



2026 PALMY AD CONTEST

Recognizing the best in South Carolina news media advertising

CONTEST DEADLINE | May 29, 2026

CONTEST PERIOD | Ads must have been published between May 1, 2025 - April 30, 2026.

CONTEST DIVISIONS | Competition will take place in three divisions regardless of publication frequency:

- **DIVISION J:** Printed newspapers over 7,500 OR online publication over 200,000 views
- **DIVISION K:** Printed newspapers under 7,500 OR online publication under 200,000 views
- **DIVISION L:** Associate Members with print and/or digital publications

Your division will auto-fill in the digital contest platform after you select your news organization. If you think your organization is listed in the wrong division, contact SCPA.

SCNEWSCONTEST.COM | Each member will be given a username and password for scnewscontest.com. If you are the manager/ad director of multiple organizations, you can submit entries for all of your organizations using the same log-in information. The manager/ad director is welcome to share this info with staffers so they can upload their entries.

ELIGIBILITY | Entries must be conceived, written, designed or sold by "regular" staff members of the news organization entering the contest. "Regular" employees are those who regularly work(ed) for the entering news organization. News organizations **may enter** ads created by in-state and out-of-state design centers that regularly create content for the SCPA member news organization. No materials may be entered that are prepared by ad agencies or advertisers.

NUMBER OF ENTRIES | Each entrant may submit as many entries in each contest as desired. **AN INDIVIDUAL AD MAY BE ENTERED IN ONLY ONE CATEGORY.** However, individual ads included inside of a special section/magazine, campaign or sig page may also be entered once in any other contest.

NUMBER OF ENTRIES FOR COMPETITION | There must be a minimum of five entries from at least two separate organizations for judging to occur. If not, the SCPA Co-Executive Directors and judges reserve the right to judge the category as is, combine entries with another division or to declare the category null and return the entry fee.

GROUP PUBLICATIONS | Ownership groups that produce an item for multiple publications within their group may enter the item only once by the organization that made the greatest contribution to the project. If the entry was published in all or a majority of the group's publications, it must be entered in the highest circulation division in which the shared item originally appeared. **YOU MAY NOT ENTER THE SAME AD MORE THAN ONCE UNDER MULTIPLE FLAGS.**

DISQUALIFICATION | Entries that do not meet contest criteria may be disqualified and entry fees will not be returned. All participants agree to accept the decision of judges as final.

ENTRY FEES/PAYMENT | THANKS TO THE S.C. NEWSPAPER NETWORK, EACH ORGANIZATION'S FIRST THREE ENTRIES ARE FREE! After your first three entries, each entry is \$7. On the online Entry Report page, you will see a breakdown of all of the entries that are being submitted for your organization. No total entry fees will be displayed. Instead, SCPA will ensure that all of your entries are correct and will email you an invoice that can be paid online by credit card or by check.

AWARDS | On July 17, 2026, the digital awards presentation will be made available on scpress.org and promoted as a resource for all members to use throughout the year. Awards will be presented in person or mailed to winners in mid-July 2026. If you'd like, SCPA staffers will work with winners to have a recognition event on site at your organization.

FILE TYPES ACCEPTED | UNLESS OTHERWISE SPECIFIED, PRINT AND DIGITAL ADS CAN BE SUBMITTED INTO ANY CONTEST CATEGORY. Print ads must be submitted as full-page PDFs. Digital ads should be submitted as URLs, original file types or as a screenshot.

LABELING YOUR ENTRY | Make sure your description in the Title/Cutline field accurately identifies the ad the judge needs to locate on the page. You should enter the ad's headline and/or advertiser name.

BEST OF SHOW | All first place winners will be judged by circulation division for the "Best of Show – Best Single Overall Ad." There are no fees or requirements for this contest.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD FOR BEST OVERALL ADVERTISING | This award will be presented to one weekly and one daily, based on number and ranking of awards won, regardless of circulation. First place awards will be worth three points, second place two points and third place one point.

NEED HELP? | Call (803) 750-9561 or email jmadden@scpress.org for help with the rules, where an ad should be entered or how to use the online entry portal.

How to enter

- 1 | Acquire your login information from SCPA. Contact Jen Madden at jmadden@scpress.org.
- 2 | Login at scnewscontest.com. You will see a page showing any entries you have already submitted. Complete rules for the contest are available above.
- 3 | Click on the "Add New Entry" link.
- 4 | On this page, select your news organization name. A lot of information will autofill, including division. If the information is incorrect, contact SCPA. Fill in the preparer's name. (The preparer is the person uploading the entry into the online contest platform, not the staffer that will be credited for any award.)
- 5 | Select the contest category from the drop-down menu. When you select the category, special instructions will appear below it. This field will clear each time you save an entry, so you must select a category for each new entry.
- 6 | Enter the ad's headline and/or advertiser name in the Title/Cutline box for your entry.
- 7 | Include the name of the person(s) who should be credited for any award. This is generally the sales rep and/or designer.
- 8 | Add your file or files. You can drag and drop files or use the "Add files" button to navigate to your files. Upload as many files as are necessary to complete your entry. If you are submitting URL(s), enter each URL in a separate box.
- 9 | When you have completed each submission, click the "Save" button. After clicking "Save," you will be directed back to the list of your entries.
- 10 | To submit another entry, click "Add New Entry." As long as you have not logged out of the system, your news organization's name will still be in place and you can simply start at Step 5 again. You may log out and log back in later to continue adding entries.
- 11 | If you are finished submitting entries, click Entry Report for full listing of entries submitted. No total fee will be displayed. Instead, SCPA will ensure all your entries are correct and contact you with an invoice.

CATEGORIES

Each entry is a single print or digital ad unless otherwise specified.

- 1. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES** | Includes lawyers, financial services, insurance, real estate, funeral homes, travel, pet care, spas and salons, tattoo and piercing.
- 2. HOME AND GARDEN** | Includes appliances, hardware, flooring, home furnishings, home maintenance, roofing, windows, plumbing, pest control, landscaping, lawn and agriculture/tractor supplies.
- 3. OUTDOORS/RECREATION** | Includes hunting, fishing, golf, camping, recreational vehicles, gyms, pools and hot tubs.
- 4. AUTOMOTIVE** | Includes new and used automotive dealers, auto repair and tire sales.
- 5. FASHION** | Includes apparel and shoes.
- 6. GIFTS** | Includes jewelry, florists and gift shops.
- 7. FOOD & ALCOHOL** | Includes grocery stores, liquor stores, beer/wine stores, bakeries, farmers markets and specialty food markets. *This contest is for retail food/alcohol. Please submit restaurant/bar ads into Category 8.*
- 8. RESTAURANTS/NIGHTLIFE** | Includes restaurants, coffee shops, breweries, clubs and bars, as well as live performances at these venues. *This contest is for restaurants/bars. Please submit retail food/alcohol ads into Category 7.*
- 9. EVENTS/ENTERTAINMENT** | Includes festivals, live-performance events, concerts, sporting events, art galleries, theater, DJs and event venues.
- 10. HEALTH SERVICES** | Includes hospitals, long-term care homes, physicians, chiropractors, optometrists, audiology, dentists, plastic surgeons, pharmacies, medical spas and health/diet.
- 11. PUBLIC SERVICE** | Includes non-profits, community organizations, churches and schools.
- 12. HOLIDAY** | Includes house ads and ads for clients themed around any holiday.
- 13. USE OF IMAGERY** | Regardless of category; will be judged on how photography or illustration choice and presentation work to forward the ad's message.
- 14. SPECIAL SECTION/MAGAZINE** | Includes features, sports, news, home and garden, "Best Of" and more. Niche publications and directories may also be submitted in this category. There is no limit on the number of entries you may submit in this contest, but each edition must be submitted as an individual entry. *(Submit URL to e-edition viewer or upload full-page PDFs from the publication.)*

15. CAMPAIGN | Showcase your best campaign for a single advertiser. Ads entered must be published individually over a period of time to contribute to a larger advertising strategy. Print, digital, or a combination can be submitted. There is no limit on the number of ads that can be submitted as part of a single advertiser's campaign, but each entry shall consist of at least three published ads. Ads entered in this contest may also be entered into any other category.

16. NEWSPAPER PROMOTION | Includes house ads, subscription and engagement campaigns, sales pieces, promotions, special rates, events and advertiser incentives. Entries in this contest do not have to be published. Print, digital, or a combination can be submitted. While single ads may be submitted, there is no limit on the number of ads/components that can be submitted if part of a newspaper promotion campaign. A letter of explanation may be submitted as part of your entry.

17. INNOVATION | Innovative concepts and programs to boost revenue and drive audience engagement. Entries may include contests, promotions, "Best Of" and other events, partnerships, non-traditional revenue ideas and more. Please submit collateral and a letter of explanation showing judges your goals, strategy, impact and engagement.

18. DESIGNER OF THE YEAR | Entry shall consist of five published print and/or digital ads. Criteria include creativity, relevance, ability to communicate subject, impact of graphics and editing. This award is for the body of work, not an individual ad. Ads entered in this contest may also be entered into any other category. There is no limit on the number of designers at each news organization who can enter this contest. Limit one entry per person.

Print Ad Contests

Each entry is a single print ad.

19. SMALL SPACE | Less than 1/4 page; regardless of category; will be judged on effectiveness of ad, given its size.

20. 1/4 AND LESS THAN 1/2 PAGE | Regardless of category; will be judged on effectiveness of ad, given its size.

21. 1/2 PAGE OR GREATER | Regardless of category; will be judged on effectiveness of ad, given its size.

22. MERCHANT GROUP OR SIG PAGE | Includes any group participation of businesses or shopping centers, or vendor-supported ads. Can be up to a single page or double truck. If more pages than a double truck, submit in Category 14 (Special Section/Magazine).

Digital Ad Contests

Each entry is a single digital ad. Ads can be published online or in any digital products, including email and social.

23. RICH MEDIA AD | Includes rich media, moving and animated ads of any size or type.

24. SPONSORED CONTENT | Includes native advertising and sponsored/paid advertorial or branded content.

25. VIDEO | Includes use of advertising video (stand-alone, sponsored content, pre- or mid-roll, etc.).