



# 2025 New Mexico Press Association Better Newspaper Contest Instructions

## Welcome

The Better Newspaper Contest, sponsored by the New Mexico Press Association, is a celebration of excellence in writing, reporting, editing, photography, advertising, design, and circulation. All NMPA members in good standing are eligible to enter the contest, which will be judged by our colleagues from another out-of-state newspaper association. If you have any questions, please contact NMPA CEO Belinda Mills at (575) 312-5449 or [ceo@nmpress.org](mailto:ceo@nmpress.org).

## Contest Details and Rules

### Please read all instructions before beginning the submission process

**ENTRY FEES** The fee is \$10 per submission. Payment options and instructions are on the contest website.

**ASSOCIATE MEMBERS NEWSPAPER GROUPS** Individuals who work for different newspapers in the same company can submit entries from the different papers and in different classes but cannot submit a substantially similar piece in different classes or for different newspapers. In cases where an individual's piece appears in two different newspapers, the piece should be submitted for the newspaper where the individual does most of his or her work.

**JOINT BYLINES** In cases of joint bylines with writers who don't work for the same company (e.g. Albuquerque Journal and Number Nine Media papers), the piece should be submitted by the paper for which it was most intended. A piece that can be reasonably seen as intended for both communities can be submitted by the larger paper. The judges will decide if the entry is properly submitted.

**CORRECTIONS** The NMPA will make every effort to allow a newspaper to correct an entry that fails to meet guidelines, but if the deficiency is not or cannot be corrected, the entry will go to judging as is. It will be up to the judge to allow or disqualify the entry. In no case will the entry fee be refunded. Entries from Associate Members who are digital-only will be judged in the Daily Class I division. Entries from Associate Members who are from print publications will be judged in the division commiserate with their circulation. Associate Members may compete in the following categories: Retail Advertisement, Best Website, Editorials, Columns. General News Photo Feature Photo News Writing, Breaking News Story. Feature Writing. Series or Continuing Coverage, Investigative Reporting.

**WORK MUST BE PRODUCED LOCALLY** Work submitted must be from employees of the newspaper or freelance work created specifically for a newspaper that reflects local news or events in that newspaper's market. Nationally syndicated columns, photos or agency ads and ads created out-of-house are not eligible.

**SPANISH-LANGUAGE ENTRIES** Spanish-language newspapers can compete with English newspapers in the size category that they are eligible. Entries must be translated into English.

**MINIMUM ENTRIES** In order for there to be a competition in a given category at least three newspapers must have an entry submitted; it is up to the judge's discretion to select a first and/or second place winner in any category. Entry does not guarantee a competition or a winner.

**ENTRIES MUST BE PAID IN FULL BEFORE JUDGING** Refunds will not be issued or permitted. Submitted entries may be reproduced with proper attribution in NMPA marketing materials, presentations, publications, website promotions or for future use.

## Contest Divisions

### DAILY CLASS I

CIRC. 5,000 & ABOVE

### WEEKLY CLASS I

CIRC. 5,000 & ABOVE

### DAILY CLASS II

CIRC. 4,999 & BELOW

### WEEKLY CLASS II

CIRC. 4,999 & BELOW

Daily = publication 3x/week or more

Weekly = publication 2x/week or less including monthlies

## Important Dates

Contest period: July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025

- Submission portal open July 1.
- Entry deadline: Postmarked or uploaded by 4:59 p.m. July 30
- Judging: Completed in late August
- Awards banquet: November 8, 2025

## Enter Online

Submit using the following website: [www.newspapercontest.com/nmpress](http://www.newspapercontest.com/nmpress)

For step-by-step directions on submitting, see below.

## **Enter by Mail**

Send via U.S. Postal Service (UPS does not deliver to P.O. Boxes) 2025 NMPA Newspaper Contest c/o New Mexico Press Association P.O. Box 95198 Albuquerque, NM 87199

## **Uploading Instructions**

Step 1 — Setting Up an Account - Association Code for contest is NMPRESS (case sensitive). - Select the “Register” tab. - Create your login profile and password. Previous year’s accounts and passwords are no longer valid. You will then receive a confirmation email, which you need to complete the registration/login. After confirming the account, you will be taken to the “Entries” page.

Step 2 — Adding PDFs- Click on the “Add New Entry” link.

Step 3 — On this page, select your newspaper name. A lot of information will auto-fill. If that information is incorrect, please call NMPA at (505) 275-1241. Your division will be selected for you based on your circulation. Fill in the preparer’s name. Important Notice: members that are Associate only will be only able enter Associate Division.

Step 4 — 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 category for each new entry. When you select the category, special instructions will appear below it.

Step 5 — If necessary, or required, provide an explanation of your entry. The explanation/cutline box is limited to 3,000 characters. It’s a good idea to write your explanation in another program, such as Word, and copy/paste into the explanation box. If a URL is required, fill in the URL box; there is no need to type “http://.”

Step 6 — Include the name of the entry. If uploading full-page PDF files, it will be helpful if the entry name matches the headline on the page so the judges can find it easily. If the judges cannot tell what is to be judged, the entry will be discarded without refund.

Step 7 — Include the name of the person or people who should be credited for any award. This is generally the writer, reporter, photographer, graphic artist, cartoonist, etc. It is not necessarily the name of the person submitting the entry nor the person picking up the award at the convention.

Step 8 — 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 JPG format. Other files and URLs may be acceptable as noted in the special instructions. Upload as many files as are necessary to complete your entry but refer to the special instructions for any limitations.

Step 9 — When you have completed your submission, click the “Save” button. If you click the “Back to list” button, before you Save, you will lose the entry you just completed. After clicking “Save,” you will be automatically directed back to the list of your entries.

Step 10 — 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 11 — If you are done submitting entries, please review the list carefully. Make sure you have YOUR newspaper’s name selected, and not mistakenly a different paper’s name. You may not change an entry, but you may delete an entry and resubmit it. How do I Login after logging out? After you have created an account, you may log in at any time by using the login button at the top of this page. How do I know what I’ve already uploaded? Each time you start at login, you will be taken to the “Entries” page, there you will see a list of your entries.

How do I make changes? Entries cannot be changed/modified once they are saved. However, there is a “Delete Selected” button on the “Entries” page. If you need to make changes/modify an entry - you will have to delete and resubmit it

## **Writing and Reporting Categories**

1. **NEWS WRITING** Submit a digital copy of one example of a news story written during the contest period. Entry may be by one individual or a team.
2. **BREAKING NEWS** Submit a digital copy of one day's coverage of a breaking news event written under deadline pressure. The entry may include multiple stories, such as a main story and sidebars. Entries may be by one individual or a team. This is a printed edition-only category.
3. **BREAKING NEWS – DIGITAL** Submit a digital copy of coverage of breaking news through digital means - social media, email, text alerts or website. Submit screen grabs of social media feeds or web updates. Letter explaining developments is encouraged.
4. **SPORTS WRITING** Submit a digital copy of one example of a sports story – news, features or mixed – written during the contest period.
5. **BUSINESS WRITING** Submit a digital copy of one example of a business story written during the contest period. Main focus of the story should be local business or economic issues. Entry may be by one individual or a team working on the same story.
6. **ENVIRONMENTAL OR AGRICULTURAL WRITING** Submit a digital copy of environmental or agricultural story written during the contest period.
7. **EDUCATION WRITING** Submit a digital copy of one educational story or feature written during the contest period.
8. **FEATURE WRITING** Submit a digital copy of one example of a feature story written during the contest period.
9. **BEST HEADLINE WRITING** Submit a digital copy of one example of a headline written during the contest period.
10. **INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING** Submit a digital copy of at least two stories on the same subject. Stories may come from one edition or multiple editions of the publication. The articles should include background and history and provide information that might not have come to light without the investigation. Entries may be either by one individual or a team. A cover letter must be attached.
11. **OBITUARY NEWS** Submit a digital copy of an obituary OF A PERSON (no dogs, cats, businesses, cars, beers, etc.) written by a staff member during the contest period. All entries must have a byline. No funeral announcements accepted.
12. **BEST NEWS COVERAGE** Submit two digital versions of a news section from two issues, one from August 2023 and one from April 2024. A brief letter is strongly encouraged to be submitted with the entry to describe the community being covered. Entries will be judged on the overall depth of local news coverage in the community, style, layout and readability.

13. **BEST SPORTS COVERAGE** Submit two digital versions of a sports section, one from March 2025 and one from April 2025. A brief letter is strongly encouraged to be submitted with the entry to describe the community being covered. Entries will be judged on the overall depth of local sports coverage in the community, style, layout and readability.

14. **COLUMNS** Submit a digital copy of one example of a column written during the contest period.

15. **SPORTS COLUMNS** Submit a digital copy of one example of a sports column written during the contest period.

16. **BEST REVIEW** Submit a digital copy of one critical review on books, art, movies, music, theater or any other performance or artistic expression.

17. **EDITORIALS** Submit a digital copy of one example of an editorial written during the contest period.

18. **BEST SERIES** This category can include a series of stories on a pre-planned topic, with articles published over the course of at least two separate editions of the publication. The editions do not have to be consecutive. An entry consists of a minimum of two articles, with no maximum. The entry can come from any editorial department – news, business, features, sports, etc.

19. **BEST ONGOING / CONTINUING COVERAGE** This award recognizes efforts by newspapers and reporters to continue coverage of a news story. An example would be follow-up stories on developing news when the entry doesn't qualify as an investigative story or series. An entry consists of a minimum of two articles, with no maximum. The entry can come from any editorial department – news, business, features, sports, etc.

## **Comprehensive Categories**

20. **COMMUNITY EVENT PROMOTION** This award will recognize the best examples of a community-wide promotion published by your publication during the contest calendar year. Judges will consider: the originality and appearance of the ad, giving 50% weight to the ad idea, 25% to the copy, and 25% to layout and design.

21. **EXPLANATION OF NEWS OPERATIONS OR NEWSPAPER** This award will recognize excellence in the explanation to readers of newspaper operations or ethics. Judges will consider use of stories, columns, editorials and advertising to explore how a newspaper functions, how policies are developed, or what standards are used to determine what the content of a paper will be, or how stories and photos will be played. Newspapers should submit PDF tear sheets and/or URLs online from any one issue within the calendar period. Each newspaper may submit two (2) entries. (Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.) All classes will compete against each other in this category as a daily or monthly category.

22. **BEST SPECIAL SECTION** (This category is for newspaper products only – No Magazines. If the product is stitched and trimmed or uses a gloss cover it is considered a magazine). Judges will consider general effect on the reader of the issue taken as a whole, relevance of locally produced editorial copy to advertising, originality and effectiveness of local advertising. One entry consists of a special section supplement devoted to a single

topic published any date within the contest period. Submit special sections to NMPA by mail. Supplements & Special Sections – MAILED ENTRY. Mail in a copy of one example (per entry) of a supplement or special edition published during the contest period. The supplement or special edition may be either printed on a regular schedule or a single time.

23. **BEST MAGAZINE** This award recognizes excellence in magazines produced by an NMPA member newspaper. A magazine focuses on a central theme and is glossy (with a minimum of a glossy cover). Judges will consider overall excellence in the publication, including locally produced editorial content, design (including use of photos and graphics) and effectiveness of advertising. The entry consists of a single newspaper staff-produced magazine published within the contest period. Submit magazines to NMPA by mail.

24. **BEST WEBSITE** Submit a web address, and any passwords needed to access the website. Include a description of any innovative or unique features. Judging based on design, advertising, functionality, content, speed and ease of navigation, and most importantly, the impact on the local market. If you have a corporate-designed or third-party website show how you make it unique and interesting to your local readers and advertisers.

25. **PUBLIC SERVICE** Submit full-page e-tear sheets and any other supporting materials, clearly marking news stories, editorials, photos, and illustrations to show the efforts of the newspaper in recognizing and addressing a public project. A cover letter detailing what was accomplished must be attached. Only one Public Service award is given in each class.

26. **SUNSHINE AWARD** Entries should include editorials, news stories or accounts of actions taken by the newspaper on the local level to gain access to governmental records or meetings. Entries can be composed of one article or a series of articles. Entries will be judged on the newspaper's ability to focus attention on the public's "right to know" by presenting information in an unbiased manner.

27. **GENERAL EXCELLENCE – MAIL ENTRY, LIMIT ONE** Submit three complete issues. Judges will evaluate them as a body of work and pick the top 3 in each division. Dailies: One issue from the week of November 21, 2024, one issue from the week of April 10, 2025, and one issue of your choice from the contest dates. Only one Sunday paper from the three entries is allowed.

Weeklies: One issue from November 2024, one issue from April 2025, and one issue of your choice from the contest dates.

Judging is weighted on the following criteria:

- Design and layout - 20 percent.
- Quality of writing - 20 percent.
- Advertising - 20 percent.
- Photos - 10 percent.
- Headlines - 10 percent.

- Front pages of sections - 10 percent; and
- Production quality - 10 percent.

## **Photography and Multimedia Categories**

28. GENERAL NEWS PHOTO Submit a digital copy of one example of a general news photo.

29. SPORTS PHOTO Submit a digital copy of one example of a sports photo.

30. FEATURE PHOTO Submit a digital copy of one example of a feature photo.

31. PHOTO SERIES Submit a digital copy of one full page of the published photo series covering a single event. The entry may feature photos by a single individual or by several individuals.

32. ONLINE PHOTO GALLERY Submit URL of online gallery of a single event or news story. If the gallery is behind a paywall, please provide password for judges to access.

33. BEST USE OF MULTIMEDIA The award will recognize excellence in using new media and social media to impact storytelling. Judges will consider the best presentation that supports storytelling and enhances the impact of the story with the use of multimedia; and must include, but is not limited to, audio, video, podcasts, photo galleries or animation as appropriate for the story. The entry can be a story that appeared on the web only but must include the use of multimedia. If the story also appeared in print, the story on the website must go beyond what appeared in the print edition to enhance the story.

Newspapers must submit URLs online from any date within the contest period. Each newspaper may submit up to two (2) entries. Each entry will consist of one (1) multimedia special project. (Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.) This category is not divided by classes. There will be a single weekly and a single daily category.

## **Advertising and Design Categories**

34. SELF-PROMOTION OR HOUSE AD This award will recognize excellence of the best newspaper staff-produced house ad and will be made to the person(s) who conceived and developed the idea. Examples include ads promoting readership, classified, effectiveness of ROP ads, and color promotion. Judges will consider originality and appearance of the ad, giving 50% weight to the ad idea, 25% to the copy and 25% to the layout and design. This category is not divided by classes. There will be a single weekly and a single daily category.

35. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN This award will recognize the overall excellence of a newspaper staff-produced advertising campaign and will be made to the person(s) responsible for conceiving and organizing the ad campaign. For the purpose of this contest, “ad campaign” is defined as a series of no less than 3 ads related to the SAME advertiser. Ads must have appeared in different issues of your newspaper, not necessarily consecutive. Judges will consider probable effects on the reader; statement by the advertiser as to the effects

of the series (this statement must be included, or entry will be deemed incomplete); and general appearance including design, typography and presswork. Agency ads are not eligible. Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. (Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.) Each individual may submit two (2) entries. One entry consists of a minimum of three (3) ads related to the same advertiser. Entrants must include a statement from the advertiser as to the effect of the series. This category is not divided by classes. There will be a single weekly and a single daily category.

**36. BEST USE OF ADVERTISING IN A SPECIAL SECTION** This award will recognize overall excellence in locally prepared display advertising in a special section. For advertising overall, judges will consider consistency in ad quality the number and variety of advertisers. Judges will consider: the probable total effect on the reader; the use of good design, typography and creativity in the ad; and the general appearance of display advertising throughout the issue. A newspaper may submit up to two (2) entries. This category is not divided by classes. There will be a single weekly and a single daily category.

**37. INNOVATIVE ONLINE ADVERTISING** This award will recognize excellence for a single online ad campaign including, but not limited to, button ads, banners, video and flash animation and will be awarded to the person(s) responsible for conceiving the ad campaign. Judges will consider creativity, effectiveness, impact, and a statement by the advertiser as to the effects of the campaign (this statement must be included, or entry will be deemed incomplete). Individuals: Submit PDF tear sheets and/or URLs online from any date within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate ad entries. One entry consists of up to 5 ads relating to the same advertiser. Entrants must include a statement from the advertiser as to the effect of the ads. (Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)

**38. DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY** Submit one copy each of three issues of your newspaper, chosen to emphasize the use of photos and graphics, editorial and advertising layout, printing reproduction, and overall appearance of the paper.

Dailies: Submit one issue from the week of October 10, 2024, and one from the week of March 13, 2025. The third issue date is your choice. Only one of the three issues can be a Sunday issue.

Weeklies: Submit one issue from October 2024 and one issue from March 2025. The third issue date is your choice.

**39. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT- BLACK AND WHITE** Submit a digital copy of any black and white retail advertisement. Ad must have been run in a printed publication. This category is not divided by classes. There will be a single weekly and a single daily category.

**40. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT – COLOR** Submit a digital copy of any color retail advertisement. Ad must have been run in a printed publication.

401. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN – DIGITAL Submit a digital copy of up to five examples of an advertising campaign by a single client. Ads can be black and white or color. This category is not divided by classes. There will be a single weekly and a single daily category.

42. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN – PRINT Submit a digital copy of up to five examples of an advertising campaign by a single client. Ads can be black and white or color. This category is not divided by classes. There will be a single weekly and a single daily category.

43. BEST WEB AD Submit an original web ad. Entries must be the work of member publication staff members; agency ads and **ads created out-of-house are not eligible**. Submit a screen grab of your home page with the URL visible. This category is not divided by classes. There will be a single weekly and a single daily category.

44. CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION Submit a digital copy of a full Classified Ad section from any date during the contest period. Page will be judged on readability, use of art and advertising as well as design.

45. BEST RATE CARD OR MARKETING KIT How do you promote your publication to advertisers? Submit a digital version of the most recent rate card or marketing kit. Judging based on design, information, ease of use and clear presentation of ad costs, circulation, days of publication and market demographics for the advertiser.

46. SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE Submit a digital copy. Judging based on originality, layout, copy and creativity. Ad can be in black and white or color and appear in any section throughout the newspaper.

47. OBITUARY PAGE Submit a digital copy of any one obituary page published in print during the contest period in which more than one obituary is printed. The page will be judged on readability, use of art and advertising as well as design.

48. BEST FRONT-PAGE DESIGN Submit a digital copy of a front-page design. The page will be judged based on a timeless design, bold approach visually and in content, strong voice, and consistency.

### **Circulation Categories**

49. NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION ON-LINE PROMOTION Submit a digital copy of an on-line newspaper subscription promotion. Include a description of how and when the promotion was used and documentation of how many new subscriptions occurred within the time the promotion was used and the following four weeks.

50. NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION PRINT PROMOTION Submit a digital copy of a print newspaper subscription promotion. Include a description of how and when the promotion was used and documentation of how many new subscriptions occurred within the time the promotion was used and the following four weeks.