

# 2015-2016 BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST

## RULES & CONTEST CATEGORIES



MINNESOTA  
NEWSPAPER  
ASSOCIATION

## **2015-2016 Better Newspaper Contest**

### General Purpose of the Contest

One of the reasons for MNA's existence, as laid down in the association's Articles of Incorporation (Art. III) is: "To secure improved standards in the practice and the profession of journalism." The purpose of this annual contest, therefore, is to recognize excellence in the various aspects of newspaper journalism so that the practice and profession in Minnesota may be advanced.

### Who May Enter

All active and associate members of MNA in good standing. To be considered "in good standing," dues for 2015 and all past dues must be paid in full by September 30, 2016, the contest entry deadline. Entries will be accepted only from members meeting these criteria.

### Contest Website

To submit contest entries, please visit: <http://betternewspapercontest.com/MNA>

### Judging

Experienced newspaper editors and publishers from the North Carolina Press Association will be selected as judges.

### Presentation

Awards will be presented at the 150th Annual MNA Convention, January 26-27, 2017, at the DoubleTree by Hilton Minneapolis South. Winners will be notified by mailed letter from the MNA office in December. We will ask all winners not to publicize the fact, but wait until the January convention to do so.

### How to Enter

First, please read the rules and accompanying submission instructions! We have tried to make them clear. Judges will be instructed to give weight, in case of a tie, to the entry which most closely follows instructions. Failure to comply with instructions will be grounds for elimination from the contest. If you have questions, the MNA staff is prepared to assist you. To reach us, please call the MNA office, 612-332-8844 or 800-279-2979 or email [member@mna.org](mailto:member@mna.org). You may also contact LuAnn Yattaw by phone (612-278-0235) or email ([luann@mna.org](mailto:luann@mna.org)). See the detailed "How to Enter the 2015-2016 MNA Better Newspaper Contest" document for detailed submission instructions.

## Entry Guidelines

- **Deadline:** Friday, September 30, 2016. All entries must be uploaded to the online system by 11:00 p.m. September 30. Categories that require mail-in entry materials must be postmarked on or before September 30. Entries postmarked later than September 30 will not be accepted. Hand deliveries must be made to the MNA office by 5:00 p.m., Friday, September 30.
- **Time Period:** Anything published between September 1, 2015, through August 31, 2016. Unless specified as a 2015 date, all dates given are in 2016. For weeklies, “the weeks which contain” means the calendar week from Sunday through Saturday.
- **Entry Form:** You are required to fill out an entry form online for every single entry. If you submit more than one entry per category, you must fill out a separate entry form for each individual entry. Most categories require the submission of full-page PDF tearsheets online. Some categories require the submission, by mail, of full issues or sections.
- **Materials:** Each category specifies the materials accepted for the entry. You will be directed to submit online a full-page PDF tearsheet or live URL, or submit by mail full hard copy issues of your newspaper, magazine or special section. All mailed entries from a single newspaper must be submitted at one time in one package with entry labels, printed from the online system, affixed to the front of each mailed entry.
- **Date Verification:** The date each entry was published must appear somewhere on the tearsheet materials you submit. If no dateline appears, you must supply a notarized proof of publication that states the run date. The affidavit should be stapled behind the mailed entry blank or uploaded with the entry.
- **Entry Limits:** The maximum number of entries an individual or newspaper can submit per category is listed in the description. In categories that recognize individuals, if a person works for several newspapers under the same ownership and his or her work goes into more than one newspaper, he or she will be limited to two entries per category. For example: A person whose editorials are published in Newspapers A and B under the same ownership may not submit more than two separate editorials. Stories or a series done by more than one writer will be counted as a single entry (one of two allowed) for the writer listed first on the contest entry form. Other writers on that series will be able to enter twice more in that category.
- **Fees:** The fee per entry is \$9. In categories that require the entry of three issues, these three issues count as ONE entry at \$9, NOT three at \$27. In categories for individuals that allow either one or two entries, each entry requires a separate \$9 fee. Each entry should be labeled separately. (For example, if a person submits his or her two best ads, this would be a \$18 charge and each ad should be labeled as a separate entry.)
- **Common Staff or Common Ownership:** If newspapers have A) the same ownership with common staff, OR B) the same ownership with common content (excluding editorial page material and news service material), then the smaller circulation paper will enter under the circulation of the largest paper in the group.
- **Only Staff-Produced Content is Eligible:** Entries submitted in all categories – editorial, advertising, design, photography, etc. must be newspaper staff-produced. For example, the following content is not acceptable: agency ads, design outsourced to another company, Associated Press reports.
- **Circulation:** The circulation figure you submitted for the MNA Newspaper Directory is the number used in determining which circulation category you were placed.

## Other Tips

- Label mail-in entries correctly. Affix the printed entry label securely. When more than one section or issue is required, be sure to bind all materials together securely with a binder clip, rubber bands, or enclose in a manila folder or envelope.
- For entries that require submission online, make sure your PDF file works, and is the correct file for the category. The maximum allowable file size is 5MB. For URL links, make sure they are “live” and accessible by judges (i.e. not behind a subscriber log in or paywall).
- Watch your dates. Judges will eliminate the entries if they don’t match the rule requirements.
- For contest purposes, weeks run Sunday through Saturday.
- Don’t pass by a category because you think you aren’t good enough. Each year we have winners from newspapers that have never before won an award.

The contest is under the supervision of MNA. We will return no entries and judges’ decisions will be final. Judges will be asked to (1) avoid ties; (2) make no awards if they feel entries do not come up to judges’ standards; (3) if merited, make first, second and third place awards; (4) make written comments about each winner.

## Fees

There is a \$9 fee for each entry. Please plan to send your entry fee check with any mail-in entries to MNA, or complete credit card payment on or before the contest deadline.

Payment is due the same day entries are due.

Fees collected will be earmarked for two purposes: To provide awards for winners and to pay expenses associated with judging. Again, this year, first place winners will receive plaques.

If your newspaper submits multiple entries, please send only one check or credit card payment for the total sum of the combined entries. Make checks payable to MNA.

## What to Mail to MNA:

- Any entries for categories that require mail-in submission including categories:

1: General Excellence	7: Headline Writing
2: Typography and Design	8: Advertising Excellence
4: General Reporting	31: Special Section
6: Use of Photography as a Whole	32: Best Magazine
- Any payments by check. Fee is \$9/entry and can be paid online or by check.
- A printed list of all entries, must accompany mailed payment. To do this, go to the “Manage Entries” page of the online system, click “calculate entry fee” in the upper right-hand corner of the page, and print the report.

Mailed entries and payment must be postmarked by September 30, 2016 and sent to:

MNA Better Newspaper Contest  
10 South Fifth Street, Suite 1105  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

## **Contest Categories**

### **Division I: Awards to Newspapers**

1. General Excellence
2. Typography and Design
3. Editorial Page as a Whole
4. General Reporting
5. Sports Reporting
6. Use of Photography as a Whole
7. Headline Writing
8. Advertising Excellence
9. Classified Advertising Section
10. Website



*Rules for Division I:* Each newspaper may enter no more than one entry in each contest category. Entries from three different issues of your newspaper must be submitted. Five dates will be listed in the explanation of each category. You must choose three of these five dates for each category.

### **Division II: Awards to Individuals**

11. Advertising Campaign
12. Institutional Advertisement
13. Self-Promotion or House Ad
14. Use of Color in Advertising
15. Best Advertisement
16. Innovative Online Advertising
17. Human Interest Story
18. Social Issues Story
19. Sports Story
20. Business Story
21. Arts & Entertainment Story
22. Local Breaking News Coverage
23. Investigative Reporting
24. Columnist
25. Photography:
  - 25 a. News Photo
  - 25 b. Sports Photo
  - 25 c. Feature Photo
  - 25 d. Photo Story
  - 25 e. Portrait and Personality
26. Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustrations

*Rules for Division II:* Each individual may enter no more than two entries in each contest category. Entries may be selected from any issue in the contest period.

### Division III: Special Awards

27. Press Photographer's Portfolio
28. Editorial Portfolio
29. Design Portfolio
30. Dave Pyle New Journalist of the Year
31. Special Section
32. Best Magazine
33. Best Use of Video
34. Multimedia Special Project
35. Best Use of Social Media
36. Herman Roe Editorial Writing Award
37. Government/Public Affairs Reporting
38. Freedom of Information Award
39. Explanation of Newspaper Operations or Newspaper Ethics
40. Category X
41. Lynn Smith Community Leadership Award

*Rules for Division III:* Rules are covered under each category.

### Circulation Classes\*

- Weeklies under 1,500
- Weeklies 1,500 to 2,500
- Weeklies 2,501 to 5,000
- Weeklies over 5,000
- Dailies under 10,000\*\*
- Dailies 10,000 and over\*\*

### Competition for the Vance & Mills Trophies

The Mills Trophy is awarded to the top weekly each year and the Vance Trophy is awarded to the top daily each year. Winners are determined based on points awarded for each winning entry.

\*Your newspaper is placed in a circulation class based on the circulation figure you submitted for the MNA Newspaper Directory. If you think the circulation listed is incorrect, contact LuAnn Yattaw by email ([luann@mna.org](mailto:luann@mna.org)) or phone (612-278-0235).

\*\* Daily newspaper circulation class determined by M-F circulation figures.



## **Division I: Awards to Newspapers**

### **1. General Excellence** (Competition among all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize the balanced excellence of the newspaper as a whole. Judges will consider: depth, breadth and quality of news coverage; quality of advertising, both classified and display; quality of editorial page with particular attention to relevance to community; quantity and quality of pictorial material; and over appearance of the newspaper.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Friday, October 9, 2015	10/4/15-10/10/15
Sunday, December 13, 2015	12/13-12/19/15
Wednesday, February 10, 2016	2/7-2/13/16
Saturday, May 7, 2016	5/1-5/7/2016
Monday, August 1, 2016	7/31-8/6/2016

Weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed.

Dailies or semi-weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) exact dates listed. If you do not publish that day, submit full issues from the date closest to, and within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one issue from the week.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full newspaper issues.

**Submit newspapers to MNA by mail.**

### **2. Typography and Design** (Competition among all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize excellence in the appearance of the newspaper. Judges will consider: design of the entire newspaper including use of photos; headlines and body types; quality of reproduction; use of information graphics and graphic illustrations; and overall appearance.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Wednesday, September 16, 2015	9/13-9/19/15
Thursday, November 5, 2015	11/1-11/7/15
Tuesday, January 19, 2016	1/17-1/23/16
Monday, March 21, 2016	3/20-3/26/16
Friday, July 22, 2016	7/17-7/23/16

Weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed.

Dailies or semi-weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) exact dates listed. If you do not publish that day, submit full issues from the date closest to, and within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one issue from the week.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full newspaper issues.

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### 3. Editorial Page as a Whole (Competition among all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize excellence in the entire editorial page. Judges will consider: the significance of the work to the community; the quality and impact of the writing; and the diversity of material. Judges will give 75% weight to the page's content; 25% weight to the form in which the material is presented.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Wednesday, October 14, 2015	10/11-10/17/15
Monday, November 9, 2015	11/8-11/14/15
Tuesday, December 29, 2015	12/27/15-1/2/16
Thursday, March 10, 2016	3/6-3/12/16
Sunday, May 8, 2016	5/8-5/14/16

Weeklies: Submit full-page PDF tearsheet(s) online of the editorial page or pages from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed.

Dailies or semi-weeklies: Submit full-page PDF tearsheet(s) online of the editorial page or pages from three (3) of the five (5) exact dates listed. If you do not publish that day, submit full issues from the date closest to, and within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one tearsheet from the week.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) PDF tearsheet(s) of the entire editorial page or pages submitted online.

### 4. General Reporting (Competition among all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize excellence in general news reporting. Judges will consider: the content of the writing and the form in which it is written; the selection of significant material to report about; and the way in which the material is handled.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Sunday, October 18, 2015	10/18-10/24/15
Friday, January 8, 2016	1/3-1/9/16
Saturday, March 5, 2016	2/28-3/5/16
Wednesday, May 18, 2016	5/15-5/21/16
Tuesday, July 26, 2016	7/24-7/30/16

Weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed.

Dailies or semi-weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) exact dates listed. If you do not publish that day, submit full issues from the date closest to, and within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one issue from the week.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full newspaper issues.

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## 5. Sports Reporting (Competition among all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize excellence in sports reporting. Judges will consider: the content of the writing and the form in which it is written; the selection of significant material to report about; and the way in which the material is handled.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Sunday, September 20, 2015	9/20-9/26/15
Wednesday, December 9, 2015	12/6-12/12/15
Saturday, February 27, 2016	2/21-2/27/16
Tuesday, April 19, 2016	4/17-4/23/16
Thursday, June 23, 2016	6/19-6/25/16

Weeklies: Submit full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of the entire sports section or pages online from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed.

Dailies or semi-weeklies: Submit full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of the entire sports section or pages online from three (3) of the five (5) exact dates listed. If you do not publish that day, submit full issues from the date closest to, and within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one tearsheet from the week.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) PDF tearsheet(s) of the entire sports section or pages submitted online.

## 6. Use of Photography as a Whole (Competition among all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize excellence in the use of photography throughout the newspaper as a whole. Judges will consider: the use of news photography in relation to news stories and other elements of the newspaper; the manner in which photos are used throughout the entire newspaper; and the photographer's technique.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Friday, September 11, 2015	9/6-9/12/15
Monday, November 23, 2015	11/22-11/28/15
Saturday, January 16, 2016	1/10-1/16/16
Wednesday, April 13, 2016	4/10-4/16/16
Tuesday, August 9, 2016	8/7-8/13/16

Weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed.

Dailies or semi-weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) exact dates listed. If you do not publish that day, submit full issues from the date closest to, and within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one issue from the week.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full newspaper issues.

**Submit newspapers to MNA by mail.**

**7. Headline Writing** (Competition among all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in the effective use of non-advertising headlines. Judges will consider: whether headlines attract readers' attention and accurately reflect stories; and the overall effectiveness of headlines throughout the newspaper as a whole.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Saturday, September 5, 2015	8/30-9/5/15
Tuesday, June 7, 2016	6/5-6/11/16

Weeklies: Submit full issues from the two calendar weeks listed, plus one issue of your own choosing from the contest period.

Dailies or semi-weeklies: Submit full issues from the exact dates listed, plus one issue of your own choosing from the contest period. If you do not publish the listed dates, submit full issues from the dates closest to, and within the same week shown.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full newspaper issues.

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**8. Advertising Excellence** (Competition among all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize overall excellence in locally prepared display and classified advertising. For advertising overall, judges will consider consistency in ad quality the number and variety of advertisers. With respect to display advertising, 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 issues, including presswork. With respect to classified advertising, judges will consider: variety of classifications and general appearance and display of ads.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Monday, October 26, 2015	10/25-10/31/15
Wednesday, November 18, 2015	11/15-11/21/15
Friday, February 19, 2016	2/14-2/20/16
Tuesday, April 5, 2016	4/3-4/9/16
Sunday, July 10, 2016	7/10-7/16/16

Weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed.

Dailies or semi-weeklies: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) exact dates listed. If you do not publish that day, submit full issues from the date closest to, and within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one issue from the week.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full newspaper issues.

**Submit newspapers to MNA by mail.**

**9. Classified Advertising Section** (Competition among 3 classes: weekly circulation up to 2,500, weekly over 2,500, and dailies.)

This award will recognize quality classified advertising pages, including classified display ads. Judges will consider: overall attractiveness; ease in reading; clarity of classified headlines; organization; promotion of classified advertising use; and ease for readers to place and use classifieds.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Tuesday, February 2, 2016	1/31-2/6/16
Monday, May 23, 2016	5/22-5/28/16
Friday, June 17, 2016	6/12-6/18/16
Saturday, July 2, 2016	6/26-7/2/16
Wednesday, August 17, 2016	8/14-8/20/16

**Weeklies:** Submit full-page PDF tearsheet(s) online of the classified advertising section or pages from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed.

**Dailies or semi-weeklies:** Submit full-page PDF tearsheet(s) online of the classified advertising section or pages from three (3) of the five (5) exact dates listed. If you do not publish that day, submit full issues from the date closest to, and within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one tearsheet from the week.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) PDF tearsheet(s) of the entire classified advertising section or pages submitted online.

**10. Website** (Competition among all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in newspaper websites based on the following criteria: content (quality of news and editorial matter); navigation (ease of finding and retrieving information from the website); visual and design (layout, use of graphics, photographs, animation, color and other visuals); advertising (innovative strategies and/or evidence of revenue generation); community (demonstration that the website fulfills a “community gatekeeper” role). The newspaper website will be randomly visited by judges a minimum of three times.

All newspapers: Submit a link (URL) to your website online.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of the newspaper URL submitted online.

## **Division II: Awards to Individuals**

### **11. Advertising Campaign** (Competition among all individuals.)

This award will recognize overall excellence of a newspaper-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.

Ads placed in member-owned shoppers may be entered in this category as part of the member newspaper’s entries. Agency ads are not eligible.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period.

Each individual may submit two (2) entries. One entry consists of a minimum three (3) ads related to the same advertiser. Entrants must include a statement from the advertiser as to the effect of the series.

### **12. Institutional Advertisement** (Competition among individuals in 3 classes: weekly circulation up to 2,500, weekly over 2,500, and dailies.)

This award will recognize excellence of the best newspaper-produced institutional advertisement and will be made to the person(s) who conceived and developed the advertisement. An institutional ad should project the best business image or portray the character of the business. Examples include ads for banks, hospitals, groups of professionals, savings and loans, and utility companies. Judges will consider: the attractiveness of the ad as it appeals to readers, giving 50% weight to the appeal, 25% to the copy and 25% to the layout and design.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate ad entries.

### **13. Self-promotion or House Ad** (Competition among individuals in 3 classes: weekly circulation up to 2,500, weekly over 2,500, and dailies.)

This award will recognize excellence of the best newspaper-produced house ad and will be made to the person(s) who conceived and developed the idea. Examples include ads promoting readership, classified, MCAN, effectiveness of ROP ads, and color promotion. (All entries submitted become the property of MNA and may be reproduced for distribution to the general membership at a later date.) 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.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate ad entries.

**14. Use of Color in Advertising** (Competition among individuals in 3 classes: weekly circulation up to 2,500, weekly over 2,500, and dailies.)

This award will recognize the effective use of color in newspaper-produced advertising and will be awarded to the person(s) who conceived and developed the ad. Judges will consider: overall appearance; effectiveness of the color use; appropriateness of the color hue for the ad subject; and uniqueness or creativity in the use of color.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate ad entries.

**15. Best Advertisement** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize the excellence of the best staff-produced ad that does not fit in the institutional or house ad categories and will be awarded to the person(s) who conceived and developed the ad. Judges will consider: the originality and appearance of the ad, giving 50% weight to the ad idea, 25% to the copy, and 25% to the layout and design.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate ad entries.

**16. Innovative Online Advertising** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

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 tearsheets and/or URLs online from any date within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate ad entries. One entry consists up to 5 ads relating to the same advertiser. Entrants must include a statement from the advertiser as to the effect of the ads.

**17. Human Interest Story** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize excellence for a single human interest story. A human interest story is a feature story that discusses a person or persons in an interactive and/or emotional way. It presents people and their problems, concerns, or achievements in a way that brings about interest or sympathy in the reader. Columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, originality and impact.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

**18. Social Issues Story** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize excellence for a social issues story or series. Social issues are matters that can be explained only by factors outside an individual's control and immediate social environment which affect many individuals in a society. Common social issues include poverty, violence, justice, human rights (suppression of), equality (or discrimination), and crime, and usually revolve around conflicting viewpoints and tensions between people who take different stances. Columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, originality, and impact.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries. If the entry is part of a series of multiple stories, the entry will be limited to three (3) stories per single entry.

**19. Sports Story** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in sports feature writing. Sports columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, originality and impact.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

**20. Business Story** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in business writing. Business columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, content, impact, local importance.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

**21. Arts & Entertainment Story** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in arts & entertainment feature writing. Columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider: readability, content and local importance.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.



**22. Local Breaking News Coverage** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in breaking news coverage both in print, and online. Entrants may submit online coverage from a 24-hour period surrounding the news event, as well as the edition of the newspaper printed in closest proximity to the event (the next printed edition). Judges will consider: enterprise, thoroughness, objectivity and local importance; clarity will be paramount; style will be a secondary criteria.

Individuals at Dailies: Submit PDF tearsheets and URLs online from any issues within the contest period. You may submit print and online coverage on the news events from a 24-hour period.

Individuals at Weeklies: Submit PDF tearsheets and URLs online from any issues within the contest period. You may submit online coverage of the news events from a 24-hour period, in addition to stories from the next available print edition of the newspaper.

Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries.

**23. Investigative Reporting** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in investigative reporting. For this contest, investigative reporting will be defined as the development of information about government, business or other institutions or individuals that is not readily available to journalists, and requires skill and effort to obtain over and above that normally required of reporters. Information should be presented in a way that gives readers understanding and insight into subject matter that is not generally known to the public. Judges will consider equally: content of the writing (the selection of significant material) and the form in which it is written (how the material was handled).

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries. You may submit a series of multiple stories in this category. You may also include a written statement specifying what happened as a result of the story in the community.

**24. Columnist** (Competition among individuals in all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence of columnists employed on newspaper staffs. Judges will evaluate 3 columns and their purpose (i.e. whether they interpret, evaluate, entertain, advocate, etc.) considering: how well the columns fulfill these goals; literary style; ability or cleverness of the writer; depth of the material or research; and local interest and relevance to the community.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit one (1) entry. Your entry consists of three (3) separate columns from any issues within the contest period.

**25. Photography** (Competition among all circulation classes for weeklies; dailies compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in photojournalism by individual newspaper reporters. There are five subcategories:

- (a) News Photo;
- (b) Sports Photo;
- (c) Feature Photo;
- (d) Photo Story (three or more photos that tell a single story);
- (e) Portrait and Personality.

Judges will consider: content of the photo (75% weight) and technique (25%).

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issues within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries per subcategory. One entry consists of one photo or photo story within each subcategory. You may also attach the original .jpeg file of the photo along with your entry. Please provide descriptive language of the photo in the entry form.

**26. Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustrations** (Competition among individuals in 3 classes: weekly circulation up to 2,500, weekly over 2,500, and dailies.)

This award will recognize excellence in staff-produced information graphics and graphic illustrations. Judges will consider: artistic design; usefulness to the reader, clarity of content; and enhancement to the story.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issues within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries. Each contest entry should include the entrant's graphics or graphic illustrations, along with the related story, if applicable, submitted online. Please provide descriptive language of the graphic in the entry form. See the "Design Portfolio" category (#29) to submit a compilation of your work.

## **Division III: Special Awards**

### **27. Press Photographers Portfolio** (Competition among individuals in 2 classes: weeklies and dailies.)

This award will recognize overall excellence among newspaper photographers as reflected by a broad sample of their work. Judges will consider: subject matter, originality, technical excellence, and versatility.

Individuals: Submit photos online from any issues within the contest period. Each individual may submit only one (1) contest entry. Each contest entry consists of PDF tearsheets and/or URLs of up to ten (10) photos. You may also attach the original .jpeg files of the photos along with your entry.

### **28. Editorial Portfolio** (Competition among 2 classes: weeklies and dailies.)

This award will recognize overall excellence in locally-written editorials, recognizing sustained quality as reflected by a broad sample of the newspapers editorials. Judges will consider: the editorials' significance to the community will be given heavy weight; sound reasoning; power to influence public opinion; and clarity.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Monday, September 28, 2015	9/27-10/3/15
Sunday, November 29, 2015	11/29-12/5/15
Wednesday, December 23, 2015	12/20-12/26/15
Sunday, January 24, 2016	1/24-1/30/16
Friday, March 18, 2016	3/13-3/19/16
Thursday, March 31, 2016	3/27-4/2/16
Saturday April 30, 2016	4/24-4/30/16
Thursday, June 2, 2016	5/29-6/4/16
Tuesday, July 5, 2016	7/3-7/9/16
Sunday, August 21, 2016	8/21-8/27/16

Weeklies: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online of from five (5) to seven (7) of the calendar weeks containing the dates listed.

Dailies or semi-weeklies: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from five (5) to seven (7) of the exact dates listed. If you do not publish that day, choose the date closest to, and within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one entry from the same week.

Each newspaper may submit one (1) contest entry. Editorials submitted may be from more than one staff member. Newspapers may document the outcome or impact of the editorials in a statement submitted with the entries.

### **29. Design Portfolio** (Competition among individuals in 2 classes: weeklies and dailies.)

This award will recognize overall excellence among graphic artists and designers as reflected by a broad sample of their work. Judges will consider: page composition and design; use of photos; graphics and illustrations; overall appearance; artistic design; creativity; and usefulness to the reader.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issues within the contest period. Each individual may submit only one (1) contest entry. Each entry consists of up to ten (10) examples of page layout, graphics and illustrations, and other design elements created by the entrant and published in the newspaper or online.

**30. Dave Pyle New Journalist Award** (Competition among individuals in 2 classes: weeklies and dailies.)

This award will recognize high achievement and dedication to the craft of journalism by a reporter, copy editor, photojournalist, editor or designer who has worked at a professional paper for two years or less.

This award is named after longtime MNA committee member and friend Dave Pyle who worked to establish the award during his time as the AP Bureau Chief covering Minnesota and as a member of the MNA Journalism Education Committee.

Each newspaper may submit one nomination per eligible journalist. One entry consists of a one-page nomination letter and six (6) samples of the nominee's best work submitted online as PDF tearsheets and/or URLs.

**31. Special Section** (Competition among 3 classes: weekly circulation up to 2,500, weekly over 2,500, and dailies.)

This award recognizes excellence in specials sections devoted to a single subject, as supplements to newspapers. Judges will consider: general effect on the reader of the issue taken as a whole; relevance of editorial copy to advertising; originality of both editorial and ad copy; and effectiveness of local advertising.

Each newspaper may submit up to two (2) entries. One entry consists of a special section supplement devoted to a single topic published any date within the contest period. Submit special sections to MNA by mail.

**32. Best Magazine** (Competition among 2 classes: weeklies and dailies.)

This award will recognize excellence in magazines produced by MNA member newspapers. Judges will consider: overall excellence in the publication, including editorial content, design – including use of photos and graphics, and effectiveness of advertising.

Each newspaper may submit up to two (2) entries. One entry consists of a single newspaper staff-produced magazine published within the contest period. Submit magazines to MNA by mail.

**33. Best Use of Video** (Competition among 3 classes: weekly circulation up to 2,500, weekly over 2,500, and dailies.)

This award will recognize excellence in using video to impact storytelling. Judges will consider: production quality, relevance of topic, content, creativity, and impact.

All Newspapers: 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) video.

**34. Best Use of Multimedia** (Competition among 3 classes: weekly circulation up to 2,500, weekly over 2,500, and dailies.)

The award will recognize excellence in using new media to impact storytelling. Judges will consider: 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.

All Newspapers: 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.

**35. Best Use of Social Media** (Competition among 3 classes: weekly circulation up to 2,500, weekly over 2,500, and dailies.)

This award will recognize excellence, efficacy, and innovation in social media use by newspapers. Entries may include examples of crowd sourcing; community engagement via sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, video and photo sharing sites, etc.; and other innovative uses of social media. Entrants should submit a statement describing the use of social media tools, and resulting success. Judges will consider: efficacy, innovation, creativity, impact, results.

All Newspapers: Submit PDF tearsheets, if applicable, and/or URLs online. Each newspaper may submit up to two (2) entries.

**36. Herman Roe Editorial Writing Award** (Competition among all individuals.)

A highly-coveted award, the Herman Roe Editorial Writing Award will recognize impactful, meaningful and excellent editorial writing. Judges will strongly consider the significance to the community of the editorial submission. This award seeks to recognize the single best editorial written during the contest period.

The late widow of Herman Roe established this award in 1965. Herman Roe was a publisher of the Northfield News, past president of MNA and one of the state's outstanding editorial writers.

Each individual may submit two (2) entries. One entry consists of a single editorial from any issue within the contest period. Submit full page PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online. The person submitting the entry must be the sole writer of the editorial.

**37. Government/Public Affairs Reporting** (Competition among all individuals.)

This award will recognize exemplary reporting on local, state or federal government and how it affects a newspaper's community. Judges will consider the clarity and relevancy to readers. Stories might be on coverage of city hall, school boards, state legislation, etc. Editorials supporting the reporting examples may be part of the entry, but not the focus of the entry.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit two (2) separate entries. Entries may include series of multiple stories, or ongoing coverage of a single issue.

**38. Freedom of Information Award** (Competition among all newspapers.)

This award will recognize an effective job of furthering the cause of Freedom of Information. Some examples include an editorial campaign, news coverage, court actions or community education program designed to open meetings, to open records, etc.

All Newspapers: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue or issues from the contest period. Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of editorials or news articles exemplifying freedom of information coverage from the contest period. Submit up to five (5) examples.

**39. Explanation of Newspaper Operations or Newspaper Ethics** (Competition among all newspapers.)

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.

All Newspapers: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any one issue within the calendar period. Each newspaper may submit two (2) entries.

**40. Category X: The Business of Healthcare** (Competition among 2 classes: weeklies and dailies.)

This award will honor excellence in the coverage of the business of health care during the contest period. Submit digital or print versions of news or features that cover the business of health care in your community. This may include stories about health care delivery, capacity and infrastructure (hospitals, clinics, health care providers, etc.); stories about insurance (MNSure, the Affordable Care Act, industry trends); stories about access to healthcare (cost, affordability, etc.), stories about healthcare trends in your community; and other stories relevant to the topic. Your entry may include news coverage, editorials, multimedia, other published coverage (special sections or magazines). We ask entrants to focus on the issues above for this category, rather than human interest stories about individual health challenges and diseases.

All Newspapers: Each newspaper may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of news coverage, editorials, features, or multimedia content from the contest period. Submit up to five (5) PDF tearsheet(s) and/or URLs online.

**41. Lynn Smith Community Leadership Award** (Competition among all newspapers.)

This award will recognize local leadership initiatives that were encouraged, initiated or promoted by the newspaper. Leadership actions may have caused something positive to happen or may have prevented something negative from happening. General reports on local government and organizations are not eligible. Entries may include editorials, exhibits, meetings sponsored by the newspaper, house ads or flyers relating to the effort. Cover letters are allowed.

All Newspapers: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online for a project that either started or ended within the contest period. Each newspaper may submit only one (1) entry.



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

If you have any questions about the BNC, please read the full rules and instruction packet first. We have tried to make the directions clear and user-friendly. We've provided some answers to frequently asked questions below, but if you still have questions, the MNA staff is prepared to assist you. To reach us, please call the MNA office, 612-332-8844 or 800-279-2979 or email [member@mna.org](mailto:member@mna.org).

### **Where do I enter the BNC?**

The contest site is [www.betternewspapercontest.com/MNA](http://www.betternewspapercontest.com/MNA)

### **What work can I enter in the BNC?**

Anything published between September 1, 2015, through August 31, 2016.

### **What browser should I use?**

BetterBNC is optimized for the Google Chrome Browser for PC and Macintosh computers, and will be fully supported by customer support.

Other browser may work but support may be limited.

### **How do I know what my password is?**

If you managed or entered a contest last year, your password will remain the same. If you need help retrieving your password, email [member@mna.org](mailto:member@mna.org).

If you've never used the contest system before, the default password is "bnc" (password is case sensitive). You will be prompted immediately to update your password and contact information.

If you have password related questions or problems, contact LuAnn Yattaw who can help re-set the password ([luann@mna.org](mailto:luann@mna.org) or 612-278-0235).

### **How do I determine or adjust my circulation group?**

MNA has pre-determined your circulation group, based on your circulation submitted for the MNA Directory. If you believe there is an error, please call the MNA office, 612-332-8844 or 800-279-2979 or email [member@mna.org](mailto:member@mna.org).

### **Do I have to fill out an entry form online for entries that I mail to MNA?**

Yes. You must fill out an entry form online for every single entry. Print and affix entry label securely to the entry materials that require mail-in submission. When more than one section or issue is required, be sure to bind all materials together securely with a binder clip, rubber bands, or enclose in a manila folder or envelope.

### **Which categories must be submitted by mail?**

1: General Excellence

2: Typography and Design

4: General Reporting

6: Use of Photography as a Whole

7: Headline Writing

8: Advertising Excellence

31: Special Section

32: Best Magazine

MNA's mailing address is 10 South Fifth Street, Suite 1105, Minneapolis, MN 55402. Mailed entries must be postmarked on or before September 30, 2016.

All other categories must be submitted online. If you do not have the capability to provide digital files for entry categories, contact MNA immediately, and we will work with you to create files that can be uploaded to the online contest system.

**There is no specific title for my entry (or there are multiple titles). What should I put here?**

On the entry form, when asked to provide "Headline or Title of Entry (exactly as it appears on the page)" - if there is no specific title, use the category title as a guide (e.g. "Paynesville Press - General Excellence" or "Sally Jones - Design Portfolio").

**How do I make changes to an entry that I've already submitted?**

On the "Manage Entries" page of the contest system, identify the entry you'd like to update or change. In the "Actions" column, click "Label" to print a label to affix to mail-in entries. Click "Edit" to update or change an entry. You can delete uploaded files and upload new or additional files, here, as well. Click "Disable" if you'd like to remove the entry from view of the contest administrator and judges. Click "Delete" if you'd like to remove the entry. This action is permanent.

**Can I submit a series of stories as one entry in the contest?**

Unless otherwise noted, one entry consists of one story. Some categories allow you to submit more than one story as a single entry.

**I'd like to enter a story/special section/magazine that was a joint effort between two newspapers/multiple staffs. How should we enter this work?**

When submitting work produced by multiple or shared staffs, submit the entry under the newspaper with the larger circulation. In the "comment/info" section of the entry form you may provide more detailed information including more complete list of staff members and/or newspapers involved with the entry.

**What file formats are accepted for uploading?**

File formats accepted by the system include .pdf, .jpg, .gif, and .png (and .doc in applicable categories). If for some reason you don't have a PDF of the tearsheet you wish to submit, it would be easy to snap a photo and submit the resulting photo file.

**What is the maximum file size?**

5MB is the maximum file size allowed by the contest system.

**How can I make my PDF files smaller?**

Most newspaper PDFs include high-resolution (200-300dpi) grayscale or CMYK images for printing. However, PDF con-test entries will be viewed and judged on a computer monitor, which displays at low resolution (72-96dpi) in RGB color.

Changes in the resolution and color mode of images are the most effective ways to reduce file size without sacrificing quality.

1. Resolution. In PDFs, text is always clear regardless of resolution. Resolution relates only to photos and rasterized graphics. Reducing resolution by half reduces image file size by 75%. The recommended maximum resolution of 96dpi can be enforced by Distiller settings.

2. Color mode. Converting from CMYK to RGB color will reduce image file size by another 25%. This color conversion can again be enforced by Distiller settings.

If you reduce image resolution and/or convert color mode in your entry PDFs with a PDF editor (e.g., Enfocus Pitstop or Quite A Box Of Tricks) or use the native profiling/editing tools in Acrobat 6 or later, **YOU WILL NOT GAIN THE EXPECTED REDUCTION IN FILE SIZE** unless you redistill the PDF afterward.

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

Collect copies of all PDF files that contain entry-related pages into one place. These may be full-issue, full-section, or individual-page PDFs that you sent to your printer or that you saved from your page layout program for other reasons. The sizes, resolutions, color modes, and other characteristics of those PDF files can be ignored at this point.

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 comprise each entry. Instructions for extracting and combining PDFs are provided below. Distill. 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 overall PDF file size.

### **How do I extract pages from a full-issue or full-section PDF?**

In Acrobat, open the PDF file, then choose "Extract Pages..." from the Document menu and follow the instructions. This will allow you to save individual or sequential pages in separate files anywhere on your system.

### **How do I combine PDF pages or files into a single entry?**

Open the PDF file that is to appear first in the entry, choose "Save As..." from the File menu, and save that file with the name you'd like to give the final PDF entry. Choose "Insert Pages..." from the Document menu, choose the file that is to appear next in the entry, then specify where that file should be inserted. When all insertions have been made, save and close the PDF file. You'll need to redistill the final PDFs.

### **How will MNA prevent fraud?**

We prefer to trust our member publishers not to submit embellished or edited entries. It is true that ads and articles can be re-edited, photos can be retouched or replaced, and page layouts can be changed. However, major deception probably would be noticed, if only because winning PDFs will be available to the public and MNA members on the MNA website. If fraud is suspected with any entries, a full investigation will follow.

**How do I submit payment for my entries?**

First, calculate the amount owed. To do this, go to the “Manage Entries” page of the online system, click “Calculate Entry Fee” in the upper right-hand corner of the page. If you are paying by check, please print this list and mail it along with a check for the full amount owed, to MNA. Checks should be made payable to “MNA.”

MNA’s mailing address is 10 South Fifth Street, Suite 1105, Minneapolis, MN 55402. Mailed payment and entries must be postmarked on or before September 30.

You may also pay by credit card. On the “Calculate Entry Fee” page, click the link at the bottom that reads, “If you wish to pay online with a credit card, click here.” This link will take you through MNA’s online credit card payment process.

If you have any questions about BNC payment, please contact MNA Accounting Manager Debbie Evans by email ([debbie@mna.org](mailto:debbie@mna.org)) or call 612-278-0231.

**What if my info is wrong or my paper is not listed!?**

We have worked very hard to make sure all MNA newspapers are included on the publication list, and that the divisions of each paper are as accurate as possible. However if you note that your newspaper is missing OR the division/circulation is listed incorrectly, please do not panic, simply call MNA at 800-279-2979 or 612-332-8844 or email [member@mna.org](mailto:member@mna.org) and it will be fixed A.S.A.P!

**What is the deadline for submitting contest entries?**

Friday, September 30, 2016. All entries must be uploaded to the online system by 11 p.m. September 30. Categories that require mailed entries must be postmarked on or before September 30.

**Where can I get more help for anything I can’t find here?**

Call MNA at 800-279-2979 or 612-332-8844 or e-mail [member@mna.org](mailto:member@mna.org).