

2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

EDITORIAL/MULTIMEDIA/PHOTOGRAPHY DIVISION

Welcome to the 2025 Better Newspaper Competition - New England's largest and most comprehensive journalism recognition program. NENPA members from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont are invited to enter.

In this packet you will find all of the information necessary to prepare your **editorial, multimedia and photography** entries, including a list of competitive categories, complete rules and guidelines, and the criteria that each contest category will be judged upon. **You can find additional information on preparing entries - such as how to make PDF files smaller, extract particular pages, and how to combine several PDF files - in the [Frequently Asked Questions page at the end of this packet.](#)**

Work published by news organizations during the **August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025** contest year is eligible for this competition.

The Better Newspaper Competition includes three divisions:

- **Editorial/Multimedia/Photography**
- Advertising/Circulation/Promotion
- College/University Division

The deadline to submit entries is **Friday, October 31, 2025.**

Awards will be presented during the annual New England Newspaper Convention (date and location to be announced.)

We wish you the very best of luck in this year's competition! If questions come up while preparing your entries please email L.Conway@nenpa.com or T.Cleary@nenpa.com

2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

EDITORIAL/MULTIMEDIA/PHOTOGRAPHY RULES AND GUIDELINES

To submit entries, go to www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa and register.
Please enter association code: **NENPA**

1. COMPETITION YEAR

The competition is open to all NENPA members. Work published between August 1, 2024 and July 31, 2025 is eligible. A series that starts before the cut off date but continues beyond that date is eligible in its entirety.

2. DEADLINES

Entries should be uploaded by **October 31, 2025**.

3. ELIGIBILITY

All NENPA member newspapers in good standing are eligible to enter the competition. ***Please be sure that your NENPA dues are up to date in order to enter. It's not too late to join—contact us!***

4. NEWSPAPER GROUPS

Newspaper groups entering an item that appeared in more than one of its publications may enter it only once. If the item ran in newspapers in different circulation classes, it should be entered by the paper in the highest circulation class.

5. CIRCULATION CLASSES

Circulation class is determined by your most recently published circulation figure.

Circulation classes are defined as:

Daily 1 - up to 12,999 weekday circulation

Daily 2 - 13,000+ weekday circulation

Weekly 1 - up to 4,999 weekly circulation

Weekly 2 - 5,000+ weekly circulation

Specialty and Niche Publications

News Services and Online News Sites

6. INDIVIDUAL ENTRIES

Individuals whose work was published in a NENPA member publication may submit their own additional entries if the newspaper has not already submitted the work.

7. COST

- An overall competition entry fee of \$25 per newspaper is required, plus \$22 for each entry.
- If your paper is entering multiple divisions the \$25 newspaper entry fee only has to be paid once.

NENPA will generate and send an invoice after the final contest deadline.

8. INSUFFICIENT ENTRIES

If not enough entries are received in any category, the staff reserves the right to combine circulation classes and/or change the number of awards given.

Questions? Contact us at L.Conway@nenpa.com

2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

EDITORIAL/MULTIMEDIA/PHOTOGRAPHY DIVISION

The Editorial/Multimedia/Photography division consists of **89** competitive categories.

Newspapers are eligible to compete in six classes:

- ◆ Dailies with circulation under 13k;
- ◆ Weeklies with circulation under 5k;
- ◆ Specialty and niche publications
- ◆ Dailies with circulation more than 13k
- ◆ Weeklies with circulation more than 5k
- ◆ News Services and Online News Sites

NEWS REPORTING

Arts and Entertainment Reporting
Business/Economic Reporting
Climate Change or Weather Reporting
Crime and Courts Reporting
Critics Award (NEW)
Education Reporting
Energy News & Reporting
Environmental Reporting
General News Story
Good News Award (NEW)
Government Reporting
Health Reporting
History Reporting
Home & Garden Reporting (NEW)
Housing News (NEW)
Human Interest Feature Story
Immigration Coverage (NEW)
Investigative Reporting
Local Election Coverage
Local Personality Profile
Obituaries
Protest and Demonstration Coverage (NEW)
Racial, Ethnic or Gender Issue Coverage
Reporting on Religious Issues
Science/Technology Reporting
Social Issues Feature Story
Sports Feature Story
Sports Story
Spot News Story
Transportation Reporting
Community/Audience Involvement
Headline Writing
Press Freedom or Right-to-Know

PAGES AND SECTIONS

Arts and Entertainment Section
Business Page or Section
Editorial/Commentary Page
Event Special Section
Food Page or Section
Front Page
Living Page or Section
Special Section or Editorial Supplement
Sports Section
Special Sports Section

EDITORIAL

Editorial Writing
Commentary
Editorial Cartoon

COLUMNS

Humor Columnist
Political Columnist
Serious Columnist
Sports Columnist

DESIGN

Illustration/Infographics
Overall Design and Presentation Print Publication
Overall Design and Presentation Special Section
Overall Design and Presentation Niche Product

DIGITAL PUBLISHING

Multimedia Coverage
Website Interactivity and Engagement
Best Infographic on Website
Outstanding Newsletter
Best Website Home Page
Best Overall Website
Best Podcast
News Video
Sports Video
Entertainment or Feature Video
Social Media Engagement
Social Media Portfolio (NEW)

PHOTOJOURNALISM

Contemporary Issues Photo
Feature Photo
General News Photo
News Feature Photo
Personality Photo
Photo Series
Pictorial Photo
Photo Story
Portrait Photo
Sports Action Photo
Sports Feature Photo
Spot News Photo
Photo Illustration

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

250th Celebration Coverage (NEW)
Combating Misinformation and Restoring Trust
Excellence in Newsroom Collaboration/Partnerships
Best Solutions Journalism Project
Innovator Award
Best Niche Publication
Rookie of the Year
Reporter of the Year
Photojournalist of the Year
General Excellence

PLEASE NOTE: Papers have no limit on number of entries per category, except in General Excellence

2025 NEW ENGLAND BETTER NEWSPAPER COMPETITION

EDITORIAL/MULTIMEDIA/PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITIVE CRITERIA

To submit entries, go to
www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa
 Please enter association code: **NENPA**

NOTE: All entries must be the work of the newspaper - its staff and contractors. Material from syndicated services, wire services, etc. are not eligible for the newspaper to submit as their own work.

REPORTING

Arts & Entertainment Reporting - Judges will be looking for lively, readable coverage on the local arts and entertainment scene.

Business/Economic Reporting - Judges will be asked to consider coverage and analysis of an aspect of business that is relevant to the local community.

Crime and Courts Reporting - Judges will be asked to consider the quality of reporting, writing and insightful analysis of a crime or trial that affected the local community. Entries may consist of a single article or series of articles that are part of ongoing coverage.

Critics Award - An article, essay, column or review on any entertainment or culture topic, including (but not limited to) theatre, book, music, movie, and dining reviews. Entries must be written by full- or part-time members of the newspaper staff, or written exclusively for the newspaper submitting the entry

Education Reporting - Recognizing coverage leading to better public, parent and student understanding of all levels of local public or private education (preschool, elementary, secondary or college). The entry may be a single article or a series of articles that has evoked greater citizen awareness and participation (i.e., letters to the editors, citizen action/reaction, school participation, etc.). Judges will be asked to consider overall impact, quality of writing and support material.

Energy News & Reporting - Judges will be asked to consider the quality, accuracy and context of reporting on the energy industry as well as effects on the local community. Entries may consist of a single article or series of articles that are part of ongoing coverage.

Environmental Reporting - Judges will be asked to consider the quality of your coverage and analysis of an environmental issue that is important to the local community.

General News Story - Judges will be asked to consider the quality of the reporting and writing, and the significance of the story, as well as its presentation.

Good News Award - For outstanding journalism that highlights the uplifting, heartwarming, and hopeful stories that remind us of the good in the world. Whether spotlighting acts of kindness, everyday heroes, resilient communities, or creative solutions, these stories should be thoughtfully reported and beautifully told. Judges will look for originality, emotional resonance, and storytelling that goes beyond clichés—leaving readers informed, inspired, and maybe even smiling.

Government Reporting - A story or series that focuses on local or state government news or issues. Judges will be asked to consider how well the report clarified governmental process for the reader, depth of coverage and quality of writing.

Health Reporting - Recognizing a story or series that leads to better understanding of a health issue. Judges will be asked to consider the quality of your coverage and analysis of a health issue that is important to the local community.

History Reporting - This is an award for publishing historical information that is relevant to the local community. Judges will be asked to consider the quality and clarity of the writing and presentation.

Home & Garden Writing - This award honors home and garden writing that combines creativity, service, and storytelling to inspire and inform readers. It recognizes work that offers fresh perspectives on how people live, design, and grow—whether through practical advice, design features, cultural insight, or profiles of local homes and gardens. Entries should demonstrate excellence in writing, visual presentation, and relevance to contemporary lifestyles,

Housing News - This category highlights impactful coverage of housing-related issues such as affordability, development, zoning, homelessness, displacement, tenants' rights, and the politics and economics of housing. It recognizes journalism that delivers clear, in-depth coverage relevant to the local community.

Human Interest Feature Story - A descriptive story that focuses more on people, places or things rather than issues. Judges will be asked to consider choice of topic, quality of writing, and the presentation.

Immigration Coverage —This award honors outstanding journalism that illuminates the complexities of immigration with accuracy, depth, and humanity. It recognizes work that elevates underrepresented voices, holds institutions accountable, and deepens public understanding of immigration issues through ethical, impactful, and innovative storytelling. Entries will be judged on journalistic rigor, quality and clarity of writing, and importance to the local community.

Investigative Reporting - Entries should include a cover letter detailing efforts required to develop and substantiate the story or series, and any results or follow up. Judges will be asked to consider worthiness of subject and quality of reporting — including the use of multiple sources, data, quotes, clarity of writing and depth of information.

Local Election Coverage - Entries should include stories, features, candidate profiles, editorials, letters to the editor, etc. published during the period of up to six weeks prior to the election until two weeks after the election. Judges will be asked to consider the quality of writing and depth of coverage, as well as the presentation of the information.

Local Personality Profile - A story about an interesting local person in the community. Judges will be asked to consider the choice of subject, quality of writing and presentation.

Obituaries - Each entry should consist of an outstanding staff-produced obituary about a local resident. Judges will consider how interesting and engaging the commemorative article is, based on the writing style, graphic elements (print or digital), background research and community voices quoted that let readers better know and/or appreciate the person who passed away.

Protest and Demonstration Coverage— Honoring excellence in local journalism that covers protests and civil demonstrations with depth, integrity, and impact. It recognizes journalists and newsrooms that bring attention to community voices, uncover the roots of civic unrest, and provide accurate, courageous, and ethically sound reporting—often under challenging or high-risk conditions. Entries should reflect a strong commitment to fairness, context, and storytelling that elevates public understanding.

Racial, Ethnic or Gender Issue Coverage - A story that heightens awareness of a racial, ethnic or gender community and its issues. Foreign language entries should be accompanied by an English translation. Judges will be asked to consider news value, quality and sensitivity of writing, and presentation.

Reporting on Religious Issues - A story on relevant religious news or issues. Judges will be asked to consider clarity, depth and news value.

Science/Technology Reporting - Judges will be asked to consider the quality of writing, analysis and presentation of a science issue or new discovery/technology that affects the local community.

Social Issues Feature Story - A story which focuses more on issues than on individuals. Judges will be asked to consider the quality of writing, depth of analysis, and the presentation.

Sports Feature Story - This award recognizes a descriptive story which focuses more on people, events or issues in any sport. Judges will be asked to consider choice of topic, the quality of writing, and presentation.

Sports Story - The story can be about any sport, athlete or team at any level. Judges will be asked to consider the quality/originality of the subject matter and its treatment.

Spot News Story - Spot news refers to an unexpected event, such as a fire, accident or disaster of any kind, for which there is no advance assignment or planning. Judges will be asked to consider the quality of reporting, writing and presentation. A letter of explanation may be submitted with the entry.

Transportation Reporting - Recognizing a story or series about transportation issues or related developments. Judges will be asked to consider the quality of writing, timeliness, comprehensiveness, and the presentation of the subject matter.



Community/Audience Involvement - This entry should consist of one idea used in your paper on a regular basis that allows members of the community to be involved with and have input into the paper. Items that are written or produced by local members of the community who receive payment for them are not eligible. Examples of possible entries are: guest columns, man-on-the-street commentaries, “speak out” phoned-in editorial remarks, school page produced by local students, etc. Please submit a letter with the entry explaining how often the feature or column appears, how the public is invited to participate and how great is the response received from the public. Judges will be asked to consider general interest to the community and presentation. This category also includes online community involvement. Please include a letter of explanation and any relevant URLs or screen shots for the judges to consider.

Headline Writing - Each entry submitted should be for an outstanding headline written for a single story, and must include the story. Judges will be asked to consider effectiveness of the headline in telling the story, fairness in the headline’s representation of the story content, colorful use of words, appropriate size for space and story.

Press Freedom or Right-to-Know Award - Given to a newspaper or individual for a story, series, editorial or for a body of work that shows a clear pattern of perseverance in defending the public’s right to know and the freedom of the press guaranteed in the First Amendment, and/or for an unfailing insistence that government and others conduct the public’s business in an open fashion.

Climate Change or Weather Reporting - Judges will be asked to consider the quality of writing and depth of coverage of weather events or climate change and its impact. Entries may consist of a single article or series of articles that are part of ongoing coverage.

PAGES AND SECTIONS

Entries should consist of the entire page or section. If an entry is more than one page, all pages should be submitted in one document. All entries published in your print edition should be in the form of a full page or section tearsheet. If submitting a component of your entry published on a digital platform please submit screenshots along with a URL.

Online-only publications: *along with your URL, submit at least one link or pdf to a stand-out story in that specific section.*

Each submission should be a single pdf that includes all pages—please do not submit every page separately.

Arts and Entertainment Section - Judges will be looking for lively, readable coverage and critique of the local arts and entertainment scene.

Business Page or Section - Judges will be asked to consider the depth and breadth of coverage of business news that is relevant to the local community.

Editorial/Commentary Page - Please include your entire op-ed or commentary page as your entry. Judges will be asked to consider variety, imagination, local focus, quality of writing, significance/effectiveness of editorials, columns, feature stories and overall impact of editorial page(s).

Event Special Section - This category recognizes special sections that promote events of interest to your readers and community. Judges will be asked to consider the audience appeal, creativity in your approach, quality of writing, feature stories and overall presentation of section.

Food Page or Section - Judges will be looking for lively, readable coverage of cooking and food-related topics.

Front Page - Judges will be asked to consider story/content selection, makeup, design, typography, general appearance, use of headlines and subheads in relationship to stories, and effective, dramatic use of photography.

Living Page or Section - Judges will be asked to consider breadth of coverage, quality of writing, feature choice/treatment, readability, editing, columns, headlines, photos, illustrations and overall presentation of the page or section.

Special Section or Editorial Supplement - The supplement may cover any subject as long as it is published as an addition to the newspaper, but yet as a part of the newspaper package (publications that are distributed separately outside the newspaper are not eligible, those items should be submitted **as specialty/ niche publications**). All editorial copy must be written by full- or part-time members of the newspaper staff, or written exclusively for the newspaper submitting the entry. Judges will be asked to consider: topic choice and reader interest, quality of writing, presentation and section structure.

Sports Section - Judges will be asked to consider your overall sports offering, its breadth and depth of coverage, quality of writing, photography and presentation.

Special Sports Section - This category recognizes special sports packages, as opposed to the regular version of the sports section that the newspaper publishes throughout the year. Typical examples include season previews, playoff sections, expanded championship coverage, tributes, etc. Judges will be asked to consider the audience appeal of the section's subject matter, the creativity in your approach, quality of coverage, writing, photography and presentation.

EDITORIAL

Editorial Writing - Entry should consist of **three (3)** editorials. Editorials must be written by full- or part-time members of the newspaper staff, or written exclusively for the newspaper submitting the entry. Judges will be asked to consider quality of writing, fairness, significance of subject matter and demonstrated local importance.

Commentary - Entry should consist of a single example of outstanding news commentary, such as an op-ed, news analysis, editorial opinion column, explanatory or outlook piece, etc. Entries must be written by full- or part-time members of the newspaper staff, or written exclusively for the newspaper submitting the entry. Judges will be asked to consider the quality of writing and presentation, significance of the subject matter, and the article's potential to interest readers and stimulate thought.

Editorial Cartoon - Entry should consist of an editorial cartoon that has appeared on a news, feature, editorial page or in a column. Cartoon must address a local subject and must have been created exclusively for the newspaper. The cartoon must be accompanied by the full page it ran on or a brief supporting letter of explanation. Judges will be asked to consider the effectiveness of how the message is communicated and the cartoonist's skill.

COLUMNS

Humor Columnist - Entry should consist of **two (2)** columns. The columns must be written on a regularly scheduled basis by a full- or part-time member of the newspaper staff, or written exclusively for the newspaper

submitting the entry. Entries must be regular columns, not feature stories. Judges will be asked to consider quality of writing and entertainment value.

Political Columnist - Entry should consist of **two (2)** columns in regard to news and politics. The columns must be written on a regularly scheduled basis by a full- or part-time member of the newspaper staff, or written exclusively for the newspaper submitting the entry. Entries must be regular columns, not feature stories. Judges will be asked to consider quality of subject matter, insight and analysis as well as illuminating or entertaining value.

Serious Columnist - Entry should consist of **two (2)** columns. The columns must be written on a regularly scheduled basis by a full- or part-time member of the newspaper staff, or written exclusively for the newspaper submitting the entry. Entries must be regular columns, not feature stories. Judges will be asked to consider quality of subject matter, reporting and writing.

Sports Columnist - Entry should consist of **two (2)** columns. The columns must be written on a regularly scheduled basis by a full- or part-time member of the newspaper staff or written exclusively for the newspaper submitting the entry. The entry must be a regular column, not a feature story. Judges will be asked to consider the quality of the subject matter, reporting and writing.

DESIGN

Illustration/Infographics - Recognizing artwork other than photographs or editorial cartoons that is used to tell, explain or clarify a story through the use of illustrations, maps, charts, diagrams or other graphics. Please include a tearsheet or screenshot of digital work and any accompanying story with this entry.

Overall Design and Presentation (print newspaper) - Upload ONE COMPLETE ISSUE within the contest year. Judges will be asked to consider general makeup and layout (use of photos, illustrations, arrangement of stories, etc.), effective use of headlines, body type and readability. ***Each submission should be a single pdf that includes all pages—please do not submit every page separately.***

Overall Design and Presentation (special section) -

Upload ONE COMPLETE SPECIAL SECTION within the contest year. Judges will be asked to consider general makeup and layout of section (use of photos, illustrations, arrangement of stories, etc.), effective use of headlines, body type and readability. Special Sections should have been a part of the newspaper, not a separate product.

Each submission should be a single pdf that includes all pages—please do not submit every page separately.

Overall Design and Presentation (niche product) -

Upload ONE COMPLETE NICHE PRODUCT within the contest year. Judges will be asked to consider general makeup and layout of section (use of photos, illustrations, arrangement of stories, etc.), effective use of headlines, body type and readability. Niche publications should have been published outside of the regular publication. ***Each submission should be a single pdf that includes all pages—please do not submit every page separately.***

DIGITAL PUBLISHING

Multimedia Coverage - This category recognizes a packaged news story of any type that creatively and effectively incorporates multimedia components in its presentation – including print, photography, audio and/or video, slides, exhibits, reader interaction, etc. Please submit a note that describes the effort to report the story and the rationale for the formats used, along with tearsheets and URL.

Website Interactivity and Engagement - This award recognizes newspaper sites that feature compelling visuals, are easy to navigate and effectively integrate news and advertising. Judges will look for a content strategy that best engages the audience in ways that attract more visitors to the site, promotes more time spent with content on the site, and increases audience satisfaction with the site. Please submit your URL along with a note that outlines your goals and content strategy, as well as evidence that your plan is working (i.e., metrics, growth, reader engagement, etc.)

Outstanding Newsletter - Recognizing newsletters that grow, support and enhance news products. Judges will be asked to consider if the product increases audience engagement while sharing value-added content. Submit three (3) editions of your newsletter with a letter describing your strategy, targeted audience and reader engagement details.

Best Infographic on a Website - Recognizing effective use of visual representations used to tell, explain or clarify a story through eye-catching and impactful graphic(s). Please submit a link to view the infographic online along with a statement identifying the topic or accompanying story with this entry.

Best Website Home Page - Equivalent to the front page of a newspaper, the judges will consider the quality of Home Page headlines, sub-headlines, primary calls-to-action, supporting images, social channel integration, advertising integration, user experience, navigation, and overall layout and content offered.

Best Overall Website - Entries will be judged on content quality, timeliness of information, presentation and visual appeal, ease of navigation, usability, use of photos and/or graphics, use of links to other sites, integration of advertising, and overall value to the audience. Please submit your URL (including a password if required). Judges will view sites on a random day that will be stipulated by NENPA.

Best Podcast - This category recognizes journalistic storytelling told through a podcast on newspaper websites. Judges will consider quality of subject matter that educates, inspires and/or entertains. Entries may be an individual episode or one of a series within the contest year. A supporting description may be submitted

News Video - This category recognizes the best news video on newspaper websites. Judges will consider the quality of the content, the production quality of the piece, and how well it conveyed the story.

Entertainment or Feature Video - Recognizing the best entertainment or feature video on newspaper websites, including personality, business profiles, community events, tributes, or videos related to feature topics such as food, travel, health or home improvement, etc. Judges will consider the quality of the content, the production quality of the piece, and how well it conveyed the story.

Sports Video - This category recognizes the best sports-related video on newspaper websites. Judges will consider the quality of the content, the production quality of the piece, and how well it conveyed the story.

Social Media Engagement - This award recognizes demonstrated high audience engagement on social media platforms reporting, stories and projects published on social media platforms that demonstrate outstanding audience engagement. Entries in this category may include reporting repackaged specifically for social media or original content created solely for a social media audience. Entries may include text, photography, audio, video, or data visualization. Judges will evaluate journalistic excellence, execution of the engagement strategy, and overall impact.

Social Media Portfolio - This category recognizes consistent outstanding storytelling published on your newsroom's social media channels. Judges will consider creative and effective use of multimedia elements such as video, audio, photography, graphics, and more. Submit three examples from platforms like TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, or others that show your best work.

PHOTOJOURNALISM CATEGORIES

Submission Guidelines

- All entries must be the work of the newspaper staff or its contractors. Photos from syndicated services, wire services, etc. are not eligible. Entries must have appeared either in print or on the newspaper's website during the contest year. A paper may enter photos from as many photographers as it wishes. ***A series of photos may be entered in only the Photo Series and Photo Story categories, but photos entered as part of a series may also be entered as individual photos in other categories.***
- All entries must be submitted as JPEG files .
- **Tearsheets** - In addition to the JPEG, each entry MUST be accompanied by a digital tearsheet of the published page.
- If the image appeared online only, a screenshot and/ or a link to the image must be provided.

Contemporary Issues Photo - Any photo that portrays the most critical issues we face that have altered lives, perspective or behavior. Examples include: environment, climate change, human rights, guns, violence, homelessness, etc.

Feature Photo - Any photo showing an unusual event, item or person, (not necessarily of a specific news event) or an unusual photo of a commonplace event, item or person.

General News Photo - Any photo of a community happening that is known, assigned and planned for in advance, such as political rallies, town meetings, drum and bugle corps competition, etc.

News Feature Photo - A photo that occurs in the public domain. It can be at a news event but it can also be a stand alone photo.

Personality Photo - Any photo of a person or group of people, whose point is to tell, photographically, who the people are, what they are like, and why they are newsworthy.

Photo Series - Two or more photographs relating to the same subject that were published over several editions relating to the same subject.

Pictorial Photo - Any photo of natural scenery, buildings or street scenes, etc. in which the emphasis is on the overall scene rather than people or news events.

Photo Story - Two or more images that are taken and tell a story from beginning to end.

Portrait Photo - An image of a person or a personality that is the focus of the photo.

Photo Illustration - A picture produced from a preconceived idea and intended to clarify or dramatize non-visual or editorial concepts -- including, but not limited to, food and fashion.

Sports Feature Photo - A sports-related feature photo captured outside the action of the game.

Sports Action Photo - An action photo that captures the spirit of a sports competition.

Spot News Photo - Photos of unexpected news events, such as fires, accidents, unrest or disasters of any kind, for which there is no advance assignment or planning.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

250th Celebration Coverage—This award recognizes outstanding journalism that explores and illuminates the significance of America's 250th anniversary. Entries should demonstrate journalistic excellence while offering meaningful insight into the nation's history, identity, and future. Submissions may address themes such as democracy, civil rights, civic engagement, local or national unity and division, or underrepresented narratives that shape the American experience. Judges will consider work that is accurate, original, impactful, and inclusive—using powerful storytelling to connect past and present as the country marks this historic milestone.

Digital Strategy Excellence - This award recognizes newspapers that have been effective in building products that attract and engage audiences on digital platforms. Please submit an outline of the overall approach and specific techniques you're using to serve your community via digital devices, evidence of your success (i.e., traffic counts, reader engagement metrics, subscription volume or advertising revenue), and what differentiates your products from competitors.

Best Solutions Journalism Project - This award recognizes excellence in a solutions, evidence-based journalism project that includes coverage of a widely shared problem, as well as evidence-based solutions reporting with a newsworthy response. Judges will look for rigorous and compelling editorial work that creates awareness and impact on a social problem in the community.

Combating Misinformation and Restoring Trust - This award recognizes a news organization's efforts to reach, inform and engage with audiences to build trust and recognize misinformation. Entries should include a cover letter detailing efforts as well as material published in print and/or online. Judges will be asked to consider how well the information clarified the integrity of the journalistic process for greater citizen awareness and the quality of writing.

Innovator Award - This award recognizes the best new idea (or unique twist on a not-so-new idea) used to grow and/or engage a newspaper's audience. Please submit a note explaining the objective you were trying to achieve, an outline of the idea, details on how it was executed, and evidence of the results achieved.

Best Niche Publication - Targeted niche products published by a member paper that are distributed within the paper or stand-alone — in print, digital or both — are eligible. Up to four (4) issues may be submitted. Judges will consider publishing strategy, content mix, audience and advertiser appeal, as well as the quality of the writing, design and production. ***Each submission should be a single pdf that includes all pages—please do not submit every page separately, or a link to the full publication.***

Excellence in Newsroom Collaboration and Partnerships - This award honors newsrooms who have formed partnerships or collaborations to cover a topic or story. Entries should include documentation from each partner in the collaboration covering the contributions from various entities that made the collaboration a success. A winning entry should show creativity and innovation through a partnership that resulted in outstanding journalism and unique storytelling approaches.

TOP HONORS

Rookie of the Year — The purpose of this award is to encourage capable and talented young journalists to continue their careers in print journalism.

- Only those who started their professional journalism career after January 1, 2024 will be eligible to compete for this award.
- The entry should consist of **four to six samples** of work from the same journalist. The samples may include features, news stories, sports stories, columns, series, photos, video, etc. Entries that were submitted in other categories of the general competition may also be submitted as part of this entry.
- Submit full page digital tearsheets or screenshots of digital work.
- Please have the Publisher or Editor include a cover letter giving background information on the items entered or detailing outstanding work.
- Judges will be asked to consider quality of writing, content, and presentation of information.

TOP HONORS *(continued)*

General Excellence - The purpose of this category is to recognize newspapers that demonstrate all-around outstanding attributes and high professional standards. To enter, please:

- Upload ONE COMPLETE ISSUE from May 18-24, 2025
- Upload ONE COMPLETE ISSUE of your choosing from within the competition year (Aug. 1, 2024 - July 31, 2025)

Each submission should be a single pdf that includes all pages—please do not submit every page separately.

Submit your website URL and access information for any other digital products that you publish (including passwords that may be needed, etc.)

- **Online News Sites** – Along with your URL, submit a link to a story, article or series from the month of May 2025, and a link to a story, article or series of work from any day August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2025.

Judges will be asked to consider:

local news and feature content - including writing, reporting, significance of stories and presentation; community service news, leadership shown in news and feature selection

editorial page - writing quality, community impact, variety and quality of other content on the editorial page

advertising - presence of a substantial advertising offering, presentation and page layout

presentation - use of headlines, use of photos, arrangement and selection of stories for reader appeal, structure, makeup and typography of entire newspaper

digital products - content quality, utility, navigability and appearance of your digital products

The following awards are NOT categories that can be entered, rather they are chosen based on points accumulated in the overall competition.

Reporter of the Year — One daily paper and one non-daily “Reporter of the Year” award will be given. **Finalists will be chosen based on the highest number of points accumulated in the overall competition.**

Points are accumulated as follows:

- First place award = 3 points
- Second place award = 2 points
- Third place award = 1 point

The top scoring journalists may be invited by NENPA to submit additional samples of work from the past year for consideration.

Photojournalist of the Year — This award is presented to the most outstanding photojournalist in the competition for both daily and non-daily classes. **Finalists are chosen based on highest number of points garnered from all of their winning entries.**

Points are accumulated as follows:

- First place award = 3 points
- Second place award = 2 points
- Third place award = 1 point

The top point getters in each of the weekly and daily divisions *may* be contacted to submit additional samples of work from the past year for that show their ability, talent, and technical expertise for consideration by the judges.

Skill in a broad variety of areas such as spot news, general news, feature, sports, people, etc. will be considered.

All submissions must have been published either in the newspaper or on the newspaper’s website within the contest year.

Frequently asked questions....

How does registration work?

Go to the online contest platform -- www.newspapercontest.com/nenpa. Here you will find a link to register along with specific instructions for registration. **Use association code: NENPA**

What file formats are accepted for uploading?

Acceptable formats include PDFs, URL links, and JPEG (for photos and graphics). **Note that a PDF or JPEG ensures our judges will be able to view your entries.** A URL bringing the judge directly to the item, without paywalls or registration required, is also accepted. If your site does have a paywall or required registration, you must include login information in the explanation field when submitting the entry. Entries will be disqualified if there is a paywall and no login information is provided.

How can I make my PDF smaller

For categories not pertaining to photography, graphics, or design we recommend optimizing the PDF through the PDF editor settings/tools - there is usually an "Optimize" option under File or Tools. There are also a number of online PDF compressors that allow you to quickly reduce the size of your PDF. We suggest www.pdfcompressor.com. This method will affect photos and graphics so do not use where those elements are being judged. Most newspaper PDFs include high-resolution grayscale or CMYK images for printing. However, PDF contest entries will be viewed and judged on a computer monitor, which displays at low resolution (72-96 dpi) in RGB color. Changes in resolution and color mode of images are the most effective ways to reduce file size without sacrificing quality. In PDFs, the text is always clear regardless of resolution. The resolution only relates to photos and graphics. Reducing resolution by half reduces image file size by 75%. The recommended max. resolution of 96 dpi can be changed via the PDF editors settings/preferences. Color Mode: Converting from CMYK to RGB color will reduce the image file size by another 25%. This can be done in the editor settings. Before submitting be sure to check the final entry PDF against the original (prior to compressing or changing resolution/color) to make sure you are satisfied with the results.

How do I extract pages from full-issue or full-section PDFs?

Open the PDF file in Acrobat and choose "Extract Pages..." from the Document menu. This will allow you to save individual or sequential pages in separate files anywhere on your computer. Alternatively, you can extract certain pages by going to File > Print and select Print to PDF under the printer option. Simply select the pages/page range to print to PDF.

How do I combine PDFs into a single file?

Open the PDF that you want to appear first in the entry. Choose "Save As..." from the File menu and give it the name of the final entry. Choose "Insert Pages..." from the Document menu, choose the file that you want to appear next in the entry, then specify where that file should be inserted. When all insertions have been made, save & close the PDF. Make sure the final PDF is optimized for size/resolution

How do I pay for my entries?

NENPA will send an invoice after the entry period is closed.

Questions? Contact Linda Conway at L.Conway@nenpa.com or Tara Cleary at t.cleary@nenpa.com