



MINNESOTA NEWSPAPER ASSOCIATION

2024-2025 Better Newspaper Contest

General Purpose of the Contest

Among 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 journalism and advertising to advance the profession in Minnesota.

Who May Enter

Active and associate members of MNA in good standing.

Contest Website

To submit contest entries, please visit: www.newspapercontest.com/minnesota

Judging

Experienced professionals from the Iowa Newspaper Association will be selected as judges.

Presentation

Award certificates will be presented Thursday evening, Jan. 29, 2026, at the 159th Annual MNA Convention & Trade Show. The convention is Jan. 28-30, 2026 at the **Marriott Minneapolis Northwest**, Brooklyn Park. Winners will be notified by email from the MNA office in December.

STATEMENT OF INTENT

The purpose of the Minnesota Newspaper Association's Better Newspaper Contest is to recognize and celebrate the outstanding news, editorial, design and advertising work published in Minnesota newspapers, magazines and digital products.

The MNA Member Services Committee and the MNA Board of Directors recognizes the contest must reflect an evolving industry, one that is collaborating on content creation more than ever. MNA asks each publication to critically evaluate its entries to ensure all criteria are met for each class and category to maintain the integrity of the contest.

Competition Categories

The Minnesota BNC is divided into three primary competition categories – **multiday publications**, **non-multiday publications** and **magazines**. Multiday publications are those producing a publication more than once per week. Non-multiday publications produce an edition no more than once per week. Magazines are defined for this contest as a periodical publication published more than once per year that contains articles and illustrations typically covering a particular subject or area of interest.

As determined by the Member Services Committee, the Better Newspaper Contest Task Force and the MNA Board of Directors, members will compete in the following categories:

Multiday publications will compete according to circulation (per statement of ownership) or if digital only by monthly visits, as:

- **Up to 3,000**
- **3,001 to 7,000**
- **7,001 and over**

Non-multiday publications will compete according to circulation (per statement of ownership) or if digital only by monthly visits, as:

- **Up to 1,000**
- **1,001 to 1,500**
- **1,501 to 3,000**
- **3,001 to 7,000**
- **7,001 and over**

Circulation verification: The circulation figure on your publication's statement of ownership, as submitted to MNA, determines which circulation category you compete in. Multiday circulation class is determined by M-F circulation figures, or by page views for digital-only members. Your circulation category has already been set in the contest platform. If your circulation category is incorrect, contact laura@mna.org **BEFORE** you submit any entries.

Contingencies: At its discretion, MNA may combine judging of circulations groups in a category if entry numbers in one or more circulation classes are low.

All entries are submitted electronically!

Do not mail any entries to the MNA office.

How to Enter

Please read the rules and instructions! Failure to follow contest rules and instructions may disqualify your entry. Judges are 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 (main line) or 612-278-0226 (Laura) or email Laura Niemi at laura@mna.org.

Important information for all entrants:

- **Entry deadline:** 9 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025. The online entry system automatically locks at the deadline.
- **Contest period:** The contest is for materials first published from Sept. 1, 2024, through Aug. 31, 2025. In these rules and instructions, unless specified as a 2024 date, all dates are 2025.
- **Entry form:** You are required to fill out an entry profile online for each entry. If you submit more than one entry per category, you must fill out a separate entry profile. Most categories require the submission of full-page PDF tearsheets online. Some categories require the submission of full issues or sections.
- **Eligibility:**
 - Any active member of the MNA in good standing may enter the contest.
 - At the time an entry was produced, the creator must have been a full-time or regular part-time employee or exclusive contributor to the publication.
 - Items published in more than one publication may be entered in the contest only once, under its publication of origin.
 - Entries intended for publication in more than one publication may only be entered once and under the publication of the largest circulation.
 - Collaborative projects created by staff members of two or more publications may only be entered once and under the publication with the largest circulation. Entries that violate these criteria will be disqualified.
- **Materials:** Each category specifies the materials required in the form of a PDF tearsheet or URL. If you submit a password-protected URL you **must** supply a password on the entry profile for the judge. We strongly suggest uploading a PDF of the entry in addition to or instead of a URL. YOU must verify your URLs are live and accessible before you enter each category.

➤ **Date Verification:**

- The date each entry was published must appear somewhere on the tearsheet materials you submit. If no date appears, you must supply a notarized proof of publication that states the publication date. The affidavit should be uploaded with the entry.
- In categories that require submission of materials from certain dates, for non-multiday publications, “the weeks which contain” means the calendar week from Sunday through Saturday. Bi-monthly publications should use the week following the required date if you do not publish during the week listed.
- For contest purposes, weeks run Sunday through Saturday.

➤ **Entry Limits:** The maximum number of entries an individual or publication can submit per category is listed in the description. In categories that recognize individuals, a person whose work appears in several publications under the same ownership will be limited to three 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 three separate editorials. Materials created by more than one person will be counted as a single entry (typically one of three allowed) for each person listed on the entry profile.

➤ **Fees:**

- The fee per entry is \$10. In categories that require multiple examples or editions, the materials count as ONE entry at \$10. In categories that allow multiple entries, each entry requires a separate \$10 fee and entry. (Example: A person entering their two best ads in the Best Use of Color category would make two separate entries and pay two \$10 entry fees.)
- Payment is due to MNA upon entry, or not later than the contest deadline: Sept. 30, 2025. Entry fees are payable online. If online payment is impossible, you may send a check for your publication’s complete entry fees to MNA. It MUST be postmarked on or before Sept. 30, 2025. If mailed, checks should be made out to MNA and must be accompanied by a printed list of all entries and include the MNA member publication name. **MAKE ONLY ONE CREDIT CARD PAYMENT/SEND ONLY ONE CHECK.** If paying by check, mail to MNA Better Newspaper Contest, 10 South Fifth Street, Suite 1105, Minneapolis, MN 55402, attn: BNC.
- Fees collected are used to pay contest expenses. First-place winners may choose to receive plaques to display their award certificate. Plaques for other award certificates may be ordered through MNA.

➤ **Other notes:**

- The maximum PDF file size is 100 MB.
- Make sure web links are accessible and a login credentials are provided for the judge, if needed.
- **Watch your dates.** Judges will eliminate the entries if they don’t match the rule requirements.
- Don’t pass by a category because you think you aren’t good enough.
- Judges are asked to (1) avoid ties; (2) make no awards if they feel entries do not meet judges’ standards; (3) if merited, make first, second and third place awards; (4) make written comments about each winner.

Contest Categories

Division I: Awards to Publications

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
11. Best Magazine
12. Best Magazine Cover
13. Magazine Use of Photography as a Whole
14. Magazine General Reporting
15. Best Magazine Design



Rules for Division I: Each publication may enter once in each category. Entries from three editions must be submitted unless otherwise noted. Five dates will be listed in the explanation of each category; you must choose three of these five dates for each entry.

Division II: Awards to Individuals

16. Advertising Campaign
17. Institutional Advertisement
18. Self-Promotion or House Ad
19. Use of Color in Advertising
20. Best Advertisement
21. Online Advertising
22. Human Interest Story
23. Human Interest Story – Personality Feature/Profile
24. Human Interest Story – News Feature
25. Social Issues Story
26. Sports Story
27. Sports Feature Story
28. Business Story
29. Business Profile
30. Arts & Entertainment Story
31. Local Breaking News Coverage
32. Hard News
33. Hard News – Coverage of Court/Crime
34. Investigative Reporting
35. Columnist
36. Photography – News Photo

37. Photography – Sports Photo
38. Photography – Feature Photo
39. Photography – Photo Story
40. Photography – Portrait and Personality
41. Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustrations
42. Best Magazine Article
43. Best Magazine Photography

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

Division III: Special Awards

44. Press Photographer's Portfolio
45. Editorial Portfolio
46. Design Portfolio
47. Dave Pyle New Journalist of the Year
48. Special Section
49. Best Use of Video
50. Best Use of Multimedia
51. Best Use of Social Media
52. Herman Roe Editorial Writing Award
53. Government/Public Affairs Reporting
54. Freedom of Information Award
55. Explanation of News Operations or News Ethics
56. Category X: **Starfish Award**
57. Lynn Smith Community Leadership Award

Rules for Division III: Listed under each category.

Circulation Classes*

- (A) Non-multiday: Up to 1,000
- (B) Non-multiday: 1,001 to 1,500
- (C) Non-multiday: 1,501 to 3,000
- (D) Non-multiday: 3,001 to 7,000
- (E) Non-multiday: over 7,000
- (F) Multiday: Up to 3,000
- (G) Multiday: 3,001 to 7,000
- (H) Multiday: 7,001 and over

Competition for the Vance & Mills Trophies

- The Mills Trophy is awarded to the top non-multiday publication each year.
- The Vance Trophy is awarded to the top multiday publication each year.

Winners are determined based on points awarded for each winning entry.

*Your circulation class has already been added to the contest platform. See page 2 for information about how your circulation class was determined. If it is incorrect or has changed, contact laura@mna.org BEFORE you start uploading entries!

Division I: Awards to Publications

1. General Excellence (Competition in all circulation classes.)

This award will recognize the balanced excellence of the publication 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 overall appearance of the publication.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Wednesday, October 9, 2024	Oct. 6-12, 2024
Tuesday, December 17, 2024	Dec.15-21, 2024
Saturday, February 8, 2025	Feb. 2-8, 2025
Thursday, April 24, 2025	April 20-26, 2025
Monday, June 2, 2025	June 1-7, 2025

Non-multiday: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed, or closest date published.

Multiday: 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 closest date within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one issue from the week.

Each publication may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full editions. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

Submit online.

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

This award will recognize excellence in the appearance of the publication. Judges will consider: design of the entire publication 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:
Tuesday, September 10, 2024	Sept. 8-14, 2024
Thursday, November 21, 2024	Nov. 17-23, 2024
Sunday, January 12, 2025	Jan. 12-18, 2025
Friday, March 14, 2025	March 9-15, 2025
Wednesday, August 6, 2025	Aug. 3-9, 2025

Non-Multiday: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed or closest date published.

Multiday: 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 closest date within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one issue from the week.

Each publication may submit one (1) entry. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of date is provided.

3. Editorial Page as a Whole (Competition in 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:
Friday, December 13, 2024	Dec. 8-14, 2024
Wednesday, January 8, 2025	Jan. 5-11, 2025
Thursday, April 3, 2025	March 30-April 5, 2025
Monday, May 5, 2025	May 4-10, 2025
Tuesday, July 15, 2025	July 13-19, 2025

Non-multiday: Submit full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of the editorial page(s) from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed, or closest date published.

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

Each publication may submit one entry. One entry consists of three (3) PDF tearsheet(s) of the entire editorial page or pages submitted online. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

4. General Reporting (Competition in 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:
Friday, September 27, 2024	Sep. 22-28, 2024
Tuesday, November 5, 2024	Nov. 3-9, 2024
Wednesday, February 12, 2025	Feb. 9-15, 2025
Friday, April 18, 2025	Apr. 13-19, 2025
Monday, August 4, 2025	Aug. 3-9, 2025

Non-multiday: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed, or closest date published.

Multiday: 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 closest date within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one issue from the week.

Each publication may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full editions. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

5. Sports Reporting (Competition in 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:
Thursday, September 5, 2024	Sept. 1-7, 2024
Wednesday, November 13, 2024	Nov. 10-16, 2024
Saturday, March 22, 2025	Mar. 16-22, 2025
Wednesday, June 4, 2025	Jun. 1-7, 2025
Tuesday, August 19, 2025	Aug. 17-23, 2025

Non-multiday: Submit full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of the entire sports section or page(s) online from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed, or closest date published.

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

Each publication may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) PDF tearsheet(s) of the entire sports section or pages submitted online. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

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

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

Exact Date:	Week of:
Tuesday, October 15, 2024	Oct. 13-19, 2024
Monday, December 2, 2024	Dec. 1-7, 2024
Friday, February 7, 2025	Feb. 2-8, 2025
Saturday, May 17, 2025	May 11-17, 2025
Thursday, July 10, 2025	Jul. 6-12, 2025

Non-multiday: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed, or closest date published.

Multiday: 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 closest date within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one issue from the week.

Each publication may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full issues submitted online. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

7. **Headline Writing** (Competition in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday 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 publication as a whole.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Thursday, October 24, 2024	Oct. 20-26, 2024
Tuesday, June 17, 2025	June 15-21, 2025
Plus one edition of your choice	

Non-multiday: Submit full issues from the two calendar weeks listed, or closest date published, plus one issue of your own choosing from the contest period.

Multiday: 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 closest dates within the same week shown.

Each publication may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full issues submitted online. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

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

This award will recognize overall excellence in locally prepared display and classified advertising. Judges will consider consistency in ad quality and 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, general appearance, and display of ads.

Exact Date:	Week of:
Saturday, November 16, 2024	Nov. 10-16, 2024
Wednesday, December 11, 2024	Dec. 8-14, 2024
Wednesday, March 12, 2025	March 9-15, 2025
Sunday, July 6, 2025	July 6-12, 2025
Friday, August 15, 2025	Aug. 10-16, 2025

Non-multiday: Submit full issues from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed, or closest date published.

Multiday: 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 publication may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) full issues submitted online. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

9. Classified Advertising Section (Competition in 4 classes: non-multiday circulation up to 3,000, non-multiday 3,001 – 7000, 7000+, and multiday.)

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:
Sunday, October 6, 2024	Oct. 6-12, 2024
Tuesday, January 28, 2025	Jan. 26-Feb 1, 2025
Saturday, March 29, 2025	Mar. 23-29, 2025
Thursday, May 22, 2025	May 18-24, 2025
Wednesday, July 2, 2025	Jun. 29-Jul 5, 2025

Non-multiday: Submit full-page PDF tearsheet(s) online of the classified advertising section or page(s) from three (3) of the five (5) calendar weeks listed, or closest date published.

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

Each publication may submit one (1) entry. One entry consists of three (3) PDF tearsheet(s) of the entire classified advertising section or page(s) submitted online. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

10. Website (Competition in 3 circulation classes; non-multiday up to 3,000, 3,001 +, and all multiday.)

This award will recognize excellence in 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 website will be randomly visited by judges a minimum of three times.

All publications: Submit a link (URL) to your website online. Please remember to include sign-on password if necessary.

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

11. Best Magazine (Competition among 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

This award recognizes excellence in magazines produced by an MNA member. A magazine focuses on a central theme and has at least its cover printed on glossy page stock. Judges will consider overall excellence in the publication, including locally produced editorial content, design (including use of photos and graphics) and effectiveness of advertising.

Each publication may submit up to three (3) magazine entries. One entry consists of a single staff-produced magazine published within the contest period. Submit online. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

12. Best Magazine Cover (Competition among 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

This award will recognize excellence based on use of graphics and/or photography, creative ambition, effectiveness of the presentation and editorial value.

Each MNA member may submit up to three (3) entries. One entry consists of a single staff-produced magazine published within the contest period. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

13. Magazine Use of Photography as a Whole (Competition among 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

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

Each MNA member publication may submit up to three (3) entries. One entry consists of a single staff-produced magazine published within the contest period. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

14. Magazine General Reporting (Competition among 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

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.

Each MNA member may submit up to three (3) entries. One entry consists of a single staff-produced magazine published within the contest period. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

15. Best Magazine Design (Competition among 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

This award recognizes excellence in overall design using all graphics including typography, use of photography, line art, effectiveness or presentation and page design. Magazines must be produced by MNA member members.

Each MNA member may submit up to three (3) entries. One entry consists of a single staff-produced magazine published within the contest period. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

Division II: Awards to Individuals

16. Advertising Campaign (Competition among all individuals.)

This award will recognize overall excellence of a staff-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 publication, 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 publication’s entries. Agency ads are not eligible.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)*

Each individual may submit three (3) 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. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

17. Institutional Advertisement (Competition among individuals in 4 classes: non-multiday circulation up to 3,000, 3,001-7,000, over 7,000; and multiday.)

This award will recognize excellence of the best staff-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 three (3) separate ad entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

18. Self-promotion or House Ad (Competition among individuals in 4 classes: non-multiday circulation up to 3,000, 3,001-7,000, over 7,000; and multiday.)

This award will recognize excellence of the best staff-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 three (3) separate ad entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

19. Use of Color in Advertising (Competition among individuals in 4 classes: non-multiday circulation up to 3,000, 3,001-7,000, over 7,000; and multiday.)

This award will recognize the effective use of color in staff-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 three (3) separate ad entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

20. Best Advertisement (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday 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 three (3) separate ad entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

21. Online Advertising (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday 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 three (3) 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. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

22. Human-Interest Story (Competition among individuals for each circulation class.)

This award will recognize excellence for a single human-interest story. A human-interest story is a feature story that discusses people in an emotional way. Presenting people and their problems, concerns, interests or achievements in a way that brings about interests, sympathy or motivation in the reader. Columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider effectiveness of writing style, originality of approach and human interest.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

23. Human-Interest Story – Personality Feature/Profile (Competition among individuals for each circulation class.)

This award will recognize excellence for a single personality feature story or profile piece. A personality feature story or profile is one in which the writer explores the characteristics of a person and presents his or her unique story. Entries will be judged on the basis of subject, quality of writing, interest and impact.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URL's online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

24. Human-Interest Story – News Feature (Competition among individuals for each circulation class.)

This award will recognize excellence for a single news feature story. A news feature story presents newsworthy events and information through a narrative story. Though usually tied to a news peg, the news feature serves to entertain readers, in addition to informing them. Stories should be memorable and their reporting, crafting, creativity and economy of expression.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URL's online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

25. Social Issues Story (Competition among individuals for each circulation class.)

This award will recognize excellence for a social issues story or stories. This category fits those stories that affect a community or society as a whole, rather than an individual or small group. Common social issues include poverty, violence, justice, human rights, equality or discrimination and crime. 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 three (3) 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. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

26. Sports Story (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in sports 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 three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

27. Sports Feature Story (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in sports feature writing. Judges will consider basis of subject, quality of writing and originality.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issues within the contest period. Each individual may submit three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

28. Business Story (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in business and economic news coverage as it pertains to growth, development and infrastructure. Business columns should not be entered in this category. Judges will consider news value, readability, content and impact, as well as the quality of coverage that goes beyond the routine to help readers understand business and economic issues.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

29. Business Story – Business Profile (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in business profile writing. A business profile is an article in which the writer explores the characteristics of a businessperson or business and presents his or her/its unique story. Entries will be judged on the basis of subject, quality of writing, interest and impact.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

30. Arts & Entertainment Story (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday 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 three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

31. Local Breaking News Coverage (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday 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 next print edition after the event. Judges will consider enterprise, thoroughness, objectivity and local importance; clarity will be paramount; style will be secondary criteria.

Individuals at Multiday: 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 Non-multiday: 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, if any.

Each individual may submit three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

32. Hard News Story (Competition among individuals in each circulation class.)

This award will recognize excellence in hard news coverage of topics that are timely, important and consequential, but those for which advanced planning may have been possible. Judges will consider communitywide importance/impact, timeliness, quality of writing, thoroughness and effectiveness of delivery.

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

33. Hard News – Coverage of Court/Crime (Competition among individuals in each circulation class.)

This award will recognize exemplary coverage of court and crime activity that goes beyond the routine. Judges will focus on the quality of the reporting, not the nature or severity of the crime(s).

Individuals: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue within the contest period. Each individual may submit three (3) separate entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

34. Investigative Reporting (Competition among individuals in 4 circulation classes; non-multiday up to 3,000, 3,001–7,000, over 7,000; multiday compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in investigative reporting. 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 three (3) 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. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

35. Columnist (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence of columnists employed on staff. 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. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

Photography (Competition among individuals in all non-multiday circulation classes; multiday compete in one class.)

This award will recognize excellence in photojournalism by individual reporters.

36. Photography - News Photo: Any single photo depicting spot news/breaking news or illustrating hard news. Judges will consider content, reader appeal, technical quality, composition and editing.

37. Photography - Sports Photo: Any single photo portraying participation or competition in a game or sports event, or a sports-related feature photo. Judges will consider content, reader appeal, technical quality, composition and editing.

38. Photography - Feature Photo: Any single photo distinguished for its creativity and economy of expression, strong human interest, fresh view of the commonplace or depicting or illustrating feature news. Judges will consider content, reader appeal, technical quality, composition and editing.

39. Photography - Photo Story: Three (3) or more photos that tell a single story. May or may not accompany a written story. Judges will consider content, reader appeal, technical quality, composition and editing.

40. Photography - Portrait and Personality: Any single photo in which the subject's face or expression is predominant, that displays the personality of the subject and for which advance planning may or may not have been available. Judges will consider content, reader appeal, technical quality, composition and editing.

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 three (3) separate entries per category. One entry consists of one photo or photo story within each category (*excluding 38. Photography-Photo Story, which needs three or more photos*). 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 profile. (*Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.*) Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

41. Use of Information Graphics and Graphic Illustrations (Competition among individuals in 4 classes: non-multiday circulation up to 3,000, 3,001-7,000, over 7,000, and multiday.)

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 three (3) separate entries. Each contest entry should include the entrant's graphics or graphic illustrations, along with the related story. Please provide descriptive language of the graphic in the entry profile. (*Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.*) Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

42. Best Magazine Article (Competition among 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

This award will be based on quality of writing, thoroughness, editorial focus, and depth of reporting.

Each MNA member may submit up to three (3) entries. One entry consists of a single staff-produced magazine article published within the contest period. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

43. Best Magazine Photography (Competition among 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

This award recognizes any single photo distinguished for its creativity, economy of expression, strong human interest, fresh view of the commonplace or depicting or illustrating feature news. Judges will consider content, reader appeal, technical quality, composition and editing.

Each MNA member may submit up to three (3) entries. One entry consists of a single staff-produced magazine published within the contest period. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

Division III: Special Awards

44. Press Photographer's Portfolio (Competition among individuals in 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

This award will recognize overall excellence among 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. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

45. Editorial Portfolio (Competition among 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

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

Exact Date:	Week of:
Wednesday, September 11, 2024	Sept. 8-14, 2024
Friday, October 4, 2024	Sept.29-Oct. 5, 2024
Tuesday, December 3, 2024	Dec. 1-7, 2024
Thursday, January 9, 2025	Jan. 5-11, 2025
Tuesday, February 18, 2025	Feb. 16-22, 2025
Monday, March 3, 2025	March 2-8, 2025
Sunday, April 6, 2025	April 6-12, 2025
Tuesday, May 20, 2025	May 18-24, 2025
Thursday, June 19, 2025	June 15-21, 2025
Friday, July 25, 2025	July 20-26, 2025

Non-multiday: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online of from five (5) to seven (7) of the calendar weeks containing the dates listed, or closest date published.

Multiday: 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 closest date closest within the same week shown. Do not submit more than one entry from the same week.

Each publication may submit one (1) entry. Editorials may be the work more than one staff member. Publications may document the outcome or impact of the editorials in a statement submitted with the entries. Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

46. Design Portfolio (Competition among individuals in 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

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:

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. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

47. Dave Pyle New Journalist Award (Competition among individuals in 2 classes: non-multiday and multiday.)

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 publication 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. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

48. Special Section (Competition among 4 classes: non-multiday circulation up to 3,000, 3,001-7,000, over 7,000, multiday compete as one class.)

This award recognizes excellence in special sections devoted to a single subject as supplements to publications. 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 publication may submit up to three (3) entries. One entry consists of a special section supplement devoted to a single topic published any date within the contest period. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

49. Best Use of Video (Competition among 4 classes: non-multiday circulation up to 3,000, 3,001-7,000, over 7,000, multiday compete as one class.)

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

All Publications: Submit URLs online from any date within the contest period. Each publication may submit up to three (3) entries. Each entry will consist of one (1) video. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

50. Best Use of Multimedia (Competition among 4 classes: non-multiday circulation up to 3,000, 3,001-7,000, over 7,000; and multiday.)

The award will recognize excellence in using multimedia 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 Publications: Submit URLs online from any date within the contest period. Each publication may submit up to three (3) entries. Each entry will consist of one (1) multimedia special project. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

51. Best Use of Social Media (Competition among 4 classes: non-multiday circulation up to 3,000, 3,001-7,000, over 7,000 and multiday as one class.)

This award will recognize excellence, efficacy, and innovation in social media use. Entries may include examples of crowd sourcing; community engagement via sites such as Facebook, X, 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 publications: Submit PDF tearsheets, if applicable, and/or URLs online. Each publication may submit up to 3 (three) entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

52. 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 three (3) 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. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

53. 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 publication'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 three (3) separate entries. Entries may include series of multiple stories, or ongoing coverage of a single issue. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

54. Freedom of Information Award (Competition among all publications.)

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 Publications: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any issue or issues from the contest period. Each publication 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. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

55. Explanation of News Operations or News Ethics (Competition among all publications.)

This award will recognize excellence in the explanation to readers of publication operations or ethics. Judges will consider use of stories, columns, editorials and advertising to explore how a publication functions, how policies are developed, or what standards are used to determine what the content of a paper will be.

All Publications: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online from any one issue within the calendar period. Each publication may submit three (3) entries. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

56. Category X: Starfish Award (Competition among all individuals.)

This award will recognize the all-star individuals who excel in creating multiple types of content. Judges will consider: variety, readability and creativity.

Submissions must include items from five separate categories such as: government news stories, sports stories, columns, photos, social media posts, advertisements, business features, human interest stories, photo stories, public health stories, education stories, political cartoons and any other multimedia work completed for a publication.

Each individual may submit one (1) entry of five (5) pieces submitted as full-page PDF tearsheets or URLs. The content must have run online or in print during the contest period. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

57. Lynn Smith Community Leadership Award (Competition among all publications.)

This award will recognize local leadership initiatives that were encouraged, initiated or promoted by the publication. 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 publication, house ads or flyers relating to the effort. Cover letters are allowed.

All Publications: Submit PDF tearsheets and/or URLs online for a project that either started or ended within the contest period. Each publication may submit only one (1) entry. *(Please verify URLs are not broken (current) or that access is allowed in the case of paywalls.)* Make sure the publication date is visible or an affidavit with proof of the publication date is provided.

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 (main line) or 612-278-0226 (Laura) or email Laura Niemi at laura@mna.org.

Where do I enter the BNC?

The contest site is www.newspapercontest.com/minnesota

What work can I enter in the BNC?

Anything published from Sept. 1, 2024, through Aug. 31, 2025.

What browser should I use?

BNC is optimized for the Google Chrome Browser for PC and Macintosh computers, and will be fully supported by customer support. Other browsers may work but support may be limited.

How do I know what my password is?

We are using a platform called ACES. The MNA association code is: "pMNA" (case sensitive). **YOU WILL NEED TO REGISTER BEFORE YOU CAN LOG IN.** NOTE: You re-register EACH year. You will be prompted immediately to create your password and include contact information. If you have password related questions or problems, contact Laura Niemi at 612-278-0226 or laura@mna.org.

How do I determine or adjust my circulation group?

MNA has pre-determined your circulation group, based on the Statement of Ownership submitted to MNA. If you believe there is an error, please call Laura Niemi at 612-278-0226 or email laura@mna.org

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

On the entry profile, when asked to provide "Name 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") and include dates.

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

Editing entries is limited. You must submit a new entry and delete the incorrect entry.

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. Consult the rules for each category.

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

When submitting work produced by multiple or shared staffs, submit the entry under the publication with the larger circulation. In the "comment/info" section of the entry profile you may provide a list of staff members and/or publications 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 photo file.

What is the maximum file size?

100MB 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 contest 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-relevant 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 your files. 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 trust our member publishers not to submit embellished or re-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?

After all entries are uploaded and you are ready to pay. Go to the **green bar (with yellow writing)** that indicates: **AFTER COMPLETING ENTRIES - PLEASE SEE ENTRY REPORT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.** This will lead you to the payment page.

Online payment by credit card is preferred. On the "Entry Report" page, click the link at the bottom that reads, "If you wish to pay online with a credit card, click here."

While not preferred, MNA will accept checks by mail for contest entries at 10 South Fifth Street, Suite 1105, Minneapolis, MN 55402, attn. BNC. ***Mailed payments must be postmarked on or before Sept. 30.***

Direct questions about payment to laura@mna.org or 612-278-0226.

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

If your publication is missing or the division/circulation is incorrect, call Laura at 612-278-0226 or email laura@mna.org.

What is the deadline for submitting contest entries?

Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2025. All entries must be uploaded to the online system by 9 p.m. September 30. The system locks down at 9 p.m.

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

Call Laura at 612-278-0226 or e-mail laura@mna.org.

Trouble Shoot: File too Large –

“The compression tab offers the opportunity to downsample the images. Maybe 100ppi is good for your evaluation purposes. I’ve also set the Image Quality to High, instead of maximum.... Also, in the bottom right corner is Crop Image Data to Frames, which takes any data outside the frame and deletes it. So if a photo is placed in a frame, then enlarged, the part of the photo outside the frame won’t be in the PDF.”

“Another option: if the compression tab settings don’t make them small enough, make the PDF RGB. If the papers are already using an RGB workflow they can simply export the PDF with No Color Conversion selected in the Output tab. If they are converting images to CMYK in Photoshop, they can convert the PDF to RGB by selecting Convert to Destination then choose sRGB and Don’t Include Profiles.”

The screenshot shows the 'Export Adobe PDF' dialog box with the 'Compression' tab selected. The settings are as follows:

- Adobe PDF Preset:** [High Quality Print] (modified)
- Standard:** None
- Compatibility:** Acrobat 5 (PDF 1.4)
- General** (selected in sidebar)
- Compression** (selected in sidebar)
- Marks and Bleeds**
- Output**
- Advanced**
- Security**
- Summary**

Color Images

- Bicubic Downsampling to: 100 pixels per inch
- for images above: 100 pixels per inch
- Compression: Automatic (JPEG)
- Image Quality: High
- Tile Size: 128

Grayscale Images

- Bicubic Downsampling to: 100 pixels per inch
- for images above: 100 pixels per inch
- Compression: Automatic (JPEG)
- Image Quality: Medium
- Tile Size: 128

Monochrome Images

- Bicubic Downsampling to: 1200 pixels per inch
- for images above: 1800 pixels per inch