

SOUTH TEXAS PRESS ASSOCIATION
2022 BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST
JUDGES' COMMENTS

Contest Judged by North and East Texas Press Association (NETPA)

15 papers entered across three divisions, for 210 entries.

DIVISION 1

Griff Singer Award of General Excellence

1st Place: Frio-Nueces Current – Best designed paper in class, good use of graphics and typography. Ads also attractive. Good breadth of local coverage. Attention to detail throughout.

2nd Place: Kingsville Record – Good clean design to go along with nice variety of local coverage. The Santa photo was played too large for its resolution..

3rd Place: Ozona Stockman – Cleanest layout in the class. Other papers featured more local news.

Honorable Mention: Schulenburg Sticker – Comments similar for Flatonia and Schulenburg. Lots of pictures/faces and local news. Headers and graphics make some pages too busy. Difficult to have so many photos on a page and make it look good, but serves the readers..

Honorable Mention: Flatonia Argus – Comments similar for Flatonia and Schulenburg. Lots of pictures/faces and local news. Headers and graphics make some pages too busy. Difficult to have so many photos on a page and make it look good, but serves the readers.

Page Design

1st Place: Frio-Nueces Current – Very creative use of photographs and blends on front of Sept. 2 issue. Flush right name lines is a good way to add white space to pages Good packaging of classified pages.

2nd Place: Ozona Stockman – Clean crisp layout. Good mix of headline styles, weights and sizes.

3rd Place: Kingsville Record – Striking photos of volleyball team honoring fallen officer

Good photo package on front and back of Nov. 11 issue for fallen officer. Watch breaking heads like on top of page 2 Nov. 11 Middle School should be on same line. Police badges centered in blotter make for difficult to read line breaks.

Honorable Mention: Schulenburg Sticker – Good use of color for on amendment election returns. More space between bottom of stories, rule and next head would make for brighter pages. Standardized standing heads would look better. Many of them looked dated. Some cutlines should be a stand alone story (Teacher sundae in Nov. 11 issue).

Lifestyle Pages

1st Place: Frio-Nueces Current – no comments

2nd Place: Flatonia Argus – no comments

3rd Place: Schulenburg Sticker – no comments

Honorable mention: Kingsville Record – no comments.

Special Section

1st Place: Frio-Nueces Current – Great job overall! The section is well laid out, complete with pull quotes, recipes, copy and much more. You all should be proud of this section!

2nd Place: Kingsville Record – Very nice special section. Good photography, great ads, design and much more!

3rd Place: Ozona Stockman – This was a tough decision in a field of great choices. Nice looking special section, lots of great maps, nicely designed ads and much more.

Honorable mention: Flatonía Argus – Nice layout overall. It's just hard to compare to the other much more involved, labor intensive special sections!

Editorial Writing

1st Place: Kingsville Record – Both of these address the need for change and/or action and that is what a good editorial should do.

2nd Place: Frio-Nueces Current – I believe these two submissions would be better placed in the column writing category and are both good. But the thoughts expressed do address editorial issues and urge readers to take a stand and/or give thought to the issue at hand.

Humorous Column Writing

1st Place: Frio-Nueces Current, Marc Robertson – no comments

2nd Place: Flatonía Argus, Paul A. Prause – no comments

3rd Place: Kingsville Record, Terry Fitzwater – no comments

Serious Column Writing

1st Place: Frio-Nueces Current, Marc Robertson – no comments

2nd Place: Ozona Stockman, Melissa Perner – no comments

3rd Place: Kingsville Record, Terry Fitzwater – no comments

Honorable Mention: Flatonía Argus, Paul A. Prause – no comments

News Photos

1st Place: Kingsville Record, Terry Fitzwater – These photos are tremendous. I'm so sorry for your community's loss. Great work to capture a mournful moment for your community.

2nd Place: Frio-Nueces Current, Manuel Azocar III & Marc Robertson – Really nice photos. Love the photo of the dad getting his badge pinned on. The band photo is really sharp. Very close to getting first, just tough competition.

3rd Place: Ozona Stockman, Melissa Perner – Really great photo of excavator and fire. Can tell your firefighters were working hard. Thank you for featuring them.

Honorable mention: Schulenburg Sticker, Darrell Vyvjala – Good photos. Confused why a sports photo was entered for news but good photo nonetheless. Really nice fire photo.

Feature Photos

1st Place: Ozona Stockman, Melissa Perner & Victorial Nowell – no comments
2nd Place: Goldthwaite Eagle, Brian Whitt – no comments
3rd Place: Kingsville Record, Terry Fitzwater – no comments
Honorable mention: Frio–Nueces Current, Marc Robertson & Manuel Azocar III – no comments

Sports Photos

1st Place: Frio–Nueces Current, Manuel Azocar III – no comments
2nd Place: Goldthwaite Eagle, James Taylor – no comments
3rd Place: Kingsville Record, Fred Salinas & Terry Fitzwater – no comments
Honorable mention: Schulenburg Sticker, Darrell Vyvjala & Layne Vyvjala– no comments

News Writing

1st Place: Goldthwaite Eagle, Tammarrah Pledger – Two very strong news stories! Well written and informative. Great job!
2nd Place: Kingsville Record, Terry Fitzwater – Very moving pieces. I can't imagine how hard it was to cover these events!
3rd Place: Frio–Nueces Current, Breyana Segura & Marc Robertson – Great pieces! Good, informative writing.
Honorable mention: Schulenburg Sticker, Darrell Vyvjala – no comments

Feature Writing

1st Place: Frio–Nueces Current, Marc Robertson – Two strong features that dig into the whys and hows of the problems at the border. Really good stuff, not overwritten or polemic. Readers on any side of the border debate would be forced to think a bit more after reading these pieces.
2nd Place: Goldthwaite Eagle, Tammarrah Pledger – Two great ideas -- revisiting a young woman as she enters college after meeting her as a kindergartner, and letting readers express how important the UPS guy was to a small town. Nice work.
3rd Place: Schulenburg Sticker, Darell Vyvjala – They both seemed like good men, and these features give interesting measures of them.
Honorable Mention: Flatonía Argus, Melanie M. Berger – Nice feature about the couple at the Red Vault. I came away understanding why they're doing business there.

Sports Coverage

1st Place: Frio–Nueces Current – The writing, photos and layout make this entry shine. The football preview pages might be a tad over-designed, and I curious how they printed with the screens and overlay texts. Regular run pages are the cleanest and best designed in the group. The track result listings get a little tedious to read (and I know they were to write). I really like the way you did the powerlifting story split into three.
2nd Place: Schulenburg Sticker – You've got good sports coverage and photos. I like that you're running big sports stories on your front.

The photo page and year-end stats are a nice keepsake. Writing could be tighter and the ledes could be snappier. For instance, the big basketball story leads with a historical comparison rather than what happened in the game.

3rd Place: Flatonía Argus – Good community sports coverage. You have lots of quick hit boxes, perhaps too many. A lot of us are stat nerds, but I'm not sure how many of your readers are super in-depth stat nerds. I would also consider a way to condense them into a side rail or an agate style package rather than sprinkle them around the page. Honorable Mention: Kingsville Record – You've got good writing and a lot of potential. The photography wasn't the best in the class, but don't let that discourage you. Shooting basketball is hard work. It's even harder when you're a one-man show trying to shoot and write at the same time. (We've all been there) Layout is fairly clean but as a general rule make sure the lead of the story touches the headline. (Feb. 4, A7 as an example) .

Headline Writing

1st Place: Frio-Nueces Current – “We want action; some houses have snakes” – Marc Robertson – Good headline / pullout quote from the story. Sub-head was helpful as well “Declaring abandoned properties public nuisance...” Your headline really summed up the dangers empty lots or abandoned houses in Cotulla. Nice work. “Wright rights waterworks wrongs” – Marc Robertson – LOVE IT! Hard to say a few times, but great headline Marc. And I'm sure Cotulla Municipality Supply Engineer David Wright loved it as well. Covering stories like this can beat a journalist to death without some latitude for creativity. You did just that and I loved it. Thank you. “Driver threw woman, money, drugs from car during pursuit” – Breyana Segura – Crazy stories need crazy headlines. Who in their right mind would throw a woman out of a car? Apparently, it happens and you put it all above the story. Would suggest you play around with a smaller headline followed by companion sub-head. Just a suggestion. Nice job and keep up the good work.

2nd Place: Kingsville Record – “A sad day of days” – Terry Fitzwater – Very nice headline and tribute to a fallen officer in your community. I am sure there were many sad days surrounding the event, and laying the officer to rest had to be the saddest day of all. Your headline really summed up the emotion in the community and captured the day and days of this horrible tragedy. Thank you for taking the time to think about your headline. I'm sure it wasn't easy. “Bishop women rip Jerseys, 75-21” – Dylan Dozier – Creative headline. Short and sweet and to the point. I'm sure fans, parents and students from Bishop caught your creative writing for sure. Nice work.

“Keeping the Jets Flying” – NAS Kingsville – We may have a mistake here. Spreadsheet showed a headline “Flood,” but the pdf was “Keeping the Jets Flying.” So, I will judge the Jets headline here: Nothing too spectacular here and you may not have intended to send. The headline and story were good, but nothing too creative in my opinion. Sorry if there was a mixup.

3rd Place: Flatonía Argus – “Let there be light: third time's a charm

for Steinhauser's motion" – no byline on the jump page. Good headline, however it was long. Might recommend a sub-head to reduce word count in the headline. Other than that, great job. "In lieu of stew, Flatonia Fire & Rescue to have fried catfish supper fundraiser" – No byline. Love the first four words as a headline. The rest made the headline longer than needed I felt. "Flatonia – fundraiser could have been a sub-head. Good headline, so don't get me wrong here. You did a good job and I believe your readers appreciated your work and more than likely read the story due to you taking the time to be creative. "At Flatonia ISD graduation, pranksters are pranked" – Melanie Berger. Great headline for a funny story for sure. It's always good when those doing the pranking get pranked themselves. Nice work.

Honorable Mention: Schulenburg Sticker – "Remembering a Legend" – Darrell Vyvjala. Sad story and fitting headline. It is difficult to write headlines when content is raw with emotion, but you did a great job and I am sure the community and Husmann family were grateful for your careful work and attention to both story and headline.

"Limbaugh's sixth school record has silver lining" – Darrell Vyvjala. It's easy to just write the story, slap a boring headline on it and let it go. And who has time to think anymore in this business? Apparently, you do. Good headlines produce results in the form of more attention to the story. Good job and nice connection between the runner's many accomplishments and play on words. "Weathering a historic DEEP FREEZE" – Darrell Vyvjala I assume. There were a number of submissions surrounding the February 2021 big freeze in Texas. Most along the same lines of water boiling, busted pipes and disruption in our communities. Not all papers treated the stories and / or headlines with much creativity. You were short, sweet and to the point with a little play on words to make the headline unique to your readers. Good work.

Display Advertising

1st Place: Frio-Nueces Current – Good color choice and use of art. Memorial layout is clean.

2nd Place: Flatonia Argus – Congrats ad is fun. Good use of art in smaller ad for BBQ. Good Work.

3rd Place: Kingsville Record – Good work would have liked to seen more ads for customers and not in-house promos.

Judy and Bill Wilkerson Sweepstakes Award

1st Place: Frio-Nueces Current – 1,300

2nd Place: Kingsville Record – 800

3rd Place: Ozona Stockman – 400

DIVISION 2

Griff Singer Award of General Excellence

1st Place: Port Aransas South Jetty – Editorial pages are the hearts of newspapers, and you've got a good one. Love that you have so many letters to the editor. It tells me your readers are really engaged.

Writing is good throughout but a few ledes fell flat. For instance, the fire story. To me, the second graf about how the cause might remain forever unknown seemed like it would make a stronger lede. You've got a good use of headlines throughout. Two suggestions on headlines: I would consider retiring the ital font. Looks like you're using Warnock Pro (I use it too) and the ital just comes across as messy. Also consider adjusting the kerning in between fi and Th. They tend to run together.

2nd Place: Pleasanton Express - I can tell you do a great job of serving your community. I like your editorial page layout but was concerned that I didn't see any voices from what I would call "everyday folks" - letter writers, non-journalist columnists, etc. Use of headlines was a little concerning in the Dec. 15 edition. Biggest head by far was at the bottom of the page. If a story warrants a headline that big, it should be toward the top. Also a few concerns with the news writing. The stories overall were concise and impactful but the lede in the top story of the 15th edition was really garbled and the reader doesn't find out what actually happened until 3/4 of the way through the story. If you've got trouble with a lede, remember this: Tell the reader concisely what happened. Then go into a little more detail, quotes, background and get out.

3rd Place: Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post - I really loved everything about your paper. Unfortunately, you submitted two copies of the same edition rather than back-to-back editions. I'd really like to give you first, but in deference to the rules, I can't. Keep up the great work.

Page Design

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post - "It's On Local Stages" nice feature for local entertainment

Good mix of head styles and weights. Mix of square and round photos improves teaser layout. "Third round bound" solid headline for sports

2nd Place: Pleasanton Express - Good packaging of election guide.

Obits could be packaged better to make it easier for families to save. Good layout of the growers in Farm & Ranch section. All caps heads are hard to read

Lifestyle Pages

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post - no comments

2nd Place: Pleasanton Express - no comments

3rd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty - no comments

Special Section

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard-Radio Post - Overall very nice and consistent layout for such a large edition. Nicely designed ads and photography. Copy is well written - not a fan of the spaced paragraph layout but love the photos and graphic design.

2nd Place: Pleasanton Express - These sports sections are hard to do! Overall, nice flow, ad design and copy.

3rd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty - Overall nice job - just wish

the placement of the ads didn't clash so much with some of the others!
Lots of BRIGHTLY colored ads!

Editorial Writing

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Ken Esten Cooke – Excellent editorials – they clearly address the problem and offer solutions and have a clear call to action. Well done.

2nd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Mary Henkel Judson – Your editorials make people think, while clearly explaining the problem and offering a good solution. Editorials are meant to do just this and yours are textbook examples of this. Thank you.

3rd Place: Pleasanton Express, Noel Wilkerson Holmes & Rebecca Pesqueda – Your editorial informs and empowers your readers, just as you write about your stories doing. Good job.

Humorous Column Writing

1st Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Mary Henkel Judson – no comments

2nd Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Samuel Sutton – no comments

3rd Place: Pleasanton Express, Stephen Whitaker – no comments

Serious Column Writing

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard Radio Post, Ken Esten Cook – no comments

2nd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Mary Henkel Judson – no comments

3rd Place: Pleasanton Express, Noel Wilkerson Holmes & Rebecca Pesqueda – no comments

News Photos

1st Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Dan Parker – Nothing stands a chance against this waterspout photo. Amazing! Love the silhouette. The fire photo also has an amazing composition. Congrats!

2nd Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Madalyn Watson & Samuel Sutton – Really great photos but stiff competition. The freeze photo is a great way to recognize linemen and to capture the ice. Bus crash photo is good spot news.

3rd Place: Pleasanton Express, Jack Garcia & Rebecca Pesqueda – Really good photos. Try to get a human element to the freezing photo, though I know that is easier said than done in some cases. Flag photo has good composition. Strong entries in this category make this decision difficult.

Feature Photos

1st Place: Pleasanton Express, Jack Garcia & Rebecca Pesqueda – no comments

2nd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Dan Parker & Murray Judson – no comments

3rd Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Samuel Sutton – no comments

Sports Photos

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Reed Graff – no comments
2nd Place: Pleasanton Express, J Garcia – no comments
3rd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Freda Greene & Dan Parker – no comments

News Writing

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Samuel Sutton & Madalyn Watson – no comments
2nd Place: Pleasanton Express, Noel Wilkerson Holmes & Rebecca Pesqueda – no comments
3rd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Dan Parker & Graysen Golter – no comments

Feature Writing

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Madalyn Watson – no comments
2nd Place: Pleasanton Express, Rebecca Pesqueda & Melissa Theis – no comments
3rd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Vivian Carlson & Graysen Golter – no comments

Sports Coverage

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Reed Graff – A very solid mix of sports coverage Good clean layout. I really like that you still include a scoring summary box with football for us stat nerds and a standing sports calendar.
2nd Place: Pleasanton Express, Stephen Whitaker – Really good mix of solid sports coverage and columns. I especially liked that you have both news and columns about games. Gamer columns have gone by the wayside a lot of places and really have a lot of value. One major criticism: I would suggest not running cutlines on top of photos. Headline over a photo works well on occasion. I think it worked great on the Poteet story, but even on the PDF I struggled to read the cutline and photo credit.
3rd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Staff – Good game coverage of community sports. I thought you were a little photo heavy, not that lots of photos are a bad thing. Parents love pictures of their kids in the paper.

Headline Writing

1st Place: Port Aransas South Jetty, Vivian Carlson & Dan Parker – “The Wrath of Grapes” – Dan Parker, Excellent and relatable story with sound hangover cures from local experts including bartenders and local physicians. One of the best headlines I have seen in some time. Makes total sense and made me smile. “Great Bowls of Fire – No byline. Great headline for something as simple as a local fundraiser for the “Animal Friends, Port Aransas Animal Shelter.” Community newspapers who provide information on events in the community can often be boring. This was a great example of how creative headlines can draw the reader

in with the intent to draw better results to attendance and participation. Excellent job. "Drip to Dry" – Dan Parker, Good headline for sure and really summed up the situation resulting from consumer demand during a cold weather event and how the city / area responded. Dan Parker has a good feel for attracting readers through creative headline writing. You had me at "The Wrath of Grapes" headline btw. So good and thank you for bringing some creativity to your work. Makes a big difference.

2nd Place: Pleasanton Express, Staff – "Hopping Around the ACLS" – Cover art w/ headline, Good headline for this FP photo about the Atascosa County Livestock Show. The headline was a great way to bring a little fun to this local event. "Don't Be a Fool" – Rebecca Pesqueda, I love the headline and I am certain your readers loved it as well. Wonderful timing on the early voting deadline and April Fools Day. Excellent job. "How Sweep It Is" – Cade Andrews, Very creative headline touting two local schools Pleasanton and Jourdanton and their undefeated record at two separate tournaments. Headlines like this make all the difference when drawing readers to content. Excellent job.

3rd Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Staff – "Dead Man's Curve" – Samuel Sutton, Tragic story and history behind "Dead Man's Hole / Dead Man's Curve." The story brought great information to the public about a very dangerous curve known for deaths since 1918. The headline "Dead Man's Curve," was good, however it could have been more creative given the opportunity and content. "The Why of Christmas" – Brooke Nevins, Wonderful headline about Jerry Shoppe and his lifetime of Christmas collectables and history behind them. Although I wasn't able to see the jump, I can assume the headline is an accurate description of the "Why of Christmas." Good job Brooke. "Billies Kill Tivi Fight" – Reed Graff, This was a big win for the "Billies" and it deserved a strong headline. Great job Reed and I am certain local readers rejoiced in the victory as the "Tivy Fight" ended that night. Congratulations.

Display Advertising

1st Place: Port Aransas South Jetty – Great color choices on all ads. Good use of photos. Nice clean look. Kody's made me hungry for shrimp.

2nd Place: Pleasanton Express – Clean layouts, Good choice of art for Lesley's and Job Fair. Might have left out pics of pool chemicals and went with brands carried on Clearwater.

3rd Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post – Stroehrer clean layout, Vapo eye-catching, great photo on Ave Maria.

Judy and Bill Wilkerson Sweepstakes Award

1st Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post – 1,250

2nd Place: Pleasanton Express – 1,050

3rd Place: Port Aransas South Jetty – 1,025

DIVISION 3

Griff Singer Award of General Excellence

1st Place: Fayette County Record – Great overall paper. Excellent stories with photos. Awesome layout!

2nd Place: Taylor Press – Great photos and mix of news. Very good layout, clean and organized to read.

3rd Place: Lampasas Dispatch Record – Very good sports action shots. A good variety of news and information.

Honorable Mention: El Campo Leader-News – Very good overall paper. Sports section was good with very good photos. Layout was also very good.

Page Design

1st Place: Uvalde Leader-News – Good clean layout throughout the pages. Effective use of white space keeps the pages from being too dark. Good art of the lemur on the masthead on April 11 issue.

Effective cutout of long

(PAGE DESIGN continued)

jumper on April 15 issue. Good organization of a large classified section.

2nd Place: Taylor Press – Good package on Cotton Boll Relays Great design of Our Town Community Events

QR code on top left of page 1 – where does it go? Too much space between bylines and text on several pages.

3rd Place: El Campo Leader-News – Use of yellow tape made for better fire photo. Good use of pull quotes to open up pages.

Honorable Mention: Lampasas Dispatch Record – Clean, open and bright pages. Unique package of football stats with sponsor

Lifestyle Pages

1st Place: El Campo Leader-News – No comments

2nd Place: Taylor Press – No comments

3rd Place: Uvalde Leader-News – No comments

Honorable Mention: Fort Bend Herald – No comments

Special Section

1st Place: Fayette County Record – Top notch layout and design. Did not notice any staff generated content, however, but really nice job overall!

2nd Place: Lampasas Dispatch Record – Very nice looking, Very cohesive publication. You should be proud.

3rd Place: Uvalde Leader-News – Great job for such a massive undertaking. Appreciate the staff generated content. Great job overall.

Honorable Mention: Taylor Press – Nice job overall!! Nice design!

Editorial Writing

1st Place: Fort Bend Herald, Scott Reese Willey – These are excellent local editorials that address local concerns and actions and help educate the readers to the problem at hand, while urging them to take a stand.

2nd Place: Uvalde Leader-News, Craig Garnett – Very good editorials that address a problem and urge action to correct that problem. That is what an editorial is for. Good job.

3rd Place: Lampasas Dispatch Record, Gail Lowe – Both are very well written editorials and will make your readers think how national action can influence local concerns and needs. Good job.

Honorable Mention: Fayette County Record, Staff – While I believe these submissions are best suited for column writing, they do express a view that I'm sure many of your readers also have.

Humorous Column Writing

1st Place: Fayette County Record, Jeff Wick – No comments

2nd Place: Fort Bend Herald, Scott Reese Willey – No comments

3rd Place: Uvalde Leader-News, Craig Garnett – No comments

Honorable Mention: El Campo Leader-News, Shannon Crabtree – No comments

Serious Column Writing

1st Place: Uvalde Leader-News, Craig Garnett – No comments

2nd Place: Fayette County Record, Jeff Wick – No comments

3rd Place: Fort Bend Herald, Scott Reese Willey – No comments

Honorable Mention: El Campo Leader-News – No comments

News Photos

1st Place: Fayette County Record, Andy Behlen – Great photos. Can tell photographer appreciates strong news content. They have good composition and flooding photo conveys the mess the region was in due to excessive rain. Love the headline too. Congrats!

2nd Place: Uvalde Leader-News, Pete Luna – Really strong photos. Covering a border town isn't easy and you guys show strong skills. Know both photos must have taken patience and trust from law enforcement to shoot. Good job!

3rd Place: El Campo Leader-News, Joshua Reese & Shannon Crabtree – Honestly, the fire photo if accompanied with a stronger news pic would have won. Great photo! The Christmas photo just isn't strong enough in this division. Good work on composition of both photos.

Honorable Mention: Lampasas Dispatch Record, Jeff Lowe & Monique Brand – I feel so sorry for the bull. Good photos overall, just need human element in them to place higher. Great composition on both. Really tough competition in this division.

Feature Photos

1st Place: Fayette County Record – No comments

2nd Place: Fort Bend Herald – No comments

3rd Place: Uvalde Leader-News – No comments

Honorable Mention: Lampasas Dispatch Record – No comments

Sports Photos

1st Place: Uvalde Leader-News – No comments

2nd Place: Taylor Press – No comments

3rd Place: Fayette County Record – No comments
Honorable Mention: El Campo Leader–News – No comments

News Writing

1st Place: Fort Bend Herald, Scott Reese Willey – This was such a hard category to judge. Your pieces are wonderfully written. Love having witness' statements throughout.

2nd Place: Uvalde Leader–News, Julye Keeble & Meghann Garcia – Wonderfully well–written and informative pieces. Love the info box on the “Taking the jab” jump page!

3rd Place: Lampasas Dispatch Record, Staff – No comments
Honorable Mention: Fayette County Record – No comments

Feature Writing

1st Place: Uvalde Leader–News, Melissa Federspill – Loved the Santa story! Great job!!

2nd Place: El Campo Leader–News, Emily Lincke & Quala Mathocha – The story about the teen mechanic girl was wonderful! Also love the great story about the women on Washington Street. Well–written.

3rd Place: Lampasas Dispatch Record, Anna Timmis & Madeline Miller – No comments
Honorable Mention: Taylor Press – No comments

Sports Coverage

1st Place: Fayette County Record – The writing made this stand out. Every lede was compelling. Volleyball coverage was great. Football tab stories were just the right length and depth with lots of quick bite information.

2nd Place: Fort Bend Herald – You have good layout and impactful stories. The Heartbreak story would have been much stronger had it not relied so heavily on Facebook posts and PR statements. Use those sparingly and always try to get in touch -- in person or over the phone -- with an actual person. Real quotes from real people read much better.

3rd Place: Lampasas Dispatch Record – The amount of quality sports writing, photos and quick take boxes is great. I hope the commentary is a regular part of your sports section. I thought you would be better served by a short story or designed box about the tennis tournament than a picture of the bracket, but sometimes you have to do what you have to do.

Honorable Mention: El Campo Leader–News – You have a strong mix of sports coverage and photography and absolutely have a talented staff . Couple points I would like you to consider that would make your pages stronger: 1. Avoid names, especially names as verbs, in headlines. 2. Make sure your leads are active with a sense of urgency. The JV story is a prime example of this. This is a great accomplishment, but the lead made it feel like an afterthought.

Headline Writing

1st Place: Taylor Press – “Nude man comes out swinging” – Jason

Hennington, This one caught my attention, as I'm sure it did for many of your readers. First place on this one for sure. Strange story, odd circumstances and humor all in one nice package. Thank you for taking the time to put the icing on an otherwise bizarre story. Wonderful job. "Back Enthralled" – Fernando Castro, If the goal was "to capture one's attention," you did it. Thrall ISD's decision to return to the classroom had to be exciting for the community and I'm sure parents, students and the community were enthralled over the return. Nice headline for sure. "Little League with Big Bats" – Matthew Hooks, Your headline was great and even in little league baseball, it takes offense to win. Congrats to the Taylor tee ball allstars and to you for putting together a great story and creative headline.

2nd Place: Uvalde Leader-News – "River Bill Dammed" – No byline, Great headline for this story about HB4146 held up by the Senate. Rather than run a standard headline, you chose to think for a minute and create something to draw more attention to the content. Great job.

"Ramos nails hammer throw" – Melissa Federspill, I got it, and most of your readers did as well. Wonderful use of words for this track and field event. Short, sweet and effective. Good job. "Bruiser pounds rivals" – Melissa Federspill, Three words told the story. Great work and awesome read about the 1,400 lb Grand Champ at the 82nd annual Uvalde County Jr. Livestock Show. Excellent job.

3rd Place: Fayette County Record – "Shock and Thaw" – Andy Behlen, Love the headline. The aftermath of this historic winter storm created a number of small stories including how the freeze impacted the county, water breaks resulting in boil water notices and possible deaths resulting from freezing temperatures. As the community thawed out, the results were truly shocking. Great job. "What a Load of Crop" – Andy Behlen, Some may have an issue with the headline. I do not. I felt it was a great headline about the trucker taking evasive action to prevent a bigger accident. The crop-load of cracked corn was big news and certainly was a "load of crop." Nice job. "Valentine Weekend Icy Embrace" – Andy Behlen, Nice subtle use of words to tie a weather event into a national holiday. The headline was very good considering both events. Nice work.

Honorable Mention: Lampasas Dispatch Record – "Vision Lampasas Back to Drawing Board for Calvert Municipal Building" – Monique Brand, Nice play on words for sure given the circumstances of whether or not to paint a mural on the art deco Calvert Municipal Building. Council has their hands full with this one and your headline really summed up the dilemma. Headline is a little long, but a good choice of words.

"Frozen in Time" – Gail Lowe,

Like many of our communities in February of 2021, Lampasas felt the impact of the arctic blast and the headline was short, sweet and impactful. Nice job. "Revin' Up His Education" – Monique Brand, Again, short and sweet. Headline hit home and registered with the reader.

Great job about this student's acceptance into the Hennessey Performance Engineering Tuner program.

Display Advertising

1st Place: El Campo Leader–News – Accutax great use of art in a smaller ad. Shop Local great photo awesome message. Anderson Dental great design and photos. Well done!.

2nd Place: Fayette County Record – Farmers Market great color choice, clean design. Great work on all three submissions.

3rd Place: Lampasas Dispatch Record – Great choice of colors and art on all three submissions. This was a tough group to judge.

Honorable Mention: Uvalde Leader–News – Great photo in the Thank You ad.

Judy and Bill Wilkerson Sweepstakes award

1st Place: Uvalde Leader–News – 900

2nd Place: Fayette County Record – 850

3rd Place: Fort Bend Herald – 475

Joyce and Fred Latcham Community Service Award

1st Place: El Campo Leader–News – Great continuing coverage and organization that directly benefitted members of your community in need. Great work!

2nd Place: Pleasanton Express – Quality coverage with a call to action and vital information that your community needed at the time. Great work!

3rd Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post – Kudos for noticing a need in your community and tackling it from several angles to spur conversation so that it can get addressed! Quality reporting that is valuable to your readership.

Honorable Mention: Uvalde Leader–News – Quality writing and consistent coverage that highlights the people in your community who step up when faced with adversity. I’m sure your readers enjoyed the spotlight pieces and it was good to see positivity in a stressful time.

Willis Webb Journalist of the Year

1st Place: Fayette County Record, Andy Behlen – News writing is good. Tighten up some longer paragraphs. Editorial should be shorter, don’t jump. Say more with less.

2nd Place: El Campo Leader–News, Shannon Crabtree

3rd Place: Frio–Nueces Current, Marc Robertson

Honorable Mention: Ozona Stockman, Melissa Perner

Photographer of the Year

1st Place: Fayette County Record, Andy Behlen – No comments

2nd Place: Fredericksburg Standard–Radio Post, Joe Southern – No comments

3rd Place: Frio–Nueces Current, Manuel Azocar III – No comments

Honorable Mention: Uvalde Leader–News, Pete Luna – No comments