



**SALINA**  
**ARTS**  
& HUMANITIES



## 2026 FESTIVAL MEDALLION QUEST WINNER CONFIRMED ON MAY 16

(SALINA 05-26) Salina Arts & Humanities announces that the winner of the 2026 Festival Medallion Quest is Courtney Witten.

Witten, a first-time hunter, started hunting Friday night, first by interpreting the clues as directions right to the location. Clue #1: Head to Aurora, she interpreted as going underneath the overhead lights of Santa Fe. After looking for a bit Saturday morning, she found herself in Lakewood Park and, with a laugh, said, “I was either really right or really wrong,” as she had noticed the park was quiet except for a couple of disc golfers. After pulling into the park, she spent time near a large tree at the entrance, but soon found the “Big Tree claims Victory” marker, leading her to the spot. Still filled with joy over her prize, Witten said, “It was a lot of FUN!” and was ready to get back out on the hunt again.



The Quest took four days and seven clues. The clues were shared online at [festivalmedallionquest.com](http://festivalmedallionquest.com) and posted outside the Eighth Street Salina Arts & Humanities office doors.

The 2026 Medallion was hidden in Lakewood Park near disc golf hole #8, atop a mound of soil just along the tree line, in the end cap of a mostly buried, rusty barrel tightly secured in the ground by tree roots. The object was magnetized to the inside of the barrel cap and covered with sandpaper to help disguise it and blend it with the barrel's aged metal. Once the object was removed, the laminated note opened like a folder with directions inside for the winner to claim their prize.

The 2026 Quest winner receives a prize package of \$1,000 in cash and \$2,000 in Gift Certificates for shopping at the River Festival 2026 Art Show. Other prizes include four Festival admission wristbands, a complimentary on-grounds VIP parking pass, an invitation for four to the Thursday evening PREMIERE Art Patron

# NEWS RELEASE

**RELEASE DATE:**  
Immediate

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**DATE SUBMITTED:**  
May 18, 2026

Party, four River Festival 2026 T-shirts, and two (2) gift certificates for tickets to attend FILI Creative's theatrical release of the film *4 Days In June* at the Salina Art Center Cinema, running July 10 – 15, 2026.

“The Quest is a great way to start the summer and get ready for the energy of the Smoky Hill River Festival,” said Salina Arts & Humanities Executive Director Brad Anderson. “The Festival Medallion Quest celebrates our community's patronage of the arts. With a big prize package up for grabs, there is a tangible buzz for the hunt, a sure sign the Festival is just around the corner. I have enjoyed seeing folks awaiting the release of clues outside the office, and I am always intrigued by the different interpretations of clues,” said Visual Arts Coordinator Crystal Hammerschmidt. Over the years, families have searched side by side, solved riddles, and endeavored to find the Medallion. It marks the official countdown to the River Festival.

The Smoky Hill River Festival, celebrating its 50th year, is the flagship event of Salina Arts & Humanities, a department of the City of Salina. The River Festival attracts many residents and out-of-town guests each year to Salina to enjoy outdoor art installations, over 120 exhibiting artists, three stages of live entertainment, the Artyopolis kids' area, Festival food, and more. The River Festival generates approximately \$3.5 million in revenue annually within the local community.

Admission to the Festival is by weekend wristband (\$15 in advance, \$20 at the gate) available in many local locations and regional cities starting Friday, May 1, or by daily wristband (\$10, sold only at the gate). Children 11 and under get in free. See a list of all local or regional wristband retailers at

<https://www.riverfestival.com/participating-retailers/>.

The Smoky Hill River Festival is a project of the City of Salina. For more information and details or to see volunteer opportunities, visit [www.riverfestival.com](http://www.riverfestival.com) or call 785-309-5770.

For needed accommodations, please call Amanda Morris at Salina Arts & Humanities at 785-309-5770 between 8:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Every effort will be made to accommodate known disabilities. For material or speech access, please call at least five working days before the event.

*Salina Arts & Humanities, a department of the City of Salina, has served a unique role as an arts advocate and resource partner since 1966. The Smoky Hill River Festival, Horizons Grants Program, Smoky Hill Museum, Arts Infusion Program in schools, Community Art & Design, and Creative Connections are among the programs of Salina Arts & Humanities, located at 211 W. Iron Avenue in Salina.*

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