

## **DIVISIONS**

Newspapers compete by size division. During the entry process each paper's entries will automatically be entered in the appropriate size division.

**Division I:** Smallest Daily Papers

**Division II:** Middle-Sized Daily Papers

**Division III:** Metro Papers

## **ENTRY FEES**

**Division I:** \$10 per entry

**Division II:** \$12 per entry

**Division III:** \$12 per entry

## **CATEGORIES & JUDGING CRITERIA**

### **JUDGING CRITERIA**

The AP editorial contest assesses news value, reporting and writing. Judges are asked to weigh the enterprise required to gather information and the skill shown in writing the article(s), including creativity, clarity, organization and narrative flow. Judges are asked to make every effort to award at least three places in each category; however, judges have some discretion and may award "honorable mention" status in the place of a 2nd or 3rd place award if the entries are deemed not to rise to the level of a 2nd or 3rd place honor.

Relative greater weight will be given to reporting skills in the Investigative Reporting, Public Service and Enterprise categories. More weight is given to writing skill in such categories as Columns and Features. Judges will be comprised of an impartial panel of editors from out-of-state AP member newspapers.

**GROUP OR JOINT PROJECTS:** When two or more newspapers share news gathering staff on a story, photo or project, those papers must enter the category under the newspaper with the highest circulation. Stories, photos or joint projects produced by staff from more than one newspaper will be entered under the name of ONE member newspaper, the paper listed in the largest division.

## **GENERAL EXCELLENCE (No Entry Required)**

General Excellence awards will be given in each division based on the points earned by winning in other categories.

## **BEST WEBSITE**

Judges will consider a newspaper's primary website on three current dates.

## **PUBLIC SERVICE**

A story or stories that show the newspaper's ability to fulfill its public service role by providing information that helps readers make informed decisions or conclusions. Emphasis will be placed on evidence of public benefit. A single entry is limited to no more than 10 stories, including sidebars, related editorials, digital-only components and samples of social media engagement. While most entries will include significant print components, this is not a requirement; in fact, public service projects that are exclusively digital will be considered.

## **INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING**

A story or stories that clearly demonstrate the newspaper's ability to obtain hard-to-get information, facts and pertinent details and put them into compelling story form.

## **ENTERPRISE REPORTING**

For a pre-planned, issue-oriented, non-deadline [story](#) or series which shows creative initiative and originality in subject matter and approach.

## **BREAKING NEWS**

For spot coverage of an unexpected news event.

## **COLUMN OR BLOG**

For commentary, personal columns, humor or critical reviews and online blogs, other than sports. Emphasis is on the quality of writing and audience engagement. An entry may consist of just one work sample, or as many as three work samples.

## **FEATURE**

For a single story, series or package on a topic or person.

## **SPORTS REPORTING**

For spot coverage of games, matches and other breaking sports news.

## **SPORTS COLUMN OR BLOG**

An entry may consist of just one work sample, or as many as three work samples

## **BUSINESS REPORTING**

For outstanding writing and reporting on a business topic with special emphasis on relevance for the non-business reader. The entry may be a single story, or a column or series. If the entry is a series or package, it is limited to no more than five stories including sidebars, digital-only components and samples of social media engagement.

## **EDITORIAL WRITING**

To recognize high achievement and dedication in the craft of editorial writing. An entry may include an individual editorial writer or a staff. Each entry should consist of up to three editorials.

## **VIDEO STORYTELLING**

Best video that can stand alone in telling a story of news, sports or chronicle our times. Note: These videos are not eligible for the digital storytelling category.

## **SPOT NEWS PHOTO**

Best spot photograph covering an unexpected news event within the publication cycle of the newspaper.

## **FEATURE PHOTO**

Best feature photograph.

## **SPORTS PHOTO**

Best sports photograph, either action or feature.

## **PICTURE STORY**

There is a limit of 12 images per picture story.

## **DIGITAL STORYTELLING**

This category recognizes powerful and informative multimedia storytelling that uses video, slideshows, audio, flash interactive, text or any combination of the techniques.

## **SWEEPSTAKES AWARDS (No Entry Required)**

A Sweepstakes Award will be selected in each division from among the first-place winners of the photography and the reporting/writing categories. General Excellence will not be considered for the Sweepstakes Awards.