

THE BEST OF GATEHOUSE 2016

Rulebook and submission guidelines



BEST OF GATEHOUSE 2016

The Best of GateHouse 2016 contest highlights and rewards the most extraordinary journalism crafted by our newsrooms and recognizes our best newspapers and editor of the year. 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 2016 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 2016.

DEADLINE All entries must be submitted online at betternewspapercontest.com/bestofgatehouse2016 by **Friday, March 24, 2017**. Submission instructions for the contest site can be [accessed here](#).

DIVISIONS

- A:** Dailies with 25 or more editorial employees
- B:** Dailies with 9-24 editorial employees
- C:** Dailies with 0-8 editorial employees
- D:** Newspapers publishing three or fewer times per week

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

PRIZES Newspaper of the Year and Editor of the Year prizes will be announced after the judging. Champions for individual categories 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
- Designers of the Year
- Visual Journalists of the Year
- Beat Reporters of the Year

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR AWARD

In each division, one newspaper will be named Newspaper of the Year.

HOW TO ENTER **Submit two editions:** Two clean copies from two days should be submitted. Locally produced special sections or advertising inserts may be left in those editions. The first edition is one that published on Wednesday, May 11, 2016, for daily newspapers, or a weekly edition from the week of May 15 to May 21, 2016. The second edition is one of your choosing from any date in 2016.

Submit a brief online questionnaire: Includes three questions,

- What new initiatives or projects did your newspaper launch in 2016?
- What did you do to engage audience, through social media or community involvement?
- How did you experiment with digital storytelling tools in 2016?

[The questionnaire can be found here.](#)

Packaging: Two hard copies from each of the two dates above should be sent via U.S. mail to:

GateHouse Media Center for News & Design

Attn: Carlene Cox

9001 IH-35 N, Suite 102

Austin, TX 78753

EDITOR OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Editor of the Year Award recognizes excellence in a position that often goes unheralded. A cash prize will be awarded, along with a plaque.

HOW TO ENTER

[Click here](#) to read about Paul Pronovost, executive editor of the Cape Cod Times and our 2015 Editor of the Year winner.

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 of printed pages 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:

Community Interaction: 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. Include an example of a project or series the paper took on in the year 2016, and explain how the project had impact. The project can be print-based, digital or a combination of both.

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, either examples of alternative story formats, in-depth news or an increase in social media referrals or page views.

All entries should be submitted via online form, [available here](#), by **Friday, March 24, 2017**.

CATEGORIES

There are 15 categories in each of the four divisions. For each division and each category, one entry will be named champion. Judges will name as many runners-up as they see fit.

- 1. News Writer of the Year** Recognizes a news reporter whose body of work is proactive, compelling and promotes transparency.
- 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 that may be found throughout your publication.
- 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 and promotes transparency in issues of community interest.
- 5. Columnist of the Year** Recognizes news and features columnists whose work is especially colorful or thought-provoking.
- 6. Designer of the Year** Recognizes top page designers. Designers from the Center for News & Design and from individual newsrooms are eligible.
- 7. Visual Journalist of the Year** Recognizes outstanding photography and videography, with an ability to depict powerful stories.
- 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 in new and powerful ways through unique digital displays, and by consistently experimenting with emerging digital tools.
- 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.
- 13. Sports Section or Page** Recognizes the efforts of a newsroom for the best sports section or page.
- 14. Lifestyle Section or Page** Recognizes the efforts of a newsroom for the best lifestyle section or page.
- 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 1-7 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 page designers, three pages constitute one entry. However, a single-topic, multi-page spread would equal one-third of an entry. Any series, jump pages with connection to a main page or the like equal one-third of an entry. For photographers, one photo constitutes one-third of an entry. However, multiple photos in a single package equal one-third of an entry. A photo story equals one-third of an entry. Multi-day series photography equals one-third of an entry. Body-of-work entries should show diversity. Treat your entry as if it were a small portfolio.

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

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR The two editions must be mailed to:

GateHouse Media Center for News & Design
Attn: Carlene Cox
9001 IH-35 N, Suite 102
Austin, TX 78753

Questionnaire must be completed via online form, [found here](#).

EDITOR OF THE YEAR Entries must be submitted via online form, [found here](#).

ALL OTHER ENTRIES MUST BE SUBMITTED ONLINE at betternewspapercontest.com/bestofgatehouse2016. 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.

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.**

REMINDER: Entries must be submitted online by **Friday, March 24, 2017.**

HOW TO ENTER

- CATEGORIES 1-5, WRITING** Submit PDFs of full pages on which your stories or columns appear, including jumps. Do this for each of the three submissions in your entry. If your entry includes online-only content, submissions must include URLs. A high-resolution headshot of the applicant must be included with your entry.
- CATEGORY 6 DESIGN** Submit PDFs of full pages that show your page designs. Multiple pages or spreads showing a single topic make up one-third of your entry. A high-resolution headshot of the applicant must be included with your entry.
- CATEGORY 7 VISUAL JOURNALISM** For photography, submit PDFs of full pages that show your photo submissions. Multiple photos of a single topic make up one-third of your entry. For photos published online or as part of a gallery, high-resolution JPGs or URLs may be submitted. For videography, submit URLs to online videos. Multiple videos of a single topic make up one-third of your entry. A high-resolution headshot of the applicant must be included with your entry.
- CATEGORY 8 BEAT REPORTING** Submit PDFs of full pages on which your stories appear, including jumps. If your entry includes online-only content, submissions must include URLs. A high-resolution headshot of the applicant must be included with your entry.
- CATEGORY 9 PUBLIC SERVICE JOURNALISM** Entries may include: 1) A brief explanation of the project's impact 2) PDFs of full pages on which the series appears. If stories jump or appear over multiple pages or days, include all page PDFs. 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 and 2) URLs to special project sites, examples of innovative use of digital tools or other compelling digital storytelling efforts.
- 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 page PDFs, URLs, screenshots, 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 PDFs of the section or magazine. There is no limit to the number of entries submitted. Premium editions are strongly encouraged. Examples include, but are not limited to, sections on local dining or entertainment scenes, football season previews or progress editions.

CATEGORIES 13, 14 Submit PDFs of up to three complete sections or pages.
SECTIONS OR
PAGES

CATEGORY 15 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 page view referral traffic increases, can also be included.

SOCIAL MEDIA
EXCELLENCE