

THE BEST OF GATEHOUSE 2017

Rulebook and submission guidelines



BEST OF GATEHOUSE 2017

The Best of GateHouse 2017 contest highlights and rewards the most extraordinary journalism crafted by our newsrooms and recognizes our best newspapers, editors and digital leaders. Here are the rules.

ELIGIBILITY The Best of GateHouse competition is open to full-time GateHouse editorial employees. Part-time employees and freelancers may not apply. This is a calendar-year competition — only work published in 2017 is eligible. If your news organization was purchased by GateHouse Media mid-year, you are still eligible to submit work published at any point during 2017.

DEADLINE All entries must be submitted online at betternewspapercontest.com/bestofgatehouse2017 by **Wednesday, March 7, 2018**. Submission instructions for the contest site can be [accessed here](#).

DIVISIONS

- A:** Dailies with 23 or more editorial employees
- B:** Dailies with 9-22 editorial employees
- C:** Dailies with 1-8 editorial employees
- D:** Newspapers publishing three or fewer times per week

ANNOUNCEMENTS Winners will be announced by email and on GateHouseMedia.com when judging is complete. Best of GateHouse winners will have their work published on BestofGateHouse.com.

PRIZES Winners must be employees of GateHouse Media/New Media at the time the check is processed to be eligible for the cash prize. The following categories will receive cash awards:

- News Writers of the Year
- Features Writers of the Year
- Columnists of the Year
- Editorial Writers of the Year
- Sports Writers of the Year
- Photographer of the Year
- Videographer of the Year
- Beat Reporters of the Year

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

In each division, one newspaper will be named Newspaper of the Year. A trophy will be awarded to the newsroom.

HOW TO ENTER **Submit your best three A1 projects:** Digital copies (PDFs) only — no print editions will be accepted. Upload the cover page and corresponding jump pages for each project. If the project was a multi-day series, upload the complete series as one third of your entry. Include links to any digital-only assets that accompanied the project.

Submit a brief online questionnaire: Includes three questions,

- How did your journalism have an impact on your community in 2017?
- What did you do to engage audience, through social media or community involvement?
- What steps did you take to grow your digital audience or reach new audiences in 2017?

Note: Your year over year, digital growth metrics will also be a consideration — specifically, visitors and pageviews. This information will be provided to judges by the digital team at the Center for News & Design.

Fill out your questionnaire and upload your Newspaper of the Year A1 submissions [here](#). All entries must be received by end of day, **Wednesday, March 7, 2018**.

Please note that if your newspaper, or individuals from your newspaper, submit three or more entries, **your newspaper must enter the Newspaper of the Year competition.**

EDITOR OF THE YEAR

In each division, one editor will be named Editor of the Year. A cash prize will be awarded, along with a plaque.

HOW TO ENTER Those applying for the Editor of the Year Award should include a recommendation letter from their publisher, demonstration of a major project the newsroom tackled (supplying PDFs and/or links to relevant content) and fill out an online form, not to exceed 1,000 words, explaining the editor's impact in the following areas:

[Click here](#) to read about our 2016 Editors of the Year.

Community engagement: Keeping readers and other community members invested in the newspaper is a key component of an editor's obligations. Examples can be varied, from instituting a readership board to engaging the community through charitable projects, contests or other forms of outreach. Significant or impactful participation or membership in a civic organization or volunteer efforts also qualify.

Impact journalism: While day-to-day enterprise journalism is a key to the industry, maintaining a focus on larger, long-term projects can show an editor's organization and planning skills, as well as a desire to remain the most active watchdog of a community. Explain how the project you submitted as part of your application had impact.

Newsroom development: Training and development of staff members, allowing for a constant evolution in an ever-changing industry, is also a necessary focus of the editor's duties. Briefly explain how you introduced enhanced reporting techniques, coached writers or guided your staff into alternative and innovative storytelling formats. Include some tangible evidence — links to alternative stories, watchdog beat reporting, or examples of digital tools used by your staff.

All entries should be submitted via online form, available [here](#), by end of day, **Wednesday, March 7, 2018**.

DIGITAL LEADER OF THE YEAR

In each division, one digital leader will be named Digital Leader of the Year. A cash prize will be awarded, along with a plaque.

HOW TO ENTER Nominations are not limited to digital editors. Any newsroom staff member driving digital may apply. Those applying for the Digital Leader of the Year Award should include a recommendation letter from their editor or publisher, and fill out an online form, not to exceed 500 words, explaining your impact in the following areas:

Utilizing digital metrics: An effective digital leader helps drive content decisions, providing newsroom staff with guidance or direction using analytics to chart a course to audience growth. Describe situations in which you have used digital metrics to assist in content decisions.

Experimentation: In the evolving landscape of digital storytelling, new tools and platforms are constantly emerging. Describe successes or failures you've had while experimenting.

Audience growth: How has your site achieved audience growth in 2017, and how did you directly contribute to that success? Some growth areas to consider are: Pageviews, engagement, social follows, social reach, etc.

All entries should be submitted via online form, [available here](#), by end of day, **Wednesday, March 7, 2018**.

#DOJOURNALISMWITHIMPACT

Awarded for a ground-breaking project or coverage series, one newsroom will be selected. Runners up will be named. Newsroom size will be considered. This category alone is evaluated by our Senior Vice President of News.

HOW TO ENTER Those applying for the #DoJournalismWithImpact Award should fill out an online form, not to exceed 1,000 words, explaining your project or series' impact in the following areas:

Community impact: What effect did your high-interest reporting have on your coverage area? Describe or provide examples of feedback. Were any local or regional policies or regulations changed as a result? Officials held accountable? Truths revealed about your community or government? How did you engage with your community?

Storytelling creativity: How did you present your reporting to readers? Highlight any creative digital tools, layers or design elements that enhanced the experience. In what unique ways did you engage with your community?

Collaboration: Did you engage with other GateHouse newsrooms, or other outside resources? Describe any collaborative efforts that made your project a success.

All entries should be submitted via online form, [available here](#), by end of day, **Wednesday, March 7, 2018**.

JOURNALISM ADVOCATE

Awarded to a publisher or general manager who took extraordinary steps to champion editorial initiatives. One individual will be awarded.

HOW TO ENTER Those applying on behalf of their publisher or general manager should fill out an online form explaining how he or she went above and beyond to ensure the success of the editorial team. Provide links to examples where applicable.

Community advocacy: How does your publisher or general manager publicly support (and defend, when necessary) your newsroom's editorial decisions?

Newsroom involvement: Describe how your publisher or general manager engages with the newsroom — encouraging editorial efforts, acknowledging success, offering suggestions or solutions to problems and assisting in overcoming obstacles (financial or otherwise).

Ethics champion: How does your publisher or general manager uphold a strong commitment to ethics? Describe any situations where your publisher has had to act as referee, or provide guidance to staff or the public when an ethical situation arose.

Embracing our future: Does your publisher or general manager promote digital storytelling? How does he or she support the newsroom's efforts to increase digital audience? Does he or she prioritize staff development and training opportunities, either internal or external?

All entries should be submitted via online form, [available here](#), by end of day, **Wednesday, March 7, 2018**.

CATEGORIES

For each division and each category, one entry will be named champion. Judges will name up to two runners-up.

- 1. News Writer of the Year** Recognizes a news reporter whose body of work is proactive, compelling and impactful.
- 2. Features Writer of the Year** Recognizes the body of work of a reporter in topics including, but not limited to, health and fitness, food, home and garden, religion and other lifestyle-oriented topics.
- 3. Sports Writer of the Year** Recognizes sports stories and column writing that go beyond game coverage and are entertaining, enterprising and evocative.
- 4. Editorial Writer of the Year** Recognizes editorials produced by one writer who asks critical questions, advocates on behalf of community interests, and promotes transparency.
- 5. Columnist of the Year** Recognizes news and features columnists whose work is especially colorful or thought-provoking.
- 6. Photographer of the Year** Recognizes outstanding photography, with an ability to depict powerful stories.
- 7. Videographer of the Year** Recognizes outstanding video coverage or storytelling. Submissions may consist of a single, powerful video or a body of work.
- 8. Beat Reporter of the Year** Recognizes outstanding watchdog journalism covering a single source or story during an extended period of time.
- 9. Public Service Journalism** Recognizes the efforts of a newsroom in the exemplary coverage of an issue that has demonstrated public service value. Project could be a special section or series.
- 10. Digital Newsroom of the Year** Recognizes the efforts of a newsroom to tell stories through unique digital displays, and by experimenting with emerging digital tools. Must show demonstrated digital audience growth (metrics) as a qualification for submission.
- 11. Community Engagement Journalism** Recognizes efforts of a newsroom to involve readers with the newspaper. Includes print, online and in-person initiatives.
- 12. Special Sections and Niche Products** Recognizes efforts of a newsroom to produce unique special sections or niche products, with valuable local content. Submissions must be digital. No hard copies will be accepted.
- 13. Sports Section** Recognizes the efforts of a newsroom for the best sports section. Judges will look for strong local content, with an emphasis on engaging, proactive and analytical pieces rather than gamers.
- 14. Lifestyle Section** Recognizes the efforts of a newsroom for the best lifestyle section. Judges will look for strong local content, with an emphasis on engaging, colorful and gripping features.
- 15. Social Media Excellence** Recognizes the efforts of a newsroom that best engages with and informs its followers through a variety of social media platforms.

JUDGING

Categories 1-6

Awards in these categories are given to individuals and are based on body of work. Three submissions constitute one entry. For reporters, three stories equal one entry. If a multi-day series is involved, the entire series constitutes one-third of an entry, regardless of the number of main bars, sidebars, etc. Web-only content is eligible. For photographers, one photo constitutes one-third of an entry. However, multiple photos in a single series equal one-third of an entry. Body-of-work entries should show diversity.

Category 7

Awards in this category can be based either on a body of work or a single, powerful video. If you choose to submit as a body of work, three submissions constitute one entry. Typically, one video constitutes one-third of an entry. However, multiple videos in a single series can also equal one-third of an entry. Body-of-work entries should show diversity.

Category 8

Awards in this category are given to individuals and are based on body of work. Entries should be limited to five of the most relevant or outstanding in-depth stories covering the source or subject of the reporter's beat.

Categories 9-15

Awards in these categories recognize the newspaper staff as a whole, and are not body-of-work categories.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

All entries must be submitted online at betternewspapercontest.com/bestofgatehouse2017. Submission instructions for the contest site can be [accessed here](#).

Newsroom managers must log in before any other newsroom employee, and must submit a minimum of two entries. Managers can then submit newsroom employees as Authorized Entrants. If only one or two total entries are being submitted from your entire newsroom, the newsroom manager must submit on the individual's behalf.

IMPORTANT

- Please use the naming convention (Name)(Category number)-(Entry content number) for all files. ex: Jane Smith, submitting for Features Writer of the Year would name her files:
JaneSmith2-1
JaneSmith2-2
JaneSmith2-3
- If your newspaper, or individuals from your newspaper, submit three or more entries, **your newspaper must enter the Newspaper of the Year competition.**

Entries must be submitted online by end of day, **Wednesday, March 7, 2018.**

HOW TO ENTER

A high-resolution headshot of the applicant must be included with each entry.

- CATEGORIES 1-5, WRITING** Submit links or PDFs, including jump pages, for all articles to be considered. Include supporting elements (digital graphics, social postings, etc.)
- CATEGORY 6 PHOTOGRAPHY** Submit image files or PDFs of pages on which the photos appear. If the photos are currently published on your website, you may submit links. Entries should consist of three photos. If multiple photos were taken on a single topic, as a photo series or photo essay, the series constitutes one-third of your entry.
- CATEGORY 7 VIDEOGRAPHY** If the videos are currently published on your website, submit links. If no longer available, submit a link to a public Google drive or Dropbox folder with the video. Entries can consist of three videos to show a body of work, or applicants can submit one impactful video for consideration. If multiple videos were produced on a single topic, as a series, the series constitutes one-third of your entry.
- CATEGORY 8 BEAT REPORTING** Submit links or PDFs, including jump pages, for all articles to be considered. Include supporting elements (digital graphics, social postings, etc.) Entries should be limited to five of the most relevant or outstanding in-depth stories covering the source or subject of the reporter's beat.
- CATEGORY 9 PUBLIC SERVICE JOURNALISM** Entries may include: 1) A brief explanation of the project's impact 2) Links or PDFs, including jump pages, for all articles to be considered. Include supporting elements (digital graphics, social postings, etc.). If you ran a four-part series on a single topic, the entire series counts as one submission. Additional content, such as letters to the editor or Facebook comments, that demonstrates the impact of the project, should be submitted as well. Multiple projects from the same newsroom can be submitted as separate entries.
- CATEGORY 10 DIGITAL NEWSROOM** Entries must include: 1) A brief summary of how the newsroom prioritizes and invests in digital storytelling, 2) URLs to special project sites, examples of innovative use of digital tools, links to individual podcast episodes or other compelling digital storytelling efforts and (3) Metrics that demonstrate some form of audience growth.
- CATEGORY 11 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** Entries must include a brief explanation describing how the newsroom has involved readers using print, online or in-person efforts, or a combination of all three. Examples can include large-scale, successful user-generated content initiatives; reader advisory boards; focus groups; social media engagement; town hall meetings or panels; etc.

Submit any relevant URLs, screenshots, PDF pages, letters or other supporting documents. Multiple examples from the same newsroom can be submitted as separate entries.

**CATEGORY 12
SPECIAL SECTIONS
AND NICHE
PRODUCTS** Submit a link to or PDFs of the section or magazine. There is no limit to the number of entries submitted. Examples include, but are not limited to, sections on local dining or entertainment scenes, football season previews or progress editions. Print copies will not be accepted.

**CATEGORIES 13, 14
SECTIONS OR
PAGES** Submit PDFs of up to three complete sections or pages. Print copies will not be accepted.

**CATEGORY 15
SOCIAL MEDIA
EXCELLENCE** Submit URLs to social media pages as well as screenshots that demonstrate best practices, engagement or tone. Judges will be looking for frequent and consistent posting; experimentation on both existing and emerging social platforms; using social platforms to enhance and inspire coverage; as well as creativity and personality. Also required is a brief narrative of how using various social media platforms improved your outreach to readers, helped you find sources for stories or produced tips that led to stories. Include PDFs of full pages on which those stories appeared, or links to the articles online. Metrics, including growth in followers and pageview referral traffic increases, can also be included.