

# CONTEST RULES



## **Texas Better Newspaper Contest**

**Contest period: Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019**

**Submit entries Sept. 9 - Oct. 4, 2019**

**[www.texaspress.com/bnc](http://www.texaspress.com/bnc)**

***Awards will be presented at the  
TPA Convention & Trade Show, Jan. 16-18, 2020 in Galveston***

# Texas Press Association's Biggest. Contest. *EVER.*

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**20 months, two football seasons!**

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Jan. 16 - 18, 2020 in Galveston*

## **ABOUT**

The Texas Better Newspaper Contest is an annual competition sponsored by the Texas Press Association to recognize and reward Texas newspapers for excellence in journalism and outstanding service to their communities. The 2018-19 contest is the transition year in changing the contest period from calendar year to Sept. 1 through Aug. 31. Awards will be presented at the 2020 Midwinter Conference and Trade Show in Galveston.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

The 2018-19 Texas Better Newspaper Contest is open to all newspapers that were members of TPA during the entirety of 2018 through Aug. 31, 2019. Entries are made by member newspapers, not individuals. Content must have been produced by full- or part-time members of the newspaper staff. Note: Newspapers may submit content produced by local freelancers or contributors provided the newspaper paid to have the content created and the content was created predominantly for the newspaper submitting the entry. Syndicated or wire service content is not eligible for submission.

## **CONTEST PERIOD**

All entries must have been originally published between Jan. 1, 2018, and Aug. 31, 2019.

## **DEADLINE**

All entries must be submitted via the Better Newspaper Contest online platform before 5 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 4, 2019. The platform will automatically close the contest to entries at deadline.

NOTE: Each newspaper is encouraged to log onto the online contest platform at least two weeks before the deadline to ensure any challenges are resolved before the deadline.

## **FEES**

The fee for each competition category entered is \$5.

# AWARDS

2018-19 Texas Better Newspaper Contest first place award winners will be notified in December 2019. Full contest results will be announced at the Annual Contest Awards Luncheon on Jan. 18, 2020, at the conclusion of the TPA Annual Convention & Trade Show at Moody Gardens Convention Center in Galveston. Copies of the Winners' Circle publication, featuring the contest results, will be available at the conclusion of the awards ceremony.

## • **Category Winners**

First place winners will come forward to accept plaques. Certificates will be distributed to second, third and fourth place winners after the awards ceremony.

## • **Sweepstakes Winners**

The Texas Better Newspaper Contest includes one Sweepstakes award for each division, except Division 1. Awards are earned by point accumulation in contest categories (excluding Community Service, Blue Moon Special Section, Routine Special Section and Best Website).

Sweepstakes points shall be calculated on the following scale:

1st Place	100 points (plaque)
2nd Place	75 points (certificate)
3rd Place	50 points (certificate)
4th Place	25 points (certificate)

## • **Sweepstakes Tiebreakers**

If a tie should arise in the Sweepstakes category, the newspaper with the most points in the General Excellence category will be declared the winner. If neither newspaper has won a General Excellence award, the newspaper with the most first place awards overall will be declared the winner. If the score remains tied, the newspaper with the most second place awards will be declared the winner.

## • **Questions/Assistance**

Texas Better Newspaper Contest Coordinator: Candace Velvin  
Email: [cvelvin@texaspress.com](mailto:cvelvin@texaspress.com)  
Office: 512-477-6755 Mobile: 512-541-5398

## DIVISIONS

**Division 1** consists of the top five metro dailies – Austin American-Statesman, Dallas Morning News, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Houston Chronicle and San Antonio Express-News – which will compete exclusively in the General Excellence category.

**Divisions 2** and higher will be divided based on total number of participating newspapers, frequency of publication and circulation.

### PLEASE NOTE:

- An entry or website published in or for more than one newspaper must be entered by the newspaper in the highest circulation division.
- **Semiweeklies** (newspapers carrying only one name, but published more than once a week yet less than four days a week) will enter the semi-weekly circulation division.
- **Twinweeklies** (newspapers bearing different names but published in the same plant and distributed in the same community during different days of the week) will be treated as semiweeklies and entered in the largest circulation division applicable.
- Monthlies will be treated as weeklies and entered in the appropriate weekly circulation division.

## COMPETITION CATEGORIES

### ADVERTISING

Submit digital tear sheets of three staff-produced advertisements originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019. Judges will consider all three ads as one entry. Judging will be based on selling power of copy, originality/creativity, layout/design, use of photos, graphics and typography.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

### BEST WEBSITE

Submit the Web address and any passwords required to access all pages within the site. Entries must include a brief description of the site's unique aspects, how frequently it is updated and what makes the site vital to readers.

- To add an entry in the Best Website category, copy and paste the Web address in the Website URL field. Please ensure that items are not behind a paywall or a password-protected area. If they are, you must provide username/password info in the Comments section of your entry.
  - Judges may disqualify your entry if work samples are inaccessible.
- Judging will be based on content, ease of use and navigation, page design, advertising, timeliness and consistency.

Awards may be presented in the following divisions: Daily, Semiweekly, and two Weekly divisions (based on total number of entrants.)

### BLUE MOON SPECIAL SECTION

Submit digital tear sheets of one complete staff-produced special section or edition built around a unique local subject matter such as an anniversary, collector's, disaster or tribute edition or any once-in-a-lifetime theme that goes above and beyond routine coverage. A letter of explanation on why the section qualifies as Blue Moon may accompany the entry. Can be slick or newsprint product. Section must have been originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019.

Judging will be based on theme, content and layout/design/presentation.

Note: For PDFs larger than 10 MB, see special instructions under Entry Formats.

*\*\* Please Note: If entry is submitted using a URL, please include a PDF of the section's front page.*

Awards may be presented in the following divisions: Daily, Semiweekly, and two Weekly divisions (based on total number of entrants.)

## **COLUMN WRITING**

Submit digital tear sheets of two columns originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019. Judges will consider both columns as one entry. Columns may be written on any subject in any style. Judging will be based on lead, subject matter, quality and style of writing.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

## **COMMUNITY SERVICE**

Submit digital tear sheets of all evidence (e.g., news, photos, editorials, letters, programs) of your newspaper's support of one community project conducted during 2017. Entries must have been originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019.

Attach a letter describing the background and results of the project. Judging will be based on subject matter, quality of coverage, extent of community engagement, layout/design/presentation and local significance.

Awards may be presented in the following divisions: Daily, Semiweekly, and Weekly.

## **EDITORIAL**

Submit digital tear sheets of two editorials originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019. Judges will consider both editorials as one entry.

Judging will be based on quality and style of writing, lead, persuasiveness, subject matter and local significance.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

## **FEATURE PHOTO**

Submit digital tear sheets of five feature photos originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019.

Judges will consider all five photos as one entry.

Judging will be based on reader interest, composition, quality of cutline, enterprise and innovation.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

## **FEATURE WRITING**

Submit digital tear sheets of two feature stories originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019. Judges will consider both feature stories as one entry.

Judging will be based on subject matter, quality and style of writing, lead and presentation, including layout, design, heads, typography, photos and use of color.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

## **GENERAL EXCELLENCE**

Submit two complete issues – one complete issue originally published in August 2018 and one complete issue originally published in any month of your choice during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019.

Wire content will not be considered. Judges will consider both issues as one entry.

Judging will be based on news coverage, quality of writing, composition/display, headlines, use of photos and art work, front page and specialty pages such as editorial, family life, social and sports pages.

Note: For PDFs larger than 10 MB, see special instructions under Entry Formats.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 1 and higher.

*\*\*Note: Please be sure that one of the General Excellence entries is from the month of August 2018 as specified. Entries that do not include an August 2018 edition will be disqualified in this category.*

## **HEADLINE WRITING**

Submit digital tear sheets of three headlines originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019.

Judges will consider all three headlines as one entry. Headlines can come from any section of a regular edition.

Judging will be based on accuracy, cleverness, creativity, impact and originality.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

## **NEWS PHOTO**

Submit digital tear sheets of five news photos originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019.

Judges will consider all five photos as one entry. Judging will be based on timeliness, composition, quality of cutline, enterprise and innovation.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

## **NEWS WRITING**

Submit digital tear sheets of two news stories originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019.

Judges will consider both news stories as one entry.

Judging will be based on quality of writing, lead, news value and enterprise.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

## **PAGE DESIGN**

Submit digital tear sheets of four pages – one front page, one editorial page, one sports page and one family/lifestyle page – originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019.

Judges will consider all pages as one entry. Pages need not come from the same edition.

Judging will be based on readability, innovation, color, graphics, design features, typography, photos and other artwork.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

## **ROUTINE SPECIAL SECTION**

Submit digital tear sheets of one complete special section produced by newspaper staff on a regular basis that consists of a complete and cohesive package of locally produced pictures, news stories and advertisements emphasizing a central theme of special local interest. Examples of routine sections are newcomers, sports, back to school, progress, chamber, visitors and festival sections. Can be slick or newsprint product.

Section must have been originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019. Entries may include a letter of explanation.

Judging will be based on theme, content and layout/design/presentation. Note: For PDFs larger than 10 MB, see special instructions under Entry Formats.

*\*\*Please Note: If the entry is submitted with a URL, please include a PDF of the front page of the section.*

Awards may be presented in the following divisions: Daily, Semiweekly, and up to three Weekly divisions (based on total number of entrants.)

## **SPORTS COVERAGE**

Submit digital tear sheets of two sports sections originally published in 2017. Judges will consider both sections as one entry. Identify any sports writing or sports photos not produced by the newspaper.

Judging will be based on selection of material, quality of writing, range of coverage, photos, layout/design and suitability of headlines.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.

## **SPORTS PHOTO**

Submit digital tear sheets of five sports photos originally published during the contest period, Jan. 1, 2018 - Aug. 31, 2019.

Judges will consider all five photos as one entry.

Judging will be based on action, composition, quality of cutline, enterprise and innovation.

Awards may be presented in Divisions 2 and higher.



# ENTRY FORMATS

All entries should be submitted as either PDF files or URLs.

## PDFs

You must submit PDFs of complete newspaper pages (digital tear sheets), even if the entry-related content is not the only content on the page.

Only submit pages that contain entry-related content. Many categories require more than one sample of work per entry. For example, a single entry in the Headline Writing category includes three headlines. For each headline, the entire page on which the headline appears must be included for judging. You may upload one multiple-page PDF that contains all work samples in the entry or one PDF for each work sample. Make PDF files as small as possible. Large PDF files will take longer to upload. They will also take longer for a judge to download and view. The more time judges spend waiting, the less time they will have to evaluate your entry, and the more impatient they will be when they do so. PDFs should not be larger than 10 MB. Entries larger than 10 MB should be uploaded to an easily accessible URL. Entries may be hosted on your own website or use Issuu ([www.issuu.com](http://www.issuu.com)). Issuu is a free online tool for creating digital editions that will create a URL for your entry.

## URLs

All entries submitted as URLs must be publicly accessible or include a username and password in entry comments for access to any entry content behind a paywall or restricted content area. Entries may be hosted on your own website or use Issuu.

To host large PDFs on Issuu:

- Go to [www.issuu.com](http://www.issuu.com) and click Publish on Issuu. From there, select an account plan.
- Select the “basic” option (it’s free!) and fill in your newspaper name, associated email and create a password.
- Then select your desired URL and create your account. After completing your publisher profile, you are now able to start uploading content.
- *If an entry has multiple pages, combine pages into one PDF before uploading to Issuu.*

# ENTRY INSTRUCTIONS

Entries to the Texas Better Newspaper Contest are submitted using the Better Newspaper Contest online platform. Below are instructions for preparing and submitting entries on the platform. If you have questions, please contact Candace Velvin, contest coordinator, at 512-477-6755, (office) 512-541-5398 (mobile) or [cvelvin@texaspress.com](mailto:cvelvin@texaspress.com). The entry deadline is Oct. 4, 2019.

## IMPORTANT!

For all files larger than 10 MB, submit entries via URL. See instructions under Entry Formats. Enter the Web address in the Website URL field when submitting your entry on the contest platform.

## USERNAME / PASSWORD

If you are a returning contestant manager/user for the Better Newspaper Contest platform, use the password created previously when submitting your newspaper's entries. If the password has been forgotten or the contestant manager is new and the email address associated with newspaper's account is not known, contact Candace Velvin, contest coordinator, at 512-477-6755 (office) 512-541-5398 (mobile) or [cvelvin@texaspress.com](mailto:cvelvin@texaspress.com). If your newspaper has not entered the contest in the past, use the temporary password: bnc (lower case) when you first log into BetterBNC. Once you have logged in, the system will prompt you to create a secure password and enter your contact information.

## LOGIN

1. Click the Enter Now link at [texaspress.com/bnc](http://texaspress.com/bnc) or visit [www.betternewspapercontest.com](http://www.betternewspapercontest.com).
2. Select 2019-20 Texas Better Newspaper Contest from the list of contests.
3. Click Contestant Login
4. Select Contestant Manager.

Note: The Contestant Manager is critical so TPA has one point of contact for contest updates and information. The Contestant Manager may add all entries or add additional users to the contest so multiple staff members can submit entries.

5. If your newspaper has not entered the contest previously and does not have an account, enter your temporary password: bnc (lower case) and click Login. When you first log in, the system will prompt you to create a secure password and enter your contact information. If your newspaper has participated in a BetterBNC contest before, log in with the password used previously.

*If the password is not known, contact Candace Velvin, contest coordinator, at 512-477-6755, (office) 512-541-5398 (mobile) or [cvelvin@texas.com](mailto:cvelvin@texas.com).*

## **SUBMIT ENTRIES**

1. On the Manage Entries page (the page you are directed to once you log in), click Submit Entry.
2. Select General from the drop-down list of Divisions.
3. Select the Category you would like to enter from the Category selection box. Read the corresponding Category Note (directly below the Category selection box) describing the category's requirements.
4. Complete the Headline/Title of Entry field. The Headline/Title will be displayed in the Winner's Circle next to winning entries where appropriate.
5. Add entry content:
  - To upload digital file attachments, click Browse, navigate to the desired file and select Open. If more than one attachment is desired for an entry, click Attach More and repeat these steps.
6. Add Cutlines for photo entries. (If you need additional space, please use the Comments section.)
7. Add Comments, if needed, but please keep them brief.
8. Add Credits for each person responsible for entry content.
9. Submit.

## **PAY FOR ENTRIES**

Payment is accepted online, by credit card or by check. If paying by check, send to TPA, 8800 Business Park Dr., Suite 100, Austin, TX 78759 with a notation the payment is for contest fees. If you are planning to pay by check, please complete your entries early and send in your check before the March 22 deadline.

1. When all entries have been submitted, go to the Manage Entries page for your account at [www.betternewspapercontest.com](http://www.betternewspapercontest.com).
2. Click Calculate Entry Fee (lower right) and review your list of entries for accuracy.
3. Scroll to the bottom of the list for your Total Entry Fee Due.
4. Click Checkout (lower left) to pay for your contest entries online on the TPA website.
5. Please click the Print icon (upper right) and print your list of entries and fees for your own records.



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