



2026

Awards Manual

For the Award Period 2025

The awards period is January 1 to December 31, 2025.

Books must have been published during that period to be eligible for a 2026 award.
All student submissions shall be completed during the 2025-2026 school year.



MISSION

The Wyoming Historical Society is dedicated to preserving, exploring, and sharing Wyoming's history for the benefit and enjoyment of all generations.

VISION

Our vision is to ensure that Wyoming's past is still accessible to present and future generations.

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Foreword

The Wyoming Historical Society awards program recognizes efforts to preserve Wyoming history. Awards candidates will have written, published, and copyrighted works pertaining to Wyoming history or will have made significant contributions in historical compilations for which adequate publisher markets do not exist.

The awards program also recognizes significant contributions in other areas of historical activity.

The Society encourages everyone to nominate individuals or groups who have made significant contributions for awards.

The Society's Executive Director will post each year's recipients on the Society's website at www.wyshs.org.

Interested persons may, with the approval of the Wyoming Historical Society Executive Board, contribute to Wyoming history by establishing and donating to an award that would become part of this program and be administered by the Society. The donor may specify the rules for the award and designate what the award will be. For details contact the Society's Central Office at PO Box 33, Riverton, WY, 82501, or preferably via e-mail to executivedirector@wyshs.org.

Awards Committee

The committee's duty is to judge nominations in accordance with rules established by the Society's Executive Committee. The Executive Committee appointed the following members to the 2026 Award's Committee: Beki Speas, (Chair); Greg Luhman, and Kathleen Price.

The awards committee may move nominations to other categories.

The awards committee may award an Honorable Mention in any or all categories.

The awards committee will meet to judge the nominations.

The awards committee may nominate and make awards on its own when an individual has nominated a project or activity worthy of an award in a category.

At the award committee's discretion, an award may not be given in a category if the committee feels none of the nominations are worthy of an award. Committee decisions are final.

The committee chair will compile a list with the name of the award, the award winner's name, who made the nomination, the committee's reason for its selection, and contact information (i.e., the award winner's address, phone number and/or e-mail address).

The committee chair will present certificates, plaques, and other awards at the Annual Conference.

Awards Program Rules

The awards period is January 1 to December 31, 2025. Books must have been published, and projects completed during that period to be eligible for a 2026 Award. All student awards shall be completed during the 2025-2026 school year.

Recognized activities are publications, exhibits, and other projects related to Wyoming history. Books must have been published during the year prior to the nomination.

Historical organizations across Wyoming are urged to use awards as a means of honoring members, projects, researchers, historians, students, and teachers.

Submit one nomination per category except in cases where more than one award may be given (e.g., one award is given in the Publications-Reference category so a chapter or individual may submit one nomination).

Nomination package contents (Submit all parts of the nomination simultaneously)

1. Complete the 2026 Nomination Form online for each nomination.
2. Include adequate supporting documentation to aid the awards committee in its selection (some awards require specific additional information)
3. Submit the support materials required by each type of awards category.

Support materials

Print publication nominations must include a copy of the publication sent to the Awards Chair.

Fine art nominations (e.g., painting, sculpture, etc.) include color photos of the piece, not the original.

Online nominations (i.e., website, social media, podcast) include a link to the site on the nomination form. Do not include printed materials.

Documentary nominations must include an audio or visual copy, or a link to the documentary, as appropriate, of the production.

For young historians, HOME mailing addresses and parent phone numbers must be included.

Submissions and Nomination Deadlines

Nominations for all should be submitted online at wyshs.org/awards and any physical supporting materials sent to:

Beki Speas
WHS Awards Committee Chair
541 S Thurmond St.
Sheridan, WY 82801

Pres.whs@gmail.com
(307) 899-4094

Nominations, except student awards, must be submitted online **no later than March 30, 2026.**

Publications and activity projects: Due to the time needed for each committee member to read the nominated materials, please submit the nomination and a copy of the publication or activity project as early as possible.

Student Essay nominations due online **no later than April 30, 2026.** The home address and phone number of the nominee must be included.

Nominations received after the deadline, or those which do not receive awards in one year may be nominated for a different award in another year, if eligible.

Publications Awards

Books

Submit the Nomination Form and one copy of the published work.

Awards recognize significant contributions to Wyoming history, a winner and runner up will be selected in each category. Occasionally, if warranted, an honorable mention may also be selected.

Fiction

- On a Wyoming Subject or locale

Nonfiction (Jeremy Johnston Award)

- On a Wyoming Subject or locale

Memoir

- On a person writing about their own experiences connected to Wyoming living or subject matter.

Biography and Autobiography (2 separate awards)

- On a living or deceased resident of Wyoming

Poetry

- Single poem or a book of poetry written on a Wyoming subject or locale.

Memoir

- A personal narrative based on the author's specific memories of a Wyoming subject or locale.

Reference Work on a Wyoming Subject or Locale

Judging Criteria

- Historical Accuracy: In your judgment and to the best of your knowledge, is the information presented in this book accurate?
- Completeness of Coverage: Is the subject covered so it gives the reader a complete picture?
- Quality of Writing: Is the information presented in a way that makes for enjoyable reading?
- Usefulness: Does the book have a table of contents, footnotes/endnotes, lists of sources and an index?
- Attractiveness: Is the book designed and printed in such a way as to make it visually appealing?
- Importance: Does it fill a void in published Wyoming history, or does it provide significant new information about subject matter that has been covered previously?

Digital Awards

Internet Website

Awards recognize the designer of a website relating to Wyoming history.

- The Internet website shall have been created or updated with at least 50% updated content during the current awards year.
- The website may have been created by an individual or group of individuals. No website may be nominated more than twice.
- The content of the website must be historically noteworthy and related to Wyoming or local history

Judging Criteria

- Historical Accuracy: In your judgment, and to the best of your knowledge, is the information presented accurate?
- Quality of Writing: Is the information presented in a way that makes for easy navigation of the website for the average internet user?
- Importance: Does the nominated website provide added information or an appealing fresh look at previously published information?

Social Media

Submit the Nomination Form online. Do not submit hard copies. Judges will review the site.

Awards recognize social media that made a significant contribution to Wyoming history (i.e., blogs, Facebook pages/groups, Twitter pages, Instagram profiles, etc.).

- The page shall have been created or updated, posting updated content weekly during the current awards year.
- The page may have been created by an individual or group of individuals. No social media may be nominated more than twice.

Judging Criteria

- Historical Accuracy: In your judgment and to the best of your knowledge, is the information presented on the page accurate?
- Completeness of Coverage: Is the subject covered so it gives the reader a complete picture?
- Quality of Writing: Is the information presented in a way that makes for enjoyable reading?
- Attractiveness: Is the page professional?
- Importance: Does it fill a void in published Wyoming history, or does it provide significant current information about subject matter, which has already been covered in published materials?

Podcast Show (Overall); Podcast Episode

Submit the Nomination Form. Do not submit hard copies. Judges will review the podcast.

Awards recognize a podcast that made a significant contribution to Wyoming history (i.e., podcast, a digital medium consisting of audio episodes that relate to a specific theme).

- The podcast shall have been created and shared with the public during the current awards year.
- The podcast may have been created by an individual or group of individuals. No podcast may be nominated more than twice.

Judging Criteria

- Historical Accuracy: In your judgment and to the best of your knowledge, is the information presented and recorded orally accurate?
- Completeness of Coverage: Is the subject covered so it gives the listener a complete picture?
- Quality of Verbal Presentation: Is the information presented in a way that makes for enjoyable listening?
- Attractiveness: Is the podcast title & host inviting?
- Importance: Does it fill a void in published Wyoming history, or does it provide significant current information about subject matter, which has already been covered in published materials.

Audio or Visual Documentary Awards

Submit the Nomination Form and one copy for viewing or listening.

Awards recognize professionals or non-professionals who have made an outstanding contribution to Wyoming history by developing documentary material in the audio-video field.

Professional

- Audio and Audio/Visual
- To an individual or individuals, television station, film production company, radio station, or any for-profit organization that has developed documentary material in the audio-video or computer-generated field.

Non-Professional

- Audio and Audio/Visual
- To individuals or groups who have developed documentary material in the audio-video or computer-generated field.

Judging Criteria

- Historical Accuracy: In your judgment, and to the best of your knowledge, is the information presented accurate?
- Quality of Writing: Is the information presented in a way that gives the viewer or listener a complete picture?
- Quality: Is the information presented in a way that makes for enjoyable viewing or listening?
- Usefulness: Does the audio or audio/video tape have useful value in promoting Wyoming history or for use as a teaching tool?
- Importance: Does it provide added information about Wyoming history, or does it provide an appealing fresh look at already existing information?

Fine Arts Awards

Submit the Nomination Form and color photos of the piece, not the original.

Awards recognize outstanding accomplishment in the field of fine arts that result in the promotion, depiction, recognition, or preservation of Wyoming history.

Judging Criteria

In addition to artistic quality, historical significance and accuracy will be major considerations. In the case of painting or other work of art portraying a historical event, does it do so accurately?

Master Artisan & Mentorship Award(s)

- Recognition of someone or an organization that is a master in or passes along the knowledge of our cultural heritage trades and crafts, such as but not limited to: leather working, blacksmithing, pottery, fiber arts, etc.

Sculpture (3D)

- Bronze, Marble, Metal work, or other such three-dimensional artworks

Photography

- Black & White, Color or Panoramic

Painting

- Acrylic, Oil or watercolor

Mural / Outdoor

- Any medium of a large outdoor mural depicting Wyoming's History and/or Cultural Heritage

Sketching/Drawing

- Ink, charcoal, chalk or pencil

Student Awards – Young Essay Awards

“Wyoming’s Uncommon Voices: Stories from the Past”

Submit the nomination form for nomination in an age group on essays written from acceptable age groups noted below. First place will receive a prize of \$150, Runner up will receive \$100 per age group. Winning essays will be featured in the February 2027 issue of *The Wyoming Historian*, the historical journal of The Wyoming Historical Society.

Submission Requirements

Submit the Nomination Form, the student essay, and any required supporting materials.

These awards recognize **original essays in Wyoming history** written by students at the following levels:

- Elementary (Grades 3–5)
- Middle School (Grades 6–8)
- High School (Grades 9–12)
- Collegiate
- Graduate

This is a monetary award. ANYONE may nominate up to three essays in each age group.

- Essays should be in a Word or Google document format, 12 point font.
- Images (Optional but Encouraged): Essays may include 5–10 images to support the written work. Images must be at least 5 x 7 inches in size and 600 dpi resolution.

Essay Categories, Topics, and Word Counts

Grades 3–5

- **Word Count:** 300–600 words
- **Topic:** “*A Pioneer’s Day: Daily Life in Early Wyoming*”

Grades 6–8

- **Word Count:** 600–1,200 words
- **Topic:** “*The Town That Vanished: The History of a Wyoming Ghost Town or Forgotten Community*”

Grades 9–12

- **Word Count:** 1,200–2,500 words
- **Topic:** “*Beyond the Frontier Myth: Exploring the Lives and Contributions of Minority and Indigenous Residents and Communities in a Specific Wyoming Town, County, or Region*”

Collegiate

- **Word Count:** 3,000–4,000 words
- **Topic:** “*The Industrial Siting Act of 1975: Managing the Surge*”

Graduate

- **Word Count:** 3,000–4,000 words
- **Topic:** “*Boom-Town Sociology: The ‘Gillette Syndrome’ Reconsidered*”

Publication Recognition

Winning essays will be featured in the February 2027 issue of *The Wyoming Historian*, the historical journal of The Wyoming Historical Society.

Judging Criteria

- **Historical Accuracy:** Is the information accurate to the best of your knowledge?
- **Completeness of Coverage:** Does the essay provide a clear and complete understanding of the topic?
- **Quality of Presentation:** Is the essay well written and engaging?
- **Usefulness:** Are sources cited through footnotes, endnotes, or a bibliography?
- **Attractiveness:** Is the essay well organized and readable?
- **Originality:** Does the essay reflect original research or a creative interpretation of historical sources?

Activities Award (up to 3 Awards)

Submit the Nomination Form and supporting materials online.

Awarded to:

- An individual or group making a significant contribution to Wyoming history through a well-planned, well-conducted tour or tours to a historic site/sites in Wyoming.
- An outstanding education project which furthers the understanding and knowledge of local and state history.
- An individual or group promoting museum activities.
- An individual or group promoting restoration or interpretation of a local historic site or sites.
- An individual or group preparing a Wyoming family history project.

Judging Criteria

- Tour: Show a significant contribution to Wyoming history by providing a well- planned, well-conducted tour to a historic site.
- Educational: The individual or group must further the understanding and knowledge of local and state history.
- Museum Activities: The individual or group must show promotion of museum activities.
- Historic Preservation: The individual or group must show restoration or interpretation of a local historic site or sites.
- Wyoming Family History Project: The information presented must connect the importance of the family history to Wyoming history.

WHS Member of the Year

Submit the Nomination Form and supporting materials.

- Awarded to Society members in recognition of outstanding services to the Society and the mission of the Society.

Judging Criteria

Awards committee members will review each nomination to determine if any of the nominations are worthy of an award. Nominations must include adequate supporting information to aid the judges in their decisions. The society members nominated must be in good standing on their WHS.

First Place (1 Award) - \$150 prize

Second Place (1 Award) - \$100 prize

Third Place (1 Award) - \$50 Prize

Historical Organization of the Year

Submit the Nomination Form and the additional information required on page 17.

Awards are made to provide financial assistance to historical organizations for historical projects: complete, incomplete, or proposed.

A brief oral report will be made to the Society at the next Annual meeting on the progress of the project funded by each Award and a written report shall be submitted at the same time to the Society's Executive Board for record purposes. Upon completion of the project, send a summary report to the current awards chair or to the Wyoming Historical Society to the attention of the WHS Executive Director Alexandra Philp.

- Funds awarded for a specific project must be used for that project.
- Organizations may apply for more than one award (i.e., Homsher Grant and Chapter Award), but the awards will not exceed the total project cost and other funds should be secured and included in total project cost and reported on the final report.

First Place (1 Award) - \$750 prize

Second Place (1 Award) - \$500 prize

Third Place (1 Award) - \$300 prize

Judging Criteria

- Merit: Is the proposal well planned? Does the organization have a clear idea of what it wants to accomplish?
- Need: Are there other sources of financial support for the project? Is financial support critical to the success of the project?
- Historical Value: Will the result of the project be valuable to the community, county or state?

Clara M. & Henry E. Jensen Outstanding Wyoming Teacher Award

Submit the Nomination Form and supporting materials.

Award is made to a Wyoming teacher in recognition of outstanding performance in teaching Wyoming history in the classroom.

The recipient receives \$250.00, a plaque, and a plaque for the recipient's school.

Judging Criteria

Awards committee members will review each nomination to determine a winner.

Mabel Brown Cumulative Contribution Award

Submit the Nomination Form and supporting materials.

Award is given as special recognition to a living Wyoming resident who over an extended period, has made valuable contributions to the understanding and awareness of Wyoming and its history.

The recipient receives \$250.00 and a plaque.

Judging Criteria

Awards committee members will review each nomination to determine a winner.

L.C. Bishop Award

Submit the Nomination Form and supporting materials.

Award is made to an organization or individual who has voluntarily contributed in a significant manner, over several years, to preserving or recording the history of any part of a historical trail in Wyoming through preservation of a site, completed written research, cartography, or other means.

The recipient receives \$250.00 and a plaque.

Judging Criteria

Awards committee members will review each nomination to determine a winner.

Henryetta Berry Memorial Award

Submit the Nomination Form and supporting materials.

Award is made to an organization or individual in recognition of their promotion of Wyoming history among young people.

The recipient receives \$250.00 and a plaque.

Judging Criteria

Awards committee members will review each nomination to determine a winner.

Judge & Mrs. Percy Metz Memorial Award

Submit the Nomination Form and supporting materials, including copies of the photographs or oral history tapes (or their transcripts if they have been transcribed). The Wyoming Historical Society will retain these copies.

This award is made to an individual or organization in recognition of outstanding contribution to the history of Wyoming in the field of photography or oral history, which may span many years.

The recipient receives \$250.00 and a plaque.

Judging Criteria

Award committee members will review each nomination to determine a winner.

Maurine Carley Memorial Historic Preservation Award

Maurine Carley, a recognized historian and writer, was a long-time, active member of the Wyoming Historical Society and served as treasurer for twenty years. She was dedicated to the preservation of the history of Wyoming and shared this dedication in her writing and in serving as a trail guide for many Historical Society Treks.

Submit electronic nominations according to the instructions.

Award is made to an organization or an individual in recognition of an outstanding project in the field of historic preservation. A historic preservation project may span many years, and people are encouraged to submit projects that may represent Wyoming's diverse cultural heritage. Projects may be underway or shall have been completed within two years the nomination.

Possible nominations may include residential, commercial, public, religious, industrial, or institutional buildings, historic sites, trails, cemeteries, archaeological sites, and other places significant to Wyoming history. Projects that focus on objects or items such as photographs, documents, antiques, or books, and oral history programs or similar projects are not eligible.

Preservation of sites on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) that comply with the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Historic Preservation* will be given special consideration. Sites not enrolled in the NRHP may be eligible for consideration.

Buildings or objects that have been moved from their original location are generally not eligible for listing in the NRHP. These buildings or sites currently used or planned for a use other than that for which they were originally constructed may be considered for the award. These buildings or sites should retain features and characteristics strongly reminiscent of the original use. For example, a home converted for use as a bed and breakfast might retain these features and traits.

A Society chapter or the Society's executive board may submit nominations.

Nominations and materials submitted with the nomination, such as photographs, brochures, and newspaper and magazine articles, must be electronically processed and sent by e-mail.

The Society's historic preservation committee will review applications. The committee may give more than one award. Other nominations may be eligible to receive special recognition.

The recipient receives \$300 and a plaque.

The chair will document the name of the award, the award winner, who made the nomination, the committee's reason for its selection, and contact information (i.e., the chapter's and the award winner's address, phone number and/or e-mail address).

The chair will present plaques and monetary awards at the annual meeting.

Instructions for Completing the Nomination for the Maurine Carley Memorial Historic Preservation Award

Complete the online submission form, and include the following:

If you have questions about the award or completion of the nomination, please contact Awards Chair Beki Speas.

Include the following checklist items in the nomination uploads:

- Letter to the Awards Committee.
- Project description of up to five typed pages. Use at least 12-point font and one-inch margins.

Briefly describe the property being nominated, including the following information:

- A brief history of the project.
- A description of the condition of the property prior to the preservation activity and efforts undertaken to preserve the site and/or structure. Include information regarding experts who may have been involved in the process.
- An overview of the preservation accomplishments and benefits to the public.
- An explanation of public and/or private involvement and funding sources.
- A summary of project completion date(s) and/or plans to complete in the future.

Up to 16 photographs. Provide clear images of the site and/or building(s), including up to five before, five during, five after of interior and exterior. Label each image with date and description. Include a separate photo of the final project that shows the entire building and landscape (not so far back that the building cannot be seen).

Up to five single page uploads of the support materials, such as copies of newspaper or magazine articles, brochures, etc. Label each image with date and description.

Maurine Carley Memorial Historic Preservation Award (committee use)

Evaluation Guidelines (each committee member complete and sign a form for each nomination)

Project Name: _____

1. Thoroughness of the application. Possible 10 points.

Points given: _____

2. Enrolled in National Register of Historic Places – Automatic 10 points.
 - a. Eligible for National Register of Historic Places - 8 points
 - b. Other significant points

Points given: _____

3. A brief history of the project.
4. A description of the condition of the property prior to the preservation activity and efforts undertaken to preserve the site and/or structure(s). Consider information regarding experts who may have been involved in the process.
5. An overview of the preservation accomplishments and benefits to the public.
6. An explanation of public and/or private involvement and funding sources.
7. A summary of project completion date(s) and/or plans to complete in the future.
 - a. Possible 15 points

Points given: _____

8. Demonstrated community involvement and support. Possible 5 points.

Points given: _____

Total Points (possible 40 points): _____

Rejection Criteria

If answers to any of the following questions are affirmative, then reject the nomination.

Was the project completed more than two years ago?

Did the applicant submit the nomination?

Did the applicant miss the April 30 deadline?

Was the nomination submitted without input from the local historical society or the Society's executive board?

Should this application be rejected? Yes, No

Evaluator Signature _____ **Date** _____

Outstanding Preservation Project Award

Submit electronic nominations according to the instructions.

Award is made to an organization or an individual in recognition of an outstanding project in the field of historic preservation that does not focus on the physical preservation of a historic building or site.

Eligible projects focus on the preservation of objects or items such as photographs, documents, films, or books significant to Wyoming's history. For example, the preservation of historic photographic plates may qualify for this award. Additionally, preservation of equipment or tools, such as the restoration of a historic wagon, may qualify for the award.

Projects may be underway or shall have been completed within two years of being nominated for the award.

Nominations and materials submitted with the nomination, such as photographs, brochures, and newspaper and magazine articles, must be electronically processed and sent by e-mail.

Anyone may submit nominations.

The Society's Awards Committee will review applications. The committee may give more than one award. Other nominations may be eligible to receive special recognition.

The recipient receives \$300 and a plaque.

The chair will document the name of the award, the award winner, who made the nomination, the committee's reason for its selection, and contact information (i.e., the chapter's and the award winner's address, phone number and/or e-mail address).

The chair will present plaques and monetary awards at the annual meeting.

Instructions for Completing the Nomination for the Outstanding Preservation Project Award

Complete the online submission form, and include the following:

If you have questions about the award or completion of the nomination, please contact Awards Chair Beki Speas.

Include the following checklist items in the nomination uploads:

- Letter to the Awards Committee.
- Project description of up to five typed pages. Use at least 12-point font and one-inch margins.

Briefly describe the project being nomination, including the following information:

- A brief history of the project.
- A description of the condition of items or materials prior to the preservation activity and efforts undertaken to preserve the artifact(s). Include information regarding experts who may have been involved in the process.
- An overview of the preservation accomplishments and benefits to the public.
- An explanation of public and/or private involvement and funding sources.
- A summary of project completion date(s) and/or plans to complete in the future.

- Up to 10 photographs. Provide clear images of the artifact including before, during and after. Label each image with date and description.
- Up to five single page uploads of the support materials, such as copies of newspaper or magazine articles, brochures, etc. Label each image with date and description.