

NEW YORK PRESS ASSOCIATION

BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST



2025 RULES AND INSTRUCTIONS

- This contest is open only to active members in good standing of NYPA. To be considered in good standing, 2025 and all past dues must be paid in full by December 1, 2025. Entrants must have been members prior to, or accepted by, end of November, 2025 to be eligible to participate in this contest.
- The contest year extends from January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2025. Entries must be submitted only from print, online newspapers or magazines published during that period.
- Deadline for RECEIPT of entries is close of business Tuesday, January 13, 2026. Entries not received by 5:00pm Tuesday, January 13, 2026, will NOT be entered into the contest.

ELIGIBILITY —

- NYPA members, daily, weekly, twice weekly, monthly, magazines and digital may submit entries in any/all contest categories.
- **All Digital-Only Newspapers entries MUST Be Submitted in Division 1**

RULES —

- Circulation divisions will be based on the total average distribution figure taken from your U.S. Postal Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation, line 15-F on form 3526, or from your printing bills, for the year ending September 30, 2025.
- Entries from newspapers will be entered in the circulation division matching the total average distribution of that single newspaper **UNLESS** an entry in a specific contest category actually ran common in multiple newspapers. In those instances, such entries must be entered in the circulation division matching the **COMBINED CIRCULATION** of the papers that the entry appeared in.

NO HARD COPIES ALLOWED

PLEASE NOTE —

- There is NO limit on the number of entries newspapers can submit in any category unless specifically indicated. **All entries must be submitted via our online contest system.**
- No cover letters are permitted except where noted.
- Contest fee of **\$15.00** per entry.
- All entries in the “Better Newspaper Contest” become property of the New York Press Association. The Association is not responsible for returning any entries.
- When there are fewer than ten entries in a circulation division, that division will be dropped and those entries will be included in the next highest circulation division.
- First, second, and third-place awards will be made in each category and circulation division.
- Judges’ decisions are final unless it is subsequently discovered that a winning newspaper entered in the wrong category or circulation division.
- Winners will be announced at the New York Press Association Spring Conference, April 23rd and 24th, 2026.
- All entries must be the work of local employees.
- Upload entries at <https://www.newspapercontest.com/newyork>

If you have any questions or problems, please contact Jill Van Dusen at: jill@nynewspapers.com or call 518-313-0554.

DEADLINE: JANUARY 13TH
ENTRIES MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN 5:00 PM

EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Newspaper of the Year Award

The Newspaper of the Year Award will be presented to the newspaper which accumulates the greatest number of total contest points.

The Stuart C. Dorman Award for Editorial Excellence

The Stuart C. Dorman Award will be given for editorial excellence, based on the following point system:

Each 1st place award	20 points
Each 2nd place award	10 points
Each 3rd place award	5 points

The paper with the highest point total for categories 3-11, 14-15, 18-48 and 65 at the end of the contest is the winner.

John J. Evans Award for Advertising Excellence

The John J. Evans Award will be given for best overall newspaper advertising. The winner of this award will be the newspaper which has accumulated the greatest number of points in categories 12, 52-60, 62 and 63.

Each 1st place award	20 points
Each 2nd place award	10 points
Each 3rd place award	5 points

3. Past Presidents' Award for General Excellence

Attention newspaper groups: Newspapers belonging to a chain or group of newspapers must contain substantially different content if multiple newspapers from the same group enter this category. Judges will have the discretion to disqualify entries if the content is largely common to multiple newspapers. Submit three issues (PDF) from different months within the contest year. Judging will be on the following basis:

Three circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 12,000*;
(2) *weeklies over 12,000*; (3) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit one complete issue from three separate months within the contest year.

Judging will be on the following basis:

News (coverage; quality of writing; headline language)	20 points
Use of pictures and artwork, reproduction	10 points
Community Engagement	10 points
Editorial page(s)	10 points
Front page	10 points
Family/Life/Feature pages	10 points
Sports Section	10 points
Advertising design and layout; quality and technique of copywriting; handling of classifieds and/or reader ads	10 points
Graphic design & typography	10 points

4. "Rookie" Reporter of the Year

This award is to honor an entry-level staffer who has been employed by the newspaper for eighteen months or less as of December 31, 2025, and who has had no previous employment in the newspaper industry. Submit five examples of the reporter's work, along with a cover letter specifying when the reporter joined the paper and what his or her responsibilities have been during that time. **Entries must be accompanied by a sworn statement from the publisher certifying the reporter has less than eighteen months of professional experience.** You must also upload a headshot (as a high-resolution jpeg) and a biographical sketch of the nominee (as Word.doc or pdf). **Entries received without a headshot and bio will be disqualified. Submit PDF or digital links.**

5. Writer of the Year

Submit five examples of the work of one writer. This award is to honor a staff member and to recognize outstanding writing during the contest year. Entrant is to demonstrate versatility in writing both news and feature stories. You must also upload a headshot (as a high-resolution jpeg) and a biographical sketch of the nominee (as Word.doc or pdf). **Entries received without a headshot and bio will be disqualified. Submit PDF or digital links.**

6. Sports Writer of the Year

Submit pages of five examples of the work of one writer. This award is to honor a staff member and to recognize outstanding writing. Entrant is to demonstrate versatility in writing both sports news and sports feature stories during the contest year. You must also upload a headshot (as a high-resolution jpeg) and a biographical sketch of the nominee (as Word.doc or pdf). **Entries received without a headshot and bio will be disqualified. Submit PDF or digital links.**

7. Photographer of the Year

This award honors a staff member and recognizes outstanding work in photojournalism during the contest year. Entrant is to submit 12 PHOTOS taken during the past year. This will include both news and feature photos of varied topics. Submit a pdf or digital link for each picture as proof of publication, as well as a jpeg of each photo. You must also upload a headshot (as a high-resolution jpeg) and a biographical sketch of the nominee (as Word.doc or pdf) detailing the photographer's experience with the newspaper.

Entries received without a headshot and bio will be disqualified. Submit PDF or digital links.

8. Best Front Page

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit pdf of page from three editions, all from separate months within the contest year. Entries will be judged on the following basis:

Makeup design, typography, general appearance	40 points
Story presentation and writing	30 points
Headline quality and relation to story	15 points
Effective use of photography	15 points
Tab/Broadsheet	

9. Best Editorial Page

Submit pdf of complete editorial page(s) from three issues, all from separate months within the contest year. Entries will be judged on the following basis:

Editorial writing (variety, effectiveness, writing quality)	35 points
Other writing (letters to the editor, columns, commentary, cartoons)	35 points
Makeup design, original art, typography, general appearance	20 points
Headlines	10 points

10. Photographic Excellence

Attention newspaper groups: Newspapers belonging to a chain or group of newspapers must contain substantially different content if multiple newspapers from the same group enter this category. Judges will have the discretion to disqualify entries if the content is largely common to multiple newspapers. Submit two complete editions (PDF) from two separate months within the contest year.

Judging will be on the following basis:

Photos (how they are displayed, cropped, etc.)	30 points
Originality and quality of photos	30 points
Local interest	20 points
Repro quality	10 points
Captions	10 points

11. Richard L. Stein Award for Overall Design Excellence

Attention newspaper groups: Newspapers belonging to a chain or group of newspapers must contain substantially different content if multiple newspapers from the same group enter this category. Judges will have the discretion to disqualify entries if the content is largely common to multiple newspapers. Submit two complete editions (PDF) from two separate months within the contest year.

Limited to one entry per newspaper. Judging will be on the following basis:

Front page	15 points
Editorial pages	15 points
Typical inside page layout	15 points
Feature, lifestyle, or sports page(s)	15 points
Photography, graphics	15 points
Advertising design	15 points
Headline and text typography, including standing heads	10 points

12. Advertising Excellence

Three circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 12,000*;
(2) *weeklies over 12,000*; (3) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit complete editions (PDF) from two separate months within the contest year. Copy generated by an agency must be marked by writing the word "AGENCY" in bold red letters. Judging will be on the following basis:

Layout and format of ad pages	30 points
Originality and quality of ad design	30 points
Quality and technique of copywriting	30 points
Classified and/or reader ads	10 points

13. Sharon R. Fulmer Award for Community Leadership

This prestigious award will be presented in recognition of local leadership initiatives which were launched, promoted and encouraged by the newspaper. Leadership actions may have caused something positive to happen or may have prevented something negative from happening. General reports on local government and organizations are not eligible. Any editorials, exhibits, meetings sponsored by the newspaper, house ads, or flyers relating to the effort may be submitted. Cover letter allowed. The project must have either started or ended within the contest period.

14. Michelle K. Rea Award for Best Freedom of Information Award

The Freedom of Information Award will be given to a newspaper that did the most during the previous year to uphold the principles of the First Amendment and to protect the public's right to know. It recognizes an effective job of furthering the cause of Freedom of Information. The award might be for news coverage, an editorial campaign, court actions or community education program designed to open meetings, to open records, etc. A letter may be uploaded to provide any necessary details. Upload PDF(s) of your best editorial or news coverage exemplifying your Freedom of Information coverage from up to five related issues within the contest period. For instance, if you took on a school board records issue, you may submit up to five articles or editorials on that subject. If you also took on a city council issue, that would be a separate entry.

15. Best Overall Digital News Platform

Three circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 12,000*;
(2) *weeklies over 12,000*; (3) *dailies over 12,000*

Judged on the complete website or digital platform including blogs, multi-media, audience engagement, advertising, design, ease of navigation and quality of content. Provide newspaper Web address (url link) and any login and password if required.

16. Overall Magazine Excellence

This is the top award given for magazines. Winners in the Magazine of the Year Award category can be said to be consistently outstanding issue to issue. Magazines will be judged on quality of photography, editorial content, page layout and design, and advertising. Judges will consider design, depth and breadth of local content, photography, advertising. You may submit a letter of explanation describing distribution, staffing, profitability, publication cycle. Submit two complete editions (PDF) from two separate months within the contest year.

17. Magazine Design Excellence

Recognizes outstanding overall design of a magazine. Entries will be judged on visual impact, layout, typography, use of photography and illustration, and overall cohesiveness of design. Consideration will be given to how the design supports the magazine's editorial mission, strengthens its identity, and enhances readability and reader engagement. Creativity, consistency, and effective use of color and imagery will also be evaluated. Submit two complete editions (PDF) from two separate months within the contest year.

EDITORIAL AWARDS

18. Investigative / In-depth Reporting

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit a single story or series of stories on the same subject, such as environmental, health, crime or social issues, which could combine elements of news and/or feature writing and which indicate a considerable degree of research and/or investigation. The series must have either started or ended within the contest period. Excellence and depth of research, quality of presentation, and the overall impact of the topic of the story or series will be taken into account by the judges. You may submit a letter of explanation. Submit PDF or digital links. (Maximum limit of up to 10 entries per paper).

19. Local Government Story

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit a single story. Reporting on governmental affairs must be by members of the newspaper's own staff. Emphasis is on quality coverage of the town or village board or similar local government agencies. Entries will be judged on thoroughness of reporting and enterprise of reporter in uncovering facts not included in government handouts. Submit PDF or digital links.

20. Education Story

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit a single story. Emphasis is on quality coverage of local education, school news, educational matters and school board business. Entries will be judged on thoroughness of reporting and enterprise of reporter in uncovering facts not included in school board and school handouts. Submit PDF or digital links.

21. Business, Financial & Economic News Story

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit a single story. Emphasis is on quality coverage of local business and economic news. Entries will be judged on thoroughness of reporting and the newspaper's enterprise in covering the subject. Submit PDF or digital links.

22. Arts Story

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit a single story. Emphasis is on quality coverage of local arts. Judges will consider depth and breadth of coverage, packaging, including typography and design, and thoroughness of reporting. Submit PDF or digital links.

23. Environment Story

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit a single story. Emphasis is on quality of coverage. Entries will be judged on the thoroughness of reporting and the newspaper's enterprise in coverage. Submit PDF or digital links.

24. Health, Health Care & Science Story

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit a single story. Emphasis is on quality coverage of hospital, health department and health agency news. News of a scientific nature may be included. Entries will be judged on thoroughness of reporting and the newspaper's enterprise in covering this subject. Submit PDF or digital links.

25. Crime / Police / Courts Story

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit a single story. Emphasis is on quality of local coverage of crime, police and courts. Entries will be judged on thoroughness of reporting and quality of writing. PDF or digital links.

26. Elections / Politics Story

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit a single story. Emphasis is on quality of local coverage of elections and politics. Entries will be judged on depth of coverage, balance in reporting and quality of writing. Submit PDF or digital links.

27. Historical Story

Submit a single story. Recognizes excellence in reporting or storytelling that highlights significant events, people, or places from the past. Entries will be judged on accuracy, depth of research, writing quality, and the ability to engage readers while connecting history to the community's present. Submit PDF or digital link.

28. Religion Story

Submit one story that explores issues, events, or perspectives related to faith and religion. Entries will be judged on depth of reporting, clarity of writing, and originality of approach. Emphasis is on thoughtful, thorough coverage that enhances readers' understanding of religious topics. Submit as a PDF or digital link.

29. Best Diversity Story

Submit one story that explore diversity, equity, and inclusion. Entries will be judged on accuracy, clarity, style, thoroughness, originality, and insight into historical, cultural, or economic factors shaping community relationships. Submit as a PDF or digital link.

30. Technology Story

Submit a single story. Recognizes excellence in reporting on technology and its impact. Entries may include stories on new products, trends, breakthroughs, cybersecurity, or digital culture, judged on clarity, depth, and reader engagement. Judges will consider clarity, depth of research, originality, and the ability to make complex topics accessible and engaging for readers. Submit PDF or digital link.

31. Feature Story — News

Seven circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 2,000*;
(2) *weeklies/dailies 2,000-4,000*; (3) *weeklies/dailies 4,001-5,000*;
(4) *weeklies/dailies 5,001-7,000*; (5) *weeklies/dailies 7,001-12,000*;
(6) *weeklies over 12,000*; (7) *dailies over 12,000*

Recognizes storytelling that goes beyond breaking news to explore people, events, or issues in a compelling way. Entries will be judged on writing quality, originality, creativity, structure, and the ability to engage and inform readers through narrative, detail, and insight. Submit PDF or digital links.

32. Feature Story – Lifestyle, Human Interest, or Personality Profile

Seven circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 2,000*;
(2) *weeklies/dailies 2,000-4,000*; (3) *weeklies/dailies 4,001-5,000*;
(4) *weeklies/dailies 5,001-7,000*; (5) *weeklies/dailies 7,001-12,000*;
(6) *weeklies over 12,000*; (7) *dailies over 12,000*

Honors exceptional storytelling that captures the essence of people, places, or everyday life. Entries may focus on lifestyle trends, personal experiences, community members, or notable individuals. Entries will be judged on writing quality, originality, creativity and the ability to engage and inform readers. Strong entries will connect readers emotionally while revealing something meaningful about the subject. Submit PDF or digital links.

33. Spot News Coverage

Four circulation divisions — (1) *weeklies/dailies under 6,000*; (2) *weeklies over 6,000*;
(3) *dailies 6,000-12,000*; (4) *dailies over 12,000*

Submit pdf or digital link, showing coverage of a single news event (such as a fire, flood, windstorm, etc.), or any event where the paper has provided extensive coverage. Consideration will be given to deadline pressure and other spot news problems. You may submit a letter of explanation. (Maximum limit of up to 10 entries per paper)

34. News Story

Five circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 3,000; (2) weeklies/dailies 3,000-5,000; (3) weeklies/dailies 5,001-10,000; (4) weeklies over 10,000; (5) dailies over 10,000

Submit a single news story clearly marked. Consideration will be given for timeliness, difficulty in obtaining story, use of sources (including documents), completeness of coverage, sentence and paragraph structure, and impact of lead. You may submit a letter of explanation. Submit PDF or digital links. (Maximum limit of up to 10 entries per paper). **(Maximum limit of up to 10 entries per paper)**

35. Online Breaking News

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Overall work on a breaking story within 24 hours after the story breaks.

Judges will consider the speed with which postings were made, including overall coverage, updates, and supplementary information, such as photographs, video, audio, PDFs or any other form of multimedia. Submit permanent links to the elements, and one screenshot saved as PDF or JPEG. Include a short statement (maximum of 200 words) describing the specific circumstances surrounding the entry. Date of content must be verified by time stamps or a signed statement from the editor.

36. Best News or Feature Series

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Submit a series of feature stories or news stories on the same subject, such as people, places, business, recreation, fashion, sports, hobbies, etc. The series must have started and/or ended within the contest period. The emphasis is on writing, breadth of coverage, presentation, and supporting art or photos. Submit PDF or digital links. **(Maximum limit of up to 10 entries per paper)**

37. Headline Writing

Submit a maximum of five articles from within the contest year. Emphasis is on quality of headline writing throughout the newspaper. Entries will be judged on how accurately, succinctly and creatively content of stories are conveyed to readers. Focus is on overall headlines, not on one specific headline. Submit PDF or digital links.

38. Sports Feature

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Submit a single story of any feature of local sports subject, item, person or group. Submit PDF or digital links.

39. Sports Coverage

Three circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 12,000; (2) weeklies over 12,000; (3) dailies over 12,000

Submit one set of sports pages or section from each of two months of the contest year. Emphasis is on quality and breadth coverage of local sports. Focus is on overall coverage, not on one specific article. Entries will be judged on thoroughness of reporting, enterprise, and breadth of coverage. Submit PDF or digital links.

40. Best News Obituaries

Three circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 12,000; (2) weeklies over 12,000; (3) dailies over 12,000

Recognizes excellence in writing obituaries that inform, honor, and engage readers. Entries will be judged on accuracy, clarity, tone, storytelling, and the ability to convey the life, contributions, and character of the subject in a compelling and respectful manner. Submit PDF or digital links.

41. Editorials

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Submit one editorial from three separate months within the contest year. Editorials may be of any length but must be written by a regular staff member and should explicitly indicate the newspaper's stance or leadership role on local issues. Entries will be judged on subject matter, timeliness, writing ability and effectiveness. You may submit a letter of explanation. Submit PDF or digital links.

42. Best Column

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

A locally-written, issues oriented column. It need not appear on a regular basis. Judging will be based on issue treatment, local appeal, originality and writing quality. Each entry will consist of three columns by the same writer. Submit PDF or digital links.



PHOTOGRAPHY AWARDS

43. Feature Photo(s)

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Submit pdf or link showing an unusual event, item or person, or any unusual photo (or photos) of a commonplace event, item or person (as distinguished from a spot news photo). Entries should include the name of the photographer and any technical or other information deemed helpful along with a jpeg of the photo. You may not submit the same entry in Art Photo. Entry can include more than one photo of the same event. You may submit a letter of explanation.

44. Sports Action Photo(s)

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Submit pdf or link of any single subject photograph(s) of an actual sports event or competition in progress, and in which the action of the event is the prime interest. Entries should include the name of the photographer and any technical or other information deemed helpful along with a jpeg of the photo. Entry can include more than one photo of the same event.

45. Sports Feature Photo(s)

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Submit pdf or link of any single subject photograph(s) of a sports event, individual competitor or group of competitors, or unusual occurrence in which action is not necessarily the prime interest. Entries should include the name of the photographer and any technical or other information deemed helpful along with a jpeg of the photo. Entry can include more than one photo of same event.

46. Art Photo

Three circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 12,000; (2) weeklies over 12,000; (3) dailies over 12,000

Submit pdf or link of a local scene or landscape. Entries will be judged on photographic composition and must be of local interest. You may not submit the same entry in category 40 (Feature Photo). Entries should include the name of the photographer and any technical or other information deemed helpful along with a jpeg of the photo.

47. Picture Story

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Submit pdf or link of any series of feature pictures that tell a story of other than a breaking news event. Other than an introduction, the only copy should be captions. Include the name of the photographer(s) and any technical or other information deemed helpful along with a jpeg of the photo.

48. Spot News Photo(s)

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Submit pdf or links of actual news event. Judging factors will be timeliness, technique and quality. Entries should include the name of the photographer and any technical or other information deemed helpful along with a jpeg of the photo. Entry can include more than one photo of same event.

DESIGN / SPECIAL SECTION AWARDS

49. Graphic Illustration / Editorial Cartoon

Three circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 12,000; (2) weeklies over 12,000; (3) dailies over 12,000

Submit a pdf or link to an illustration or Editorial Cartoon. Entries may be drawn freehand or be computer-produced. Charts, graphs, maps, line-drawings, digitally manipulated photographs and paintings are all eligible. The entry must be clearly marked.

50. Best Special Section Cover

Three circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 12,000; (2) weeklies over 12,000; (3) dailies over 12,000

To be judged on creativity, relation to section, color application and overall eye appeal, produced solely by the newspaper. You may not submit the same entry in category 46 (Graphic Illustration). **If an entry runs common in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the COMBINED CIRCULATION of those newspapers.**

51. Best Magazine Cover

Three circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 12,000; (2) weeklies over 12,000; (3) dailies over 12,000

Recognizes excellence in magazine cover design. Entries will be judged on visual impact, creativity, composition, typography, and effective use of photography or illustration. Consideration will be given to how well the cover captures attention, reflects the magazine's identity, and conveys the theme or feature story of the issue. Submit three front covers - pdf or digital link.

52. Special Sections / Niche Publications - Newsprint

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Any section on a special subject or theme printed on newsprint (including the cover) qualifies for this category. Judges will take into account quality of editorial content and graphic design. Special consideration will be given to locally prepared editorial and ad content, as well as particular interest or importance to the community. **If an entry runs common in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the COMBINED CIRCULATION of those newspapers.** You may submit a letter of explanation. Submit PDF or digital link.

53. Special Sections / Niche Publications - Glossy

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Any section on a special subject or theme printed on glossy stock qualifies for this category. Judges will take into account quality of editorial content and graphic design. Special consideration will be given to locally prepared editorial and ad content, as well as particular interest or importance to the community. **If an entry runs common in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the COMBINED CIRCULATION of those newspapers.** You may submit a letter of explanation. Submit PDF or digital link.

54. Best Real Estate / Home Section

Three circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 12,000; (2) weeklies over 12,000; (3) dailies over 12,000

Any section, regularly published or special edition, devoted to real estate, homes, building, furnishing, decorating, garden, etc. Judges will consider quality of editorial content, graphic design, advertising layout and design, use of color, and overall reader appeal. Special consideration will be given to locally prepared editorial content. You may not submit the same entry in the Special Section categories. **If an entry runs common in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the HIGHEST CIRCULATION of those newspapers.** Submit PDF or digital link.

ADVERTISING AWARDS

55. Best Special Section — Advertising

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Multi-advertiser section revolving around a single theme, produced solely by the newspaper. Judged on uniqueness of idea, volume of representation and overall layout. You may not submit the same entry in categories 52, 53, 54 and 60. **If an entry runs common in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the COMBINED CIRCULATION of those newspapers.** Submit PDF or digital link.

56. Best Advertising Campaign

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

A series of ads, three or more different ones, conceptualized and executed solely by the newspaper for a single advertiser or a single group of advertisers. All ads must be created and produced by the newspaper. Emphasis will be on the cohesiveness of the campaign. Submit PDF or digital link.

57. Best Large Space Ad

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Judges will consider the creativity of layout and copy, along with originality and impact. Ad must be conceptualized and executed solely by the newspaper. Ads must be a half-page or larger. All ads must be generated by the newspaper. **If an entry runs common in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the HIGHEST CIRCULATION of those newspapers.** Submit PDF or digital link.

58. Best Small Space Ad

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Same as Category 57 (Best Large Space Ad), except the ads must be less than half-page. All ads must be generated by the newspaper. **If an entry runs common in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the HIGHEST CIRCULATION of those newspapers.** Submit PDF or digital link.

59. Best Online Newspaper Ad

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Honors a newspaper-organized event that successfully engages the community and enhances the publication's brand. Entries should demonstrate creativity, strong audience engagement, and effective promotion through print, digital, or social media platforms. Winning entries will show how the event strengthened the newspaper's connection to its readers and community. Submit PDF or digital link.

60. Best Multi-Advertiser Pages

Multi-advertiser page or pages (not a special section - no cover, and minimal editorial) revolving around a single theme: shopping center, seasonal merchandise, specialty stores, holiday, etc. Judged on uniqueness of idea, volume of representation, and overall layout. **If an entry runs common in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the HIGHEST CIRCULATION of those newspapers.** Submit PDF or digital link.

61. Best Sales Promotional Materials

Recognizes the most effective and creative marketing materials designed to promote a newspaper's products, services, or advertising opportunities. Entries may include brochures, flyers, digital campaigns, direct mail, or multimedia presentations. Winning materials should demonstrate clear messaging, strong visual appeal, and measurable results in attracting or retaining customers. Submit PDF or digital link.

62. Best House Ad / Ad Campaign

Ad produced by staff to promote an aspect of the newspaper. This may be for circulation, advertising/ marketing, editorial positioning or general image enhancement. **If an entry runs common in multiple newspapers, it must be submitted in a circulation category matching the HIGHEST CIRCULATION of those newspapers.**

63. Innovative Ad Project

An innovative project or idea initiated by the a paper's advertising department that resulted in additional revenue for the newspaper. Entries should include a short description of the project or idea, information on actual or projected revenue generated, and the product itself, which may have appeared online, in print, or both. Submit PDF or digital link.

64. Best Event

Three circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 12,000; (2) weeklies over 12,000; (3) dailies over 12,000

Honors a newspaper-organized event that successfully engages the community and enhances the publication's brand. Entries should demonstrate creativity, strong audience engagement, and effective promotion through print, digital, or social media platforms. Winning entries will show how the event strengthened the newspaper's connection to its readers and community. Submit PDF or digital link.

DIGITAL AWARDS

65. Best News Video

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Recognizes excellence in visual storytelling focused on news coverage. Entries should combine strong reporting, video editing, and production values to deliver timely and informative stories in an engaging way. **Maximum limit of up to 5 entries per paper.**

66. Best Feature Video

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Celebrates video storytelling that entertains, inspires, or informs through human interest or lifestyle subjects. Entries should show creativity, narrative flow, and strong visuals that enhance the viewer's experience. **Maximum limit of up to 5 entries per paper.**

67. Best Podcast

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

This category recognizes journalistic storytelling told through a podcast on newspaper websites. Judges will consider quality of subject matter along with production quality. Entries must be an individual episode. **Maximum limit of up to 5 entries per paper.**

68. Best Newsletter

Four circulation divisions — (1) weeklies/dailies under 6,000; (2) weeklies over 6,000; (3) dailies 6,000-12,000; (4) dailies over 12,000

Recognizing newsletters that grow, support, and enhance news products. Judges will be asked to consider if the product increases audience engagement while sharing value-added content. Submit three (3) editions of your newsletter with a letter describing your strategy, targeted audience, and reader engagement details. Submit PDF or digital link.

FINAL AWARD