



**Oregon Newspaper  
Publishers Association**

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# ASSOCIATE MEMBER CONTEST RULES

## Who can enter?

Any members of ONPA, NAI, or Washington Daily newspapers.

## What can be entered?

Publications published during the 2025 calendar year are eligible to enter. Entries must be produced by full- or part-time staff of the publication.

## What is the entry deadline?

All entries must be submitted by 5:00 pm Monday, March 16, 2026, at which time the online system will close. No extensions will be granted.

## Where is the online registration?

Go to [www.newspapercontest.com/onpa](http://www.newspapercontest.com/onpa). Use the Association Code "orennews". After registering, you will receive an email that you will need to confirm in order to login to the contest.  
NOTE - each contest will require a different email to register.

## What are the costs for entering?

A general registration fee of \$35 plus \$5 per entry.  
How should payments be made?

### Credit Card

On the contest website, click "Entry Billing" to view your total. Credit card payments are accepted via PayPal. NOTE - this method includes a 3.5% fee calculated at the end. Each contest entered will require a separate payment.

### Check

Make checks payable to "Oregon Newspapers Foundation" or "ONF", Memo: "Contest fee" and mail it to ONPA.

## When is the deadline for payments?

Payments need to be made online or postmarked (if mailing a check) by March 28, 2026.

## How are the competitions defined?

All entries in each category are judged together.

## Who will judge the contest?

This year the judges are member of the New Jersey Press Association and other journalists across the country. They will be assigning a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winner for each competition.

## When will awards be presented?

Judging will be completed by April 30, 2026. ONPA will then notify participating publishers of results. Awards will be presented at the Summer Convention TBD.

## What if something goes wrong?

Any entry submitted in violation of these rules may be disqualified. Written complaints regarding disqualifications or alleged rules violations must be submitted to the Contest Committee c/o ONPA within 30 days after the award presentation. Only written complaints will be considered.

Any decision made by the Contest Committee will be final.

## How should entries be prepared?

This year ALL entries need to be prepared electronically - the only exception being the General Excellence category. Pay careful attention to the instructions within each category to make sure you are entering the appropriate item(s). Also, pay particular attention to the need to combine multiple files into one before submitting.

### Accepted Formats

Entries may be submitted as a PDF, URL, or JPEG (for photos). URL submissions must link directly to the item and must include login information in the explanation field if there is a paywall or required registration. Entries will be disqualified if there is a paywall and no login information is provided.

### Photography Entries

In addition to uploading full-pages, individual photo files may be uploaded as part of but not as a replacement for a full page. Entries that do not include the full page will be disqualified.

### Additional Information

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.

**Register Online: [www.newspapercontest.com/onpa](http://www.newspapercontest.com/onpa)**





# CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

## 101: Target Audience Publication General Excellence

Only PDF entries will be accepted. Entry. The single entry in this category consists of three complete issues, one from each of the months of Jan, July, Oct 2025. Issues submitted should exhibit content that is intended for the target audience defined by the publication. Include a single-page description of the intended audience.

*Judging will be based on the level of interest, relevance, creativity, and commitment to the target audience.*

## 102: Best News Photo

Photos must be taken by full- or part-time newspaper staff or by a dedicated free-lancer (shooting specifically for your newspaper). No commercial photos are eligible. Each entry may be news or sports. Each entry consists of a full published page containing the entered photo in context, and may also include original of the photo in baseline JPEG format for judges' review. Newspapers may submit up to three entries.

*Judging will be based on news value/human interest quality, originality, imagination, & photo technical quality.*

## 103 General: Best News Writing

This category emphasizes news reporting-government, breaking news, educational, business, sports, etc. Focus should be on an actual event rather than a trend or personality. Each PDF entry should be an individual story (and sidebars). Writer must be a staff member or dedicated free-lancer (writing specifically for your newspaper). Each newspaper may submit up to three entries.

*Judging will be based on quality and clarity of writing, content, originality, imagination and thoroughness of reporting.*

## 104 General: Best Feature Writing

In this category, reporting about a trend or a personality (including sports) and sidebars may be included. Each PDF entry should be an individual story (and sidebars). Writer must be a staff member or dedicated free-lancer (writing specifically for your newspaper). Each newspaper may submit up to three entries.

*Judging will be based on quality and clarity of writing, content, originality, imagination and creativity connecting the reader to the subject, and overall quality of research, including heads, art, and photos.*

## 105 General: Best Editorial/Column

Each entry consists of three full-page examples (including jump pages) of editorials or columns written by a staff member or dedicated free-lancer (writing specifically to your paper). Column entries must be a regular feature of your newspaper. Columns may be on a single topic or a variety of topics (sports, arts, general, etc). Up to three entries per newspaper. Judging will be based on quality of writing, original, & imagination.

## 106 General: Design

The single entry in this category consists of three complete issues, one from each of the months of February, August, and Nov. Judging will be based on use of headlines, effective use of photography, content, makeup, and typography.

## 107 General: Graphics

Entries in this category represent the best use of hand- or digital-generated graphics produced by full- or part-time staff. This can include color or black & white illustrations, charts, graphs, or other supporting art.

Each entry consists of the page containing the graphic, plus all jump pages. Each newspaper may submit up to three entries. Judging will be based on impact, attractiveness, and relevance.

## 215 Editorial: Best Story of the Year

The emphasis in this category is on pure journalistic excellence: writing, information gathering, and being in the right place at the right time.

It is open to both General and Associate Members in three groups: Daily, Multi-weekly, and weekly. It recognizes one story as the most outstanding - based on both presentation and topic.

Entries must be a SINGLE STORY, but may be one of a series.

These stories may be entered in other categories as well. Each newspaper is limited to a single entry. No entry fee.

*Judging will be based on the compelling qualities of the story and how well it holds the reader's interest, quality of reporting, clarity, quality of writing, and the story's impact.*

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# CATEGORY DESCRIPTIONS

## 216 Editorial: Baker Family Public Service Journalism

This prestigious award will be one that can only be entered this year by Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association and Newspaper Association of Idaho Newspapers. (Washington State info to come from WNPA) There will be 1st, 2nd and 3rd place awards for Oregon newspapers as well as a 1st, 2nd and 3rd place for Idaho Newspapers. This is the only award that won't be a joint competition. It also can be entered by any members of the ONPA or NAI.

Public Service Journalism is journalism that achieves a positive result. This can include raising awareness of critical issues, sparking public dialogue, influencing policy or providing practical solutions that lead to tangible changes. Results also encompass how the reporting benefits the community or advances public understanding in meaningful ways. This might be a focus on a problem or project that prompted government or community action to correct or accomplish it.

\*Up to five supporting pieces may be submitted per entry along with a written paragraph about how the story came to be, what was done to cover the story, and the specific impact/results it made.

Judging will be based on significance of the results, research put into the story, creativity, force & clarity of effort shown by the reporter/paper. Up to five supporting pieces may be submitted per entry.

### A-Mark Foundation Prize Details:

First Place \$5,000 for the journalist(s), plus \$2,500 for news outlet  
Second Place \$3,000 for journalist(s), \$1,500 for news outlet

Third Place: \$2,000 for journalist(s), \$1,000 for the news outlet

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## Sweepstakes Award

This award is based on a point system: 3 points per first place award, 2 points per second place award, and 1 point per third place award. The recipient of this award will be the publication that has earned the greatest number of points in categories 101 through 107. There is no fee for this category.

Register Online: [www.newspapercontest.com/onpa](http://www.newspapercontest.com/onpa)





# Frequently Asked Questions

## How does registration work?

This year we have switched to a new online contest platform -- [www.newspapercontest.com/onpa](http://www.newspapercontest.com/onpa). Here you will find a link to register along with specific instructions for registration. It is important to note that each contest is completely separate and will require a separate registration and email address. You will not be able to use the same email for say the general contest AND the Best Ad Idea Contest.

## 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](http://www.pdfcompressor.com). This method will effect 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 are satisfied with the results. If you have questions or need assistance please email [onpa@orennews.com](mailto:onpa@orennews.com).

## What is the most efficient way to collect entry files?

Extract entry-related pages from any multi-page PDFs or delete non-entry pages. Give each resulting file a clearly descriptive name. Combine into a single PDF file the pages that compose each article. See below for instructions on extracting/combining PDFs.

Once you've created all your entry PDFs, redistill each one as explained above to reduce it to the smallest practical size. It is not productive to try to reduce the sizes of individual files before combining them into complete entries. Like all changes, combining pages can increase the overall file size. You may also upload a URL link to your entry as an extra precaution.

## 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. Uptaqui tecaborpos aut etus, vellam, ium facero occab invendit que delignat quatemprorenimus id ut acestio. Ut aut aut aut es ut vo

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