

Lights, Camera, “Ag-tion” – New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum rolls out its inaugural short film contest on Jan. 14

LAS CRUCES, NM – Filmmakers are invited to create short films rooted in agriculture, ranching, and rural heritage for the New Mexico Heritage Short Film Contest in collaboration with the Las Cruces International Film Festival (LCIFF).

“This short film contest is truly important because it preserves and elevates stories of agriculture, ranching, and rural heritage through film, ensuring these lived experiences remain visible and relevant to future generations,” Eric Kirker, contest director and New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum (NMFRHM) Exhibit Designer,

said.

Since film is a prominent industry in the state, Kirker urges New Mexicans to be proud of their cultural heritage and share their stories through contemporary filmmaking.

Participants and their crew must attend (in-person or virtually) the kickoff event on Wednesday, Jan. 14 from 4-6 p.m. at the Museum at 4100 Dripping Springs Road. Genres will be assigned and the mandatory cultural phrase to be used in the films will be unveiled at this event. Feb. 2 is the early bird deadline to pay the \$10 participation fee for standard entries and students, with the regular deadline on Feb. 27 for a \$15 fee.

Official rules and more information can be found at: <https://filmfreeway.com/NMFarmandRanchHeritageFilmContest>.

The films will be judged for award categories including Best Director, Cinematographer, Use of Phrase, Story, Originality, and Sound. Films can be up to 10 minutes in length and any music used must be licensed or original.

Selected films will be revealed and trophies for first, second, and third place will be awarded at the LCIFF Poster Reveal Party on March 6 at the Museum.

“Stories are how we measure, understand, and share our lives,” Ross Marks, LCIFF executive director, said.

“Film is the most powerful storytelling medium. By supporting local storytellers, we elevate and enrich our community. I am excited to partner with the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum in an effort to support local storytellers and help them explore their own voices and grow through film.”

Filmmakers can contact Contest Director Eric Kirker at eric.kirker@dca.nm.gov for more information.

About the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum:

www.nmfarmandranchmuseum.org

The New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum in Las Cruces is a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs. The 47-acre interactive museum brings to life the 4,000-year history of growing food and fiber in this region. Accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, it features livestock, indoor and outdoor exhibits, barns, greenhouse, gift shop, and demonstrations. The Museum is supported by the Friends of the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum.

NEW MEXICO FARM & RANCH HERITAGE MUSEUM

KICK-OFF EVENT
January 14th, 2026
4pm-6pm @
Farm & Ranch Museum

INAUGURAL
NEW MEXICO HERITAGE
SHORT FILM CONTEST

Contest will challenge participants to create a short film, incorporating a required New Mexico Heritage phrase (to be revealed at the Kick-Off Event). The phrase must be used creatively and verbatim. Must attend the Kick-Off event to participate in this contest.

Rules & Requirements:

- Up to 10 minutes in length
- Format: MP4
- Must use phrase verbatim
- All music must be licensed or original

Submissions through FilmFreeway.com

Entry Categories:

- Best Director
- Best Cinematographer
- Best Use of Phrase
- Best Story
- Best Originality
- Best Sound

Selected films will be revealed on

March 6th at LCIFF Poster Reveal Party
@ NM Farm & Ranch Museum.

1st, 2nd & 3rd place will receive trophies

A surprise announcement will be announced that evening for all the selected films.