be distributed via email to the address provided

Adult Discount Admission Booklet: \$45.00

Adult booklets provide eleven (11) any-day admissions to the Fair.

Senior Admission Booklet: \$30.00

Senior booklets provide eleven (11) any-day admissions to the Fair.

Seasonal Parking Pass: \$40.00

Seasonal Parking is accommodated at Gate 6, (Infield of the One-Mile Track).

**Daily parking is available each day of the Fair for \$5.00 per vehicle. Unlike the Seasonal Parking Pass, daily parking passes can only be purchased at the gate upon arrival and cannot be purchased in advance.*

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Twilight Parade

General Rules

Thursday, August 13, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

The following General Rules apply to all entries in the Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade. The rules have been created in the interest of safety of parade participants and spectators, to ensure a quality parade, and minimize the length and duration of the overall event.

The 2026 Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade theme is *Miles of Smiles*.

1. All parade entries must conform to the parade theme.
2. A committee will screen all entries for entertainment value, and approximately 60 entries will be selected for participation in the parade. Conformance to the theme or “atmosphere” of the Fair will be a major component of the selection of entries.
3. The parade committee will evaluate and select entries based upon information provided in the parade applications. Failure to provide complete information or to comply with the rules may result in an entry being disqualified. The parade committee reserves the right to limit, or recategorize entries based upon their discretion. All decisions of the committee are final.
4. A \$25.00 entry fee is required for each selected entry plus additional fees dependent upon number of participants or category entered. This fee shall be submitted after notification of acceptance by the committee to the Special Events Office of the Illinois State Fair.
5. All applicants will provide detailed drawings or descriptions of entries. Any major changes to the original entry must be approved by the committee or the entry will be disqualified.
6. All entries must be postmarked, or hand delivered to the Illinois State Fair Special Events Office by close of business on **Monday, July 6, 2026**.
7. No entry will be accepted unless the application has been completed in full.
8. Candy, samples, or other materials of any type may **not** be thrown from, or distributed from, floats or vehicles. Parade walkers may distribute materials to parade spectators by walking to the curb and handing material out. Law enforcement, Parade Marshals, and Parade Officials may, without warning, remove entries from the parade if this rule is violated.
9. It is the policy of the Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade to showcase the Miss Illinois County Fair Queen. No other queens or royalty will be allowed to ride in a vehicle as a single entry. Other queens or royalty may participate but must appear in conjunction with an accepted parade entry.
10. All entries must display their assigned parade entry number on the front of the unit. This number will be provided to entries in the staging area.
11. Formal instructions for staging of entries will be provided to those entries selected to participate in the parade.
12. The parade has contests for Marching Bands, Floats, and Specialty Units. Please see specific rules on the following pages for each of these contests.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR
Twilight Parade
Entry Form
Thursday, August 13, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

All entries must be postmarked, or hand delivered to the Illinois State Fair Special Events Office by close of business on **Monday, July 6, 2026**

The 2026 Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade theme is *Miles of Smiles*.

This application must be completed fully, or it will not be considered.

Name of Unit or Band: _____

Name of Business/Organization/School: _____

Contact Person: _____ Contact Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code _____

Will the entry be distributing any materials to parade spectators: ____ Yes ____ No

* All items distributed must be listed and the parade committee must be notified prior to the parade. See General Rule #8.

Does this entry have any type of sound/audio component: ____ Yes ____ No

Type of Entry:

____ Marching Band ____ Non-Commercial Float ____ Commercial Float
____ Horse Unit ____ Specialty Unit ____ Honor Guard ____ Other

Description of Entry:

A description, sketch, or photograph of the entry must be provided.

For promotion, press releases, and parade announcements, please provide information about your club or organization:

A \$25.00 entry fee will be required for each selected entry plus an additional fee dependent upon the number of participants.

- a. Tier 1: \$50 = \$25 registration fee + admission for up to 10 participants
- b. Tier 2: \$77.50 = \$25 registration fee + admission for 11-25 participants
- c. Tier 3: \$150 = \$25 registration fee + admission for 26 to 50 participants

If your unit is selected for the Parade, you will receive a letter of confirmation in mid-July at which time you will be expected to pay the entry fee.

After reading all General Rules and specific contest rules for the Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade, I hereby agree that myself or the organization I represent will follow these published procedures and rules. I (We) do realize that we can be asked to leave the parade at any time for breaking those General Rules and guidelines.

It is acknowledged by the parties hereto that Participant(s) and all persons performing pursuant to this contract hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Illinois Department of Agriculture (the Department), its agents, officers, and employees from any liability for injuries to the person, whether for bodily injury, sickness, mental anguish or death of the Participant(s) or persons performing pursuant to this contract and as to claims for any damage to any of their property. The Participant(s) and all persons performing pursuant to this contract hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Department, its agents, officers, and employees from any liability to third parties arising out of the performance of this contract. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any attendee requiring a reasonable accommodation should notify the Department of their needs by July 10, 2026.

By signing this form, I, certify I have read and understood all the General Rules and specific contest rules for the Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade and that I will abide by all applicable rules contained therein, and all other rules relating to the Illinois State Fair and the laws and regulations of the State of Illinois.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Organization: _____

Submit the completed application to:

Illinois State Fair
Office of Special Events – Twilight Parade
Emmerson Building
P.O. Box 19427
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9427

Questions may be directed to:

(217) 782-0777 or (217) 782-6661 or ISF.SpecialEvents@illinois.gov

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Twilight Parade

Marching Band Contest

Thursday, August 13, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

Division 4801

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
01	Marching Band Contest	\$2100	\$900	\$700	\$600	\$500

INFORMATION

1. Three (3) judges are utilized for this contest. Judges will use scoring sheets, and those sheets will be provided to marching band directors after judging has been completed.
2. An average total scoring system is used to determine contest winners. The basis for judging is as follows:

Showmanship	Points Available to Award
General Picture	7.5 possible points
Band Fronts	7.5 possible points
Overall effectiveness of the musical performance	7.5 possible points
Overall effectiveness of the marching performance	7.5 possible points
Total	30.0 possible points
Marching & Maneuvering	Points Available to Award
Posturing and carriage	7.5 possible points
Uniformity	7.5 possible points
Alignment	7.5 possible points
Spacing	7.5 possible points
Total	30.0 possible points
Musicality	Points Available to Award
Tone Quality	8.0 possible points
Intonation	8.0 possible points
Interpretation and General Musicianship	8.0 possible points
Balance	8.0 possible points
Precision	8.0 possible points
Total	40.0 possible points

3. **Competition Area:** The competition area is in front of the Reviewing Stand inside the Main Gate of the Fairgrounds. It is indicated by two taped lines; one indicating the beginning and the other indicating the end. The total competition area is approximately 100 yards long. Each marching band will mark time until the entire competition area is clear of other entries and then given the instructions to proceed.
4. **Musical Requirement:** All marching bands are required to play a selection of their choice while marching through the competition area. Marching bands cannot stop while marching through the competition area to perform routines and will have points deducted from the overall score. Marching routines are allowed if forward movement is maintained.
5. **Announcement of Awards:** Awards will be announced at the conclusion of judging process. Band directors will be mailed the judging sheets. The 2026 First Place winner will be invited to participate as the 2027 Twilight Parade Honor Band.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Twilight Parade Float Entries

Thursday, August 13, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

Division 4801

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
-	Governor's Sweepstakes Award	\$300	-	-
02	Non-Commercial Float	\$150	\$50	\$25
03	Commercial Float	\$150	\$50	\$25

The following rules apply to entries of floats in the Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade:

1. Float entry applications **must** include a drawing or photograph of the proposed entry.
2. Each entry should incorporate the parade theme or an "atmosphere" of the Fair in the design of the float.
3. The committee encourages all floats to be covered with sturdy materials such as vinyl sheeting, enamel paint, or other materials which will hold up under adverse weather conditions. Floats covered with paper napkins or other materials may be destroyed in adverse weather conditions or strong winds. All parts of the float, including wheels, must be completely covered by materials.
4. Floats must bear the name of the participant or organization and the title of the theme that the float depicts. This can be on the float proper or printed on a banner that would be carried in front of the float. All signage must be high quality and easily legible.
5. For the safety of parade participants and parade spectators, each float may be accompanied by up to eight (8) escort personnel. Two banner/sign carriers will be allowed per entry. The banner/sign carriers are not included in the escort personnel count.
6. **Floats shall be no more than 36-feet long, 10-feet wide, and 13-feet high.** These dimensions are exclusive of the tow vehicle (if applicable).
7. Decorated cars, trucks, or vans are not considered floats and will not be accepted in either of the float categories.
8. For purposes of judging, Commercial Floats are those which have been designed and built for a business or organization that sells goods or services for profit, and Non-Commercial Floats are those which have been designed and built for groups or organizations that are not-for-profit, i.e., charities, volunteer groups, etc.

Scoring:

An average total scoring system is used to determine contest winners. The basis for judging is as follows:

Criteria	Points Available
Title and Theme - The basic idea of the float and conformance to the parade theme or Fair "atmosphere"	25.0 possible points
Ingenuity - The inventiveness or skillfulness of the design or concept	15.0 possible points
Public Appeal - Potential enjoyment of the parade spectator	15.0 possible points
Craftsmanship - The quality, neatness, and detail of the construction, and functionality of any mechanical parts	15.0 possible points
Proportions, Balance, and Space - The size relationships among the various features of the float or intentional lack or proportion, use of space, and overall effect rendered	10.0 possible points
Color - The combination of colors providing a pleasing appeal and how it relates to the desired effect.	10.0 possible points
Animation and Special Effects - The total effect of movement on the entry to include but not be limited to sound, visual tricks, and illusions.	10.0 possible points
Total	100.0 possible points

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Twilight Parade Specialty Units

Thursday, August 13, 2026 – 5:30 p.m.

Division 4801

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
04	Specialty Unit Award	\$150	\$50	\$25

A Specialty Unit is defined as any parade unit that is not a float, equestrian, or marching band. This can include, but is not limited to specialty vehicles, synchronized walking units, and entertainers. The number of participants accompanying any Specialty Unit will be limited by the committee. Motorized Specialty Units will be limited to six (6) entries per club.

Scoring:

An average total scoring system is used to determine contest winners. The basis for judging is as follows:

Criteria	Points Available to Award
Title and Theme - The basic idea of the float and conformance to the parade theme or Fair "atmosphere"	25.0 possible points
Ingenuity - The inventiveness or skillfulness of the design or concept	25.0 possible points
Public Appeal - Potential enjoyment of the parade spectator	25.0 possible points
Color - The use of colorful costumes or another eye appealing effect.	25.0 possible points
Total	100.0 possible points

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

State Fair Parade Run 2 Mile Race

Thursday, August 13, 2026 – 5:00 p.m. – Main Street

Once again, the Illinois State Fairgrounds welcomes the State Fair Parade Run- a two-mile race hosted by the Springfield Road Runners Club that begins on Main Street and ends just ahead of the annual Illinois State Fair Twilight Parade. For the 35th year, runners and walkers of all ages will gather at the fairgrounds and run out of the Main Gate, down to Lincoln Park, and back. The race starts at 5:00 p.m.

For more information, contact the Springfield Road Runners Club at ilstatefairparaderun@gmail.com.

2026 ILLINOIS STATE FAIR Special Events Entry Form

Contest _____ Date of Event _____

Name of Contestant _____ Age _____

Address _____ City/Zip _____

Telephone (Area code) _____

Email: _____

Emergency Contact Name & Phone Number/ _____

Please list all Classes that you will be entering, by providing Class Number and Description from the Special Events Premium Book. Attach additional page as needed.

Class Number	Class Description

It is acknowledged by the parties hereto that Participant and all persons performing pursuant to this contract hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Department, its agents, officers and employees from any liability for injuries to the person, whether for bodily injury, sickness, mental anguish or death of the Participant or persons performing pursuant to this contract and as to claims for any damage to any of their property. The Participant and all persons performing pursuant to this contract hereby agree to indemnify and hold harmless the Department, its agents, officers and employees from any liability to third parties arising out of the performance of this contract. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any attendee requiring a reasonable accommodation should notify us of their needs by July 10, 2026.

By signing this form, I certify that I have received and read the contents of the Premium Book and that I will abide by all applicable rules contained therein, and all other rules relating to the Illinois State Fair and the laws and regulations of the State of Illinois.

Signature _____

IMPORTANT NOTICE: This state agency is requesting disclosure of information that is necessary to accomplish the statutory purpose as outlined under 20 ILCS 210 and 30 ILCS 120. Failure to provide this information shall prevent this form from being processed. This form has been approved by the State Forms Management Center. IL 406-0876 (Rev. 6-04)

Submit to:

Illinois State Fair
 Special Events Office
 P.O. Box 19427
 Springfield, Illinois 62794-9427
 Or Email the completed form to: ISF.SpecialEvents@Illinois.gov

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Baby Photograph Contest

On display Thursday, August 13 to Sunday, August 23, 2026

Division 4802

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
01	Girls Under 6-Months	R	R	R
02	Girls 6-Months to 1-Year	R	R	R
03	Girls 1-Year	R	R	R
04	Girls 2-Years	R	R	R
05	Girls 3-Years	R	R	R
06	Boys Under 6-Months	R	R	R
07	Boys 6-Months to 1-Year	R	R	R
08	Boys 1-Year	R	R	R
09	Boys 2-Years	R	R	R
10	Boys 3-Years	R	R	R

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Baby Photograph Contest:

1. All entries must be postmarked, or hand delivered to the Illinois State Fair Special Events Office by close of business on **July 22, 2026**, and one entry per child will be accepted.
2. Photographs must be 5"x7", firmly attached to white poster board which is 7"x9" in size. Photographs will not be accepted if mounted on any other material, or if mounted in any type of frame. The following information must be recorded on the back of the posterboard in the upper left-hand corner:
 - a. Parent or Legal Guardians Name
 - b. Address
 - c. Telephone Number
 - d. Child's name
 - e. Child's age at the time the photograph was taken.
 - f. Child's birthdate.
3. All photographs **must** be full color. Tinted, colorized, or black and white photographs will be disqualified.
4. All photographs must have been taken in within the previous 6-months.
5. Photographs will be on display the entire run of the Illinois State Fair and be located outside the Emmerson Building near the entrance to the Sensory Station off Main Street.
6. Photographs may be picked up at the Illinois State Fair Administrative Offices from 8 AM to 4 PM Monday to Friday from Monday, August 24 to Friday, September 4, 2026. Any photograph that is unclaimed as of September 4, 2026, will be disposed of.
7. Submit photographs to:
Illinois State Fair
Office of Special Events
Emmerson Building
P.O. Box 19427
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9427

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Pet Photograph Contest

On display Thursday, August 13 to Sunday, August 23, 2026

Division 4803

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
01	Cutest Pet	R	R	R
02	Craziest Pet Costume	R	R	R

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Pet Photograph Contest:

1. All entries must be postmarked, or hand delivered to the Illinois State Fair Special Events Office by close of business on **July 22, 2026**, and one entry per person will be accepted.
2. Photographs must be 5"x7", firmly attached to white poster board which is 7"x9" in size. Photographs will not be accepted if mounted on any other material, or if mounted in any type of frame. The following information must be recorded on the back of the posterboard in the upper left-hand corner:
 - a. Owners Name
 - b. Address
 - c. Telephone Number
 - d. Pet's name
 - e. Pet's age at the time the photograph was taken.
3. All photographs **must** be full color. Tinted, colorized, or black and white photographs will be disqualified.
4. All photographs must have been taken in within the previous 6-months.
5. Photographs will be on display the entire run of the Illinois State Fair and be located outside the Emmerson Building near the entrance to the Sensory Station off Main Street.
6. Photographs may be picked up at the Illinois State Fair Administrative Offices from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday to Friday from Monday, August 24 to Friday, September 4, 2026. Any photograph that is unclaimed as of September 4, 2026, will be disposed of.
7. Submit photographs to:
Illinois State Fair
Office of Special Events
Emmerson Building
P.O. Box 19427
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9427

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Amateur Talent Contest

Thursday, August 13, 2026 – 12:00 p.m. – Lincoln Stage

Division 4804

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
01	Female Vocal Solo – 13 to 18-Years	\$60	\$40	\$20
02	Male Vocal Solo – 13 to 18-Years	\$60	\$40	\$20
03	Vocal Group – 13 to 18-Years	\$90	\$60	\$30
04	Instrumental/Keyboard Solo – 13 to 18-Years	\$60	\$40	\$20
05	Dance Solo – 13 to 18-Years	\$60	\$40	\$20
06	Dance Group – 13 to 18-Years	\$90	\$60	\$30
07	Female Vocal Solo – 12 & under	\$60	\$40	\$20
08	Male Vocal Solo – 12 & under	\$60	\$40	\$20
09	Vocal Group – 12 & under	\$90	\$60	\$30
10	Instrumental/Keyboard Solo – 12 & under	\$60	\$40	\$20
11	Dance Solo – 12 & under	\$60	\$40	\$20
12	Dance Group – 12 & under	\$90	\$60	\$30

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Amateur Talent Contest:

1. Pre-registration for this event is required as number of contestants is limited.
2. To Pre-register fill out the entry form and email it to the Illinois State Fair, Office of Special Events at ISF.SpecialEvents@illinois.gov. For questions, please call (217) 782-0777 or (217) 782-6661. The deadline is close of business **July 22, 2026**.
3. Contestants may only enter one class. All First-Place winners from the 2025 Illinois State Fair are not eligible to compete in the same class in the 2026 Illinois State Fair.
4. Baton twirling, use of machetes, knives, objects that resemble firearms, or other props is not allowed.
5. A contestant considered to be a professional is not eligible for this contest. For purposes of this contest a professional is defined as anyone who is a union member, music teachers, band leaders, anyone who has a professional manager, or whose principal and/or supporting income is derived from performing.
6. Performances are limited to no more than four (4) minutes. Performances that run over the four (4) minute requirement are disqualified.
7. Each contestant is required to submit a list of selections and the means of accompaniment (tape, piano, amp, musical instrument).
8. In vocal classes, instrumental accompaniment by the contestant, or others, is allowed, however the contestant will be judged on whether the vocal performance would stand alone if no accompaniment were provided. No voices or vocal utterances may be used on recorded accompaniment for vocal classes.
9. In instrumental solo classes, accompaniment is allowed, however the contestant will be judged on whether the performance would stand alone if no accompaniment were provided. No instrument of the same nature as the solo instrument may be used as accompaniment.
10. In dance classes, accompanists are permitted on stage but may not assume visual importance in the performance. Acrobatic or gymnastic movements will be allowed in dance classes but cannot consist or more than 20% of the overall routine.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Cutest Little Farmer Contest

Friday, August 14, 2026 – 11:00 a.m. – Exposition Building Stage

Division 4805

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
01	Girls 2 to 5-Years	R	R	R
02	Girls 6 to 10-Years	R	R	R
03	Boys 2 to 5-Years	R	R	R
04	Boys 6 to 10-Years	R	R	R

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Cutest Little Farmer Contest:

1. Pre-registration for this event is highly encouraged as number of contestants is limited. To Pre-register contact Illinois State Fair, Office of Special Events at (217) 782-0777 or (217) 782-6661.
2. Registration day of contest will be accepted, if there are still spots available, and will be done at the Exposition Building Stage from 10:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.
3. Contestants will be judged on the neatness, creativity, and overall effect of their costume. Contestants may bring one (1) object as a costume accent. No live animals will be allowed as part of the costume.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Fiddle & Banjo Contest

Saturday, August 15, 2026 – 11:00 a.m. – Lincoln Stage

Division 4806

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
01	Banjo 16 & Under – Finger Picked / Bluegrass	\$150	\$75	\$50	-	-
02	Banjo 16 & Under – Clawhammer / Old-Time	\$150	\$75	\$50	-	-
03	Banjo 17 to 59 – Finger Picked / Bluegrass	\$200	\$100	\$75	-	-
04	Banjo 17 to 59 – Clawhammer / Old-Time	\$200	\$100	\$75	-	-
05	Banjo 60 & Over – Finger Picked / Bluegrass	\$150	\$75	\$50	-	-
06	Banjo 60 & Over – Clawhammer / Old-Time	\$150	\$75	\$50	-	-
07	Fiddle 16 & under	\$150	\$100	\$75	\$50	\$25
08	Fiddle 17 to 59	\$200	\$100	\$75	\$50	\$25
09	Fiddle 60 & over	\$200	\$100	\$75	\$50	\$25

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Fiddle & Banjo Contest:

1. Pre-registration for this event is highly encouraged as the number of contestants may be limited by time constraints. To Pre-register contact the Illinois State Fair, Office of Special Events at (217) 782-0777 or (217) 782-6661.
2. Contestants may register the day of the contest as long as spots are available. Registration will be from 9 am to 10:15 am at the Lincoln Stage.
3. Each contestant will be required to play two (2) tunes of their choice. Fiddlers are required to play a Hoedown and a Waltz. Fiddle players are not allowed to play the following for the contest: Black Mountain Rag©, Orange Blossom Special©, and Listen to the Mockingbird©.
4. No more than three (3) accompanists can be used for each contestant, and no electric amplification is allowed.
5. Judging will be based on traditional content, rhythm and timing, creativity, and expression and execution.
6. Performance Order will be posted 30 minutes prior to the start of the contest.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Ponytail Contest

Saturday, August 15, 2026 – 2:30 p.m. – Lincoln Stage

Division 4807

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
01	2-Years and under	R	R	R
02	3 to 4-Years	R	R	R
03	5 to 6-Years	R	R	R
04	7 to 8-Years	R	R	R
05	9 to 10-Years	R	R	R
06	11 to 12-Years	R	R	R
07	13 to 16-Years	R	R	R
08	17 and over	R	R	R
-	Best Ponytail Overall	Trophy		

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Ponytail Contest:

1. Pre-registration for this event is highly encouraged as number of contestants is limited. To Pre-register contact Illinois State Fair, Office of Special Events at (217) 782-0777 or (217) 782-6661.
2. Registration day of contest will be accepted, if there are still spots available, and will be done at the Lincoln Stage on the Fairgrounds from 2:00 PM to 2:30 PM.
3. Contestants in the 17 and Over Class are not eligible for consideration for Best Ponytail Overall.
4. For purposes of this contest a ponytail is defined as a hairstyle in which the hair is pulled together and banded at the back of the head and secured with a rubber band.
5. No French Braids or Cornrows will be allowed.
6. Ponytails may be braided or unbraided. If the contestant chooses to braid the ponytail, it must be braided as far as possible.
7. Length of hair will be the chief factor in judging and will be measured from the base (rubber band) of the ponytail to the end of the longest hair.
8. Should there be a tie based on Rule #7, judges will break the tie based on neatness and beauty of the hair.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Decorated Diaper Contest

Saturday, August 15, 2026 – 3:30 p.m. – Lincoln Stage

Division 4808

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd
01	Prettiest Decorated Diaper	R	R	R
02	Craziest Decorated Diaper	R	R	R

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Decorated Diaper Contest:

1. This contest is restricted to children 18-months and under.
2. Pre-registration for this event is highly encouraged as number of contestants is limited. To Pre-register contact Illinois State Fair, Office of Special Events at (217) 782-0777 or (217) 782-6661.
3. Registration day of contest will be accepted, if there are still spots available, and will be done at the Lincoln Stage on the Fairgrounds from 3:00 PM to 3:30 PM.
4. Contestants may only register for one (1) of the two classes.
5. Contestants will be assigned a number upon entry. The entry number must be always clearly in view during the contest.
6. Children must be in decorated diaper attire. This may consist of a cloth or disposable diaper. A costume that is coordinated with the decorated diaper is allowed but must not obstruct the view of the diaper during the contest.
7. Judging criteria for both classes will be based on originality of design, creativity, attractiveness, public appeal, and overall effect.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Diaper Derby Contest

Saturday, August 15, 2026 – 4:00 p.m. – Lincoln Stage

Division 4809

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
01	Diaper Derby	Trophy	R	R	R	R

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Diaper Derby Contest:

1. This contest is restricted to children 1-Year and under, and still in the crawling stage. Any child that does walk will be disqualified from the contest.
2. Pre-registration for this event is highly encouraged as number of contestants is limited. To Pre-register contact Illinois State Fair, Office of Special Events at (217) 782-0777 or (217) 782-6661.
3. Registration day of contest will be accepted, if there are still spots available, and will be done at the Lincoln Stage on the Fairgrounds from 3:30 PM to 4:00 PM.
4. All children must compete in diaper attire. This may consist of a cloth or disposable diaper.
5. Heats of no more than four (4) children at a time will be held. Heat winners will compete for the overall prize.
6. Children will be lined up in a straight line at the starting location. Parents or guardians will line up at the finish location directly in front of their child. After the contest has started, children will have four (4) minutes to crawl from the starting positions to the finish location. Parents are allowed to use verbal persuasion, toys, food, etc., to lure their child to the finish location.
7. If no child reaches the finish location at the conclusion of the four (4) minute period officials will determine which child was closest to the finish location and that child will win that heat.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Illinois State Auctioneer Championship

Hosted by the Illinois State Auctioneers Association

Sponsored by Farm Credit Illinois

Wednesday, August 19, 2026 – 10:00 a.m. – Lincoln Stage

Division 4810

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
01	Auctioneer Championship	P	P	P	P	P

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Auctioneers Bid Calling Contest:

1. The contest shall be limited to the first 20 entries received. If the limit is not reached, additional contestants may be at the call of the committee. Each contestant should dress appropriately for a professional presentation. Past ISAA Champions are not eligible to compete in future Illinois State Auctioneer Championships.
2. Contestants shall be 18 years of age or older, current, paid members of the Illinois State Auctioneers Association Inc. and hold a current auctioneer license in the State of Illinois. There shall be one division combined for men and women.
3. Contestants must pay the \$100 non-refundable entry fee, by 9:00 PM on Tuesday, August 18, 2026. All entries will be date “stamped” when received. In case of cancellations, substitutions will be at the call of the committee. An auction market, auction company, private company or businessperson, association, newspaper, etc. may sponsor a contestant.
4. Contestants must provide (3) items that should sell for \$50 or more each that he/she shall sell consecutively in the Preliminaries Round. Each item must have the contestant’s business card or name firmly attached to the item, and if he / she wishes to specify the order of selling those items, each should be clearly indicated as #1, #2 or #3.
5. The sound system shall be preset. Contestants will be allowed to test it in advance but cannot adjust it during the contest.
6. In the Finals each contestant will sell items provided by ISAA with a value equal to other contestants’ items. All proceeds from the sale of items will be used at the discretion of the ISAA.
7. Competing order will be determined prior to the event by a draw, conducted by the Championship Committee Chairman during the Mandatory Roll Call and Orientation Meeting.
8. ALL Contestants MUST attend the Contestant Roll Call and Orientation Meeting at 9:05 AM, on Wednesday. Roll Call will be taken at the start of the meeting promptly at 9:05 AM. In the event a contestant is not present during the initial roll call, his/her name will be called 2 additional times at 5-minute intervals. In the event a contestant is not present when his / her name is called the third and final time, he / she will be disqualified from the contest, without return of entry fee.
9. Contestants may request a copy of these rules and sample score sheets.
10. The score system used for the International Auctioneer Championship Contest will be used.
11. A panel of at least three judges will be selected by the committee. The judges may be either auctioneers or members of the community.
12. Scores from the Preliminaries will determine who advances to the Finals round. The number of finalists shall be based on the following sliding scale: 10 or fewer contestants – Five Finalists; 11 to 20 contestants – Six Finalists.
13. If a tie score occurs in the Preliminaries, scores will be recalculated and the lowest score for each contestant shall be eliminated. In the event there is still a tie, the highest score in the Chant / Voice category will be used as the tiebreaker.

14. Finalists will be announced after the conclusion and the scoring of the Preliminary Competition. Each Finalist will be asked to report to an isolated room for instruction on the interview portion of the competition. A separate drawing will determine the order in which the Finalists participate. Finalists will sell items provided by ISAA.
15. During the Interview Portion of the contest, Finalists shall be isolated in a room until it is his / her turn to be interviewed. Cell phones / cell phone usage is NOT allowed by Finalist while in isolation. The Interview Portion is the only part of the contest with isolation restrictions.
16. Finalists will be asked two questions by the emcee developed by the contest committee. A time limit of two minutes per question will apply after the question has been read. The contestant may ask to have the question repeated only once.
17. Final scores are determined by combining the interview score with the bid-calling finals score. If a tie occurs, scores from the Preliminaries will be used as the tiebreaker in the Finals.
18. The following prizes will be awarded: CHAMPION - \$1,000 Check, Championship Buckle & Plaque. 2027 ISAA Membership Dues & ISAA Conference Registration, Reimbursed Entry Fee for the 2027 International Auctioneer Championship Contest, if he/she represents Illinois. FIRST RUNNER-UP – \$250 Check & Plaque. 2027 ISAA Membership Dues & ISAA Conference Registration. SECOND RUNNER-UP – \$150 Check, Plaque and 2027 ISAA Membership Dues.
19. Contestants shall not be given the exact order of finish. Score sheets will be provided after the contest.
20. The winner shall be referred to as “2026 Illinois State Champion Auctioneer.”
21. The champion shall make promotional appearances on behalf of Illinois State Auctioneers Association, including but not limited to, the Governor’s Sale of Champions auction at the Illinois State Fair upon championship year, the International Auctioneer Championship Contest and will be the Emcee for the following year championship contest. The Illinois State Champion Auctioneer shall wear a shirt with the ISAA logo when representing ISAA.
22. The Committee Chairmen or his / her designee(s) shall address, as needed, any additions, errors or omissions regarding rules and regulations of the contest. The decision of the committee shall be final and binding at the time a decision is made and shall apply to all contestants. Ringmen will be selected by the Committee Chairmen.
23. Registration for the Illinois State Auctioneer Championship may be made on the ISAA website at www.illinoisauctioneers.org.

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Baton Twirling Contest

Saturday, August 22, 2026 – 9:00 a.m. – Barn 26

Division 4811

Class	Event	Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
01	Teams	Divisions as needed	R	R	R	R	R
02	Solo Show Twirl	Level 1 – Novice & Beginner Twirlers	R	R	R	R	R
03	Solo Show Twirl	Level 2 – Intermediate & Advance Twirlers	R	R	R	R	R
04	Solo Fight/ School Song	One Division – High School Twirlers	R	R	R	R	R
05	Basic Strut	Primary, Novice, Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Twirlers	R	R	R	R	R
06	Solo	Primary, Novice, Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Twirlers	R	R	R	R	R
07	Recreation Solo		Participation Ribbon				

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Baton Twirling Contest:

1. All entries must be emailed to Becky Seay at BeckySeay@msn.com, by **Saturday, August 15, 2026**.
2. National Baton Twirling Association rules, judges, and score sheets will be used for all phases of this contest.
3. Scores will be posted as soon as they are available. Score sheets will be placed in a designated area for pickup on the day of the event.
4. Dressing facilities are available in the restrooms located nearby.
5. Solo age divisions are as follows: 0-6, 7-9, 10-12, 13-15 and 16+.
6. Extra Small Team (2-3 members) time limit for the performance is 0 to 3:00 minutes. All other divisions are 2:00 to 3:00 minutes.
7. Twirl Off – First Place winners in Novice, Beginner, Intermediate, and Advance twirl off. Each division winner will receive an award.

Cheer & Dance Showcase

Sunday, August 23 – 2:00 p.m. – Orr Building

Division 4811

Class	Class Description	1 st
01	High School Game Day Cheer	Banner
02	High School Halftime Dance	Banner

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Cheer & Dance Showcase:

1. Pre-registration for this event is required as number of contestants is limited. To register, click [here](#) or scan the QR code below. Registration opens **April 1, 2026** and the deadline is close of business **July 15, 2026**.
 - a. Registration is open to all Illinois High Schools.
 - b. Entry Limits:
 - i. The maximum number of registered teams per division is 25.
 1. Registrations will be accepted on a first-come basis.
 - c. Number of participants must be provided to secure admission passes for the event.
2. Divisions:
 - a. Game Day Cheer
 - b. Dance Team Halftime
 - c. Time Limits:
 - i. Game Day: 2:30 minutes
 - ii. Halftime: 2:30 minutes
 - iii. Timing will begin with the first choreographed movement or note of music, whichever is first.
 - iv. Timing will end with the last choreographed movement or note of music, whichever is last.
3. Music Guidelines:
 - a. All music used must be family-friendly and age appropriate. No suggestive or use of vulgar language is allowed.
 - b. All music must be accessible from the coach's phone or tablet on the day of the event.
 - c. Each team is required to have an adult or alternate team member at the sound station to play the music. Please make sure that all devices have a headphone jack to connect to the sound system and are fully charged, volume turned up and placed in airplane mode.
 - d. ISF will provide the necessary chords and dongles to play music through provided sound system.
4. Content Guidelines
 - a. All choreography must be family-friendly and age appropriate. No suggestive or use of vulgar movements are allowed.
5. Game Day Cheer Specific Guidelines
 - a. Game Day will consist of Band Chant/Fight Song and Crowd Leading, each with a 1-minute time limit.
 - b. Team shall transition quickly from Band Chant/Fight Song to Crowd Leading.
 - c. No basket or waist level tosses are allowed.
 - d. No inversions are allowed.
 - e. No twisting released dismounts are allowed.
 - f. No stunts or tumbling are allowed during entrance and exit.

- g. The use of signs, poms, flags, and megaphones is allowed for performances. No additional props are allowed.
- 6. Halftime Dance Specific Guidelines
 - a. Halftime Dance may be choreographed in any of the following styles – jazz, pom, kick, or hip hop.
 - b. Dancers must have dance shoes on both feet.
 - c. No running tumbling passes are allowed.
 - d. No props other than poms allowed.
- 7. Sportsmanship
 - a. All participants, coaching staff, and audience members agree to display good sportsmanship throughout the Showcase and Best of Show presentation.
- 8. Best in Show Award:
 - a. A "Best in Show" will be awarded in both the Game Day Cheer Division and the Halftime Dance Division.
 - b. The "Best in Show" recipient will be determined by audience participation, with voting taking place after the presentation of participation awards.

2026 Illinois State Fair Cheer & Dance Showcase Registration



ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

Abe's Amble 10K / 5K Race

Sunday, August 23, 2026 – 7:30 a.m. – In Front of the Grandstand

The Illinois State Fairgrounds will again be the starting point of Abe's Amble, a 10,000-meter race or 5,000-meter. Racers will run from the Fairgrounds for 6.2 miles or 3.1 miles. The competition is coordinated by the Springfield Road Runners Club and is open to all runners who are physically fit. Entries will be divided into men and women categories, ranging from 14 years and under to 60 years and over.

Registration is required. Participants will gather in front of the Grandstand on Sunday, August 23 and the race will start at 7:30 AM.

For further information and registration please contact the Springfield Roadrunners Club at srrcablesamble10k@gmail.com

ILLINOIS STATE FAIR

International Chili Society sanctioned Chili Cookoff

Sunday, August 23, 2026 – 9:00 a.m. – The Shed

Division 4813

Class	Class Description	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
01	Red Chili	\$750	\$500	\$200	Plaque
02	Verde Chili	\$750	\$500	\$200	Plaque
03	Homestyle Chili (People's Choice)	\$600	\$400	\$200	Plaque

The following rules apply to entries in the Illinois State Fair Chili Cookoff:

1. The cookoff is historically a regional cookoff sanctioned by the International Chili Society. Winners advancing to the finals at the ICS World Championship. If participation numbers do not meet the ICS competition requirements, the event may not be recognized by the ICS and winners may not advance.
2. Entry fees are \$35.00 for Red Chili and \$25.00 for Chili Verde and Homestyle Chili. Applications are made through the ICS website. Fees will be paid day of event. Entry into any two of the three categories will allow the entrant to enter the third category without fee.
3. Contestants entering as an ICS competitor must be a member of the International Chili Society prior to competing, however, membership can be processed at the time of competition. ICS membership fees are \$10 for a one event cookoff. Cookoff fees are waived for first time cooks. ICS rules will be used.
4. Contestants shall supply all cooking ingredients, cooking devices, utensils, etc. ICS competitors must prepare their chili onsite, from scratch. Public Health Department rules require contestants to have a receipt for all food items, and contestants must wear hats or hairnets during the competition. Tavern/Restaurant competitors with valid food handlers' licenses issued by the Illinois Department of Public Health can prepare their entry(s) in their place of business and do not need receipts. All entries prepared in this manner will be inspected and checked for temperature when they are assigned a table on the day of competition.
5. Tables will be provided, and assistance with transporting supplies is available.
6. Parking is available at a lot adjacent to The Shed.
7. Contestants may enter in all classes.
8. The ICS suggests cooks provide 2-gallons of "People's Choice" Chili for sampling by the public.
9. For more information, please visit the ICS website at: <https://www.chilicookoff.com/cookoffs>

2026 LEGO CONTEST

AT THE 2026 IL STATE FAIR!

ILLINOIS
STATE FAIR
AUGUST 13 - 23, 2026

DETAILS

SUNDAY, AUGUST 23rd

CONTEST 1

REGISTRATION: 10:00 AM
LEGO BUILDING: 10:30 AM
JUDGING: 11:00 AM

CONTEST 2

REGISTRATION: 11:30 AM
LEGO BUILDING: NOON
JUDGING: 12:30 PM

CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND

REGISTRATION: 1:00 PM
LEGO BUILDING: 1:30 pm
JUDGING: 2:00 PM



LOCATION

Exposition Building
IL State Fairgrounds



AGE CATEGORIES

Group 1: 5-8
Group 2: 9-12
Group 3: 13-17



LEGO Kits will be Provided
for the Contest



Prizes will be Awarded!



Free to Participate

Children under 5 may enter the
fairgrounds for free. Ages 5+: \$5
admission to the fair is required.



Judging Criteria Listed on
Registration Website

Register at: SpringfieldAreaHBA.com

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217-698-4947