WISCONSIN NEWSMEDIA ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION

2026 Better NewsMedia Contest

Contest Opens:
Monday, Sept. 14, 2026

Contest Closes:
Friday, Oct. 30, 2026 at 10:59 p.m.

Note:

- **Deadlines are final — no extensions.**
- **$12 entry fee**
- **Payments by credit card only via PayPal (link on contest site).**

- All submissions must have been published in print or online between **Sept. 1, 2025 and Aug. 31, 2026**.
- Incomplete entries (those missing a required element), or entries submitted that were published outside the contest dates will be disqualified.
- All submissions must be made online through the Better Newspaper Contest portal: **betternewspapercontest.com**

Contest Divisions (by Circulation)

Member publications are grouped by their print and e-edition circulation based on the issue closest to the **October 2025 Statement of Ownership.**

If your publication is not required to publish a statement of ownership, contact the WNA to determine your division.

If your publication changed classes during the year, you'll be judged in the division in which it published most of the year.

NEW **Online only publications will be placed in Division A or B based on staff size and the scope of their audience (regional or statewide reach).**

Daily*

Division A: 10,000 or more

Division B: 9,999 or less

**Dailies are defined by the WNA as newspapers that publish three (3) or more times per week.*

Weekly

Division C: 4,500 or more

Division D: 2,250 - 4,499

Division E: 2,249 or less

NEW **Division S: Shoppers**

It is the news outlet's responsibility to ensure participation in the appropriate division. P**lease contact Laura Niemi at laura@mna.org** with any questions.

All submissions must be made online at **betternewspapercontest.com** by 10:59 p.m. on Friday, October 30.

Entry Submissions

All Entries must be submitted in one of the following formats:

PDFs

- Include jump pages for printed work.
- Combine multi-page samples into **one** PDF. For example:
  - If a story spans two printed pages ("A1" and a jump page), submit all related pages as one pdf.
  - For web entries that submit a pdf; screen captures should be compiled and submitted as one pdf.
- Ensure the publication date appears on each page or screenshot.
- Include the headline of the story on your entry so the judges can identify it on the page.

URLs:

- Submit direct link(s) to the original story or e-edition.
- If your website has a paywall or metered access, **you must provide login credentials and a password in each entry's comment section.** If judges can't access the entry, it will be disqualified.

Entries Appearing in Multiple Publications

- If an identical entry appeared in multiple sister publications, it must be entered in the division of the publication with the largest circulation. **Exception:** If the entry was reported and produced entirely by the staff of a single publication, it must be entered under that specific newspaper's division—regardless of where else it was published.

Merged Categories

- Categories with **10 or fewer entries** will be merged across daily and weekly divisions.
- If a category receives **3 or fewer entries**, it will be judged with the next-highest circulation division.

Daily (A/B) and **Weekly (C/D/E)** divisions **will not** be combined and judged together unless the category has been merged across all divisions.

Eligibility

Open to all WNA members in good standing. Entries must be created by:

- Employees of the member publication
- Direct agents of the publication (a centralized production facility utilized by the news outlet that is not located on your physical premises)
- Freelancers contracted specifically by the publication

Ads created by **independent ad agencies** are **not eligible**.

AI-generated or AI-modified/enhanced content is not eligible for submission. Content submitted for judging must be the work of the publication's employees and freelancers unless noted so their genius, expertise, judgment, skill, creativity and overall talent may be judged. Computer assistance in gathering data, reviewing writing, editing photos and manipulating design components is standard and acceptable so long as the final judgments are by humans. WNA will rely on the integrity of those preparing entries to adhere to this rule.

Entry Limits

Overall Newspaper Awards (1-11) - 1 Entry Per Newspaper
Reporting/Writing (12-24) - 2 Entries Per Reporter/Team
Reporting/Writing (25-32) - 1 Entry Per Reporter/Team
Photography/Multi Media (33-45) - 2 Entries Per Reporter/Team
Advertising (46-57) - 3 Entries per publication
Advertising - Shoppers (58-63): Unlimited

Advertising points earned by shoppers are processed independently and do not contribute to overall BNC award standings.

Duplicate Entries

- **Do not** submit identical entries in more than one category.
- Components of a larger piece may be entered separately

  ***Example:** A photo from a Photo Essay can also be submitted in the Feature Photo category.*
- Exceptions: **A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism** is separate from the BNC contest. Members can enter identical entries in both Investigative Journalism categories (#19 & #32). **Bill Payne Award** - Entries in this category may be submitted in one additional advertising category.

Multiple Bylines & Entry Caps

Entry caps apply to each **individual named**, whether entries are solo or team submissions.

***Example:** If April O'Neil submits a solo story in Environmental Reporting (limit: 2 entries per person) and also appears on a team entry in that category, she has reached her maximum.*

All submissions must be made online at **betternewspapercontest.com** by 10:59 p.m. on Friday, October 30.

Missing Clips?

WNA can provide access to your digital archive. Contact **Denise Guttery** at denise.guttery@wnanews.com or call 608-283-7630.

Paywalls & Judge Access

For URLs behind paywalls or metered sites, include login credentials in the entry comments for each submission. Judges must be able to view the content without restrictions.

Entry Fee & Payment

- $12 per entry
- Payments by credit card only via PayPal (link on contest site).

File Sizes

- Maximum: 20 MB
- Judges' time is valuable—optimize PDFs for fast loading.

Awards

BEST OF DIVISION

The newspaper that accumulates the most overall points **from editorial and advertising awards** will be named Best of Division and presented a crystal trophy at the awards banquet on Friday, March 12, 2027.

Points are awarded for editorial and advertising honors.

1st Place: 8 points

2nd Place: 4 points

3rd Place: 2 points

HM: 0 points *(No points for HM are given. In the event of a tie, the newspaper with more Honorable Mentions will be awarded Best of Division.)*

★ General Excellence points are doubled.

NEWSPAPERS OF THE YEAR

The daily and weekly publications with the most points will be named Newspapers of the Year.

New this year:

First-place winners will be called forward at the awards banquet to accept their certificates. To receive a first-place plaque, **winners will be able to request one complimentary plaque** (per category, per division), **which will be produced and delivered after the convention.** Duplicate plaques can be ordered for a fee at this time as well.

As in previous years, winners receiving second place, third place or honorable mention will be awarded certificates.

All submissions must be made online at **betternewspapercontest.com** by 10:59 p.m. on Friday, October 30.

Contest Categories

OVERALL NEWSPAPER AWARDS

1. General Excellence
2. Best Front Page
3. Best Opinion Section
4. Best Sports Section
5. Best Feature/Lifestyle Section Judged across all divisions
6. Best Special Section - Editorial
7. Best Headlines
8. Editorial Award
9. Community Engagement Award One daily & One weekly winner
10. Open Records & Public Governance Award
11. All-Around Newspaper Photography Judged across all weeklies

REPORTING | WRITING

12. General News Story
13. Feature Story (Non-profile)
14. Feature Story (Profile)
15. Localized State or National Story
16. Sports News Story
17. Sports Feature Story
18. Breaking News Reporting
19. Investigative Reporting
20. Enterprise/Interpretive Reporting
21. Environmental Reporting
22. Ongoing/Extended Coverage
23. Health Coverage
24. Arts & Culture Coverage
25. Reporting on Local Government
26. Reporting on Local Education
27. Business Coverage
28. Local Column
29. Local Sports Column
30. Local Outdoor Column Judged across all divisions
31. Rookie Reporter of the Year
32. A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism **Cash Prizes!!**

PHOTOGRAPHY | MULTIMEDIA

33. General News Photo
34. Spot News Photo
35. Sports Action Photo
36. Sports Feature Photo
37. Feature Photo
38. Artistic Photo
39. Photo Essay
40. Overall Page Design Weekly only
41. Visual Storytelling
42. Outstanding Podcast or Audio Storytelling
43. Best Video
44. Best Website **NEW!**
45. Best Email Newsletter **NEW!**

ADVERTISING

46. Bill Payne Excellence in Advertising Award Judged across all weeklies
47. Best Restaurant Ad
48. Best Large Ad
49. Best Small Ad
50. Best Ad Idea (Series)
51. Best Use of Color
52. Best Multiple Advertiser Layout
53. Best Use of Local Photography Judged across all weeklies
54. Best Use of Humor Judged across all divisions
55. Best Newspaper Promotion
56. Best Special Section (Advertising)
57. Best Niche Product

ADVERTISING - SHOPPERS **NEW!**

58. General Excellence A – Papers/Shoppers with less than 25% news content
59. General Excellence B – Papers/Shoppers with 25% or more news content
60. Best Front-Page Design
61. Best Large Ad (larger than ½ page)
62. Best Small Ad (½ page or less)
63. Best Crammed Ad ("Do More with Less")

Note: Advertising points earned by shoppers are processed independently and do not contribute to overall BNC award standings. Awards will be presented at the awards banquet on March 12, 2027.

All Entries must be submitted in one of the following formats:

PDFs

- Include jump pages for printed work.
- Combine multi-page samples into a single PDF. For example:
  - If a story spans two printed pages ("A1" and a jump page), submit all related pages as one file.
  - **For web entries that submit a pdf**; screen captures should be combined and submitted as one pdf.
- Ensure the publication date appears on each page or screenshot.
- Include the headline of the story so the judges can identify it on the page.

URLs:

- Submit a direct link(s) to the original story or e-edition.
- If your website has a paywall or metered access, **you must provide login credentials and a password in EACH entry's comment section.** If judges can't access the entry, it will be disqualified.
- Incomplete entries (those missing a required element), or entries submitted that were published outside the contest dates will be disqualified.

Photography submissions must include a pdf showing the publication date, a .jpg file is encouraged but not required.

OVERALL AWARDS

One (1) entry per publication

1. General Excellence

This is the top award in the WNA Foundation Better Newspaper Contest. ***Judges will evaluate both the print edition and website.***

What to Submit:

- Three (3) complete newspaper issues (September 2025, February 2026, and one of your choice)
- Your main website URL

Scoring (100 points total):

Writing quality: 25
Use of photos/art: 10
Editorial coverage: 10
Sports coverage: 10
Advertising design and copy writing: 10
Production quality: 5
Website navigation: 5
Digital storytelling: 5
Front page design (includes web landing page): 5
Best Arts & Culture content: 5
Public notices: 5
Headlines: 5

2. Best Front Page

Recognizes excellence in design and content for either website landing pages or newspaper front pages. Judges will consider layout and design, effective headlines, reader appeal, photography, writing clarity, and overall news coverage in choosing the winner.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) front covers or three (3) screen captures of website landing pages of your choice

3. Best Opinion Section

Recognizes outstanding overall opinion content. Judges will consider the use of feature material, quality of writing and design. Preference given to locally written content.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) full opinion sections

4. Best Sports Section

Highlights excellence in sports journalism, including writing, photography, layout, and coverage depth.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) full sports sections (September 2025, February 2026, and one of your choice)

5. Best Feature/Lifestyle Section Judged across all divisions

This award recognizes overall excellence in lifestyle or feature content. Criteria include concept, extent of coverage, writing quality, photography and design. Entries may include lifestyle, feature, entertainment, religion, or other special interest.

OVERALL AWARDS (continued)

One (1) entry per publication

What to Submit:

- Three (3) complete feature or lifestyle sections

6. Best Special Section - Editorial

This award recognizes editorial excellence in special sections covering a single theme. Criteria include concept, appearance, writing quality, extent of coverage, and timeliness.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) stories within a theme published/posted on the same date

7. Best Headlines

Recognizes creativity and effectiveness in headline writing.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) headlines and the full articles they accompany

8. Editorial Award

This award recognizes excellence in editorial writing by a publication. Criteria include clarity of thought, effective writing, and significance of subject.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) staff-written editorials

9. Community Engagement Award One daily & One weekly winner

Recognizes efforts that engage readers, build trust, foster civic participation and strengthen community connections. Examples include newsletters, podcasts, social media, crowdsourcing, community events or stories resulting from reader engagement.

What to Submit:

- Up to five (5) examples that have cultivated community engagement.
- Include context and impact in the "Comments" section

10. Open Records and Public Governance Award

Recognizes outstanding local journalism that advances open, responsive and transparent government and protects the public's right to know. Entries may include news coverage, editorial campaigns, public records or open meetings efforts, or programs that educate the community about access to government information. Entries will be judged on their impact on government transparency, accountability, and public access to information.

What to Submit:

- Up to ten (10) examples of related coverage (news stories, editorials or opinion columns, campaigns)
- Include explanatory details in the "Comments" section

11. All-Around Newspaper Photography Judged across all weekly

Awards strong photojournalism across multiple issues.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) full newspaper issues featuring your best photography

REPORTING | WRITING

Two (2) entries per individual or team per publication

12. General News Story

Honors strong reporting on a scheduled or planned event such as a trial, public meeting, dedication, or political visit. Judging will focus on topic importance, writing quality, completeness, strong emphasis on sentence structure, and lead.

What to Submit:

- One (1) main article (sidebars may be included)

13. Feature Story (Non-profile)

Recognizes compelling feature writing that is not focused on a person or group. Judges will consider creativity, writing style, and human interest.

What to Submit:

- One (1) feature story (sidebars may be included)

14. Feature Story (Profile)

Highlights excellent profile writing about a person or group relevant to the community. Judged on originality, writing style, and reader interest.

What to Submit:

- One (1) profile story (sidebars may be included)

15. Localized State or National Story

Awards coverage that effectively connects a state or national news story to the local community. Judged on relevance, clarity, and writing quality.

What to Submit:

- Up to three (3) related articles on the same topic (sidebars may be included)

16. Sports News Story

Recognizes strong coverage of a single sports event or sports-related news topic (not including features). Judges will consider writing style, timeliness, and depth of reporting.

REPORTING | WRITING (cont.)

Two (2) entries per individual or team per publication

What to Submit:

- Up to three (3) related news articles on a single sports topic (sidebars may be included)

17. Sports Feature Story

Honors excellent storytelling in sports-related features. Judging focuses on originality, writing quality, and unique treatment of the subject.

What to Submit:

- Up to three (3) related sports feature articles (sidebars may be included)

18. Breaking News Reporting

Recognizes outstanding coverage of an unscheduled, developing news event. Judging focuses on urgency, depth, clarity, and news value.

Stories stemming from a breaking news event that include issue-related follow-up stories should be entered into Enterprise Reporting or Ongoing/ Extended Coverage.

What to Submit:

- Up to ten (10) related stories about a single event

19. Investigative Reporting

Recognizes deep, watchdog-style reporting on a single topic, revealing information not previously public. Judges will consider depth of research, persistence, public records use, obstacles overcome, and impact on public policy.

Differs from Enterprise/Interpretive Reporting because it requires higher standards of research and investigation.

What to Submit:

- Up to ten (10) related investigative articles on a single topic (sidebars may be included)

20. Enterprise/Interpretive Reporting

Awards original, in-depth coverage of an issue or trend developed through strong reporting and use of data and analysis.

Coverage of events like trials and government meetings should be entered in General News Story or Extended/Ongoing Coverage.

What to Submit:

- Up to ten (10) articles and related data content on a single topic (sidebars may be included)

21. Environmental Reporting

Recognizes exceptional journalism on environmental issues. Judges consider clarity, local relevance, technical accuracy, and overall coverage.

What to Submit:

- Up to ten (10) related articles on a single environmental topic (sidebars may be included)
- Entrants are encouraged to include a note to judges in the "Comments" section explaining the impact of the reporting.

22. Ongoing/Extended Coverage

Honors strong continuing coverage of a planned or developing topic over time. Judges will focus on topic importance, writing quality, and thoroughness.

What to Submit:

- Up to ten (10) related articles on the same subject (sidebars may be included)

23. Health Coverage

Awards excellence in reporting on health-related issues or events. Judges will consider depth of reporting, clarity, and public impact.

What to Submit:

- Up to three (3) related health stories (sidebars may be included)
- Entrants are encouraged to add a comment for the judges on the coverage's impact

24. Arts & Culture Coverage

Honors excellent writing in arts and culture, entertainment, or similar topics. Judged on originality, writing style, and reader interest.

What to Submit:

- Up to three (3) related arts stories (sidebars may be included)

REPORTING | WRITING

One (1) entry per individual or team per publication

25. Reporting on Local Government

Recognizes strong coverage of local government topics or issues. Judged on reporting depth, clarity, and relevance.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) government-focused articles by a single reporter or reporting team (sidebars may be included)

26. Reporting on Local Education

Honors excellent reporting on local education topics. Stories and sidebars will be judged on clarity, news value, explanatory value, and storytelling.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) education-focused articles by a single reporter or reporting team (sidebars may be included)

27. Business Coverage

Recognizes strong local business and economic reporting. Entries should include analysis, clarity, and informative reporting.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) business-focused articles by a single reporter or reporting team (sidebars may be included)

28. Local Column

Awards outstanding local column writing in any format — such as news, feature, or humor. Judged on reader appeal and clarity of writing.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) columns by a single columnist

29. Local Sports Column

Recognizes excellence in sports commentary or storytelling by a single columnist. Judged on reader appeal and clarity of writing.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) sports columns by a single columnist

30. Local Outdoor Column Judged across all divisions

Honors compelling outdoor-themed columns (e.g., hunting, fishing, nature) by a single columnist. Judged on reader appeal and clarity of writing.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) outdoor columns by a single columnist

31. Rookie Reporter of the Year

Recognizes an outstanding entry-level reporter employed 18 months or less as of Aug. 31, 2025, with no prior newsroom experience.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) work samples
- Reporter's head shot
- Nomination letter with employment start date and job description

A-Mark Foundation

32. A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism

Judged across all divisions > $25/entry - Unlimited Entries

Open Call to ALL professional news media organizations based in Wisconsin, including newspapers, radio and TV broadcast outlets, including digital-only platforms.

- Entries must have been published or aired between September 1, 2025 and August 31, 2026.
- Both standalone pieces and series are eligible for submission.
- Individual reporters, editors, and freelance journalists based in Wisconsin are welcome to apply, provided their work has been published or aired by Wisconsin-based news media organizations.

JUDGING CRITERIA:

Quality of Journalism: Judges will look for well-researched, thorough work that provides new insights or brings important issues to light.

Quality of Presentation: Submissions should be clear, compelling and effectively presented in their chosen format(s) whether it is written, audio, video or multimedia.

Responsiveness to Community Needs: Judges will consider how the reporting reflects community input or engagement, whether through direct collaboration, feedback or active listening.

Impact: Judges will evaluate the demonstrated or potential impact of the reporting.

WINNERS WILL RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING PRIZES:

First place:
$5,000 for the journalist(s) and $2,500 to the news organization

Second place:
$3,000 for the journalist(s) and $1,500 to the news organization

Third place:
$2,000 for the journalist(s) and $1,000 to the news organization

Winning submissions with multiple journalists or newsrooms will split the relevant prizes.

PHOTOGRAPHY | MULTIMEDIA

Two (2) entries per individual or team per publication

33. General News Photo

Recognizes the best single photograph that captures a scheduled, organized or ongoing event for which advanced planning was possible. Judged on content, composition, and technical quality.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf or url

34. Spot News Photo

Recognizes excellence in spot news photography that captures an unscheduled event for which no advance planning was possible. Judged on immediacy, emotion of the breaking moment, and technical quality.

What to Submit:

- Up to ten (10) photographs documenting a single news event.

35. Sports Action Photo

Recognizes excellence in sports action photography. Each entry shall portray participation or competition in a game or sports event. Judged on content, technical quality, and the peak action captured.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf or url

36. Sports Feature Photo

Recognizes excellence in sports feature photography. Entries will consist of a feature photo that is sports-related. Judged on authenticity, composition, and technical quality.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf or url

37. Feature Photo

Recognizes excellence in feature photography. Entries will consist of a single feature photo that has strong human interest or offers a fresh view of the commonplace. Judged on authenticity, composition, and technical quality.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf or url

38. Artistic Photo

Recognizes the best single artistic photo. Judged on content, composition, technical quality, creativity, and originality.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf or url

39. Photo Essay

Recognizes the best photo essay on a single topic. Judged on content, composition, technical quality, and use of photos and captions.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf or url

40. Overall Page Design Weekly only

Recognizes excellence in overall page design of any three (3) newspaper pages designed by the same person. Judged on attractiveness, impact, effective use of headlines, info-graphics, clarity in presentation of information, and creativity.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf of 3 newspaper pages or 3 urls

41. Visual Storytelling

Recognizes excellence in telling a story through photography, graphics, data visualization and other visual means. Judged on quality and impact of the visuals, effectiveness in conveying the story topic, originality, creativity, and innovation.

Entries should be a single visual storytelling piece. Photo essays or collections of multiple photographs are not eligible.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf or url

42. Outstanding Podcast/Audio Storytelling

Recognizes a newspaper's effort to report or offer commentary through audio media. Judges will consider the journalism behind an audio project, as well as its originality, overall production quality and innovative use of storytelling techniques.

What to Submit:

- A URL linking to a single audio file which highlights a podcast project in its entirety **or**
- A URL linking to a single audio file containing up to three (3) edited highlights

Podcast entries are encouraged to include a description about the podcast and why the entry is significant.

43. Best Video (long or short form)

Recognizes the newspaper's effort to report a story through video. Judged on production quality, relevance of topic, content, creativity and impact. Entries may be of news, sports or feature videos. Videos may stand on their own or be part of a larger story.

What to Submit:

- A URL linking to a single video file

PHOTOGRAPHY | MULTIMEDIA (cont.)

Two (2) entries per individual or publication

44. Best Website NEW

Recognizes a publication's online presence and the involvement of its local staff in the updating of content and maintenance. Members using third party vendors to host and design their sites are eligible as long as their staff is primarily responsible for content and maintenance. Criteria includes quality of locally produced content, overall design, consistency of updates and functionality of the site.

What to Submit:

A link (url) to your website. Please include username and password, if necessary.

45. Best Email Newsletter NEW

This category honors outstanding editorial and visual execution of a regularly scheduled newsletter that serves as a standalone journalistic product, rather than just a list of links to a website. Judges will evaluate how effectively the newsletter establishes a unique and trusted identity that resonates with their target audience.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) dated newsletters
- A url/screenshot/pdf showing the complete newsletter

ADVERTISING

Three (3) entries per publication

Print and digital ads accepted in PDF or JPG format. The publication date must be clearly visible on the submitted file or screenshot.

46. Bill Payne Excellence in Advertising Award

Judged across all weeklies

Recognizes the best locally created display ad of the year, in black & white or color. Judged on concept, layout, and originality.

What to Submit:

- One (1) display ad

47. Best Restaurant Ad

Recognizes standout advertising for a restaurant client. Judged on concept, layout, and creativity.

What to Submit:

- Up to three (3) ads created for one restaurant advertiser

48. Best Large Ad

Awards the best ad measuring a half-page or larger. Judged on design, creativity, and reader appeal.

What to Submit:

- One (1) ad measuring a half-page or more **or** 970 x 250 px (Billboard) or 300 x 600 px (half page)

49. Best Small Ad

Honors an outstanding single ad, no larger than 15 square column inches (e.g., 3"x5", 2"x7.5") **or** 300 x 250 px. Judged on creativity and visual impact.

What to Submit:

- One (1) ad no larger than 15 square column inches **or** 300 x 250 px

50. Best Ad Series

Recognizes a creative ad series with a consistent theme for a single advertiser. Judged on originality and concept.

What to Submit:

- Three (3) ads forming a cohesive series

51. Best Use of Color

Awards the most impactful use of color in a single ad. Judges will look at visual clarity and creative execution.

What to Submit:

- One (1) color ad

52. Best Multiple Advertiser Layout

Recognizes a promotional layout featuring multiple advertisers under a shared theme or event. Judged on concept, clarity, and originality.

What to Submit:

- One (1) complete multi-advertiser layout

53. Best Use of Local Photography

Judged across all weeklies

Honors ads that creatively incorporate original photography taken by a newspaper staff member.

What to Submit:

- One (1) single ad or a series of ads using employee-taken photos

54. Best Use of Humor

Judged across all divisions

Recognizes an ad that effectively uses humor to engage readers. Judged on cleverness, design, copy, and overall appeal.

What to Submit:

- One (1) humorous ad

ADVERTISING (continued)

Three (3) Entries/Publication

55. Best Newspaper Promotion

Honors in-house ads or promotional campaigns created to support the newspaper's readership, services, or public mission. May include house ads, promotion of public notices, circulation promotions, special rates, advertiser incentives and ads promoting readership.

What to Submit:

- Up to 10 items (ads, graphics, or materials)

Optional: Include a short statement in the "Comments" section describing the campaign's goals and results

56. Best Special Section (Advertising)

Recognizes themed sections aimed at readers and shoppers. These are often tied to seasonal or local events.

What to Submit:

- One (1) complete special section (e.g., festival guide, sports preview, tribute issue)

57. Best Niche Product

Honors a special publication produced for a specific audience. Examples include visitor guides, hunting magazines, or real estate inserts.

What to Submit:

- Up to two (2) complete issues of a niche product

Remember:

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- Incomplete entries (those missing a required element), or entries submitted that were published outside the contest dates will be disqualified.
- All submissions must be made online by **10:59 p.m. on Friday, October 30.**

Deadlines are final.

ADVERTISING - SHOPPERS* NEW!

Unlimited Entries

Shopper General Excellence Awards

Entries will be evaluated on overall design and presentation, including layout style, production quality, organization, use of halftones and mechanicals, color usage, ad design, advertiser diversity, readability, and the publication's overall visual appeal.

For General Excellence B – Papers with 25% or more news content: Judges will also consider the quality and presentation of editorial content, as well as the publication's overall appeal.

58. General Excellence A – less than 25% news content

What to Submit:

- Three (3) pdfs of complete shopper issues (September 2025, February 2026, and one of your choice)

59. General Excellence B – 25% or more news content

- Three (3) pdfs of complete shopper issues (September 2025, February 2026, and one of your choice)

60. Best Front-Page Design

Showcases front page of publication NOT a special section

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf of a front page of your choice

61. Best Large Ad (larger than ½ page)

Awards the best ad measuring a half-page or larger. Judged on design, creativity, and reader appeal.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf

62. Best Small Ad (½ page or less)

Honors an outstanding single ad, no larger than 15 square column inches (e.g., 3"x5", 2"x7.5")

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf

63. Best Crammed Ad ("Do More with Less")

Awards the ad that successfully fits a large amount of information into a limited ad space. Entries will be judged on the effective use of space, organization of content, readability, and the overall presentation of information within the ad.

What to Submit:

- One (1) pdf

**Please note: Advertising points and awards earned by Shoppers are processed independently and do not contribute to overall BNC award standings. Awards will be presented at the awards banquet on March 12, 2027.*