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## KEEP IOWA BEAUTIFUL ANNOUNCES 15TH ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WINNERS

Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) has announced the winners of its 15th Annual Photography Contest! This contest invites photographers to showcase Iowa's natural and environmental beauty through their lenses and capture the essence of their favorite seasons in a creative and engaging way.

"Keep Iowa Beautiful's annual photo contest is a great opportunity for photographers to capture and share the essence of Iowa's story," said Andy Frantz, Keep Iowa Beautiful Executive Director. "We were truly impressed by the incredible quality and creativity of this year's submissions. This contest not only highlights the immense talent of photographers across our state, but this year, we introduced a new category, *Hometown Pride*, to celebrate the spirit and character of the communities involved in our Hometown Pride Program."

Over 900 photos were entered in six categories in this year's photo contest. Keep Iowa Beautiful is proud to announce the winners, with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place recipients in each category receiving \$100, \$75, and \$50, respectively. Additionally, the prestigious Robert D. Ray Best of Show awards honored top photographers with prizes of \$500 for 1st place, \$250 for 2nd place, and \$100 for 3rd place. The Public Favorite award winner also received a \$100 prize.

"As an avid photographer, my dad, Bob Ray, rarely went anywhere without his camera. Through his lens, he captured the faces and stories of Iowans he cared so deeply about. His passion for keeping Iowa beautiful extended far beyond its natural scenery; it was rooted in his love for the people who made this state so special," said Randi Ray, Robert D. Ray's daughter and a panelist in the photo contest.

To ensure fairness and objectivity, all entries were judged blindly—without the names of the submitters visible to the judges—emphasizing the quality and creativity of the photos themselves.

### Category winners:

#### **The Robert D. Ray Best of Show winners:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Cliff Swallows Arguing," Sharon Scarff of Wayland

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "Little George Park," Svitlana Kay of Harlan

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: "Hazy Des Moines," Scot Howe of Urbandale

#### **Iowa Landscape winners:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Little George Park," Svitlana Kay of Harlan

2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "Iowa's Fire Tower," Cody Davis of Grinnell

3<sup>rd</sup> Place: "Surrounded by Corn," Sharon Scarff of Wayland

Honorable Mention: "Surrounded by Green," Anji Bennett of Lake View

**Iowa Water winners:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Floating Dock," William Beardsley of Spirit Lake  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "Falling for Autumn," AJ Ash of Waukee  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: "Aurora Borealis Over Clear Lake," Alec Heggen of Clear Lake  
Honorable Mention: "Window to Serenity," William Beardsley of Spirit Lake

**Iowa Cities winners:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Hazy Des Moines," Scot Howe of Urbandale  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "Woodbine at Dusk," Sarah Lenz of Woodbine  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: "Fall in Elkader," Trent Hanselmann of Dubuque  
Honorable Mention: "Historic Downtown Dubuque," Kay Munson of Dubuque

**Iowans in Action winners:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Rodeo," Lee Navin of Ankeny  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "Crop Duster," Adam Orgler of Johnston  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: "Combining Natural Curves," Anji Bennett of Lake View  
Honorable Mention: "Fly Iowa Air Show," Lee Navin of Ankeny

**Iowa Wildlife winners:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Cliff Swallows Arguing," Sharon Scarff of Wayland  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "Swallowtail on purple flowers," Bill Benson of Carroll  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: "Between the Rows: Protective Mama," Benjamin Neff of Beaman  
Honorable Mention: "The Great One," Cody Davis of Grinnell

**Hometown Pride winners:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place: "Early morning in July," Katie Kettering of Clinton  
2<sup>nd</sup> Place: "Potter's Mill," Scott Hoag of DeWitt  
3<sup>rd</sup> Place: "Sunset Flight," Heather Johnson of Ankeny  
Honorable Mention: "Fair Food," Adam Orgler of Johnston

**Public Favorite winner:**

"Floating Dock," William Beardsley of Spirit Lake

All winning photos can be accessed on our website at: <https://keepiowabeautiful.org/photography-contest/winners/>

**About Keep Iowa Beautiful**

*Keep Iowa Beautiful was established in 2000 by Governor Robert D. Ray and Donald F. Lamberti becoming the 23rd State Affiliate of Keep America Beautiful. It is a 501c3 charitable organization working with citizens, neighborhoods and communities in improving the vitality and cultural health of the state of Iowa. KIB is helping build stronger communities to develop sustainable futures. For more information, visit our website at <https://keepiowabeautiful.org/>.*