



PANHANDLE PRESS ASSOCIATION

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

PO BOX 1110 | CLARENDON, TEXAS 79226

June 9, 2026

Dear PPA Member,

We hope you have had a great year and look forward to your participation in the PPA Better Newspaper Contest based on your publications in 2026.

Winners will be recognized at the 117th PPA Convention in Hereford, Texas, on July 17-18, 2026.

All entries will be uploaded on the new online contest platform. For registration and uploading instructions, please visit: www.newspapercontest.com/panhandle

All contest entries must be from work done in 2025. **THE ABSOLUTE DEADLINE FOR ALL ENTRIES IS FRIDAY, June 26, 2026.** All entries must be submitted on or before that date. Newspapers whose entries are uploaded on or before Friday, June 19, 2025, will receive **five bonus points** toward the General Excellence Award.

For more information, contact Jeff Blackmon at: publisher@herefordbrand.com or 940-585-8720 or contact Texas Press Association Regional Better Newspaper Contest Coordinator Sue Brown, sbrown@texaspress.com or 830-570-7543.

All entries should be contained on complete PDFs, identified by headline or cutline of photos. Entries should include the name of the newspaper, date of publication, and the name of the writer or photographer. To be eligible for contest judging, entries must be from PPA member newspapers in good standing. Your 2026 PPA dues must be paid, and you must pay the \$50 contest entry fee online.

You should receive confirmation by e-mail to let you know your entries have been received. If you do not receive confirmation within 10 days of the date your entries were uploaded, contact PPA President Jeff Blackmon at 940-585-8720 to check.

Also attached is a nomination form for the PPA Hall of Fame. Nominations are due June 19, 2026.

Sincerely,

Roger Estlack,
PPA Secretary

2026 Texas Panhandle Press Association 2025 Better Newspaper Contest

Deadline for submitting entries is June 26, 2026 (June 19, 2026 Early Bird)

See instructions below for details on registering.

In order to enter the contest, membership dues must be paid. If membership dues are not paid, the dues may be added to and mailed with the contest category entry fees after entering the Panhandle Press Association contest. Please contact the contest chairman at panhandle@newspapercontest.com with any questions.

Step 1 — The Association Code needed to register is PANHANDLE (CASE SENSITIVE). Register on the contest website (www.newspapercontest.com/panhandle) and use your email address. You will receive a confirmation email, which you will need to complete registration. Links to register are at the top of that URL and also the link to log in, as well as a link to the CONTEST RULES.

Step 2 — Once you have registered, you can login to into the URL listed in Step 1. You will see a page showing any entries you have already submitted. Complete rules are available on the homepage. Some browsers, such as Safari, will open the rules in a new window; others will require you to download the PDF file to your computer.

Step 3 — Click on the “Add New Entry” link.

Step 4 — On this page, select your newspaper name. A lot of information will autofill. If that information is incorrect, please email panhandle@newspapercontest.com. Your Division will be pre-assigned, please verify information. Fill in the preparer’s name.

Step 5 - Select Contest Type – Select “Editorial” or “Advertising”.

Step 6 — If necessary, provide an explanation of your entry. The explanation/cutline/paywall box is limited to 3,000 characters. It’s a good idea to write your explanation in another program, such as Word, and copy/paste into the explanation box. If a URL is required, fill in the URL box; there is no need to type <http://>. If you submit by URL, you must submit the entire page. IF your newspaper uses a paywall, you must supply a username/password in this field, that will allow free access to your site. If your site requires paywall information and it is not provided, your entry may be disqualified without refund.

Step 7 — Include the name of the entry. If uploading full-page PDF files, it will be helpful if the entry name matches the headline on the page so the judges can find it easily. If the judges cannot tell what is to be judged, the entry will be discarded without refund.

Step 8 — Include the name of the person or people who should be credited for any award. This is generally the writer, reporter, photographer, graphic artist, cartoonist, etc. It is not necessarily the name of the person submitting the entry nor the person picking up the award at the convention.

Step 9 — Add your file or files. You can drag and drop files or use the “Add files” button to navigate your files. For Photography categories, each entry must consist of a full-page pdf with photo on the page or a URL with photo in context with the story. If you submit by URL, you must submit the entire page. Also, if your newspaper uses a paywall, you must supply a username/password that will allow free access to your site. Other files and URLs may be acceptable as noted in the special instructions. We allow for up to 5 URLs, if you need additional, you may supply these in a pdf document as clickable hyperlinks. Upload as many files as are necessary to complete your entry but refer to the special instructions for any limitations.

Step 10 — When you have completed your submission, click the “Save” button. If you click the “Back to list” button, you will lose the entry you just completed. After clicking “Save,” you will be directed back to the list of your entries.

Step 11 — To submit another entry, click “Add New Entry.” As long as you have not logged out of the system, your newspaper name will still be in place and you can simply start at Step 6 again. You may log out and log back in later to continue adding entries. You will need to select your newspaper name each time you log in.

Step 12 — If you are done submitting entries, please review the list. You may not change an entry, but you may delete an entry and resubmit it. As long as you have not submitted payment to PPA, you can continue adding entries for the contest. Once you submit payment to PPA, no further entries can be accepted for the contest.



2025 Panhandle Press Association Better Newspaper Contest Official Rules

GENERAL RULES: All entries in all categories **MUST** have been published in calendar year 2025. All entries will be uploaded on the new online contest platform. For registration and uploading instructions, please visit: www.newspapercontest.com/panhandle.

CONTEST DIVISIONS Division I – Weeklies Division II – Semi-Weeklies & Dailies

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

All newspapers will automatically be entered in this contest, based on placings in all other categories. First place nets 15 points; second place 10 points; third place 5 points; and honorable mention 2 points. Points earned in all categories will be added together to determine Division I and II winners. Those newspapers with entries submitted on or before Friday, June 19, 2026, will receive an additional 5 points. First place plaques awarded in Division I and II.

BEST NEWS WRITING

Enter three news stories you consider your best in 2025. The stories can cover any topic. Send full-page tearsheets. Judges will look at the quality of coverage, reader interest and importance of placement. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

BEST EDITORIALS

Enter your three best locally written editorials published in 2025. Send full-page tearsheets. Judges will look at the timeliness of the topic, significance of the material presented and suitable handling of the topic. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

BEST SERIOUS COLUMNS

Each newspaper may enter two columnists in this category. For each columnist, submit three locally produced (non-syndicated) columns from 2025. Columnists may enter both serious and humorous categories. Judges will consider quality of writing, reader interest and originality. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

BEST HUMOROUS COLUMNS

Each newspaper may enter two columnists in this category. For each columnist, submit three locally produced (non-syndicated) columns from 2025. Columnists may enter both serious and humorous categories. Judges will consider quality of writing, reader interest and originality. Plaques awarded in Division I and II.

ADVERTISING DESIGN

Enter your three best locally designed ads published in 2025. The category will be judged on originality, creativity, impact and benefit to advertiser. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

FEATURE STORIES

Select the three features you consider your best in 2025. Only one set of entries and one award per paper. Judges will look at originality, style of writing and reader interest. Photos and appearance of layout will also be considered. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

BEST NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

Enter three staff-produced news photos published in 2025. Entries may be "stand alone" photos with a cutline or accompany a "hard news" story. Judges will consider elements of timeliness, composition, quality and relevance. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

BEST SPORTS PHOTOGRAPHY

Enter three staff-produced sports photos published in 2025. Entries may be "stand alone" photos with a cutline or accompany a "hard sports" story. Judges will consider elements of timeliness, sports action, composition, quality and relevance. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

BEST HUMAN INTEREST PHOTOGRAPHY

Enter three staff-produced feature photos published in 2025. Judges will consider human interest, unusual effectiveness, appearance to reader, reader interest and composition. Entries may be "stand alone" photos. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

SPORTS WRITING

Select your three best stories of the year 2025. Emphasis should be on "hard" sports writing, not on features. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

BEST SPECIAL EDITION/SECTION

Enter your best special edition or section published in 2025. Any special edition on any topic is eligible. Judging will be on basis of appearance, content and creative use of subject matter. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

SOCIETY/LIFESTYLES

Enter three issues of your choice from 2025. The category is designed to encourage the use of material appropriate to modern lifestyles. Both photos and stories will be considered. Send entire section or page. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

HEADLINE WRITING

Enter your three best headlines of 2025. They may be from the same or different issues. The three headlines will constitute a single entry for judging which will be based on clarity, applicability to story, impact and originality. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

FRONT PAGE LAYOUT

Emphasis on attractive and effective front page layout, typography, composition and reader interest. Enter your best three consecutive issues from 2025. Send full-page tearsheets. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

BEST WEBSITE

Websites will be judged for quality of content, ease of use, design, interactivity and innovations. Plaques awarded in Divisions I and II.

KEN TOWERY

COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT AWARD

The Community Service Project Award, sponsored primarily by Ken Towery, is presented each year by the Panhandle Press Association. Each entry must be in a three-ring binder and include a cover letter explaining your newspaper's role in a Community Service Project during 2025 (i.e., economic development project, environmental project, historic project, etc). Materials may include news stories, editorials, pictures, columns, letters to the editor and other subject matter pertinent to the support of one project. **Entry must be in the hands of the contest chairman by noon on July 17, 2026, either delivered in person at the convention or shipped ahead of time to Jeff Blackmon, c/o Hereford Brand, PO Box 673, Hereford, TX 79045.** A cash prize will be awarded to the winner.

Early postmark deadline: Friday, June 19, 2026
Final postmark deadline: Friday, June 26, 2026

The absolute deadline for all entries is Friday, June 26, 2026. All entries must be submitted on or before that date. **Newspapers whose entries are submitted on or before Friday, June 19, 2026, will receive five bonus points toward the General Excellence Award.** All newspapers entering the contest must be a paid-up member of PPA under the paper's own name. A \$50 **ENTRY FEE** is required online. Plaques will be presented at the PPA convention in Hereford on July 18, 2026. All entries other than the Community Service Award entry must be submitted online. You should receive confirmation by e-mail to let you know your entries have been received. If you do not receive confirmation within 10 days, call Contest Chairman Jeff Blackmon at 940-585-8720.



Nomination Guidelines for the Panhandle Press Association Hall of Fame

NOMINEES:

- * Nominees must be or have been associated with a PPA-member newspaper or newspapers for a minimum of 10 years.
- * Nominees must have made a significant contribution to the newspaper industry.

NOMINEE SUBMISSIONS:

- * The PPA board will mail one letter to each PPA-member newspaper asking for nominations at least one month prior to a deadline established for receipt of the nominations.
- * Any member of Panhandle Press Association and anyone associated with a Panhandle-Press-Association-member newspaper may submit Hall of Fame nominees, including PPA board members. Those submitting nominations must include reasons the nominee is worthy of Hall of Fame consideration.
- * Nominees not selected to the Hall of Fame will remain eligible, but will not be automatically placed on future ballots. A new nomination must be received annually for inclusion on the ballot.
- * PPA board members are responsible for verifying eligibility of nominees prior to placing names and biographical information on a ballot. Board members may use discretion in determining the biographical information that's included on a ballot.
- * There is no limit to the number of nominees on a ballot.

HALL OF FAME VOTING:

- * Each PPA-member newspaper will receive one Hall of Fame ballot and may vote for up to two nominees.
- * The top two vote-getters will be selected to the Hall of Fame. In the event of a tie, PPA board members will decide if any, all or some of those tied for second will be selected.



2026 Panhandle Press Association Hall of Fame Nomination Form

Name of individual nominated _____

_____ Deceased

_____ Living

If still living, current address, telephone number _____

Newspapers worked for: _____

In 150 typewritten words or less, tell us why this individual should be elected to the PPA Hall of Fame. Please use separate page.

Is photograph available of individual? YES NO

Will you notify winner or winner's family if he/she is selected? YES NO

Name, address and telephone number of individual making nomination: _____

Please return nomination form in your company envelope to:

Roger Estlack

PO Box 1110

Clarendon, TX 79226

FAX: 806-874.2423

E-Mail: panhandlepublisher@gmail.com

Must Be Received By June 26, 2026.