



Juan Carlo, Ventura County Star  
1st Place, Feature Photo, Monthly Unique Visitors 400,001 & over and Monthly Unique Visitors 100,001-400,000  
2020 California Journalism Awards—Digital Contest

# 2021 California Journalism Awards

## Digital Contest



*Presented by the California News Publishers Association*

# Rules & Information

## About the California Journalism Awards

The California Journalism Awards provide the opportunity for publishers and editors to promote excellence in journalism and recognize their staffs' outstanding work to inform and enlighten their readers through reporting, design, photography and multimedia in print and online.

### Contest Period

Entry publication dates must be between January 1 and December 31, 2021. A series published between those dates that starts before or ends after the contest period is eligible.

### Entry Deadline

**Monday, February 21, 2022, at 9 p.m. Late entry: Monday, February 28, 2022 at 9 p.m. (Fees are doubled) Entrants are urged to meet the February 21 deadline but any entries made after that date will cost double the regular entry deadline fee. All entries will be treated equally in judging.**

### Eligibility

The Digital Contest is open to all CNPA digital news media and print members in good standing. **Membership dues must be current and contest entry fees paid before entries are accepted for judging. In addition, Digital Contest entrants MUST provide judges for the contest as follows:**

- 400,001 monthly unique visitors and over – **3 judges**
- 100,001-400,000 – **2 judges**
- 100,000 and under – **1 judge**
- Individual freelancers – **1 judge**

**Note: Print media entering the Digital Contest must provide one judge in addition to the judging requirement in the Print Contest.**

**Judges do not have to be employees of your publication as long as they are experienced journalists. Sign-up form for judges: <https://cnpa.formstack.com/forms/judges>**

### Judging

Judging will take place in late March and early April 2022. A select group of experienced out-of-state journalists will judge the following categories:



- General Excellence
- Enterprise News Story or Series
- Feature Story
- In-Depth Reporting
- Investigative Reporting
- Public Service Journalism

Judges will choose five finalists in each category. Awards will be distributed as follows:

**1st Place and 2nd Place** – Award plaque(s) with the publication name, category and placing.

**1st through 5th Place**– Personalized certificates with the names of the entrants, the publication, the category and the placing. For winning entries with multiple credits, each person will receive an individual certificate.

We will offer 1st Place and 2nd Place winners the option of ordering personalized plaques at a reasonable cost directly from the awards company.

Divisions with five or fewer entries in a category will be merged with an adjacent division to make the category competitive. Divisions that do not have entries from three or more publications in a category will also be combined with an adjacent division. CNPA reserves the right to declare a category not competitive and issue refunds of entry fees.

## Announcements

Finalists will be announced in late April.

## Entry Rules

- Entries must be produced by entrants' staff or regular contributors. A freelance member may only enter work that was published by CNPA-member media outlets.
- The same story, series or photograph may be entered in multiple categories but can only receive an award in one category. If an entry is chosen for an award in more than one category, the award will be given in the most prestigious category such as categories judged by out-of-state judges.
- An entry that has appeared on the websites of multiple publications should be submitted by the publication whose staff is primarily responsible for creating the entry. However, publications have the option to submit the entry in a higher audience division among the multiple publications that published the entry.
- Entries by newspapers must be substantially different from what appeared in print, either in content or in the way the content is presented. (For example, a print article that is presented online with additional materials, such as a video or other graphics not included in the newspaper.) Newspaper entrants will be asked to state how their digital entry is different from what appeared in print.



## How to Enter

Go to: <https://betternewspapercontest.com> (See “Entry Instructions” in this document for details.)

### Choosing a Division

Each entrant must choose one division in which all of its entries will compete. Average number of unique visitors per month should be determined for the current calendar year based on Google Analytics.

**Freelancers entering individually must choose the division of a media member that published their work.**

**If your assigned division is incorrect, you may continue to upload your entries but please contact the contest administrator immediately at 916-288-6023 or [contests@cnpa.com](mailto:contests@cnpa.com) with your correct unique visitors.**

Digital Media Divisions	
CNPA digital media members and print members shall choose a division below based on their average monthly unique visitors for calendar year 2021.	
Division	Cost per Entry
A: 400,001 & over	\$25
B: 100,001-400,000	\$20
C: 100,000 & under	\$15

### Questions?

Contact contest administrator Jason Schaff ([contests@cnpa.com](mailto:contests@cnpa.com), 916-288-6023).

## Categories

**In addition to the specific judging considerations for each Digital Contest category described below, judges will also consider how well the entries in each category use the unique capabilities of online publishing.**

#### 1. General Excellence (Allows a single entry)

Provide the URL of your publication’s primary website.



**Judging considerations:** General news coverage, local news coverage; opinion; quality of writing; headlines; use of photography, graphics and other artwork.

## 2. Public Service Journalism (Allows a single entry)

Submit a single package for a completed or ongoing project that performs a public service through compelling coverage of a vital community issue or event. Entries may contain news stories, photographs, editorials, columns, cartoons, graphics, video or other online material.

**Judging considerations:** The effect of the coverage on the community will be a major factor in the judging. Evidence of the project's public service effect should be provided either in the entry description, an accompanying letter of explanation, or a URL pointing to a detailed online description of the project and its impact on the community.

## 3. In-Depth Reporting (Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a single story or series of stories on the same subject, such as environmental, health, crime or social issues, which could combine elements of news and/or feature writing and which indicate a considerable degree of research and/or investigation. Entries should use multiple sources to explore the subject in significant depth.

**Judging considerations:** Excellence and depth of research, quality of presentation, and the overall impact of the topic of the story or series. You may submit a letter of explanation.

## 4. Writing (Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a single story, column or editorial that is notable for the quality of writing. **Please note that this category is for a SINGLE story, NOT a series. Series entered in this category will be disqualified. Multiple writers on a single story are acceptable.**

**Judging considerations:** Effective use of language, clarity and organization or writing; impact of lead.

## 5. Investigative Reporting (Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a story that focuses on one in-depth investigative story/series. Entries should have required extensive research, and an above-average amount of interviewing, documentation and background research. Attach a cover letter summarizing any obstacles that staff overcame in digging out facts and sifting through complexities to render the coverage meaningful, complete and balanced. A statement is required as to whether any objections, requests for corrections or retractions or other controversies rose after publication. If so, include copies of such complaints and the response of the publication.

**Judging considerations:** Effective organization of facts; thorough support and attribution; thoroughness of investigation, initiative, enterprise and quality of writing.

## 6. Enterprise News Story or Series (Allows up to 3 entries)

Submit a proactive story or series that is not directly based on a news event and that covers a topic or issue in a new and creative way.



**Judging considerations:** Coverage should be comprehensive and enlightening, while demonstrating an undertaking of risk, effort and difficulty; quality of writing; selection of material, balanced reporting; local appeal; photography, graphics and headlines.

#### **7. Coverage of Local Government (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit a story or a series on one subject about an issue being addressed by local government.

**Judging considerations:** Thoroughness of reporting, quality of writing, news depth; local appeal; photography, graphics, headlines.

#### **8. Coverage of Newsom Recall Election (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit a story or stories that report on the campaign and election to recall Gov. Gavin Newsom.

**Judging considerations:** Quality of writing; comprehensiveness of coverage; balance of coverage.

#### **9. Coverage of the COVID-19 Pandemic (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit a story or stories that report on the continuing COVID-19 pandemic including medical issues, community impact, effect on people and political fallout.

**Judging considerations:** Quality of writing; effective explanation of complex and technical issues; comprehensiveness of coverage.

#### **10. Wildfire News Coverage (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit a story or stories covering the 2021 wildfires that ravaged parts of the state.

**Judging considerations:** Timeliness; quality of writing.

#### **11. Wildfire Feature Coverage (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit a feature story from the wildfires.

**Judging considerations:** Quality of writing, clarity, organization, effective use of language; shows human element to the disaster.

#### **12. Wildfire Photo (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit a single photo from coverage of a wildfire. Please upload JPEGs or PNGs of photos, not PDFs of pages.

**Judging considerations:** Visual impact and technical quality.

#### **13. Breaking News (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit coverage of a single breaking news event.

**Judging considerations:** Quality of writing; timeliness; effective use of headlines, photos, graphics.

#### **14. Land-Use Reporting (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit a story or series of stories specifically focusing on subjects such as housing density, commercial or residential development, conversion or changing use of agricultural land.



**Judging considerations:** Thoroughness of reporting, quality of writing, news depth; local appeal; photography, graphics, headlines.

#### **15. Coverage of Youth and Education (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit a story or a series from one subject that focuses on youth and/or local education.

**Judging considerations:** Comprehensiveness of coverage, quality of writing; local appeal; selection of material; balanced reporting.

#### **16. Feature Story (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit a compelling story on an interesting subject in your community.

**Judging considerations:** Quality of writing, clarity, organization, effective use of language; originality, relevance, news value; graphic presentation, headlines, photos.

#### **17. Columns (Allows up to 3 entries)**

A single entry consists of **TWO** opinion columns written by a single author or writing team. May include humor and sports columns.

**Judging considerations:** Originality and quality of writing; creativity; reader appeal.

#### **18. Arts & Entertainment Coverage (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Submit an arts and entertainment story or stories.

**Judging considerations:** Quality of writing (stories and headlines), local appeal, effective use of language, originality.

#### **19. Home Page Layout & Design (Allows a single entry)**

Provide the URL of your publication's primary website.

**Judging considerations:** Layout and design; effective use of headlines, photography, graphic design, color and typography; creativity.

#### **20. Story Presentation Page Layout & Design (Allows up to 3 entries)**

Provide the URL of your publication's primary website.

**Judging considerations:** Effective use of headlines, photography, graphic design, color and typography; creativity.

#### **21. News Photo (Allows up to 5 entries)**

Submit a single general or breaking news photo.

**Judging considerations:** Visual impact and technical quality.

#### **22. Feature Photo (Allows up to 5 entries)**



A feature photo differs from a news photo in that the photographer may have had some control of the setting and/or circumstances under which the photo was taken; may either illustrate a story or be used as a stand-alone. The photo may not be set up, unless it's a portrait. The photo should be timeless in nature, have universal appeal and human interest, and capture the moment.

**Judging considerations:** Visual impact; storytelling; technical quality.

### 23. Informational Graphic (Allows up to 3 entries)

Charted information, graphs, diagrams or maps. May be a stand-alone informational graphic.

**Judging considerations:** Quality of artwork; effectiveness in informing the reader; organization and clarity of message; effective use of color.

### 24. Video Journalism—News (Allows up to 3 entries)

Use of video, including video produced and edited prior to posting and live broadcasts, in support of a news story or series. A stand-alone video that tells a news story may also be entered. Entries may include limited use of still shots. The entries may not include copyrighted material, including audio, from another source without written permission from the copyright holder. The video may be presented in Flash, QuickTime or Windows Media Format. Include a statement if necessary to explain the entry.

**Judging considerations:** Quality of videos and effectiveness of theme, storytelling and technical quality.

### 25. Video Journalism—Other (Allows up to 3 entries)

Use of video, including video produced and edited prior to posting and live broadcasts, in support of a feature or sports story, or other subject not considered news. A stand-alone video that tells a story not considered news may also be entered. Entries may include limited use of still shots. The entries may not include copyrighted material, including audio, from another source without written permission from the copyright holder. The video may be presented in Flash, QuickTime or Windows Media Format. Include a statement if necessary to explain the entry.

**Judging considerations:** Quality of videos and effectiveness of theme, storytelling and technical quality.

## Open Division

The Open Division allows all print and digital news organizations to compete against each other **regardless of size. Entries in the Open Division categories will be the first-place winners in those categories from the regular division competition. (Separate entry not permitted.)** The Open Division includes the following categories:

- Enterprise News Story or Series
- Feature Photo
- Feature Story
- In-Depth Reporting
- Investigative Reporting



- Public Service Journalism

Open Division winners will be presented as the best of all California journalism for the year.

## Entry Instructions

Entries to the California Journalism Awards are submitted using the BetterBNC Media Awards Platform.

BetterBNC recommends using the Chrome or Firefox browser for Windows and MacOS to upload your entries. Please have a recent version installed for the best contest experience.

**The deadline for all entries is Monday, February 21, 2022, at 9 p.m. Late entry: Monday, February 28, 2022 at 9 p.m. (Fees are doubled) Entrants are urged to meet the February 21 deadline but any entries made after that date will cost double the regular entry deadline fee. All entries will be treated equally in judging.**

Here are the steps to follow:

1. Login:

- Go to: <https://betternewspapercontest.com>
- Click “Contestant Login” in the menu at the top of the page.
- Make sure the “Contestant Manager” tab is selected (it should be selected by default).
- Select “2021 California Journalism Awards - Digital Contest” from the list of contests.

2. Select your Media Organization.

### Contest Managers

1. You can log in with the same email and password you used for last year’s contest. If you forgot your password **and are using the same email address as last year**, please click the “Forgot Password?” link on the login page or contact the contest administrator.
2. If your publication participated in last year’s contest **but you are replacing the previous contest manager**, contact the contest administrator for access to your account.
3. If your publication is new to the contest, please continue to follow the instructions below for creating and accessing your account for the first time.



3. Enter your password.

### Temporary Password

If it is your first time logging into your account, use this temporary password:

**bnc**

After you log in using that temporary password, the system will require you to update your password. Going forward (including future years) you will log in with the password you set.

4. Click "Login."

5. Submit entries:

- Click "Submit Entry" from the Manage Entries page
- Choose "Digital" as the Division
- Select a Category
- Enter the entry headline or title
- Add entry content (may vary by category)
- Add Comments
- Enter Credits

6. To upload file attachments (such as letters of explanation for your entries), click "Browse," navigate to the desired file, and then click "Open." Allowed file types are PDF, DOC/DOCX, TXT, JPG, GIF, and PNG. To upload additional attachments to a single entry, click the "Browse and Attach More Files" button.

7. To add web/audio/video content, copy and paste the content's URL into the provided website URL field. To host your content online, either upload it to a free streaming content website (for example, [YouTube](#) or [Vimeo](#)) or talk to your IT person about adding it to your publication's website. Make sure the content will be accessible online throughout the duration of the contest and awards process.

**IMPORTANT:** If your entries are behind a paywall or a password-protected area, you must provide username/password info in the "Comments" section of your entry. Judges may disqualify your entry if work samples are inaccessible.

8. Click "Submit Entry"

