



The National Cowboy Poetry Gathering

nationalcowboypoetrygathering.org





Elko, Nevada

January 30-February 4, 2023



“Year after year, you manifest a miracle. You are the dozens of people who created this event and gave it a name, and the hundreds of volunteers who help make it happen. You are the ranch women and men who give voice to the power of their lives, who ride the river of change with courage and curiosity, who write poetry, make music, draw and paint their lives, explore their heritage and imagine their futures.



You reinvigorate old poems and songs and give birth to new ones. You let us be the vessels that carry the wisdom and beauty born out of lives numbered by seasons, dependent on animals, shaped by brutal sun, brilliant stars, wind and snow and rain. Your art is born of these powerful elements; these elements imbue you with your power.”

— Hal Cannon, Founding Director

One Week in Winter

The *National Cowboy Poetry Gathering* takes place each January in Elko, Nevada. It all began nearly 40 years ago as a time and place where Western ranchers and cowboys could gather to share poems about their lives working cattle.

Today, we are a nation of Western poets, musicians, artisans, and storytellers, sharing our creativity around the world, telling stories of hard work, heartbreak, and hilarity —and what it means to make your way in the rangeland West.





“I love cowboy poetry, but cowboy poetry is far more than poetry alone. Cowboy poetry is performance art, adorned by all the accouterments of cowboy fashion, authentic or not, better on the stage than on the page. And cowboy poetry is community. Cowboy poetry is a few hundred or a few thousand people gathering to reaffirm their vows to the culture, despite the fact that—if pressed—they’d find as many contrasting definitions as attendees.

When critics ignore the community aspect of cowboy poetry, they’re missing the point altogether. Cowboy poetry is a Basque meal at the Star Hotel in Elko, Nevada, the table ten-friends deep. Cowboy poetry is saying thank you too many times. Cowboy poetry is saying yes to what Paul Zarzyski calls ‘the glorious commotion of it all.’”

— **Carson Vaughan, *The Paris Review***



“Today, it’s an affinity for the land and all that it produces that seems to unite many of the performers and attendees, a yearning for authenticity even if it has little to do with the cowboy mythology.”

— **Meg Berhard, Los Angeles Times**



“Elko, the town that hosts the Gathering, stands against time and the commodification of cowboy culture in a refreshing way. The largest town in northeastern Nevada, Elko, was founded in 1869 with the Transcontinental Railroad and has a storied tradition of cow punching, ranching, and mining. The long traditions of cowboy poetry, through both spoken word and music, are given proper treatment and space here. Occupying every free space in town throughout the week, the attendees that come in by the thousands from all over the country can be distinguished by the beaverskin brims, silk wild rags, belt buckles, and boots all shined up for the week. Those that stand in front of the microphone are deeply connected to the western life, bringing inspiration from the landscapes, ranching, and cattle culture that they will return to at week's end.”

— **Joshua Cogan, National Geographic**





Elko Convention Center

900-seat theater



Western Folklife Center

Intimate 300-seat theater







“People come from all over the world; I met a folk singer from Northern England, a Canadian cowboy, and even a few New Yorkers. The event is a celebration of Western storytelling, with movies and music, cooking workshops and square dancing—you won’t be able to do it all, but that’s maybe why so many return year after year. “

—**Sonja Swanson, Desert Companion**



One Jam-Packed Week!

Entertainment

30 ticketed shows featuring music and poetry
125 daytime sessions on 17 stages and other venues
Films, lectures, discussions, and dances

Workshops

Gear making
Cooking, dancing
Writing, reciting, and the business of performing

Exhibitions

Historical art and objects
Contemporary cowboy gear
Educational interpretation

Western Mercantile

30 vendors with handcrafted Western art and gear



Educational Programming

More than 3,000 area students participate in...

Experiences

Field trips for local youth with art, poetry, and music
In-school performances by Gathering artists

Workshops

Poetry writing and reciting for area high schools
Square dance for the whole family
Hands-on learning with cowboy arts masters

Exhibitions of Student Work

Open mic stages for young poets and singer/songwriters
Exhibitions highlighting the artistry of local students



Demographics

Attendance

6k+

Attendees

People of all ages from all 50 of the United States, Canada, Australia, England, France, Italy, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and beyond; lovers of Western lifestyle; ranchers and working cowboys; fans of storytelling and creativity

Social Media + Email

185k Facebook followers

10k Instagram followers

7.5k newsletter subscribers

Featured in...

Los Angeles Times, National Geographic, Vice, MTV, Western Horseman, Wall Street Journal, New York Times, and many more





“Right Where We Belong”

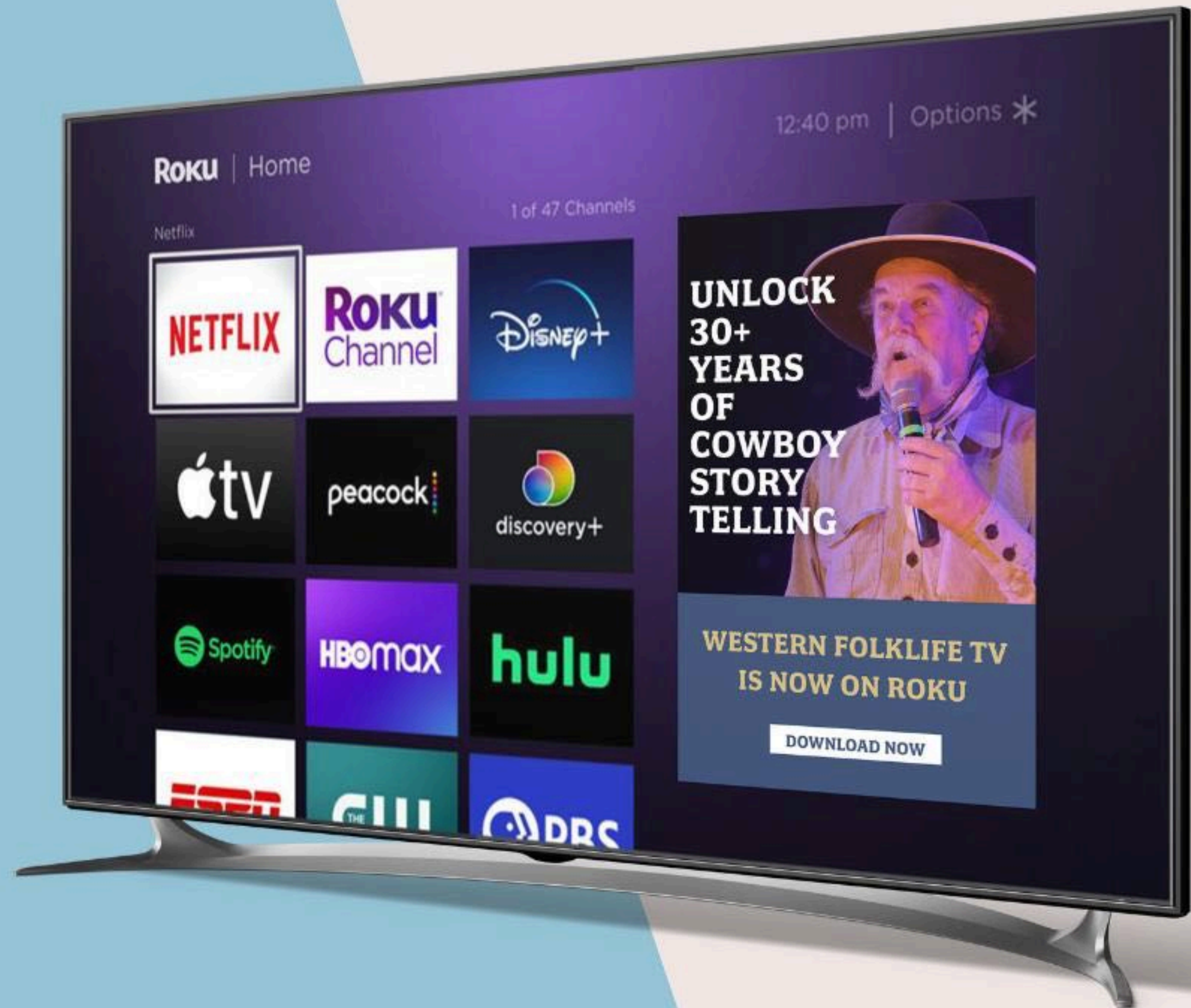
The 39th *National Cowboy Poetry Gathering* will take place in Elko, Nevada, January 29 through February 4, 2024.

Our theme is “Right Where We Belong,” and we’ll be inviting western poets, songwriters, artists, and land stewards to bring new and old stories to light as they endeavor to create a West that hosts healthy and hospitable landscapes and agriculture-based communities.



Watch Anywhere

We livestream a selection of shows from two theaters all week on our streaming service, Western Folklife TV. Members and subscribers can watch live and archived shows on their phones and TVs with Roku, Amazon Fire, Android, and AppleTV.









Event Title Sponsor

\$50k (one available)

- Exclusive sponsor of livestream programming
- Exclusive category sponsor of VIP party
- Onsite activation
- Logo prominently displayed in all advertising, event website, lobby screens, email correspondence to attendees, save-the-date cards, printed tickets and badges
- Verbal recognition from stage on each show
- Listing on poster and in program book with additional full-page, full-color ad

** Discounts available for multi-year sponsorship*

Poet Lariat

\$25k (six available)

- Exclusive category sponsor of VIP party
- Performance sponsor (logo + verbal from stage)
- Logo prominently displayed in all advertising, event website, and lobby screens
- Listing on poster and in program book with additional two-color full-page ad
- Mention in email newsletter and social media

- 14 VIP invitations to VIP party
- 20 three-day Deluxe Passes
- 14 tickets to sponsored performance
- Framed poster



Buckaroo Bard

\$15k (13 available)

- Performance sponsor (logo + verbal from stage)
- Logo prominently displayed in all advertising, event website, lobby screens
- Listing on poster and in program book with additional full-color, half-page ad
- Mention in email newsletter and social media
- 8 VIP invitations to VIP party
- 15 three-day Deluxe Passes
- 8 tickets to sponsored performance
- Framed poster





Verse Vaquero

\$10k (13 available)

- Performance sponsor (logo + verbal from stage)
- Logo prominently displayed in all advertising, event website, and lobby screens
- Listing on poster and in program book with additional two-color, half-page ad
- Mention in email newsletter and social media
- 6 VIP invitations to VIP party
- 12 three-day Deluxe Passes
- 6 tickets to sponsored performance
- Framed poster

Word Wrangler

\$5k (8 available)

- Performance sponsor (logo + verbal from stage)
- Logo prominently displayed in all advertising, event website, and lobby screens
- Listing in program book

- 4 VIP invitations to VIP party
- 10 three-day Deluxe Passes
- 4 tickets to sponsored performance

- Unframed poster



Saddle Sonneteer

\$1k

- Logo on lobby screens
- Logo on website
- Listing in program book

- 2 three-day Deluxe Passes
- Unframed poster







Mission

Use story and cultural expression to connect the American West to the world

What We Do

The Western Folklife Center is a nonprofit that provides a platform for rural and urban communities to communicate and exchange new ideas and avenues of expression. We produced the first Cowboy Poetry Gathering in 1985. Our National Cowboy Poetry Gathering continues to celebrate and promote the artistry and ingenuity of life in the American West. It remains our signature event, with programming changing to reflect contemporary realities and issues of the American West.

Throughout the year, our fieldwork, research, exhibits, website, and archives preserve, document and share the heritage of the West. Our media and educational programs entertain and engage, deepening the understanding of the vitality and challenges of western communities.





Western Folklife Center

501 Railroad Street
Elko, Nevada 89801
+1 775.738.7508

Daniel Neel
dneel@westernfolklife.org

