



**CANADIAN COMMUNITY
NEWSMEDIA AWARDS**

2026 Entry Book

Table of Contents

Quick Start Guide	3
General Excellence	5
Category 101 - General Excellence	5
Premier Awards	6
Category 201 - Best News Story*	6
Category 202 - Best Feature Story	7
Category 203 - Best Feature Series.....	7
Category 204 - Outstanding Columnist.....	8
Category 205 - Outstanding Reporter Initiative*	8
Category 206 - Best National Editorial	9
Category 207 - Best Local Editorial	9
Category 208 - Best Historical Story	10
Category 209 - Best Local Civic Journalism	10
Category 210 - Best Local Cartoon*	11
Category 211 - Best Spot News Photo Coverage.....	11
Category 212 - Best News Feature Photo.....	12
Category 213 - Best Feature Photo.....	12
Category 214 - Best Sports Photo	13
Category 215 - Best Photo Essay.....	13
Category 216 - Best Ad Campaign.....	14
Category 217 - Best Ad Design	14
Category 218 - Best Reader Engagement Campaign*	15
Category 221 - Outstanding Community Service**	16
Category 223 - Best Coverage of the Arts	16
Category 224 - Best Sports Coverage*	17
Category 226 - Best Community Newspaper Website.....	17
Category 227 - Best Multimedia Feature**	18
Category 228 - Best Multimedia Breaking News Coverage**	18
Special Competitions	19
Category 301 - Best Special Section	19
Category 302 - Excellence in Rural Reporting	20
Category 303 - Best Business Writing.....	21
Category 304 - Best Agricultural Edition	21
Category 305 - Best Agricultural Story*	22

Quick Start Guide



2026 UPDATES

- The 2026 competition is open to members of News Media Canada only.
- Entry fees have been reinstated at previous rates.

ELIGIBILITY

Entrants must be non-daily community newspapers or newsmedia sites published in Canada in English or French and contain content of a general nature for a Canadian audience. To be eligible the publisher must be a general or associate member of News Media Canada in good standing.



CATEGORY CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Within each category, each community newspaper or newsmedia site shall compete in the class applicable to it.

PRINTED NEWSPAPERS:



Circulation figures will be used from the latest audited or sworn average total circulation per issue for the edition of record.

DIGITAL-ONLY SITES:



Sites will be classified based on size of market(s) served (using Statistics Canada data).

- Large market sites with population greater than 100,000 will be grouped with printed publications having circulation 10,000+.
- Small market sites serving markets with population under 100,000 will be grouped with printed publications having circulation up to 9,999.

ENTRY DETAILS

Newspapers must submit entries from the 2025 calendar year.

A maximum of three (3) entries may be submitted into EACH of the following categories:

Premier Awards:

- 201 - Best News Story
- 202 - Best Feature Story
- 203 - Best Feature Series
- 204 - Outstanding Columnist
- 205 - Outstanding Reporter Initiative
- 208 - Best Historical Story
- 209 - Best Local Civic Journalism
- 210 - Best Local Cartoon*
- 211 - Best Spot News Photo Coverage
- 212 - Best Feature News Photo

- 213 - Best Feature Photo
- 214 - Best Sports Photo
- 215 - Best Photo Essay
- 216 - Best Ad Campaign*
- 217 - Best Ad Design*
- 218 - Best Reader Engagement Campaign*

Special Competitions:

- 302 - Excellence In Rural Reporting
- 303 - Best Business Writing
- 305 - Best Agricultural Story



A maximum of one (1) entry may be submitted into EACH of the following categories:

Premier Awards:

- 206 - Best National Editorial
- 207 - Best Local Editorial
- 221 - Outstanding Community Service
- 223 - Best Coverage Of The Arts

- 224 - Best Sports Coverage
- 226 - Best Community Newspaper Website*
- 227 - Best Multimedia Feature
- 228 - Best Multimedia Breaking News Coverage

Special Competitions:

- 301 - Best Special Section*
- 304 - Best Agricultural Edition*

General Excellence:

- 101 - General Excellence

*Printed newspapers only.

Entrants competing in General Excellence must submit one issue from **March 2025** and one issue from **September 2025** (randomly selected by News Media Canada) and enter them in the appropriate circulation class.

ENTRY DEADLINE & FEES



The final entry deadline is Thursday May 21, 2026, at 11:59 PM Eastern

All entries must be submitted and paid in full by the deadline in order to qualify.

General Excellence: **\$75**

Premier Awards or Special Competitions: **\$20** per entry submitted

All amounts include 13% HST. Payment must be made by Paypal through the contest website. All payments must be received no later than the entry deadline.

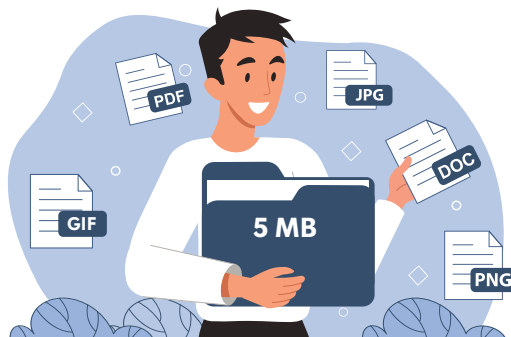
All entrants must register and complete entry forms online at www.cnaawards.ca.

Quick Start Guide



ONLINE ENTRY SYSTEM

All entrants must register and complete entry forms online. Click **ENTRY DETAILS** at www.ccnawards.ca.



File Formats Accepted: PDF, DOC/DOCX, TXT, JPG, GIF and PNG.

For the Best Community Newspaper Website, Multimedia Feature and Multimedia Breaking News Coverage categories, a URL link may be provided for your website and online/multimedia components.

File names must not contain spaces or special characters.

The following format is acceptable: Community-News-March-22-2025-pg1.pdf

Maximum file size: 5 MB

For larger files (5-50 MB), you may upload your file(s) to a 3rd party website such as www.issuu.com and copy and paste the hosted item's web address into the website URL field.

RULES & REGULATIONS

Any work published in more than one newspaper or newsmedia site may only be entered by the publisher with the highest circulation or market population. The work must be entered in the applicable class. The awards committee, staff, and judges reserve the right to disqualify any duplicate or incorrectly submitted entries at any point that they are discovered during the competition.

Any image created or manipulated beyond basic lighting or cropping changes using computer software may not be entered in the Best Spot News Photo, Best Feature Photo, Best Sports Photo or Best Photo Essay categories.



Submissions become the property of News Media Canada and may be reproduced by News Media Canada in any of its publications.

Maintain a copy of your submissions for later announcements. Due to the high volume of entries, News Media Canada is unable to trace individual entries following submission to judges. Be sure to keep a copy of your entry form(s) for your files.

THE DECISION OF THE JUDGES SHALL BE FINAL.

WINNERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Winners in all categories and classes will be announced on the Canadian Community Newsmedia Awards website, www.ccnawards.ca on Monday September 14, 2026.



QUESTIONS?

Call the News Media Canada office toll-free at 1-877-305-2262 ext. 3221 or email awards@newsmediacanada.ca.

General Excellence

Category 101 - General Excellence

PRINT NEWSPAPERS ONLY

This category is based on the total newspaper and will recognize outstanding overall achievement in the community press. An entry will consist of one complete copy of an issue from **March 2025** and one complete copy of an issue from **September 2025**.

There is a limit of **one entry** per calendar year in this category. The URLs of your e-editions or PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required for this category.

Any newspaper that did not publish during a General Excellence month must submit an issue from the preceding publishing month closest to the General Excellence month in question. Include an explanatory note in the comments section when submitting your entry.

Awards will be given for [Best All-Round Newspaper](#), [Best Front Page](#), and [Best Editorial Page](#).

Judges will select the top three newspapers based on the following scoring system:

Editorial:

Range of Coverage and Editorial Design 35 points
Quality of Writing 15 points
Photography 15 points

Typography:

Typography and Design 10 points
Print Quality 5 points

Advertising and Layout:

Ad Design and Copy Editing 15 points
Layout and Effective Use of Colour 5 points

Front Page: 10 points

Editorial Page: 10 points

TOTAL: 120 points

[Class 1011 - Print circulation up to 1499](#)
[Class 1012 - Print circulation 1500 to 6499](#)
[Class 1013 - Print circulation 6500 to 17499](#)
[Class 1014 - Print circulation 17500 and over](#)

Premier Awards

Category 201 - Best News Story*

An entry will consist of **one story** dealing with a **local event of some newsworthy importance**.

Previous award-winning entries in this category have been well-researched, in-depth reports on the community, with quality writing that captivates readers.

Each entry must include the article URL or one set of full-page PDF tearsheets containing the article clearly marked and visible for judging. Please include the writer's name with the entry. Syndicated material will not be accepted.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

***An explanatory letter should accompany the entry to provide background information.**

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Grammar, Spelling (35 points)
- **Depth and detail:** Scope and excellence of content, Quality of reporting/initiative, Depth of research (35 points)
- **Newsworthiness:** Significance to community, Impact, Local content, Timeliness (30 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2011 – Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000
Class 2012 – Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 202 - Best Feature Story

A feature takes an in-depth look at what's going on behind the news. It gets into people's lives and tries to explain why and how a trend developed. Unlike news, a feature does not have to be tied to a current event or a breaking story, but it can grow out of something that's reported in the news.

An entry will consist of **one story published about one specific subject of local interest**. Entry must include full-page PDF tearsheets, with the article clearly marked and visible for judging. Please include the writer's name with the entry. Syndicated material will not be accepted, and cover letters will not be considered.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Structure and organization, Grammar, Spelling (25 points)
- **Depth and detail:** Scope and excellence of content, Quality of reporting/initiative, Depth of research (25 points)
- **Originality and creativity:** Uniqueness of approach, Original treatment of the topic (20 points)
- **Presentation:** Graphic layout, Picture content (15 points)
- **Impact:** Relevance to the community, Reader interest (15 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2021 - Print circulation up to 3,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 10,000

Class 2022 - Print circulation 4,000 to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population 10,000 to 99,999

Class 2023 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 203 - Best Feature Series

An entry will consist of a **series of two to four stories about one specific subject of local interest**. Entry must include URLs or full-page PDF tearsheets with the articles clearly marked and visible for judging. Please include the writer's name with the entry. Syndicated material will not be accepted.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Grammar, Spelling, Structure, organization (25 points)
- **Depth and detail:** Scope and excellence of content, Quality of reporting/initiative, Depth of research (25 points)
- **Originality and creativity:** Uniqueness of approach, Original treatment of the topic (20 points)
- **Presentation:** Graphic layout, Picture content (15 points)
- **Impact:** Relevance to the community, Reader interest (15 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2031 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2032 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 204 - Outstanding Columnist

George Cadogan Memorial Outstanding Columnist Award

Entries will be from those who write a general interest column on a regular basis for community news media or a newspaper of any circulation. Entries should be lively, original, tight and grammatical. They should show courage regarding local issues. Covering more than one subject is good. Presentation counts.

An entry will consist of URLs or full-page PDF tearsheets of **three consecutive columns** of your choosing during the calendar year.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Lively, tight writing style, Organization of thoughts, Grammar, Spelling, Originality and freshness of approach (35 points)
- **Scope and excellence of content:** Choice of subject matter, Courage regarding local issues, Expression of opinion on local issues, Clarity of argument (35 points)
- **Impact:** Ability to stimulate thought, Appeal to readers (20 points)
- **Presentation:** Layout and design, Consistent placement in the newspaper (10 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

A \$500 cash prize will be awarded to the first-place winning columnist.

Class 2041 - Open to all members

Category 205 - Outstanding Reporter Initiative*

An entry will consist of **at least one story or a series of stories** published during the calendar year. Stories may cover a variety of topics, including science, education, public health, business, etc. Judging will be based on local relevance, quality of writing and depth of research. Please include the writer's name (s) with the entry (can be a reporting team).

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

***An explanatory letter from the editor or publisher should accompany the entry to provide background information.**

Judging based on:

- **Depth and detail:** Scope and excellence of content, Quality of reporting/initiative, Depth of research (40 points)
- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Grammar, Spelling (30 points)
- **Newsworthiness:** Significance to community, Impact, Local content, Timeliness (30 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2051 - Open to all members

Category 206 - Best National Editorial

This award is intended to recognize editorial writing of national focus rather than local that contributes to a better understanding of human relationships in Canada between individuals, regions or races. The award seeks to stimulate more editorial writing in community news media on broad Canadian subjects. The purpose of any writing submitted should be to provide and stimulate the thinking of the readers.

The emphasis in this competition is on individual effort, regardless of the size of the newspaper. Signed or unsigned editorials stating the official position of the publisher may be entered. Judges reserve the right to disqualify entries deemed to be columns.

An entry will consist of a URL or one full-page tear sheet containing the editorial. Please include the writer's name with the entry.

There is a limit of **one entry** per calendar year in this category.

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Grammar, Spelling (35 points)
- **Clarity of argument:** Identification of a national issue that is or should be of concern to the community, Expression of opinion, Support a course of action, Persuasiveness and reasoning (35 points)
- **Impact:** Ability to stimulate thought, Relevance to community (30 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2061 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000
Class 2062 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 207 - Best Local Editorial

The intent of this award is to recognize excellence in dealing editorially with issues that are of purely local or regional interest. Entries should be stimulating, well-researched, clearly stated expressions of opinion on topics of local importance. Background material may be submitted to broaden the judges' understanding of the issue. Signed or unsigned editorials stating the official position of the publisher may be entered. Judges reserve the right to disqualify entries deemed to be columns.

An entry will consist of a URL or one full-page tear sheet containing the editorial. Please include the writer's name with the entry.

There is a limit of **one entry** per calendar year in this category.

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Grammar, Spelling (35 points)
- **Clarity of argument:** Identification of a local issue that is or should be of concern to the community, Expression of opinion, Support a course of action, Persuasiveness and reasoning (35 points)
- **Impact:** Ability to stimulate thought, Relevance to community (30 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2071 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000
Class 2072 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 208 - Best Historical Story

An entry will consist of **one story published** dealing with local history. This entry should record community-wide interest in an event, observance or personage(s) that could have some national heritage importance. If a newspaper submits a historical section, it must identify which story is to be judged. Entry must include a URL or a full-page tearsheet with the article clearly marked and visible for judging. Syndicated material will not be accepted.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

Judging based on:

- **Depth and detail:** Depth of research, Scope and excellence of content, Quality of reporting/initiative (30 points)
- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Grammar, Spelling, Structure, organization (20 points)
- **Originality and creativity:** Uniqueness of approach, Original treatment of the topic (20 points)
- **Presentation:** Graphic layout, Picture content (15 points)
- **Impact:** Effectiveness in enhancing the public understanding of, or interest in, history in the community, Relevance to the community (15 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2081 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2082 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 209 – Best Local Civic Journalism

This award recognizes public service journalism that sheds meaningful light on a civic issue affecting the local community. A good civic journalism story should have an investigative element to it and hold those in power accountable. Entries should demonstrate the ability to go the extra mile, such as using access to information, consulting outside experts, or pushing those in power for clear answers. The subject may be a municipal, regional, provincial or national issue directly impacting the local community.

An entry will consist of **one story** or **a series of up to three stories** published during the calendar year.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

Judging based on:

- **Depth and detail:** Scope and excellence of content, Quality of reporting/initiative, Balance, Local angle, Depth of research (40 points)
- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Grammar, Spelling (30 points)
- **Newsworthiness:** Significance to community, Impact, Local content, Timeliness (30 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2091 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2092 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 210 - Best Local Cartoon*

PRINT NEWSPAPERS ONLY

An entry will consist of a **non-syndicated cartoon pertaining to a subject of local community interest** for that newspaper.

A full-page tear sheet containing the cartoon must be submitted. Please include the cartoonist's name with the entry.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. A full-page PDF tearsheet of your entry is required.

***An explanatory letter should accompany the entry to provide background information.**

Judging will be based on:

- **Presentation:** Creative representation of subject matter, Originality and freshness of approach (35 points)
- **Newsworthiness:** Relevance to the community, Reader interest, Timeliness (35 points)
- **Impact:** Ability to stimulate thought (30 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2101 - Open to all members

Category 211 - Best Spot News Photo Coverage

A spot news photo is a published photo of an unscheduled event for which no advance planning was possible. It must contain emotion, expression of interest, action or illusion of movement, with good exposure, composition and reproduction.

An entry will consist of a URL or **one full-page tear sheet with the photo clearly marked** and visible for judging. Only one picture or single-subject sequence will be accepted for judging. Actual prints are not necessary. Please include the photographer's name with the entry. Any image created or manipulated beyond basic lighting or cropping changes with computer software is not acceptable.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

French entrants: Please provide an English translation of your photograph's outline.

Judging will be based on:

- **News or feature value** (20 points)
- **Impact:** Emotion, Expression of interest, action or illusion of movement (15 points)
- Composition and Technical Skills (10 points)
- **Presentation:** Focus/clarity, Reproduction, Cropping, Cutline (5 points)

TOTAL: 50 points

Class 2111 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2112 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 212 - Best News Feature Photo

A news feature photo is a published photo of a scheduled or unscheduled event for which an opportunity exists for advanced planning and creative control. It must contain emotion, expression of interest, creativity, with good exposure, composition and reproduction. Preference will be given to story-telling images that demonstrate excellent news judgment.

An entry will consist of a URL or **one full-page tearsheet with the photo clearly marked** and visible for judging. Only one picture only will be accepted for judging. Please include the photographer's name with the entry. Any image created or manipulated beyond basic lighting or cropping changes with computer software is not acceptable.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

French entrants: Please provide an English translation of your photograph's cutline.

Judging will be based on:

- **News or feature value** (15 points)
- **Impact:** Emotion, Expression of interest (15 points)
- Creativity, Composition and Technical Skills (15 points)
- **Presentation:** Focus, Clarity, Reproduction, Cropping/cutline (5 points)

TOTAL: 50 points

Class 2121 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2122 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 213 - Best Feature Photo

A feature photo must contain imagination, initiative and technical skill.

An entry will consist of a URL or **one full-page tearsheet with the photo clearly marked** and visible for judging. Only one picture or single-subject sequence will be accepted for judging. Actual prints are not necessary. Please include the photographer's name with the entry. Any image created or manipulated beyond basic lighting or cropping changes with computer software is not acceptable.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

French entrants: Please provide an English translation of your photograph's cutline.

Judging will be based on:

- News or feature value (15 points)
- Impact (10 points)
- Originality and foresight (10 points)
- Technical skills (10 points)
- Presentation: Focus, Clarity, Reproduction, Cropping/cutline (10 points)

TOTAL: 55 points

Class 2131 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2132 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 214 - Best Sports Photo

A sports photo must convey emotional impact of the moment to sum up a sports event, displaying foresight and ingenuity on the part of the photographer.

An entry will consist of a URL or **one full-page tearsheet with the photo clearly marked** and visible for judging. Only one picture or single-subject sequence will be accepted for judging. Actual prints are not necessary. Please include the photographer's name with the entry. Any image created or manipulated beyond basic lighting or cropping changes with computer software is not acceptable.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

French entrants: Please provide an English translation of your photograph's cutline.

Judging will be based on:

- Impact (15 points)
- Originality and foresight (10 points)
- Technical skills (10 points)
- Presentation: Focus, Clarity, Reproduction, Cropping/cutline (5 points)

TOTAL: 40 points

Class 2141 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2142 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 215 - Best Photo Essay

A well-presented storytelling photographic essay is an important communicator. This award recognizes photographic excellence, attention to composition, communication, quality of pictures, presentation, graphic display and completeness of the message.

An entry will consist of a URL or **one set of full-page PDF tearsheets containing a series of two or more photos**. Actual prints are not necessary. Please include the photographer's name with the entry. Any image created or manipulated beyond basic lighting or cropping changes with computer software is not acceptable.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required.

Judging will be based on:

- Photographic narrative (15 points)
- News or feature value (15 points)
- Impact (15 points)
- Originality and foresight (15 points)
- Technical skills (10 points)
- Presentation: Focus, Clarity, Reproduction, Cropping/cutline (5 points)

TOTAL: 75 points

Class 2151 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2152 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 216 - Best Ad Campaign

PRINT NEWSPAPERS ONLY

This category recognizes print ad campaigns developed and executed by newspapers for an advertising client. An ad campaign is a series of ads (minimum two ads) for a single client.

Entries may either be produced entirely in-house, using original art, photography, and copywriting OR they may incorporate client-provided and/or stock photography and creative. Entrants are encouraged to submit campaigns that are either print, digital, or both.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. Full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required. Do NOT just submit the ads on their own.

Judging will be based on:

- **Idea/Concept:** Uniqueness, Creativity (15 points)
- **Implementation:** Strategy and approach, Execution (20 points)
- **Design:** Typography, Layout, Headlines, Graphics (20 points)
- **Copywriting:** Unique selling proposition, Benefits statements, etc. (20 points)
- **Results:** Impact, Success communicating the message, Outcome (25 points)

Total: 100 points

Class 2161 - Open to all PRINT members

Category 217 - Best Ad Design

PRINT NEWSPAPERS ONLY

This category recognizes the best single print ad designed and executed by a newspaper for a client.

Entries may either be produced entirely in-house, using original art, photography, and copywriting OR they may incorporate client-provided and/or stock photography and creative. Entrants are encouraged to submit ads that are either print, digital, or both.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. Full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required. Do NOT just submit the ads on their own.

Judging will be based on:

- **Idea/Concept:** Uniqueness, Creativity (15 points)
- **Implementation:** Strategy and approach, Execution (20 points)
- **Design:** Typography, Layout, Headlines, Graphics (20 points)
- **Copywriting:** Unique selling proposition, Benefits statements, etc. (20 points)
- **Results:** Impact, Success communicating the message, Outcome (25 points)

Total: 100 points

Class 2171 - Print circulation up to 9,999

Class 2172 - Print circulation 10,000+

Category 218 - Best Reader Engagement Campaign*

PRINT NEWSPAPERS ONLY

This category recognizes an effective print campaign launched by a newspaper designed to promote its readership or grow its audience.

This could include a campaign that highlights any of the paper's services or offerings, including but not limited to: contests that engage readers and the local community; a creative drive to connect the newspaper's staff and the community at large; a "Best of the City" competition for local businesses; promotions for subscriptions, sponsorships, newsletters; or social media campaigns to attract followers and online engagement.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. Full-page PDF tearsheet(s) are required. Photos or collateral material from other media may be included.

***An explanatory letter from the editor or publisher should accompany the entry to provide background information.**

Judging will be based on:

- **Idea/Concept:** Uniqueness, Creativity (15 points)
- **Implementation:** Strategy and approach, Execution (20 points)
- **Design:** Typography, Layout, Headlines, Graphics (20 points)
- **Copywriting:** Unique selling proposition, Benefits statements, etc. (20 points)
- **Results:** Impact, Success promoting to the community, Outcome (25 points)

Total: 100 points

Class 2181 - Print circulation up to 9,999

Class 2182 - Print circulation 10,000+

Category 221 - Outstanding Community Service**

An entry will consist of a **report on a single project** which extends **beyond the normal community service mission of news media**, such as a community event sponsored or originated by the publisher.

The presentation should convey to judges through tearsheets, letters, clippings, photos and other descriptive accounts, the involvement of the organization in this community service. The report may cover several years but must have concluded in the 2025 calendar year.

There is a limit of **one entry** per calendar year in this category. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheets of your entry are required for this category.

****An explanatory letter MUST accompany the entry to provide background information.**

Judging will be based on:

- **Scope of the project:** Relative importance of the project to the community, Appeal, Innovativeness of the idea (25 points)
- **Coverage:** Depth of research, Quality of reporting, Effective use of photos, editorials and promotion (25 points)
- **News organization involvement:** Engagement with the community (25 points)
- **Outcome:** Benefit to the community (25 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2211 - Open to all members

Category 223 - Best Coverage of the Arts

This award recognizes news media for coverage of the arts in the community. Submit **at least three, but no more than five, different works covering arts**, such as a news story, feature, editorial or photograph. Do not submit full sections.

An entry will consist of a URL or **one set of full-page PDF tearsheets for each different example**, with the stories clearly marked for judging.

There is a limit of **one entry** per calendar year in this category. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheets of your entry are required for this category.

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Grammar, Spelling (25 points)
- **Scope and excellence of editorial content:** Variety of content, Quality of reporting/initiative, Depth of research, Comprehensiveness, Original treatment of the topic (25 points)
- **Presentation:** Layout and design, Graphic and photo content (25 points)
- **Impact:** Effectiveness in enhancing the public understanding of, or interest in, arts and culture in the community, Creativity of approach (25 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2231 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2232 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 224 - Best Sports Coverage*

This award recognizes news media for coverage of sports in the community. Submit **at least three, but no more than five, different works covering sports**, such as a news story, feature, editorial or photograph. Do not submit full sections.

An entry will consist of a URL or **one set of full-page PDF tearsheets for each different example**, with the stories clearly marked for judging.

There is a limit of **one entry** per calendar year in this category. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheets of your entry are required for this category.

***An explanatory letter from the editor/publisher should accompany the entry to provide background information.**

Judging will be based on:

- **Scope and excellence of editorial content:** Including regional/local/community/minor league sports coverage, Some consideration to the use of a statistics page (25 points)
- **Presentation:** Layout and design, Graphic elements (15 points)
- **Impact:** Effectiveness in showcasing sports in the community, Creativity of approach (15 points)
- **Photo content:** An emphasis on original photos taken by staff—sports photos showing foresight and technical skill and feature photos showing originality and good composition (20 points)

TOTAL: 75 points

Class 2241 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 2242 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 226 - Best Community Newspaper Website

PRINT NEWSPAPERS ONLY

A strong community newspaper website is easy to navigate with an appealing design and local information.

Entries will consist of the newspaper's URL provided on the entry form. It is not necessary to print out a page from your website because entries will be reviewed online by judges.

Any websites produced by sister newspapers using the same template may only be entered by the newspaper with the highest circulation. The work must be entered in the applicable circulation class for that newspaper. The awards committee, staff and judges reserve the right to disqualify any entries that do not comply with this requirement at any point that they are discovered during the competition.

There is a limit of **one entry** into this category. The URL of your website is required for this category.

Judging will be based on:

- **Creativity and visual appeal:** Layout/design, Graphics (15 points)
- **Usability:** Functionality and navigation (15 points)
- **Timeliness:** Immediacy (15 points)
- **Comprehensiveness:** Local content, Reflection of the community (25 points)
- **Interactive features:** Social networking, blogs, surveys, polls (15 points)
- **Effective use of rich media:** Video, podcasts (15 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2261 - Print circulation up to 9,999

Class 2262 - Print circulation 10,000+

Category 227 - Best Multimedia Feature**

This award recognizes excellence in online journalism featuring a single subject. This may include, but is not limited to, print, audio and visual elements in the form of photography, sound clips, video or animation. Emphasis is on innovative ways of storytelling.

Any feature produced by sister publications may only be entered by the publisher with the highest print circulation or market size. The work must be entered in the applicable class for that publisher. The awards committee, staff, and judges reserve the right to disqualify entries that do not comply with this requirement at any time they are discovered during the competition.

There is a limit of **one entry** per calendar year into this category. Website URLs and/or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required for this category.

****A letter fully outlining the origin and purpose of the feature, as well as the work involved in creating it, MUST accompany the submission.**

Judging will be based on:

- **Writing quality** (25 points)
- **Creative and visual appeal:** Layout design, Graphics (print/online) (25 points)
- **Effective use of rich media** (25 points)
- **Comprehensiveness:** Content, Scope of coverage, Reflection of the community (25 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2271 - Open to all members

Category 228 - Best Multimedia Breaking News Coverage**

This award recognizes excellence in online journalism on a single breaking news event of local importance. This may include, but is not limited to, print, audio and visual elements in the form of photography, sound clips, video or animation. Emphasis is on innovative ways of storytelling.

Any entry produced by sister publications may only be entered by the publisher with the highest print circulation or market size. The work must be entered in the applicable class for that newspaper. The awards committee, staff, and judges reserve the right to disqualify entries that do not comply with this requirement at any time they are discovered during the competition.

There is a limit of **one entry** per calendar year into this category. Website URLs and full-page PDF tearsheet(s) of your entry are required for this category.

****A letter fully outlining the origin and purpose of the combined print and online feature, as well as the work involved in creating it, MUST accompany the submission.**

Judging will be based on:

- **Writing quality** (25 points)
- **Creative and visual appeal:** Layout design, Graphics (print and online) (25 points)
- **Effective use of rich media** (25 points)
- **Comprehensiveness:** Content, Scope of coverage, Reflection of the community (25 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 2281 - Open to all members

Special Competitions

Category 301 - Best Special Section

PRINT NEWSPAPERS ONLY

Special sections are separate or pull-out newspaper sections with four pages or more, containing both editorial and advertising content. They can be in tabloid or broadsheet format. Providing results in an explanatory letter helps your entry stand out.

There is a limit of **one entry** per calendar year for this category. Full-page PDF tearsheets of your entry are required.

Judging will be based on:

- **Idea/Concept:** Uniqueness, Creativity (10 points)
- **Applicability:** Local relevance, Local editorial content (10 points)
- **Writing quality:** (15 points)
- **Implementation:** Strategy/approach, Execution of theme, Balance of editorial and advertising content (25 points)
- **Design:** Typography, Ad designs, Page layout, Use of graphic and photographic elements (20 points)
- **Results:** Financial results, Impact on readers (20 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 3011 - Print circulation up to 9,999

Class 3012 - Print circulation 10,000+

Category 302 - Excellence in Rural Reporting

Entries must focus on rural development in Canada. This award recognizes a positive contribution in journalism on any of the following criteria:

- Development of a higher quality of life in rural and remote communities through societal improvements in attitudes, technology, science, infrastructure, services, etc.
- Commitment to improve a rural or remote community's quality of life (by an individual, group or organization)
- Innovative approaches to building a higher quality of life in rural and remote communities
- An individual's contribution to developing a solution(s) to challenges facing a rural or remote community.

An entry will consist of **one article** or **a series of no more than three related articles** that have been published in community newsmedia and written by a journalist employed by the publisher or a freelancer.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) are required. Photos or collateral material from other media may be included.

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Structure and organization, Grammar, Spelling (25 points)
- **Depth and detail:** Scope and excellence of content, Quality of reporting/initiative, Depth of research, Comprehensiveness (25 points)
- **Originality and creativity:** Uniqueness of approach, Original treatment of the topic (20 points)
- **Impact:** Relevance to the community, Reader interest, Enhancement of public awareness of rural issues (20 points)
- **Presentation:** Graphic layout, Picture content (10 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

[Class 3021 - Open to all members](#)

Category 303 - Best Business Writing

This award recognizes the best business writing dealing with a community-oriented business or industry issue.

An entry will consist of **a single story written by a journalist employed by the publisher or a freelancer**. Entries may be in the form of feature or news stories, editorials or special sections. Syndicated material will not be accepted. Please include the writer's name with the entry.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. URLs or full-page PDF tearsheet(s) are required. Photos or collateral material from other media may be included.

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Structure and organization, Grammar, Spelling (25 points)
- **Depth and detail:** Scope and excellence of content, Quality of reporting/initiative, Depth of research, Comprehensiveness (25 points)
- **Originality and creativity:** Uniqueness of approach, Original treatment of the topic (20 points)
- **Impact:** Relevance to the community, Reader interest, Effectiveness in enhancing the public understanding or interest in local business issues, Relevance to the local economy, and/or demonstrates that a national issue has an impact on the local economy (20 points)
- **Presentation:** Graphic layout, Picture content (10 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 3031 - Print circulation up to 9,999 / Digital-only sites in markets with population up to 100,000

Class 3032 - Print circulation 10,000+ / Digital-only sites in markets with population 100,000+

Category 304 - Best Agricultural Edition

PRINT NEWSPAPERS ONLY

An entry will consist of **a special agricultural edition dealing with agriculture in general or a specialized aspect of agriculture** appropriate to the newspaper's coverage area.

Limit of **one entry** per calendar year into this category. Full-page PDF tearsheets of your entry are required for this category.

Judging will be based on:

- Editorial Content (15 points)
- Presentation/Appearance (10 points)
- Photo Coverage (10 points)
- Advertising (10 points)
- Localization (5 points)

TOTAL: 50 points

Class 3041 - Open to all PRINT members

Category 305 - Best Agricultural Story*

This award recognizes excellence in writing by an individual journalist, dealing with a community-oriented agricultural issue.

An entry will consist of **a single news or feature story that focuses on issues facing agriculture in general, or an agricultural story specific to the coverage area.** URLs or full-page PDF tearsheets are required with the story clearly marked and visible for judging. Syndicated material will not be accepted. Please include the writer's name with the entry.

Up to three different entries per calendar year may be submitted in this category. A separate entry form must be completed for each entry. Full-page PDF tearsheet(s) are required. Photos or collateral material from other media may be included.

***An explanatory letter from the editor or publisher should accompany the entry to provide background information.**

Judging will be based on:

- **Quality of writing:** Writing style, Structure and organization, Grammar, Spelling (25 points)
- **Depth and detail:** Scope and excellence of content, Quality of reporting/initiative, Depth of research, Comprehensiveness (25 points)
- **Originality and creativity:** Uniqueness of approach, Original treatment of the topic (20 points)
- **Impact:** Relevance to community, Reader interest, Enhancement of public awareness of agricultural issues (20 points)
- **Presentation:** Graphic layout, Picture content (10 points)

TOTAL: 100 points

Class 3051 - Open to all members