

# Buffalo County Voices

## Poetry Contest Celebrating Buffalo County during America's 250th Anniversary

### Purpose

To commemorate both Buffalo County's history and the 250th anniversary of the United States of America, the Buffalo County Historical Society (BCHS) invites poets of all ages to submit original poetry that reflects the county's role, experiences, and stories within the broader American journey.

This contest is part of the larger America 250 Buffalo County Celebration, a countywide effort uniting volunteers, local officials, and community organizations to create inclusive events and educational programs for citizens of all ages. The poetry contest represents one creative expression within this broader celebration.

This contest is made possible through the generous donations made in memory of Ken Carmann, a Buffalo County Historical Society member, whose support allows for cash prizes and publication of selected works.

### Eligibility

- Participants must meet the age requirements for their division **as of June 29, 2026**.
- Current members and volunteers of the Buffalo County Historical Society are eligible to participate.
- Judges and immediate family members of judges are not eligible.

### Age Divisions

Participants must submit to the appropriate age division based on their age **as of June 29, 2026**:

1. **Youth (Ages 6-11)**
2. **Middle & High School (Ages 12-18)**
3. **Adult (Ages 19 and over)**

## Theme

Poems must incorporate **Buffalo County, Nebraska**, as their central focus and may also address the **250th Anniversary of the United States of America**. Writers are encouraged to interpret the theme broadly and creatively

**Optional Artwork:** Participants may submit images or artwork that visually connect to their poem. Artwork is optional and will **not** be considered in judging but may be used for publication or display purposes if the poem is selected.

## Submission Guidelines

- Poems must be **original work** and not previously published.
- One (1) poem per participant.
- Poems may be any style (free verse, rhymed, narrative, etc.).
- Poems must be typed and submitted electronically.
- Submissions must be sent via link found under [www.bchs.us/events](http://www.bchs.us/events)

## Judging Criteria

Poems will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- **Connection to Buffalo County and the 250th theme**
- **Creativity and originality**
- **Use of language and imagery**
- **Overall impact**

Judging will be blind; poets' names will be removed before review.

## Awards and Prizes

- Cash and other prizes will be awarded in each age division using Ken Carmann Memorial funds.
- Prize amounts will be determined by the Buffalo County Historical Society.
- Judges reserve the right to withhold awards if submissions do not meet contest standards.
- Winners will be notified prior to public announcement.

## Publication and Rights

- By submitting, participants agree to complete a **publication release form** allowing the Buffalo County Historical Society to publish selected poems.
- Selected poems may be included in a commemorative 250th anniversary publication and related promotional materials.
- Poets retain full copyright to their work.
- Published poems will include the poet's name and age division unless otherwise requested.

## Important Dates and Submission Method

- **Call for Entries Opens:** February 13, 2026
- **Submission Deadline:** June 29, 2026
- **Winners Announced:** August 2, 2026, Wagon's West Celebration

Submissions must be received electronically by the deadline. Late or incomplete submissions will not be considered.

## General Conditions

- Entries that do not follow these guidelines may be disqualified.
- Buffalo County Historical Society reserves the right to make final decisions regarding eligibility, judging, and publication.
- Submission constitutes acceptance of all contest rules.

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Please contact Community Engagement Director Andie Trembley with any questions.

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