

BEST OF SHOW AWARDS

26. Community Service

Recognizes accomplishment in dealing with a significant community problem or issue. Any community service effort of the newspaper relating to one specific subject may be entered. This can involve either investigative work exposing a situation needing correction or a positive project to stimulate some facet of community progress. May include editorial series not entered elsewhere in this contest.

Entrants are urged to present entries demonstrating journalistic enterprise and coverage beyond that normally given to the endeavors specified. Projects must be promoted and/or developed and completed principally through the newspaper's own effort.

Exhibits should include stories, editorial support and follow-up evidence of accomplishment. The project must be completed, or significant progress made, during the contest period.

Explanatory or background letter (one 8 1/2" x 11" page maximum) MUST accompany entry. Judges will consider the project's relative importance, quality of reporting, depth of research, degree of newspaper involvement and results.

Entries in this category may not be entered elsewhere. For example, newspapers cannot enter the same story or series for Best General Commentary (Category 3) AND Community Service.

27. Best Newspaper Design

Judges for this category look for attractive and effective graphics, along with a layout that enhances readability throughout the paper.

Overall graphic design, typography, consistency and the use of photographs are considered, as well as special applications in news columns. Special emphasis will be placed on Page One design.

Submit three complete editions: one from Aug. 2019, one from April 20, and one from any month during the contest period (including Aug. or April if desired). Only one entry composed of the three editions will be accepted from each newspaper.

28. Blue Ribbon Newspapers

The Blue Ribbon Award, presented each year to one daily and one nondaily newspaper, is the highest accolade of the HSPA Foundation's Better Newspaper Contest. It is based on an overall evaluation of editorial quality.

The question posed by the judges is which paper, all variables considered, does the best job of serving its readers.

Newspapers MUST submit three complete editions: one from the month of November 2019, one from the month of April 2020, and one from any month during the contest period (including November or February if desired).

Only one entry composed of the three editions will be accepted from each newspaper. No more than two Saturday/Sunday or Sunday issues may be used.

Judges consider breadth and depth of coverage, quality of reporting and copy editing, news judgment and content balance, general appearance, imaginative approach to problem news areas, originality, reader interest and overall professionalism.

The enclosed Blue Ribbon entry form MUST be uploaded with the three editions or the newspaper will be disqualified.

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

General Excellence Award will be given to one paper in each of the six circulation divisions based on a point system. Winners in this category exemplify excellence in all aspects of newspaper publication, including mechanical excellence, editorial content, layout and general appearance.

Points will be awarded as follows:

- Writing and Photography Categories – 5 points for first, 3 points for second, 1 point for third.
- Section and Website Categories – 10 points for first, 6 points for second, 2 points for third
- Community Service and Newspaper Design categories – 10 points for first, 6 points for second, 2 points for third.

This category will not be judged but will be an accumulation of points earned in the other categories.

Photo of the Year

From the first place awards in categories 13-18, judges will choose the best in each of the six circulation divisions. These six semifinalists will compete for Photo of the Year. (No points toward General Excellence.)

Story of the Year

Recognizes one piece of writing as the most outstanding – regardless of paper's circulation.

After awarding first place in Categories 1, 2, 9 and 11, judges will choose one story as the best in each of the six circulation divisions. The six semifinalists will compete for Story of the Year.

Judges will select the best example of journalistic excellence combining all criteria they deem applicable. (No points toward General Excellence.)

RESTRICTIONS

- All corrections and clarifications associated with an entry must be submitted as part of the entry. Failure to comply could result in nullification of award.
- Stories should be submitted as official newspaper archived copies in PDF format, showing the headline and date of publication. Stories outside the contest dates will be disqualified.
- If an article or photo appears in two or more publications, it must be entered by only one newspaper.
- Freelancers', stringers' or correspondents' work must be submitted by the newspaper where it first published.
- Stories written by the newspaper staff for other publications (magazines, etc.) and inserted in the newspaper may be entered.
- Stories in Sunday editions published jointly by individual newspapers under one ownership must be entered by the daily paper where the journalist is employed.
- Newspapers operating under different banners with the same staff in the same city/town may enter stories from both papers in Categories 2 and 25.
- Any entries listing more than three writers will be recognized as "Staff."
- If a daily/nondaily publication changes status during the contest year, it must enter the division that represents the publication frequency for the majority of the contest year, or six months and one day.
- Designation of daily or nondaily is determined by number of print editions each week: Nondaily – three or fewer; daily – more than three.

2020 HSPA Foundation Better Newspaper Contest

Rules & Category Descriptions

CONTEST PERIOD - NEW DATES

Entries must be published between May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020.

DEADLINE

Submit all entries at www.newspapercontest.com/hspa by 5 p.m. Thursday, May 28, 2020.

SUMMARY SHEET

Submit summary sheet by 5 p.m. Thursday May 28, 2020.

Your summary sheet is included in your contest packet, or you may print a copy at: www.hspa.com/newspaper-contest 2020.

All papers entering the contest must send summary sheet via email to sgoldsby@hspa.com

FEES

Each newspaper pays an entry fee based on circulation as follows. (See enclosed list for divisions.)

(N1) Division One – Nondailies less than 2,500: \$65

(N2) Division Two – Nondailies more than 2,500: \$70

(D3) Division Three – Dailies less than 4,000: \$75

(D4) Division Four – Dailies 4,000-9,999: \$100

(D5) Division Five – Dailies 10,000+: \$130

May submit three entries in each category except where noted in rules. Additional entries may be included for \$10 per entry.

ENTRIES

Entries must be entirely the original work of the person or people submitting them; must be published online or published and distributed as part of the paper, ROP or insert (work published only in free publications is not eligible); and are considered the property of HSPA Foundation.

Judges may award first, second and third places. No honorable mentions will be given. If three or fewer entries are submitted in a category, the judges may opt to give no awards. Judges may not award a second or third without a first and must give at least a first place in any category with four or more entries.

Winners will be announced during the 2019 HSPA Foundation Editorial Contest Awards in October .

Checks should be mailed no later than Sept. 2, 2020 to:

HSPA Foundation BNC, 212 W. 10th St., Suite B340, Indianapolis, IN 46202

Questions? Call (317) 803-4772 or email sgoldsby@hspa.com.

HSPA phone and email support available through noon, May 29.

ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

Step 1 — Visit www.newspapercontest.com/hspa.

Enter Association Code: HSPA.

Complete rules are available online. Use Safari or Google Chrome browser.

Step 2 — Click on the "Register for Editorial" tab.

Step 3 — Register on the contest website using your email address. Each newspaper must have its own unique email address. You will receive a confirmation email, which you will need to complete your registration. **The "Association Code" you will use is HSPA** (this is case sensitive.)

Step 4 — On this page, select your newspaper name. A lot of information will auto-fill. If you do not see your paper listed or if the information is incorrect, please call Shawn Goldsby at HSPA (317) 803-4772. Your Division is selected for you based on your circulation. Fill in the preparer's name.

Step 5 — Select "Editorial" to begin submitting entries. As you create entries, this field will not change unless you select to change it. All required fields are marked with a red asterisk.*

Step 6 — Select the contest category. These are drop-down menus for your convenience. This field will clear each time you save an entry, so you must select a class for each new entry. When you select the class, special instructions will appear below it.

Step 7 — If necessary, provide an explanation of your entry. The explanation/cutline box is limited to 3,000 characters. If a URL is required, fill in the URL box; there is no need to type "http://." Do not submit URL's unless category requires it.

Step 8 — Include the name of the person or people who should be credited for any award. If more than 3, please list as staff only.

Step 9 — Add your file or files. You can drag and drop files or use the "Add files" button to navigate your files. Generally, files should be in PDF format except photos, which should be in high-resolution JPG format. Upload as many files as are necessary to complete your entry.

Step 10 — When you have completed your submission, click the "Save" button. If you click the "Back to list" button, you will lose the entry you just completed. After clicking "Save," you will be directed back to the list of your entries. You may not change an entry, but you may delete an entry and resubmit it.

Step 11 — To submit another entry, click "Add New Entry." As long as you have not logged out of the system, your newspaper name will still be in place and you can simply start at Step 6 again. You may log out and log back in later to continue adding entries. You will need to select your newspaper name each time you log in.

Step 12 — If you are done submitting entries, please review the list. When done uploading all your entries, click the "Report Tab" to preview your entries.

2020 HSPA Foundation Better Newspaper Contest Categories

WRITING AWARDS

Entries must be published between May 1, 2019 to April 30, 2020. Judging will be based on clarity, thoroughness and enterprise.

✓1. Best News Coverage Under Deadline Pressure

Recognizes excellence displayed by an individual or team in covering a developing news event in one print publication cycle across all platforms.

For daily newspapers, the story or stories must have been published in the first edition of the newspaper following the event. For weeklies the story or stories must have appeared in the first run following the event. The date of publication must accompany the entry.

A letter, no longer than one page, must be uploaded to recognize any special circumstances under which the story or stories were written.

Sidebar for the same edition by the same writer or team may be included with the entry. Judges will give weight to story or stories written under especially tight deadlines. They will consider all elements of coverage, including digital.

✓2. Best News Coverage With No Deadline Pressure

Recognizes excellence by an individual or team in reporting an event or situation where an immediate deadline is not a factor. (Example: A series on children's issues that is planned and executed over time.)

An entry may include more than one story on a single subject, as long as they were by the same writer or team. Series are accepted here.

Judges will consider all elements of coverage, including digital.

3. Best General Commentary

Recognizes a regular local column or blog on any subject, written by any individual staff member on any platform. Any three samples of the columnist's work make up one entry. Please note only one entry per writer may be entered.

Three samples judged as one entry for consistency. Judges will consider all elements of coverage, including digital.

4. Best Editorial Writer

Recognizes excellence in editorial writing by a single author on any platform. Judging is based on persuasiveness, worthiness of purpose, clarity and effectiveness.

Three samples of an entrant's work constitute one entry. Only one entry per writer. (Only two editorials in a series may be submitted. Newspapers wanting to submit an entire series may consider the Community Service category, No. 26.) Three samples judged as one entry for consistency.

5. Best Business/Economic News Coverage

Recognizes a single article or series of articles (not to exceed three) on the same topic by one writer or a team that emphasizes analysis and research. Articles may appear in the same issue or several issues.

Entries can be either a business/economic story on deadline or not and is not confined to the business section. Judges consider cohesiveness, organization and impact. Judges will consider all elements of coverage, including digital.

6. Headline Writing

Recognizes excellence and creativity in writing headlines. Judging will be based on whether the headline fulfills the mission of the story, clarity and creativity. May include news brief and editorial headlines. Three headlines equal one entry.

FEATURE ENTRIES: Total number of entries in Categories 7, 8 and 9 combined may not exceed 15 (i.e.: six in No. 7, seven in No. 8, and two in No. 9.)

7. Best Short Feature Story

Recognizes a single article, 1,000 words or less, by any reporter that deals with people and their lifestyles, activities or concerns. Judges consider reader interest and effectiveness in conveying human element and quality of reporting and writing.

8. Best Profile Feature

Recognizes the best single story focusing on a person. Judges will give emphasis to timeliness, quality of writing and depth of reporting, including multiple sources and way the author(s) sets the tone, mood or setting.

✓9. Best In-Depth Feature or Feature Package

Recognizes feature material published as a single article, set or related articles on the same day, or a series of related articles by the same writer or team.

Entries featuring more than one article must include a letter (one 8 1/2" x 11" page maximum) summarizing the package. Include no more than 10 articles per entry. Judges will use same criteria as Best Short Feature.

10. Best Sports Event Coverage

Recognizes a main "game story" from coverage of sporting events – most likely by a single writer but may be a multiple byline on a single story or in the package. Sidebars (pull-outs, graphics, break-outs) by the same writer may be included.

Judging is based on clarity, thoroughness and enterprise. Judges will consider all elements of coverage, including digital.

✓11. Best Sports News or Feature Coverage

Recognizes in-depth coverage of sports personalities and issues. Entries may consist of a single article or a series by one writer or a team.

12. Best Sports Commentary

Recognizes a regular column written by any individual staff member on any platform. One entry consists of three samples of one writer's work. Please note only one entry per writer. Judging is based on selection of material, reader interest and quality of writing.

PHOTOGRAPHY & MULTIMEDIA AWARDS

All entries are judged on journalistic merit. Photographs and multimedia entries must have been published in the newspaper or online within the contest period. Photographs should approximate the original cropping as published.

13. Best Spot News Photo

Coverage of events for which no advance planning was possible. Examples include, but are not limited to, accidents, fires, natural disasters, weather and spot police action.

14. Best General News Photo

Coverage of planned events where advanced planning was possible. Examples include, but are not limited to, courtroom events, funerals, news conferences, mock exercises and campaigns.

15. Best Sports Feature Photo

Feature photographs from a sporting event. Images showing the thrill of victory, agony of defeat, fans or moments from within the bounds of a sporting event would fit this category.

16. Best Sports Action Photo

Action photographs from an athletic event which captures what it means to compete. Athletic practices or warm-ups would not fit this category.

17. Best Feature Photo

This category recognizes photographs of found moments or slices of life. Pictorial images – images that show graphic and aesthetic qualities of a subject with strong emphasis on composition – may also be entered here. This is not the home for news or sports photographs.

18. Best Portrait

A single photograph that captures a unique aspect of a subject's character and personality.

19. Best Multiple Picture Group

A group of photographs on a central theme published as part of a package or series. Must include at least three and not more than 12 photographs. No collages or diptychs are allowed. Pictures entered as part of a group may not be entered as a single in another category. **Enter all photographs from a picture group into one entry.**

Judging is based on content, visual narrative and originality. All pictures submitted in the entry must have been published in the newspaper or online. Entry may include work of multiple photographers.

20. Best Multimedia Story

Recognizes excellence in a multimedia piece done with video; still photographs and audio; or a combination of video, still photographs and audio. Entries can be on any topic. Judges will be looking at the storytelling, editing and use of audio to make their decisions.

Entries must have been published online and may include work of multiple visual journalists.

When submitting multimedia entries, paste a URL so judges may access the entries. If content is behind a paywall, enter a user name and password in the comments box.

21. Best Editorial Page

Recognizes community leadership through an outstanding editorial page. Judging is based on the overall quality of editorials, planning, originality and organization of the page, readership appeal, content balance and distinctive typography.

Submit any three editorial pages to make up a single entry. One op-ed page may be included as part of the three-page entry. Other opinion/analysis/commentary pages will not be considered.

This entry may include an editorial entered under Category 4. Newspapers may submit only one entry.

22. Best Website

Judges evaluate news content, design and presentation, navigation, interactivity and connectivity to other sites. Type your newspaper website's URL in the Headline box and in the appropriate URL field, adding a user name/password in the Comments field if site is behind a paywall.

23. Best Sports Section

Judges consider planning and organization, general typography and use of graphics, readership appeal, content balance, readability and originality.

Newspapers may submit only one entry with three samples. May include sports special sections published those same days. This entry may include a sports story entered in either the Sports Event Coverage and/or the Sports News or Feature Coverage category.

24. Best Feature Section or Page(s)

Recognizes a feature section or page(s) that appears on a continual basis in the newspaper. (i.e., entertainment, lifestyle, home).

Newspapers may submit up to two entries with three samples each. Must come from different sections. (For example, you may submit three lifestyle sections as one entry and three arts sections as another). The entry may include a feature story entered under Best Short Feature or In-Depth Feature Package categories.

Judges will consider planning and organization, typography and use of graphics, readership appeal, content balance, readability and originality.

25. Best Special Section

Recognizes a special section published one time during the contest period. Any topic is eligible. May include digital components. Judges consider content on all platforms including newspaper-produced magazines and inserts. Entry must be delivered as part of the newspaper. A letter no longer than one 8-1/2" x 11" page must accompany entry.

✓ = Category eligible for Story of the Year

Max file size for uploading is 100 MB