

## 2021 Missouri Press Foundation Better Newspaper Contest General Rules & Categories

The 2021 Missouri Press Contest will be conducted online with procedures similar to the 2020 contest. The process is easy and should not discourage any newspapers from entering the contest. You will upload files (or links to bulky entries) to the contest template, and the judges will judge them online.

**REMINDER:** All categories for Missouri's 2021 Better Newspaper Contest require digital entries.

**Deadline:** Entries must be uploaded to the contest template by 11 p.m. Wednesday, March 31. (The template will close automatically at midnight Eastern Time on March 31, hence the 11 p.m. closing time for Missouri.)

If you need help entering any category, including those that previously required mailed-in entries, contact Matthew Barba ([mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com)) or Kristie Fortier ([kfortier@mopress.com](mailto:kfortier@mopress.com)) for assistance.

Upload entries in any of these formats: PDF, DOC, JPG, GIF, PNG. **NOTE: When an entry consists of more than one file, please combine them into a single file for uploading to the template, so the judge has to open only one file to see the entire entry.** (Separate PDF files can be combined easily into a single file.)

**NOTE:** Please try to keep file sizes under 5mb to aid judges in accessing entry content. For larger files such as Special Sections, options include Dropbox, Google Drive, Scribd or Issuu. Please make sure the file is public or a password is provided and that it can be printed. You cannot upload these large entries directly to the contest template because it has space limitations. If a file cannot be accessed for printing, it will not be displayed with other Better Newspaper Contest entries at the Annual Convention.

This year's contest has 47 Categories. With a few exceptions, each Category has six Circulation Classes, three each for Weeklies and Dailies (DAILIES Classes: 0-5,000; 5,001-15,000; 15,001 and over. WEEKLIES Classes: 0-2,000; 2,001-5,000; 5,001 and over).

Categories 43 and 44 have only one class.

New for 2021, Category 46, is for Dailies only.

The "Photo of the Year" award will continue for the 2021 contest. The award will be chosen from all first-place photo category winners, including news, sports and feature photos.

Members of the MPA Contest Committee made suggestions for changes and additions to this year's contest, including adding a new category highlighting newspapers' coverage of the coronavirus pandemic and another for dailies focusing on election coverage.

**The two new categories are:**

#### **46. BEST COVERAGE OF ELECTIONS (DAILIES)**

Limited to Dailies. An entry consists of a story, series, editorials, analysis, photographs, etc., about any election affecting the newspaper's coverage area. Entries should be comprised of any 3 consecutive news sections. Limit 2 entries. Awards go to the newspaper.

Judging criteria: Enterprise; quality coverage that goes beyond routine election reporting.

AND

#### **47. BEST COVID-19 COVERAGE**

Limit one entry per newspaper of three issues that include coverage of COVID-19, the coronavirus pandemic and/or the pandemic's effects on the newspaper's coverage area. Award goes to the newspaper. Separate categories for Weeklies and Dailies. Entries should be comprised of any 3 issues from the period March through December.

Judging criteria: All 3 issues are to be judged as one body of work. Consistent quality coverage of the pandemic; features, editorials and columns; photos and artwork; presentation.

Other changes for the 2021 BNC include removing language in Categories 25 and 28 regarding the timeframe for submitting entries. The new categories do not require entries be from specific issues, but they now stipulate that entries cannot include content from special sections.

The 2021 BNC will also continue allowing each contestant two free entries, as well as implementing a reduced fee structure for greater numbers of entries.

**For example:**

- If your publication submits a total of 10 entries, the total entry fee cost will be \$56, broken down as two free entries and eight entries at \$7 each.
- If your publication submits 11 entries, the total cost will be \$47.25, broken down as two free entries and nine entries at \$5.25 each.
- If your publication submits 51 entries, your total cost will be \$245, broken down as two free entries and 49 entries at \$5 each.

1. Newspapers must be ACTIVE, ACTIVE ONLINE, or FRIENDS OF members of Missouri Press Association to enter the contest.

2. Entries must have been published predominantly during 2020, but if an entry is a series or an on-going story and coverage includes content from 2019 or 2021, that content may be included.

3. Work must have been done by full- or part-time members of the newspaper staff. The same work may be entered in more than one category. Work done by third parties may be entered, but that work must have been done *exclusively* for the newspaper entering the material.

4. Your first two entries are free and the fee up to 10 entries is \$7 per entry. Publications entering between 11 and 50 entries will be charged \$5.25 per entry. Any contestant with 51 or more entries will be charged \$5 per entry.

You may call Missouri Press and provide credit card information (573-449-4167) or send a check payable to the Missouri Press Foundation.

You may also pay through Missouri Press Association's website. To use this method of payment, fill out the form here:

<https://mopress.wufoo.com/forms/zdxo2e81ib2pn4/>

5. Combination and group newspapers may submit separate entries in each category, but if the same content appears in more than one newspaper, only one paper may submit the content.

6. Upload entries to the template under your newspaper's name using the Code for your circulation class. You'll see the entry codes for each circulation class when you sign on to the contest template.

Missouri Press entered your newspaper into the contest template using the most recent circulation information reported to MPA. (DAILIES Classes: 0-5,000; 5,001-15,000; 15,001 and over. WEEKLIES Classes: 0-2,000; 2,001-5,000; 5,001 and over.) If you have concerns about your division, please contact [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com) or [kfortier@mopress.com](mailto:kfortier@mopress.com)

7. If a class in a category receives two or fewer entries, those entries will be moved into the next larger class.

8. Unless otherwise noted in the category descriptions, all entries are full-pages. The dateline on the page proves publication date. Entries should have 1-3-word titles that tell the judge precisely what material on the page is to be judged. The Title of a photo entry should include the date the photo was published, example: Car crash, 7-26-15; or Out at home, 4-15-15.

9. Judges will award and comment on first, second, third and, at their discretion, ONE honorable mention.

10. Gold Cups will be given to the newspapers that win the most points in each circulation class. Points will be awarded as follows:

General Excellence: 1st-12 points; 2nd-10 points; 3rd-8 points; HM-5 points

Community Service: 1st-10 points; 2nd-8 points; 3rd-6 points; HM-3 points

Investigative Reporting: 1st-10 points; 2nd-8 points; 3rd-6 points; HM-3 points

All Other Categories: 1st-6 points; 2nd-5 points; 3rd-4 points; HM-2 points

Detailed instructions for uploading your entries to the contest template will be provided when the template is open. If you have not yet done so, you are encouraged to begin gathering digital files of your entries now. You can submit your entries at any time after the template has been activated; you need not wait until the deadline to submit entries.

If you have questions, contact the MPA office in Columbia, (573) 449-4167, [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com) or [kfortier@mopress.com](mailto:kfortier@mopress.com)

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**NOTE: Entries should consist of one single file whenever possible. If a category calls for more than one piece, such as Best Front Page or Best Columnist, combine the pieces into a single file for uploading to the contest template. If your paper enters more than one entry in a category — say for columnists Smith and Jones — each entry should be a separate file. In other words, combine Smith’s columns into one file to upload, but don’t combine Smith’s columns with Jones’ columns.**

**EMAIL QUESTIONS TO [mbarba@mopress.com](mailto:mbarba@mopress.com) OR [kfortier@mopress.com](mailto:kfortier@mopress.com)**

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## **01. GENERAL EXCELLENCE**

Limit one entry. Award is made to the newspaper. **Weeklies:** Entry consists of 3 complete issues — 1 each from March and November and 1 issue of choice.

**Dailies:** 3 issues (only 1 of the 3 can be a Sunday or weekend issue) — 1 each from April and October and 1 issue of choice.

Judging criteria: All 3 issues are to be judged as one body of work. Judge the newspaper on: Breadth of news coverage—20 points; Quality of writing—10 points; Advertising Design and Layout—10; General Layout—10; Use of Photos and Artwork—10; Editorial Page—10; Front Page—10; Sports Page—10; Headline Language—5; Treatment of Public Notices—5.

## **02. BEST OVERALL DESIGN**

Limit one entry consisting of three issues. Award is made to the newspaper. An

evaluation of the overall design of the entire newspaper. **Weeklies:** 1 issue each from January and December and 1 of your choice. **Dailies:** 1 issue each from August and November and 1 of choice (only 1 of the 3 can be a Sunday or weekend edition).

Judging criteria: All 3 issues are to be judged as one body of work. Judge this category on the *consistent quality* of layout and design of all 3 issues of the *entire newspaper*, including typography, photography/graphics, white space, all design elements.

### **03. BEST FRONT PAGE**

Limit one entry consisting of three front pages. Award is made to the newspaper. Combine all 3 pages into a single file for uploading. **Weeklies:** 1 front page each from January, June and August. **Dailies:** 3 front pages from June.

Judging criteria: All 3 issues are to be judged as one body of work. *Design is a major element of this category, but not the only element.* Judge on the *consistent quality* of writing, layout, design, headlines, white space and other elements.

### **04. BEST BREAKING NEWS STORY**

The judges will decide how well the material fits into “breaking news.” Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person. For each entry, combine all content into a single file for uploading.

Judging criteria: Style and quality of writing and reporting on deadline.

### **05. BEST NEWS STORY**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person. Stories entered in the “Breaking News Story” category CANNOT also be entered in this category.

Judging criteria: Style and quality of writing and reporting.

### **06. BEST FEATURE STORY**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing; interest and impact; subject and composition.

### **07. BEST NEWS OR FEATURE SERIES**

A series of stories, including sidebars, on the same topic or with the same general theme, all in the same issue or in multiple issues. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Style and quality of writing and reporting; interest and impact; subject and presentation.

### **08. BEST EDITORIAL**

**Editorials only! Do not enter columns.** Weeklies category is called the Tilghman Cloud Memorial Editorial. Each single editorial shall constitute an entry. Award is made to the newspaper, not to the writer. Limit 4 entries per newspaper.

Judging criteria: Significance; clarity of style; power to influence opinion; sound

reasoning; writing quality.

#### **09. BEST HUMOROUS COLUMNIST**

#### **10. BEST SERIOUS COLUMNIST**

**Do not enter Editorials!** Columns must be regular features of the newspaper. One entry per writer in each category, Humorous and Serious. An entry consists of three columns. **Weeklies:** 2 columns from consecutive months and one of your choice.

**Dailies:** 2 columns from the same month and one of choice.

Judging criteria: We're looking for the **best columnist**, NOT the best single column. Judge consistent quality and style of writing in all 3 columns judged as a body of work; content, topic, effectiveness.

#### **11. BEST NEWS PHOTOGRAPH**

#### **12. BEST FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH**

**13. BEST SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH** (A game action photo showing a player or players making or failing to make plays. This is not a game or play reaction photo.)

**14. BEST SPORTS FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH** (NOTE: This is NOT a game action photo. It should be a sports related, human-interest photo. Game action photos should be entered in category 13, Best Sports Photograph) No more than 6 entries per newspaper per category; no more than 4 entries per person per category.

Upload the JPG files or PDFs of the images. If a photo appeared in print, include a PDF of the page where the photo was published. You can upload the photo as a separate file, in addition to the page PDF. The Title of a photo entry should include the date the photo was published, example: Car crash, 7-26-15; or Out at home, 4-15-15.

Judging criteria: Composition, cropping, impact.

#### **15. BEST PHOTO ILLUSTRATION**

Photo Illustrations are *staged or manipulated photographs* created to illustrate a story or ad. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person. Upload the JPG files or PDFs of the images. The Title of a photo entry should include the date the photo was published, example: Vegetable face, 7-26-15.

Judging criteria: Entries in this category are staged photos. Judge the concept, creativity, composition and impact. Disregard photos that should be in the News, Sports or Feature Photo category.

#### **16. BEST PHOTO PACKAGE**

Two or more photos relating to the same subject, on one or more pages. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person. Upload the entire pages, not individual photos.

Judging criteria: Quality of photographs; layout; story, headlines, captions.

#### **17. COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Submit projects — reporting, programs, activities, sponsorships, special events —

that extend over and above the routine community service mission of the newspaper. The projects should have occurred substantially during the contest period. Limit of 2 entries per newspaper. Entries should convey the newspaper's activity and any public involvement or response generated by this community service. Awards go to the newspaper. (Enter Newspaper In Education projects in the NIE category.) Judging criteria: Importance of project, depth of research and reporting, involvement of the community, use of pictures and editorials, general appeal.

### **18. BEST EDITORIAL PAGES**

One entry per newspaper consisting of pages from three issues. Award goes to the newspaper. **Weeklies:** Editorial pages from 1 issue each from April and September and 1 of choice. **Dailies:** 1 issue each from May and October and 1 of choice. Judging criteria: All 3 issues are to be judged as one body of work. Power of original editorial matter; layout and design of pages; quality of content; informational value.

### **19. BEST SPORTS PAGES**

One entry per newspaper. Award goes to the newspaper. **Weeklies:** Sports pages from 1 issue each in October and January and 1 issue of choice. **Dailies:** Pages from 1 issue each in November and January and 1 of choice (only 1 may be a Sunday or weekend issue).

Judging criteria: All 3 issues are to be judged as one body of work. Quality of writing; layout, design and photography; scope of content; headlines; local features and columns.

### **20. BEST SPORTS NEWS STORY OR PACKAGE**

Entries may include sidebars. "Package" refers to stories and sidebars about the same subject that may appear in the same issue or in more than one issue. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality and style of writing.

### **21. BEST SPORTS FEATURE STORY**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality and style of writing.

### **22. BEST SPORTS COLUMNIST**

An entry shall consist of three columns, two from consecutive months and one of choice. One entry per writer.

Judging criteria: We're looking for the **best columnist**, NOT the best single column. Judge consistent quality and style of writing in all 3 columns judged as a body of work.

### **23. BEST NEWS or FEATURE SPECIAL SECTION**

Upload PDF or provide URL of complete special section. Limit of 4 entries per

newspaper.

Judging criteria: Advertising can be considered in the Overall Quality of the special section, but this is not an advertising category. Judge content, cover design, overall quality.

#### **24. BEST INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING**

A story or series showing enterprise reporting beyond the routine. Limit 4 entries per newspaper.

Judging criteria: Enterprise and ingenuity in gathering information; quality and style of writing and reporting; local significance; use of headlines; treatment of the story relative to its importance.

#### **25. BEST LOCAL BUSINESS COVERAGE**

Limit one entry per newspaper of pages from three issues. Entry need not be "Business" pages. Entry cannot include content from special sections. Award goes to the newspaper.

Judging criteria: All 3 issues are to be judged as one body of work. Consistent quality coverage of business news; features and columns; photos and artwork; presentation.

#### **26. BEST BUSINESS STORY**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing; lead; significance.

#### **27. BEST COVERAGE OF GOVERNMENT**

An entry consists of a story, series, editorials, analysis, photographs, etc., about the same topic related to government, such as a project, controversy, issue or election. Limit 2 entries. Awards go to the newspaper.

Judging criteria: Enterprise; quality coverage that goes beyond routine government reporting.

#### **28. BEST COVERAGE OF RURAL LIFE OR AGRICULTURE**

An entry consists of stories, editorials, analysis, photographs, etc., related to rural living or agriculture taken from three issues. Entry cannot include content from special sections. Awards go to the newspaper.

Judging criteria: Consistent, quality coverage of the topic.

#### **29. BEST STORY ABOUT RURAL LIFE OR AGRICULTURE**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing and reporting.

#### **30. BEST STORY ABOUT RELIGION**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing and reporting.

### **31. BEST STORY ABOUT EDUCATION**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing and reporting.

### **32. BEST STORY ABOUT THE OUTDOORS**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing and reporting.

### **33. BEST STORY ABOUT HISTORY**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing and reporting.

### **34. BEST MILITARY STORY**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing and reporting.

### **35. BEST PAGE DESIGN**

**Do not enter page 1A in this category.** Any one page or story — other than page 1A — demonstrating creativity of layout and design. Up to 4 entries per paper. (If the design involves more than one page, all pages should be submitted.)

Judging criteria: Layout and design of page(s) or story other than page 1A, including all design elements.

### **36. BEST INFORMATION GRAPHIC**

Maps, charts, diagrams or other freehand or computer-generated graphics used to provide, explain or clarify information. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Originality, craftsmanship, presentation of information, clarity of message of the graphic.

### **37. BEST EDITORIAL CARTOON**

Submit full pages containing the cartoons. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person. Cartoons must have been created initially for the newspaper submitting the entry.

Judging criteria: Originality, presentation, clarity of message.

### **38. BEST NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION PROJECT**

Rather than the newspaper's NIE program for the year, entries consist of NIE projects or features. Limit 2 entries per newspaper. Entry may include a letter of explanation about the project or feature.

Judging criteria: Originality, creativity, presentation.

### **39. BEST ONLINE NEWSPAPER OR WEBSITE:**

Submit the web address of your website. Provide a password to allow the judge to gain access to all areas of your website.

Judging criteria: ORIGINALITY, graphic appeal, ease of use, LOCAL content, advertising, overall utility.

### **40. BEST VIDEO**

Submit links to original news or advertising video clips, including promotions of the newspaper, produced during the year. URLs may be provided for archived copies of the video clips, or you may upload videos to YouTube and provide links to them.

Limit of 4 entries per newspaper.

Judging criteria: Quality, value and impact of video.

### **41. BEST HEADLINE WRITING**

One entry per newspaper consisting of 5 headlines. Award goes to the newspaper.

**Weeklies & Dailies:** 5 headlines of choice published during the year. Entries should be submitted with file names using key words of the headlines to be judged.

Judging criteria: All 5 headlines are to be *judged as a body of work* on accurate description of the story, word selection, creativity and overall impact.

### **42. BEST NEWS OR FEATURE OBITUARY**

No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than 4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing and reporting.

### **43. MULTI-MEDIA REPORTING**

One entry per newspaper. This can be a breaking news or a non-deadline subject.

All content should be collected in one PDF document and uploaded through the contest template. Package may include links to or representative materials from coverage across platforms, including print, online, social media, mobile, video, audio, slideshows, music, etc.

Judging criteria: See category description. All content from a newspaper is a single entry. Innovative use of original content in a variety of formats, reader interaction, ease of navigation and value to the reader.

### **44. MAGAZINE/ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATION**

A publication that has a unique title and is distributed differently than the regular newspaper. Publications that are distributed as inserts are not eligible and should be entered in the special sections category (23). The product must be published at least quarterly. Include three editions for judging.

Judging criteria: Entries are judged as a body of work on quality of writing, design, creativity and overall impact.

### **45. BEST HEALTH STORY**

Entries may include sidebars. No more than 6 entries per newspaper; no more than

4 entries per person.

Judging criteria: Quality of writing and reporting.

#### **46. BEST COVERAGE OF ELECTIONS (DAILIES)**

Limited to Dailies. An entry consists of a story, series, editorials, analysis, photographs, etc., about any election affecting the newspaper's coverage area. Entries should be comprised of any 3 consecutive news sections. Limit 2 entries. Awards go to the newspaper.

Judging criteria: Enterprise; quality coverage that goes beyond routine election reporting.

#### **47. BEST COVID-19 COVERAGE**

Limit one entry per newspaper of three issues that include coverage of COVID-19, the coronavirus pandemic and/or the pandemic's effects on the newspaper's coverage area. Award goes to the newspaper. Separate categories for Weeklies and Dailies. Entries should be comprised of any 3 issues from the period March through December.

Judging criteria: All 3 issues are to be judged as one body of work. Consistent quality coverage of the pandemic; features, editorials and columns; photos and artwork; presentation.

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