



Capture the Magic of Balloon Fiesta® with Annual Cindy Petrehn Memorial Photo Contest
Contest celebrates the art of photography and pays tribute to cherished Balloon Fiesta photographer, Cindy Petrehn

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Albuquerque, NM – Following the 54th event, the ExxonMobil Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta® invites guests to participate in the annual Cindy Petrehn Memorial Photo Contest. The contest, created in honor of longtime photographer Cindy Petrehn, is accepting entries through Oct. 31 and welcomes amateur and professional photographers alike to share the joy of Balloon Fiesta through moments captured in photography.

Cindy Petrehn's passion for photography started in college, an art she considered, "capturing the light in a moment of time and space. We may never pass this way again... or so the song goes. It is a passion and an obsession."

Cindy's legacy in photography is wide-ranging, as she captured intriguing images of people, events, and nature. She was also a licensed hot air balloon pilot, official Balloon Fiesta photographer, and member of both Women in Aviation and The Balloon Federation of America.

Since her passing in 2013, Balloon Fiesta has preserved her legacy and memory by continuing the tradition of what she loved most – capturing the spirit of the skies and the beauty of the world through photography – with the annual contest.

Photos submitted for the contest must have been taken during the 2026 Balloon Fiesta, Oct. 3-11, 2026. Submissions will be accepted online with a \$10 entry fee through Oct. 31. There is no limit on entries per person.

Contest Categories:

- Faces of Fiesta
- Dawn Patrol/Balloon Glow
- Mass Ascension
- Special Shapes
- AfterGlow Fireworks
- Digital or Artificial Intelligence (AI) Art (not eligible for Grand Prize)

The Grand Prize winner will receive \$1,000; first-place winners from each category will receive \$500, second-place winners from each category will receive a 2026 Balloon Fiesta jacket, third-place winners from each category will receive an Official 2026 Event Poster, and the Digital/AI Art winner will receive \$300.

Winners will be announced in mid- to late-November. Full contest details and rules are available at balloonfiesta.com/media/photos/photo-contest/.

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About the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, Inc.

The ExxonMobil Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta® is an annual festival of hot air balloons that takes place every October in Albuquerque, New Mexico, USA. It is the largest gathering of balloons and balloonists in the world. For details on events, schedule, and entertainment, visit our website, BalloonFiesta.com and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter/X](#), or [TikTok](#).