

THE NATIONAL COWBOY POETRY GATHERING - THE TRADITION GOES ON



In 1985, a group of folklore lovers started a small 'cowboy' festival to support and celebrate the American West. Twenty five years later, the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering remains one of the biggest events of its kind.

Every year during the last week of January, cowboys and admirers of the American West all gather in Elko, Nevada for one of their most renowned events - **The National Cowboy Poetry Gathering**. Thousands of cowboys and cowgirls come here to celebrate the tradition of the American West, listen to some great music and poems, learn about local history and arts - simply embrace the cowboy legacy.

Many agree that the festival is not a clear-cut tourist attraction. One has to be properly devoted to be able to enjoy it. However, even for a newcomer, one day will be a sufficient and impressive introduction to the American West. **There are poetry readings, music performances, artistic exhibitions, lectures and many other events aimed to promote the cowboy traditions as well as share their knowledge and experience of farming and cattle breeding.**

Initially, when the festival started in 1985, it was indeed a small gathering of enthusiasts. However, its relevance grew and in 2000, the U.S. Senate officially recognized the significance of the festival and named it the "National" Cowboy Poetry Gathering.

The festival is organized by the Western Folklife Centre, founded in 1980. While this event is the grandest of its initiatives, the centre promotes the everyday life and traditions of the American West all year round. It offers workshops, youth education programs, lectures as well as performances or exhibitions to make sure the tradition does not disappear; and judging by the increasing popularity of the festival, their activities are making a big difference.

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