



MAINE PRESS ASSOCIATION

2025 Better Newspaper Contest Rules

The contest is for work published by Maine Press Association members from **April 1, 2024**, to **March 31, 2025**. **The deadline for entry is May 30.** To enter, follow the instructions below:

1. Go to newspapercontest.com/maine.
2. Click “Register” and fill out the necessary information. The Association Code is MAINE.
3. You will receive an email to confirm your account and finish registration. Click the link in the email to complete your registration.
4. Follow the instructions on the homepage to submit each entry.
5. On the left-hand side of the screen, click “entry report.” Follow the instructions to pay online or by mail.
6. **MAIL** the completed Entry Form (including the name and email address of a judge for another association’s contest) and properly labeled paper entries for **two categories**:
 1. **General Excellence – Advertising**
 2. **General Excellence – Print**

to: MPA Better Newspaper Contest
P.O. Box 336 | 178 Mountain St.
Camden, ME 04843

To be eligible for the contest:

- 2025 membership dues must be paid
- Each entrant must submit a copy of their Oct. 2024 Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation or print run as applicable
- Each entrant must provide the name and email address of at least one judge for a reciprocating association's contest. One person may not serve as a judge for multiple entrants.
- All second-class newspapers must abide by state law regarding public notices, including the requirement to have a link to public notices on the homepage of the newspaper’s website

A base fee of \$100 pays for one entry per category. Newspapers may submit two additional entries in most categories and three additional entries in Photography/Design categories for an additional \$15 per entry. A brief statement, up to 50 words, may accompany any entry. Some categories require a statement for entry.

Questions? Email maine@newspapercontest.com. If necessary, call Contest Chair Maia Zewert at 563-3171 or MPA Executive Director Diane Norton at 691-0131.

This package must be postmarked by **May 30, 2025.**

NEWSPAPER DIVISIONS

- **Weekly 1:** Published fewer than five times per week with circulation or distribution from **one to 1,999**.
- **Weekly 2:** Published fewer than five times per week with circulation or distribution of **2,000 or more**.
Note: The weekly divisions are combined in certain categories, others may be combined if low entry count.
Online-only News Organizations: The Daily Bulldog and Pen Bay Pilot will compete in the Weekly 2 Division.
- **Daily:** Published five or more times per week.
Online-only News Organizations: The Maine Monitor and Maine Morning Star will compete in the Daily Division.
- **Weekend:** A daily newspaper's weekend edition, whether published on Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. This division only applies to the weekend General Excellence – Print category. Otherwise, all content is judged alongside work published in the Daily division.

CATEGORY RULES

Photography/Design

- Submit JPG files for photo categories
- Submit JPG or PDF files for Illustration/Graphic
- Submit PDF files only for Front Page Design and Specialty Page Design

Photography entries must be original work by staff members or freelancers. No digitally altered photos will be considered. All photo submissions must have been published in the newspaper or on the newspaper's website in the same form in which they are entered.

Advertising/Circulation

- Submit PDF files for all entries, except Supplement/Special Section
- Submit links for Supplement/Special Section
- Self-Promotion, Best Customized Advertising Solution, and Community Engagement Idea must include supporting statements

See category guidelines for details. Entries must be original work by staff members.

Writing

- Submit a link or PDF file. Links must be permanent and must lead to a publicly accessible website.
- Entries may include sidebars when they contribute to the completeness of the article.
- If a category calls for multiple entries, like two columns or three cartoons, enter all materials together as one entry. DO NOT submit each piece separately.
- **NEW:** In the event an article appears in multiple publications, it can only be entered by the author's "home" publication. If two or more newspapers collaborate on an article, the organizations must determine which publication may enter it in the contest.

Important: If the website has a paywall, login information must be included in the explanation field. Members will not receive refunds for inaccessible entries.

Sections

Submit PDF files. One entry only in each category. Each entry consists of three full sections. See category guidelines for details.

- **Editorial Page:** Submit one editorial page or section from **October 2024**, one from **March 2025**, and one of your choice.
- **Sports Page:** Submit pages or one section from **September 2024**, one from **February 2025**, and one of your choice. If your newspaper did not produce a sports section or pages for one of the mandatory weeks, you may submit the last sports section/pages prior to that week.

Online

- Submit links for video categories; Submit PDF files for Best Digital Ad Campaign

Special Categories

One entry only in each category. Please use caution to submit the correct editions for **General Excellence-Advertising**, and **General Excellence-Print**.

- **Freedom of Information:** This award honors newspapers that were champions of the public's right to know from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025. Awards will be given in the Daily/Weekend and Weekly divisions. Submit a statement, articles or editorials, and any other evidence of the newspaper's efforts.
- **General Excellence – Digital:** The Maine Press Association's highest honor for members' online publications. Submit the url at newspapercontest.com/maine. IMPORTANT: Members with paywalls must submit a username and password in the explanation field.

General Excellence – Advertising (Paper Entries Only)

The highest advertising honor the MPA gives each year to member newspapers. Awards will be given in the Daily/Weekend, Weekly 1, and Weekly 2 divisions.

Submit one full edition each with a stapled label from **April 2024**, one from **November 2024**, and a week of your choice.

General Excellence – Print | (Paper Entries Only)

The highest editorial honor the MPA gives each year to members' print publications. Awards will be given in the Daily, Weekend, Weekly 1, and Weekly 2 divisions.

- **Dailies and Weeklies:** Submit one full edition each with a stapled label, from **April 2024**, one from **November 2024**, one from and a week of your choice.
- **Weekend Newspapers:** Submit one full edition each with a stapled label, from a **weekend in April 2024**, a **weekend in November 2024**, and a weekend of your choice.

Best in Show – Photography: The judges will select one photo from among all entries. No separate entries will be accepted. Awards will be given in the Daily/Weekend, Weekly 1, and Weekly 2 categories.

Individual Awards

Email all nominations to maine@newspapercontest.com by **July 11, 2025**. Do not submit nominations with contest entries. Digital entries only, please.

- **Unsung Hero Award:** For any staff member, in any department, whose contributions to his or her newspaper/organization have been essential but often overlooked. Nominations may include examples of the nominee's work and letters from supervisors and/or co-workers detailing his or her contributions.
- **Advertising Person of the Year:** For an advertising employee whose work has been truly distinguished over the course of a year or years. Candidates may have established unique marketing plans or stood out through other measures, such as sales record. Work samples may be included with a nomination letter.
- **Bob Drake Young Writer's Award:** For a full-time employee of a Maine Press Association member with fewer than three years of full-time experience in journalism as of July 11, 2025. A letter from the staffer's supervisor must contain a review of the nominee's experience and accomplishments. School or college newspaper experience does not count as full-time experience. Entries will be evaluated on writing quality, enterprise, imagination, thoroughness, balance, and general reporting. As many as six articles may be submitted.
- **Journalist of the Year:** For an exceptional news employee whose work has been truly distinguished over the previous year or a period of years. A reasonable number of news clips, photographs, or other samples of work must be included with a cover letter from the nominee's editor or publisher. The nominee must be an employee of a member organization.
- **NEW! Mentor of the Year:** The MPA Mentor of the Year Award honors an employee at an MPA-member news organization who has offered support, encouragement or advice that has helped others in their organization grow or achieve in the news industry. Mentors from any newspaper division — advertising, circulation, newsroom, production and print shop — are eligible for the award. The nomination must include letter(s) from coworkers, employers and/or supervisors detailing how their mentorship has influenced others.

Note: If the number of entries is insufficient for any individual award, that award may not be given. In that case, any nominations will be held over for the following year.