



MOUNTAIN CITY FIDDLERS' CONVENTION CELEBRATES ANOTHER MEMORABLE WEEKEND OF MUSIC, COMPETITION AND TRADITION

**16-YEAR-OLD HOLLACE OAKES NAMED 2026 GRAND
CHAMPION FIDDLER; RIDERS IN THE SKY HONORED
WITH G.B. GRAYSON AWARD**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MOUNTAIN CITY, Tenn. — The Mountain City Fiddlers' Convention brought another weekend of old-time and bluegrass music to Mountain City October 2–3, welcoming an estimated over 700 people who attended and participated throughout the two-day event.

Friday's Opening Night at Heritage Hall Theatre featured performances by Denim & Plaid, The Kody Norris Show and Lonesome River Band, setting the stage for a full Saturday of youth and adult competition and special performances by Remedy Tree, Carson Peters & Iron Mountain and Riders in the Sky.

16-YEAR-OLD HOLLACE OAKES CLAIMS GRAND CHAMPION FIDDLER TITLE

One of the weekend's biggest moments belonged to 16-year-old Hollace Oakes of Snowville, Virginia, who competed in the adult category this year and emerged as the 2026 Grand Champion Fiddler.

Oakes' victory continues a remarkable story at the Mountain City Fiddlers' Convention. In 2025, she competed in the youth division and went on to finish as first runner-up in the Grand Champion Fiddle-Off. Returning one year later to compete with the adults, she captured the convention's top fiddle honor.

As Grand Champion, Oakes received this year's signature prize — a custom Jason Barie fiddle valued at approximately \$5,000, made possible through support from the East Tennessee Foundation and Johnson County Community Foundation.

2026 Fiddle-Off Results

- Grand Champion Fiddler: Hollace Oakes — Snowville, VA
- 1st Runner-Up: Asa Nelson — Johnson City, TN
- 2nd Runner-Up: Charlie Tolbert — Purlear, NC

RIDERS IN THE SKY RECEIVE G.B. GRAYSON AWARD

Another highlight of Saturday evening came when Kody and Mary Rachel Norris presented legendary Western music group Riders in the Sky with the Mountain City Fiddlers' Convention's G.B. Grayson Award.

The award honors the musical heritage of Johnson County, Tennessee, by recognizing those whose work helps preserve old-time country music for future generations.

Riders in the Sky received the 2026 award "in recognition of your life's work and dedication to old-time country music," stated Kody Norris.

Named in honor of Johnson County native and influential old-time fiddler G.B. Grayson, the award reflects the convention's commitment not only to presenting traditional music, but to honoring the artists who have dedicated their lives to keeping that music alive.

PRESERVING A JOHNSON COUNTY TRADITION

The 2026 Mountain City Fiddlers' Convention was made possible through funding from the Tennessee Arts Commission, East Tennessee Foundation and Johnson County Community Foundation, along with the generous support of local corporate and individual sponsors.

2026 COMPETITION WINNERS

The 2026 Mountain City Fiddlers' Convention welcomed youth and adult musicians from across Tennessee, North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Virginia, South Carolina and Maine, with approximately 40 individual musicians and seven bands competing for more than \$12,000 in cash and prizes.

YOUTH COMPETITION

Youth Guitar

- 1st Place: Zane Lewis — Shady Valley, TN
- 2nd Place: Isaac William Eggers — Zionville, NC

Youth Banjo

- 1st Place: Isaac William Eggers — Zionville, NC
- 2nd Place: Jase Owen Smith — Gaffney, SC

Youth Mandolin

- 1st Place: Isaac William Eggers — Zionville, NC
- 2nd Place: Jeremiah Bates — Hartsville, TN

Youth Fiddle

- 1st Place: Macy Stevens — Granite Falls, NC
- 2nd Place: Hank Russell Norris — Elizabethton, TN
- 3rd Place: Jeremiah Bates — Hartsville, TN

Youth Band

- 1st Place: Hail Mary
- 2nd Place: Stateline Ramblers

FOLK SONG AND ADULT COMPETITION

Folk Song

- 1st Place: Chase A. Willis-Johnson — Todd, NC
- 2nd Place: Ava Burck — Boone, NC
- 3rd Place: Audrey Neal — Johnson City, TN

ADULT COMPETITION

Adult Guitar

- 1st Place: Hudson Mikeal — Crumpler, NC
- 2nd Place: Alex Edwards — Johnson City, TN
- 3rd Place: Grayden Shepherd — West Jefferson, NC

Adult Banjo

- 1st Place: Griffin Dombey — Kingsport, TN
- 2nd Place: Claire Childress — Wise, VA
- 3rd Place: Ashton Moore — Enterprise, AL

Adult Mandolin

- 1st Place: Charlie Tolbert — Purlear, NC
- 2nd Place: Hudson Mikeal — Crumpler, NC
- 3rd Place: Claire Childress — Wise, VA

Adult Fiddle

- 1st Place: Hollace Oakes — Snowville, VA
- 2nd Place: Cody Bauer — Knoxville, TN
- 3rd Place: Asa Nelson — Johnson City, TN

Adult Band

- 1st Place: Buffalo Mountain Boys
- 2nd Place: The Mountaineers
- 3rd Place: Briar Creek Boys

SAVE THE FIRST WEEKEND OF OCTOBER FOR THE 2027 MOUNTAIN CITY FIDDLERS' CONVENTION.

Organizers are already looking ahead to next year. Save the first weekend of October for the 2027 Mountain City Fiddlers' Convention. For additional information, competition results, photos and future updates, visit MountainCityFC.com.

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