

2025 AUSTIN COUNTY FAIR PARADE RULES, CATEGORIES AND AWARDS

Parade Day: October 9, 2025

Open the Gate and Hold On for "8" at the 98th Austin County Fair

If you only had "8" seconds of Fun once the entry gates open at the Austin County Fair what would you do?

Ride a wild bull or a bronc, barrel race, rope a calf, go mutton busting, show a goat, chicken, rabbit, calf, horse, turkey, work on a tractor, eat a funnel cake, ride the Ferris wheel, look over the canned goods & craft exhibits, go to the country store for some goodies, listen to some great entertainment on the big stage or stand in the winner's circle? How much FUN can you have in "8" seconds? What activity at the Austin County Fair gets you rearing and jumping in your boots to pop that gate open and go for "8"? Design your entry to show our folks at the parade what gets YOU chomping at the bit to go to the Austin County Fair.

Keep in mind that ALL entries will be judged and are eligible for an award, if they meet the criteria and based on the discretion of the judges. All judges are from another county and have no ties to any entry in the parade/county. Please find a list of awards and categories on the following page. It is important that your entry number be displayed on both sides of your entry to insure your entry is properly identified. You will be contacted the weekend prior to parade day with your entry number and the parade line-up area instructions.

As in past, the entries will be on a first come, first serve basis. You will be notified if your title has already been registered.

The Austin County Fair Parade will take place on Thursday, October 9, 2025 at 10:00 a.m. in Bellville, Texas. The theme for this year's Fair is "Open the Gate and Hold On for "8" at the 98th year of the Austin County Fair and all parade entries should be tailored to reflect that theme.

Entries should be mailed or emailed to:

**Mary Smentek
155 Dogwood Trail
Bellville, Texas 77418**

Email: austincountyparade@sbcglobal.net

**Questions: (please do not hesitate to Call) Mary 713-876-7102
Please do not wait until the night before**

DEADLINE for Entries: Wednesday, October 1, 2025

If you do not receive your entry conformation within 3 days of sending it, then please contact Mary by email or phone. (contact info above)

Parade Rules

1. **No Throwing of Gum, Candy, Paper, Etc. and No Handing Out of Any Items By Parade Entrants Will Be Allowed. THIS is a VERY SERIOUS SAFETY ISSUE!!!**
2. **When reaching end of parade route BE SURE and FOLLOW SIGNS which will lead you to your DISBANDING AREA. This will help everyone trying to leave the area.**
3. **NO PARKING will be allowed on the street of the parade route on Thursday until parade is over.**
4. **Parade entries should be in place by 9:15 a.m. Thursday, October 9th, except for Western Division - Trail Riders do not have to be in line until 9:30 a.m. Any entry which includes a Horse(s)/Mule(s) will be placed in rear of the parade with the rest of the four legged animals. NO EXCEPTIONS.**
5. **All participants will stay in their designated places until authorized to advance by a Parade Committee member. Non-compliance with this rule will result in forfeiture of participation in the parade.**
6. **Entries with horses may NOT travel up & down line-up roadway prior to parade.**
7. **Western Division – Horse or Rider is it IMPORTANT that each animal or rider display the group line-up number. This is the only way the judges are able to clearly identify the group you are in.**
8. **Speed of entries in the parade and control of traffic will be under the direction and supervision of the Chief of Police of the City of Bellville, the Austin County Sheriff's Department or the Texas Department of Public Safety.**
9. **Identification of sponsor must be on both sides of the parade entry. This will help the crowd identify supporters of your parade, help the announcer to give proper credit and judges. YOU'RE A SUPPORTER OF THE COMMUNITY BY BEING IN THIS PARADE SO LET EVERYONE KNOW WHO YOU ARE! Hang a sign on your entry.**
10. **DO NOT STOP TO PERFORM – This slows the speed of the parade down.**
11. **NO consumption of alcoholic beverages by parade entrants will be allowed.**
12. **Band buses, trailers, etc will be parked in a reserved area that will be very convenient for everyone at the end of the parade route. This area will be advised the same time you are advised of your line-up number.**

Float Requirement and what the Judges will be looking at/for:

1. **Each float should have the theme idea/slogan and the sponsor's name on each side of the entry in a manner that can be read from a distance, for identification by the judges and for the pleasure of the spectators.**
2. **Theme idea/slogan should be coordinated with float shape and costumes.**
3. **Wheels and tongue of trailer should be concealed.**
4. **Pulling vehicle should be coordinated with the float theme/slogan.**
5. **Arrangement, actions and costumes of riders on float will be considered in the float's effectiveness.**
6. **Overall appeal of float as it proceeds along the parade route will determine the float's quality.**
7. **Theme matching entries, precision marching, good strong/clear band music, happy smiling faces, waving to the spectators, controlled & well-groomed horses/animals, signage of sponsor on entry & line-up number.**
8. **Entries will be judged by a panel of out of town judges. All decisions of the judges will be FINAL.**

General Division Categories and Awards

YOU MUST DISPLAY line-Up NUMBER – No Number Showing NOT Qualified to be Judged

AUSTIN COUNTY JUDGE AWARD – Austin County Judge Award is awarded to the best presentation of the theme idea, float shape, pulling vehicle and character's depiction of the theme "Open the Gate – Hold on for 8" at the 98th Austin County Fair.

AUSTIN COUNTY JUDGE AWARD – Trophy & Ribbon – Sponsored by County Judge Tim Lapham

RUNNER-UP AUSTIN COUNTY JUDGE AWARD – Ribbon

SHOWMANSHIP AWARD – Showmanship Award is granted to the entry that creates the best spectator response.

1st SHOWMANSHIP AWARD – Trophy & Ribbon – Sponsored by City of Industry

2nd SHOWMANSHIP AWARD – Ribbon

BEST DECORATED FLOAT - Includes floats that exhibit the best use of float covering, plus float shape, coordination of pulling vehicle and riders.

1st BEST DECORATED FLOAT – Trophy & Ribbon – Sponsored by Bellville Abstract Company

2nd and 3rd BEST DECORATED FLOAT – Ribbon

CLASSIC CAR – This category shall include vehicles 25 years old or older, Vehicle should be decorated to carry out the parade theme.

1st and 2nd Place – Ribbon

ANTIQUE TRACTOR – This category shall include tractors 25 years old or older. Tractors should be decorated to carry out the parade theme.

1st and 2nd Place – Ribbon

WALKING UNIT – Any type of walking group.

1st, 2nd and 3rd Place – Ribbon

RIDER OR RIDING GROUP – A single rider or group riding any type of animal.

1st BEST RIDER/RIDING GROUP – Trophy & Ribbon – Sponsored by 71L Ranch

2nd and 3rd Place – Ribbon

WAGON– Any type of western style wagon pulled by an animal.

1st, 2nd and 3rd Place – Ribbon

All Parade Award winners (Trophies and Ribbons) will be contacted on Friday, October 10th. Awards will be handed out and photos taken on Sunday, October 12th in the stage area of the Convention and Expo Building. Winners will be advised of award & photo time when contacted.