



2025 Missouri Press Association's Better Newspaper Contest

Results and Judges Comments

A-Mark Prize for Investigative Journalism |

		<i>Title of Entry, If Applicable</i>	<i>Award Winner(s), If Applicable</i>
1st	The Kansas City Star Remarkable and comprehensive in reporting and presentation, this special report consistently strung its analysis of policy choices across a scaffolding of personal stories — from the too-many victims of police-involved crashes to a troubled driver who made the bad decision to flee a police stop, with deadly results. Excellent photography and smart graphics added power. Any public official or law enforcement officer who reads this coverage and fails to think deeply about what they can do to prevent the next catastrophic injury or death should consider another line of work.	Reckless Pursuit	Katie Moore, Glenn E. Rice and Bill Lukitsch
2nd	FirstAlert4/KMOV Excellent follow-the-money, shoe-leather reporting that starts and finishes with the property owners left holding the bag (in the form of bills and crumbling properties) as public corruption flourishes and already challenged neighborhoods decline. The sort of coverage that prompted this viewer to say “You’ve gotta be kidding me” at least three times. Fast-moving but crystal-clear in its storytelling.	Inspecting the Inspectors	Lauren Trager
3rd	Edina Sentinel In a field of entries that included several worthy stories turning on officials’ failure to follow or at least understand state transparency laws, this one stands out — both for the wrongdoing it uncovers and the intensity of the legal effort to keep the public in the dark (even in open court!). If the cardinal rule of crisis public relations is “Don’t make a bad-news story worse by turning it into a transparency beef,” the hospital leaders here kept punching themselves in the face as the Sentinel looked on taking notes. And it’s great to see the work done by the Washington University School of Law’s First Amendment Clinic in this effort.	Sunshine Law Trial	Echo Menges

01.) GENERAL EXCELLENCE | Class 1

		<i>Title of Entry, If Applicable</i>	<i>Award Winner(s), If Applicable</i>
1st Place	Cassville Democrat A lively, community-oriented newspaper that knows its audience and isn't afraid to have a bit of fun with kids' turkey-cooking ideas, eclipse coverage and first-person commentary by the publisher.	CassDem General Excellence	Staff
2nd Place	Tribune and Times The Tribune and Times handled with grace and sensitivity the unfathomable death of a senior football player hours after he helped his team win the championship. Stories, headlines, photos and an editor's commentary on the tragedy all well played on top of what is already a solid curation of local news.	Tribune and Times	Times and Tribune Staff
3rd Place	Edina Sentinel An extra effort on an investigation into the firing of a whistleblower by the county commission stands out. The reporting and photos handled deliberately and fairly for what is an explosive story.	General Excellence Edina Sentinel	Staff

01.) GENERAL EXCELLENCE | Class 2

		<i>Title of Entry, If Applicable</i>	<i>Award Winner(s), If Applicable</i>
1st Place	Ozark County Times Chockful of news of record and names and faces and event photos. Strong local Memorial Day story, substantive primary election preview and second-to-none coverage of the popular Hootin an Hollarin festival.	Ozark County Times General	Ozark County Times Staff
2nd Place	Warren County Record Sophistication in animal shelter vote story and in fire district needs enterprise story. A colorful, clean and informative read. Truly striking design on Sabrina Carpenter songwriter centerpiece.	General Excellence	Staff
3rd Place	Gasconade County Republican An impressive Class of 2024 showcase (strong photo presentation and volume of images). Well-presented photos of baseball team in playoffs. And the December issue sparkled with holiday spirit, visually and through many children's letters to Santa.	GCR - General Excellence	Staff

01.) GENERAL EXCELLENCE | Class 5

		<i>Title of Entry, If Applicable</i>	<i>Award Winner(s), If Applicable</i>
1st Place	Southeast Missourian Superb eclipse coverage, strong local sports focus and a community-oriented read throughout, including salute to veterans section.	General Excellence: April 9, May 11,	Staff
2nd Place	News Tribune Truly extensive commitment to local sports coverage that includes numerous names and faces reflecting how high school teams and athletes are tied to community pride.	General Excellence	News Tribune Staff

3rd Place **Mid America Farmer-Grower**
Layout gives reader clear connection to the story and helps the reader navigate the page

Mid America Farmer Grower **Stephanie Schumer-Vandeven**

02.) BEST OVERALL DESIGN | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Springfield News-Leader**
Strong use of layout elements in every page serve the reader well and communicate visually and navigationally

Springfield News-Leader - Overall **Springfield News-Leader Staff**

2nd Place **Columbia Missourian**
Visually draws the reader in, clear hierarchy of headlines and photos, nice packaging of stories

Missourian Best Overall Design **Columbia Missourian Staff**

3rd Place **News Tribune**
Design is clean and clearly informs and helps guide the reader.

Best Overall Design **News Tribune staff**

03.) BEST FRONT PAGE | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Maries County Advocate**
Clean design with a nice mix of stories. Some helpful touches, including top right tease to inside and the daily quote in the ribbon at the bottom of the page.

MCA - Best Front Page **Maries County Advocate Staff**

2nd Place **Tribune and Times**
Nice mix of stories and smart use of the left rail to help readers with daily picks from the community calendar,

Tribune and Times **Tribune and Times Staff**

3rd Place **Maryville Forum**
Really pack a lot onto this page without looking too crowded.

3 - Best Front Page **Maryville Forum Staff**

03.) BEST FRONT PAGE | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Warren County Record**
Clean design with smart, eye-catching centerpieces with helpful at-a-glance information included with one. Loved the use of QR code to get readers to your online content.

Best Front Page **Tim Schmidt**

2nd Place **Ozark County Times**
Clean design. Not afraid to give the centerpieces space.

Ozark County Times, best front **Ozark County Staff**

3rd Place **Springfield Business Journal**

SBJ Front Page **Springfield Business Journal Staff**

03.) BEST FRONT PAGE | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **St. Louis American**
This feels like a paper that knows its community well. Great design and mix of news and features.

Best Front Page **Mike Terhaar**

2nd Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times**

Best Front Page **Kevin Murphy**

3rd Place Washington Missourian

Washington Missourian Front Page Washington Missourian Staff

03.) BEST FRONT PAGE | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place Columbia Missourian
Really beautiful covers with big, bold centerpieces and good mix of local and national news.

Missourian 03 Front Page

Columbia Missourian Staff

2nd Place Dexter Statesman
So much to read here! A good mix of news and features with lots of entry points.

Dexter Statesman

Donna Farley

3rd Place Daily American Republic | Poplar Bluff
Really love the local feel of this paper, from reaction to the total eclipse and opening of a play at the local theater to a look at Butler County's failing audit. "Dash to the Past" adds to the sense of place.

Daily American Republic

Donna Farley

03.) BEST FRONT PAGE | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place News Tribune
A good looking page with a clean design. Nice mix of news and features. The water cooler story is a great, steal-worthy idea. Gives readers a fun tidbit every day to share.

Best Front Page

News Tribune Staff

2nd Place Southeast Missourian
A lot packed in here. The looks is reminiscent of a good web page. Smart to have a regular icon sending readers to your web page and love the weather dog!

July 26; Sept. 11; Dec. 20

Southeast Missourian Staff

3rd Place Springfield News-Leader
Nice local mix. Even when a national story makes the page, it's localized.

Springfield News-Leader - Best

Springfield News-Leader Staff

04.) BEST EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGES | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place Washington Missourian
Really appreciate the very local feel and the variety of topics covered. This is a good example of wielding your opinion page responsibly but effectively.

Washington Missourian Editorial

Washington Missourian Staff

2nd Place Jefferson County Leader

Best Editorial and Opinion Pages

Steve Taylor and Kimberly Mathis

3rd Place St. Louis American

Best Editorial and Opinion Pages

St. Louis American Staff

04.) BEST EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGES | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place The Kansas City Star
Excellent and informative editorials on a variety of important subjects, combined with local voices from the community make these editorial pages must-reads for the community.

Kansas City Star Editorial Pages

Kansas City Star Staff

2nd Place Southeast Missourian
This has everything a reader could want: A well-thought-out editorial about an important topic - gun violence and schools, coupled with a first-person account of the shooting in a column from the mayor. The page also features another insightful opinion piece, and a letter to the editor. Nice job!

Opinion: May 21, July 16, Dec. 28

Southeast Missourian Staff

3rd Place **News Tribune**
The editorial and the letters provide a good mix of local voices.

Best Opinion Pages

News Tribune Staff

04.) BEST EDITORIAL AND OPINION PAGES | Classes 1 & 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Howell County News**
Publisher Amanda Mendez stands tall against threatening elements warping public debate in Willow Springs, doing so with courage and resolve.

Speaking Personally

Howell County News Staff

2nd Place **Maryville Forum**
An insightful and relatable editorial standing up for public access to traffic accident records stands out. The Forum Editorials anchor a crisp, informative opinion page.

4 - Best Editorial Pages

Maryville Forum Staff

3rd Place **Odessan**
Succinct editorials speaking to the community good atop the opinion page reflect The Odessan's sense of local leadership. Well-branded and regular columns, including "I have a question" are the icing on the cake.

The Odessan

Odessan Staff

05.) BEST SPORTS PAGES | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **St. Louis American**

Best Sports Pages

Mike Terhaar

2nd Place **Washington Missourian**

Washington Missourian Sports

Bill Battle and Arron Husted

05.) BEST SPORTS PAGES | Classes 1 & 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Cassville Democrat**

CassDem Sports Pages

Kyle Troutman

2nd Place **Wright County Journal**

Best Sports Pages WCJ

Ron Schott

3rd Place **Maryville Forum**

5 - Forum Best Sports Pages

Jon Dykstra

05.) BEST SPORTS PAGES | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Columbia Missourian**
Vibrant tapestry of national, state & local sports captures the essence & each facet of competition. Stunning photo captures & stats formats make pages visually & aesthetically pleasing.

Missourian 05 Sports Pages

Columbia Missourian Staff

2nd Place **Southeast Missourian**
Stunningly captured action shots, coupled with a variety of sports = Excellence. Layouts of headlines, jump pages & dropheads also visually interesting.

Sports pages: May 16, Aug. 3, Oct.

Southeast Missourian Staff

3rd Place **News Tribune**
Successful variety of national, state & local coverage with excellent images. Layout pages with subheads provide both an easy-to-read format & visual interest.

News Tribune sports

News Tribune Staff

06.) BEST PAGE DESIGN | Class 1

1st Place **Maryville Forum**
Nice clean layout, easy for reader to follow, balanced

2nd Place **Maryville Forum**
Creative layout that easily brings the readers the visual support for the article content.

3rd Place **Cassville Democrat**
Strong and varied focus and size of photos as well as layout of text creates nice package.

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

6 - Election Coverage **Skye Pournazari**

6 - Maryville's Own **Jon Dykstra**

CassDem Page Design 1 **Kyle Troutman**

06.) BEST PAGE DESIGN | Class 2

1st Place **Springfield Business Journal**
Reader drawn into the story with a creatively created page which quickly communicates highlights and significant aspects of the story.

2nd Place **Springfield Business Journal**
Photos, typography, fold into a design which informs and draws in the reader.

3rd Place **Springfield Business Journal**
From first glance at the page it is clear what the reader will explore in the story.

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

Accommodating All **Heather Mosley**

Crafting Fear **Rebecca Green**

Mind on Money **Rebecca Green**

06.) BEST PAGE DESIGN | Class 3

1st Place **St. Louis American**

2nd Place **Washington Missourian**

3rd Place **Jefferson County Leader**

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

Best Page Design **Melvin Moore**

Trails Across Missouri **Lori Obermark and Dan Claxton**

Best Page Design - Recipe Guide **Lindsay Recar**

06.) BEST PAGE DESIGN | Classes 4 & 5

1st Place **News Tribune**
This page exemplifies classic newspaper design at its finest, featuring a bold, central photo that powerfully captures the subject matter, with two smaller supplemental images for added context. The stylized feature headline helps draw the reader in, while the secondary story at the bottom is cleanly presented with a pull quote, small photo, and column logo that add visual interest and clarity.

2nd Place **Columbia Missourian**
Now this is the way to cover a Super Bowl win by the home town team. From the full page section front photo of Kansas City teammates celebrating to three inside pages packed with large action photos and stories, readers were treated to a next-day "re-run" of the big game. The layouts capture the drama and excitement and encourage readers to linger.

3rd Place **Columbia Missourian**
With six compelling photos illustrating the feature story, the designer made the most of the space available in a luxurious double-truck layout. Combined with a pull quote and great use of white space, the well-cropped photos really draw the reader in.

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

Nov. 27 Flavor Pages **Gary Castor**

February 13 2024 **Columbia Missourian Staff**

August 8 2024 **Columbia Missourian Staff**

07.) BEST BREAKING NEWS STORY | Class 1**1st Place** Maryville Forum
well done with good photos**2nd Place** Tribune and Times
scary story**3rd Place** Courier-Tribune
grisly details but dog stuff is compelling.*Title of Entry, If Applicable***7 - Anhydrous Crash****Surgery saves HHS senior's leg****Couple killed 8-29-24***Award Winner(s), If Applicable***Geoffrey Woehlk and Skye Pournazari****Jimmy Gillispie****Amanda Lubinski****07.) BEST BREAKING NEWS STORY | Class 2****1st Place** Springfield Business Journal
Complicated story explained quickly.**2nd Place** Springfield Business Journal
Man who arranges vegetables into male genitalia gets promoted to a possible half million dollar yearly salary**3rd Place** Houston Herald
Good topic*Title of Entry, If Applicable***Mercy reaches pediatric agreement, Geoff Pickle****MSU board votes unanimously to** Karen Craig and Geoff Pickle**Best Breaking News - Historic****Isaiah Buse****07.) BEST BREAKING NEWS STORY | Class 3****1st Place** Webster-Kirkwood Times**2nd Place** Washington Missourian**3rd Place** Jefferson County Leader*Title of Entry, If Applicable***Spencer's Grill: Employees Left In****St. Clair student killed****"Tragedy"***Award Winner(s), If Applicable***Melissa Wilkinson****Christopher Parker****Tony Krausz****07.) BEST BREAKING NEWS STORY | Class 4****1st Place** Missouri Independent**1st Place** Missouri Independent**2nd Place** Columbia Missourian*Title of Entry, If Applicable***Missouri Senate GOP warfare****Missouri Senate GOP warfare****Yearwood Leaving CPS***Award Winner(s), If Applicable***Rudi Keller****Rudi Keller****Yasmeen Saadi**

3rd Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times**
A great job at recognizing and illustrating a trend using multiple sources, clear writing and careful use of facts.

A Changing Workplace Culture **Brandi Schubert**

08.) BEST NEWS STORY | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Missouri Independent**
An angering story, but quite well-written and revelatory. The reporting here was thorough and the delivery was nuanced.

Missouri cannabis leader accused of **Rebecca Rivas**

2nd Place **The Kansas City Beacon**

Why rural Missouri schools and **Meg Cunningham**

3rd Place **Columbia Missourian**

Rainbow House **Annie Goldman and Anna Spidel**

08.) BEST NEWS STORY | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **The Kansas City Star**
In addition to being a wonderful example of accountability journalism, this entry stood out for its clear, compelling writing.

String of child deaths, public in the **Laura Bauer**

2nd Place **Southeast Missourian**
Excellent, excellent entry displaying why inquisitive, tenacious journalists are so valuable to our communities.

Show Me Center board inactive **Bob Miller**

3rd Place **Springfield News-Leader**
Great example of a local newspaper covering a contentious public issue in a way that advances everyone's understanding.

Turnover on Christian County **Marta Mize**

09.) BEST FEATURE STORY | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Maryville Forum**
This one stood out from all the entries of which there were several very good ones. This is quality writing and great artwork to support it. A very high quality piece of work, one that you want to read a second time,

9 - Sharpshooter **Geoffrey Woehlk**

2nd Place **Tribune and Times**
What impressed me, along with very high quality writing, was the fact someone got a very nomadic person to pause and tell their story. The reader can picture the wagon moving down the highway pulled by a mule. Not something you witness every day.

Traveler shares story of living a **Dennis Minich**

Very good effort

3rd Place **Marion County Advocate**
A gripping story of something that could have ended up much worse. Thankfully the firefighters survived to tell their story. This was a very good account of what happened that day and the story was worth the read. A very strong effort and well done

Vienna Firefighters Reflect **Colin Willard**

09.) BEST FEATURE STORY | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Springfield Business Journal**
What a story about an incredible person. The way the story was told points out what an impact this person made on so many lives. It tells a story of a true leader and tells it well. Nice work

From Success to Significance **Christine Temple**

2nd Place **Springfield Business Journal**
This is more than just a story. It is a look at life and the way it should be lived. Enjoyed every word and also loved how the story was told. Nice piece of writing

Tradition in Store **Karen Craigo**

3rd Place Actually 7.5	Maryville Forum	10 - Scam Series	Skye Pournazari
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At least a 12-part series on various types of scams and how to avoid being fooled by them. The series got a little tedious and, clearly, the best stuff was used earlier in the series. What made it work was talking about specific

10.) BEST NEWS OR FEATURE SERIES | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place An interesting and fun read. The articles were informative, descriptive, and educational. The writer did an excellent job of blending historical history with contemporary milestones. The Harlin family has a rich history in the community.	Ozark County Times	Century Bank and Harlin family	Sue Ann Jones
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2nd Place This series holds a lot of important information. It provides details in both an informative and concise way that surely benefited the community. You can tell they put a lot of work into it.	Springfield Business Journal	Economic Growth Series	Springfield Business Journal Staff
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3rd Place A collection of compelling features that highlighted uniquely talented artists.	Springfield Business Journal	Business of the Arts	Karen Craigo
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10.) BEST NEWS OR FEATURE SERIES | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Thorough and thoughtful throughout, the writer helps us feel the real stakes presented. The series doesn't pain to create a happy or definitive ending, and leaves us with much left to consider at its conclusion.	Webster-Kirkwood Times	Opposition Rises To KVC Mental	Brandi Schubert
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2nd Place Thoughtful consideration is given to community voices. Asserts the power of public input toward policy.	Arnold-Imperial Leader	Arnold Parkway series	Tony Krausz
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3rd Place Compelling coverage of election topics relies on the writer's presentation, as shown here. The people and the election cycle were portrayed with outstanding clarity.	Washington Missourian	Union Alderman Race	Geoff Folsom
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10.) BEST NEWS OR FEATURE SERIES | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place This quartet of stories about the most accident-prone streets in Kansas City is the hands-down winner. It's opening story does a great job setting up the series and individual stories are shorter/more digestible than those in other entries.	The Kansas City Beacon	Half of KC's traffic deaths in the last	Josh Merchant
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2nd Place Actually 7.5	Missouri Independent	Questions about the conviction of	Clara Bates
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A two-part series on how a local police officer might be treating black suspects inappropriately. The first story was a little long, but this was a decent read.

3rd Place Actually 7.5	Missouri Independent	Predatory contracts in social-equity	Rebecca Rivas
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A series of stories that dive into predatory practices in obtaining limited-issue cannabis business contracts. Stories are full of details and are long, sometimes tedious.

10.) BEST NEWS OR FEATURE SERIES | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place This is a series about a horrific private boarding school, now closed, that for years apparently abused children who attended there. The saddest part of the story may be that the school operated for years without attention.	The Kansas City Star	Boarding school hell	Laura Bauer and Judy Thomas
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2nd Place A series about the charismatic leader of a local religious ministry sexually abusing some who attended there and also being accused of chicanery in some of his prophesizing. Long stories; a lot of work.	The Kansas City Star	IHOP sex scandal	Judy Thomas
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3rd Place News Tribune St. Elizabeth softball Greg Jackson

12.) BEST SPORTS FEATURE STORY | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Cassville Democrat **Thanks For Fridays** Kyle Troutman
This was hands-down the most enterprising and most interesting entry of this very tough, tight category. Nice details, well researched -- an unconventional take on a sports story.

2nd Place Fulton Sun **Grrridiron flag football camp stops** Lilly Goss
Overall great work. I always look for the "why?" of a feature story, and this one does a very good job of answering that question.

3rd Place Fulton Sun **Former Cardinals player recalls** Emily O'Leary
Nice reflective piece that carries wide audience appeal. Great details, too.

12.) BEST SPORTS FEATURE STORY | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Wright County Journal **Jacob Wade 040324 WCJ** Sam MacPherson
This was an interesting story that captured my attention in the first sentence. Well done.

2nd Place Sedalia Democrat **Gauge Young fighting his way** Jack Denebeim
Definitely a change of pace from the typical features of athletes seen on a sports page. Kudos to the author for branching out and highlighting this athlete.

3rd Place Warrensburg Star-Journal **Zebrowski repeats as Harlon Hill** Joe Andrews
Strong story about an outstanding local athlete. The design of the page helped with the entire package.

12.) BEST SPORTS FEATURE STORY | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Washington Missourian **Dakota Burns** Dan Claxton
Whether you care about professional billiards or not, this unique feature draws the reader in like an 8 ball in the corner pocket.

2nd Place Webster-Kirkwood Times **St. Louis Slam: A Sisterhood** Miki McKee Koelsch
The reporter scores a touchdown with this action-packed feature on a leading full-tackle women's professional football team.

3rd Place Jefferson County Leader **"Official crisis"** Russell Korando
While everyone is watching the players and coaches, this sharp-eyed reporter casts a rare light on this important issue involving the refs that impacts the entire game.

12.) BEST SPORTS FEATURE STORY | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place The Kansas City Star **Trey Smith feature** Sam McDowell
It's not easy to get people to talk about themselves let alone talk about their medical condition, but this writer makes it look easy with style and grace.

2nd Place The Kansas City Star **Arrowhead lights feature** Jesse Newell
I love that the writer saw this and found a way to share the story in an accessible narrative for readers.

3rd Place **Southeast Missourian**
There was no 'backtracking' on my opinion of how good this editorial is.

Beware of false messages

Southeast Missourian Staff

14.) BEST HUMOROUS COLUMNIST | Classes 1 & 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Houston Herald**
These were so much fun to read! In a category fit to judge based on how many smiles the writing brings on, this writer stands out. My face hurts a little now.

Off the Cuff

Doug Davison

2nd Place **Tribune and Times**
Relatable and irreverent stories that made me smile. The writer reveals a bit of vulnerability even in humor, which makes these pieces stand out.

Dennis Minich humorous columns

Dennis Minich

3rd Place **Morgan County Statesman**
Lighthearted takes on everyday situations. I enjoyed these very much.

Nickels and Sense

Bryan E. Jones

14.) BEST HUMOROUS COLUMNIST | Classes 3 & 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Jefferson County Leader**
Not only are these funny, they're completely relatable for a wide audience. The chuckles sprinkled throughout the writing are like sprinkles in on a really good sundae. The artwork that goes with the column adds the cherry on top.

Best Humorous Columnist

Peggy Bess

2nd Place **Independence Examiner**
Great storytelling on everyday live with humor in just the right places. I'd be a regular reader.

The unpleasant surprises that lurk

Jeff Fox

3rd Place **Jefferson County Leader**
Love the trivia

Trivia Two Ways - Kevin Carbery

Kevin Carbery

15.) BEST SERIOUS COLUMNIST | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Cassville Democrat**
This entry isn't just "serious" column writing -- it is "courageous" column writing, too. The writing is clear, compelling, and from-the-heart. This is the best entry from this very solid and competitive category.

TroutMom Says Serious Columnist

Jordan Troutman

2nd Place **Cassville Democrat**
This writer admits to being part of a generation that I myself consider "still young," but his words are coming from a place of wisdom, common sense, and authenticity. Bold statements are well-reasoned. Excellent work.

CassDem K Troutman Serious

Kyle Troutman

3rd Place **Tribune and Times**
The column reflecting on a 50-year high school reunion won me over in the process of judging this category. This writer is sweet and thoughtful, sensitive and wise -- and it all comes through in the writing. Nicely done.

Dennis Minich serious columnist

Dennis Minich

15.) BEST SERIOUS COLUMNIST | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Morgan County Statesman**
I really connected with this entry. Thoughtful writing, emotional content, and a tone of reverence all make for a first-place finish for this writer.

Hometown Corner

Patrik Andrews-Ryan

2nd Place **Morgan County Statesman**
The column on graffiti is a standout here. The writing is strong all around. I appreciate the little details that make this writer's work enjoyable to read.

Nickels and Sense

Bryan E. Jones

3rd Place **News Tribune** **Best Sports Columnist** **Tom Rackers**
 Tom Rackers provides well-paced, community-rooted sports commentary with a strong sense of place. His tone is approachable, and his columns deliver reliable context and clarity on both state and local sports issues.

16.) BEST SPORTS COLUMNIST | Classes 1 & 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Houston Herald** **Off the Cuff** **Doug Davison**
 Doug Davison's columns are a model of community sports journalism — personal, insightful, and rooted in years of observation. His storytelling is consistently strong, with a clear voice and confident pacing across all three pieces.

2nd Place **Gasconade County Republican** **'WILL'FUL THINKING** **WILL JOHNSON**
 Will Johnson brings a genuine love for local athletics to his column writing. His style is celebratory, energetic, and full of heart — particularly when he links personal stories with broader community pride.

3rd Place **Tribune and Times** **Jimmy Gillispie columns** **Jimmy Gillispie**
 Jimmy Gillispie brings useful perspective and topical relevance to his sports columns. His writing is focused and opinionated in the best way — informative without losing the reader in stats or recaps.

17.) BEST NEWS PHOTOGRAPH | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Maryville Forum** **17 - Pickering Fire** **Skye Pournazari**
 This is an eye-catching photo. It's beautiful and eerie at the same time. The silhouette of the tree and fireman pop and against the orange-pink hazy from the fire. Excellent.

2nd Place **Tribune and Times** **Enjoying solar event** **Jimmy Gillispie**
 This is a fun photo. There's definite rhythm and flow to this. It's balanced and the students against the background really pop. Good job.

3rd Place **Cassville Democrat** **10-16-24, Rodeo** **Kyle Troutman**
 Good capture. I can only imagine what's going through the animal's mind. :) Balanced. Wish we could see the cowboy's face, but I shoot enough rodeo pics to know it's not always possible. This photo tells a story and it's a good one.

17.) BEST NEWS PHOTOGRAPH | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Gasconade County Republican** **Pry Open Door** **Dave Marner**
 Stunning photo--very clear with firefighter centered. Great job.

2nd Place **Wright County Journal** **Solar Eclipse dominant image 04-10** **Ron Schott**
 Wow! Great shot capturing the eclipse.

3rd Place **Ste. Genevieve Herald** **Best News Photo Spill 1-31-24** **Michael Boyd Jr.**
 Captured shot with great clarity.

17.) BEST NEWS PHOTOGRAPH | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Washington Missourian** **Red, white and belated blue** **Wanda Parsons**
 The brilliance of the photo is that it not only shows a young man enjoying the event, but also the red, white and blue that show the focus of the event. The clarity is excellent and the photo is framed very well. Top notch work.

2nd Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times** **Voters Return Trump To Oval Office** **Ursula Ruhl**
 It is easy to take a boring shot of political signs or voters waiting, but this photo tells the entire story - politics, waiting and weather. Terrific job.

3rd Place **Springfield Business Journal**
Brings the atmosphere of the performance to the readers. Very nice composition.

McClurg Jam, 6-17-24

Heather Mosley

18.) BEST FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times**
Great energy, great subject and composition in this shot.

Back To School

Ursula Ruhl

2nd Place **Washington Missourian**
Great composition, great moment, great energy.

School's out for summer! 05-25-24 **Eileen Wisniowicz**

3rd Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times**
Great eye to catch this moment and frame it as it happened!

A Holiday Walk In Kirkwood

Ursula Ruhl

18.) BEST FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Columbia Missourian**
Wow — this lighting is unbeatable. Great composition, great moment.

Surendra firework

Kyle Maki

2nd Place **Columbia Missourian**
Excellent moment of pure emotion, and great framing of the shot.

MU Match Day 3-17-24

Catie Cobble

3rd Place **Columbia Missourian**
Phenomenal shot, great planning to capture those early-morning drivers.

Tire marks 1-10-24

Austin Johnson

18.) BEST FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **News Tribune**
Wonderful little moment, great composition, vibrant colors — truly a memorable photo.

Earth Day

Julie Smith

2nd Place **The Kansas City Star**
What a shot! The lighting, the composition — this fits the energy of the event in every way.

RAT BRAT 102524

DOMINICK WILLIAMS

3rd Place **The Kansas City Star**
This is a photo that makes the viewer stop for a minute. Phenomenal composition, and a moment of emotion.

MEMORIAL DAY 052324

Tammy Ljungblad

19.) BEST SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Shelby County Herald**
What a catch. What a shot!

Miracle Catch

Marlana Smith

2nd Place **Maries County Advocate**
The photographer caught a moment here that told a dramatic story. You feel for both athletes.

Photo finish-5.15.24

Jacob Warden

3rd Place **Maries County Advocate**
A nicely composed action shot, and a nice block.

Block Ball-11.27.24

Will Johnson

19.) BEST SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Houston Herald**
This photo shows the action of the game so well. The photo is clear, precise and timed just right. The expression of the catcher and full extension of the runner are impeccable. Excellent job.

Out at the plate

Doug Davison

2nd Place **Odessan**
Incredibly good action shot! The expressions and positions of the wrestlers is very good. Standout work all the way around.

Emily Bischoff 2-29-24

Kory Hales

3rd Place **Gasconade County Republican**
Excellent job catching an unusual moment in sports. Great work!

Big Hit_ 12-18-24

Will Johnson

19.) BEST SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **The Kansas City Star**
Great shot of three players ensnarled in the play. The stop action photo shows the speed and violence of the play.

CHIEFS RAVENS TACKLE

Emily Curiel

2nd Place **Springfield News-Leader**
Great timing of the shot, showing the ball just inside the pylon with runner in flight.

Hunter Wood dives

Nathan Papes

3rd Place **News Tribune**
Love the expression on the runners face!

Out At Home

Garrett Bradley

19.) BEST SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH | Classes 3 & 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Washington Missourian**
With a sharp, clear image, this hard-to-capture photo goes beyond the action to display the player-of-the-year's basketball prowess. Great shot!

Ober the Bar

Arron Hustead

2nd Place **Jefferson County Leader**
This dramatic photo captures both the action in the game and the broader picture of the game conditions — playing football in snow. Makes me feel like I am there.

Best Sports Photograph

Ron Rigdon

3rd Place **Columbia Missourian**
Great depth of field. It's easy to see the concentration of the gymnast as she reaches for the bar while also getting a feel for the crowd in the background. A crisp photo with good lighting.

Mara Tiratsolej 3-5-24

Vanina Dimitrova

20.) BEST SPORTS FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Cassville Democrat**
This is a well-framed shot and the cropping and presentation in paper made it better. Nicely done.

Faith of a Champion

Kyle Troutman

2nd Place **Tribune and Times**
The story behind this photo makes it all the more powerful. Kudos to photographer to catch what I'm guessing was a fleeting moment in a long race.

Not falling for that

Jimmy Gillispie

3rd Place **Jefferson County Leader**
Clean cut-outs, great placement of elements. Really shows a well-rounded team.

"Congrats, state wrestling champs!" Lindsay Recar

21.) BEST PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | Classes 1 & 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Wright County Journal**
The photo illustration uses classic school imagery, a chalkboard, to share scores in an easy-to-digest format for readers

APR Scores

Ron Schott

2nd Place **Wright County Journal**
The photo illustration gives a visual representation to the heart of the article.

Republican Divide

Ron Schott

21.) BEST PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Southeast Missourian**
The illustration gives readers a clever, clear portrait of the eclipse phases.

Total eclipse phases

Nathan Gladden

2nd Place **Daily American Republic | Poplar Bluff**
This illustration helps readers see historical transition of a key municipal building.

Built to last Butler County

Donna Farley and Jonathon Dawe

22.) BEST PHOTO PACKAGE | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Maryville Forum**
These photos (especially being the first time in the ring) are amazing, no bull! Kudos on the great shots!

Bring in the Bulls

Skye Pournazari

2nd Place **Cassville Democrat**
Here fishy, fishy. This really captures the vibe of opening day along a river!

Come For The Fish

Kyle Troutman

3rd Place **Cassville Democrat**
I'm not sure what I enjoyed more... the layout and photos, or the looks on the cows faces!

Rodeo Rides

Kyle Troutman

22.) BEST PHOTO PACKAGE | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Gasconade County Republican**
The balance and framing of the photos selected are top notch. Composition of the photos lend themselves to telling the story of volunteerism within the fire department and those who serve.

Volunteering

Dave Marner

2nd Place **Gasconade County Republican**
A truly great photo selection that was well balanced and truly representative of the occasion. The central photo is powerful and well supported by the additional selections.

Memorial

Dave Marner

3rd Place **Houston Herald**
Diverse selection with interesting subjects, the photos are well thought out and pose a great narrative of a fun family event. Color balance and framing are also very strong and show technical prowess.

The Texas County Fair

Doug Davison and Jeff McNiell

22.) BEST PHOTO PACKAGE | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times**
Beautiful photos well-presented on a nicely designed page. Great job.

Webster Groves Community Days

Ursula Ruhl

2nd Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times**
Great shots of the all-abilities flag football event. The reader can't help but smile at joy on the kids' faces.

Unified Night Lights **Ursula Ruhl**

3rd Place **Washington Missourian**
Wonderful action shots of the tournament baseball game. Found myself wishing there was some description of who Ott Jasper and Larry Maune are, but obviously your local readers would know. Nice job by the photographers.

Mid-South Memories **Bill Battle and Arron Husted**

22.) BEST PHOTO PACKAGE | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **The Kansas City Star**
Amazing photos capturing every aspect of the game, from the plays to the fans to the celebration, with extraordinarily high technical quality and great composition and, of course, there are 39 of them. These are in a league of their own.

CHIEFS RAVENS AFC **Tammy Ljungblad, Emily Curiel and Nick Wagner**

2nd Place **Columbia Missourian**
Fantastic photos that capture so much about the event. They say "It's all about faces," and here they are, in stark portrayal, along with so much else. You can feel the exhaustion as if it's your own. Great work!

Whirlwind of Emotions **Jamie Maron and Bailey Stover**

3rd Place **The Kansas City Star**
Lovely photos that tell a story, well-written captions and a beautiful layout that fits the subject combine for a compelling package. While the top two spots went to online galleries, this entry shows print can still win with its limited space and number of photos.

NUTCRACKER **Tammy Ljungblad**

23.) COMMUNITY SERVICE | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Edina Sentinel**
Getting the community to help each other out is what newspapers are for. Weather spotter training is crucial and a great way to help the area at large.

Weather Spotter Training **Echo Menges**

2nd Place **Cassville Democrat**
Advertisers knowing that not only are they getting their businesses out there but also giving back to the community? Win win. A great idea and execution, showing where the funds that were collected go!

Back 2 You **Cassville Democrat Staff**

3rd Place **Edina Sentinel**
A trifecta of collaboration for important election information. Great job!

Knox County Candidate Forum **Echo Menges**

23.) COMMUNITY SERVICE | Classes 2 & 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **St. Louis American**
An amazing range of coverage on social platforms, in print and online. This really highlights the best of the community and gives back in a way that showcases younger people and gives back through scholarships and grants. Awesome work.

Community Service **St. Louis American Staff**

2nd Place **Jefferson County Leader**
A fantastic way to get local recipes and raise funds for students to excel. This is one section you can sink your teeth into for supporting the community.

Leader Holiday Dinner **Leader staff**

3rd Place **Houston Herald**
Leading the way in encouraging more people access to information. Excellent work.

Community Service - Texas Country **Houton Herald Staff**

23.) COMMUNITY SERVICE | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Columbia Missourian**
An amazing effort to really bring the community together. This isn't just feel-good holiday effort once a year, this is truly trying to show how just because someone is homeless, doesn't mean they don't have things to offer to the community. I'll be bookmarking this section and checking on it in the future!

CoMo Street Gazette **Columbia Missourian Staff**

2nd Place **Springfield News-Leader**
This isn't just helping the community, this is taking the lead and being the change you want to see. Great job.

Share Your Christmas 2024 **Hope Davis**

3rd Place **The Kansas City Star**
A picture is worth 1,000 words. This staff gave readers who needed it ten-fold in memories.

Holiday Portraits **Kansas City Star Staff**

24.) BEST NEWSPAPER IN EDUCATION PROJECT | Classes 2 & 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Eldon | The Advertiser**
Hugely impressive and important.
A civics day which includes politicians, law enforcement, , businessmen, student council led town hall and a press corps of fifth graders covering it all.

Democracy Day **Tammy Witherspoon**

2nd Place **St. Louis American**
Magnificent. And also looks to be well supported financially.

Newspaper In Education **Cathy Sewell**

3rd Place **Eldon | The Advertiser**
Kids from 6 schools Interview Veterans

Veterans Project **Tammy Witherspoon**

25.) BEST SPECIAL SECTION, MAGAZINE OR ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATION | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Courier-Tribune**
A clean, eye-catching read that gives readers exactly what they need while emphasizing the abundance of fun to be had.

Explore_Liberty_CourierTribune **Courier- Tribune Staff**

2nd Place **Cassville Democrat**
I am not a fisherman, but reading this thorough special section hyping the sport made me want to start.

Trout Times 2024 **Kyle Troutman and Sheila Harris**

3rd Place **Cassville Democrat**
This historical narrative was clearly a labor of love for this publication, and it sounds like the readers love it too since the magazine has become an annual tradition.

Through the Years Magazine **Jordan Troutman and Sheila Harris**

25.) BEST SPECIAL SECTION, MAGAZINE OR ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATION | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Houston Herald**
Extremely comprehensive, very well laid-out guide that tells the reader everything they need to know about the City of Houston. Well done.

Best special section, magazine **Houston Herald Staff**

2nd Place **Ozark County Times**
Wonderful guide to the Ozarks. Great use of photos. Comprehensive roundup of things to do.

The Real Ozarks magazine **Ozark County Times Staff**

3rd Place **Sedalia Democrat**

A very ambitious project, handled beautifully. Nice work.

Veterans Day **Democrat Staff and Star-Journal Staff**

25.) BEST SPECIAL SECTION, MAGAZINE OR ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATION | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Washington Missourian**
Touching tribute to a beloved coach. Well done.

Dale Gildehaus Thanks for the **Washington Missourian Staff**

2nd Place **Kansas City Northeast News**
Great idea from your talented intern. Engaging and well-designed.

Northeast Narratives

EllieAna Hale, Lillian Gibbs and Michael Bushnell

3rd Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times**
Fun book of recipes. Great collection.

2024 (Times) Gift & Recipe Guide

Webster-Kirkwood Times Staff

25.) BEST SPECIAL SECTION, MAGAZINE OR ALTERNATIVE PUBLICATION | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Southeast Missourian**
What a great concept and so well executed. Excellent work!

Flourish, Fall 2024

Southeast Missourian Staff

2nd Place **Southeast Missourian**
Beautiful, graceful design. Great use of white space!

The Best Years, September 2024

Southeast Missourian Staff

3rd Place **Columbia Missourian**
Clean layout allows the ads and content to really pop. Interesting articles, great design.

Missouri Tourism

Columbia Missourian Staff

26.) BEST INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Cassville Democrat**
Excellent sustained in-depth and probing coverage of a key issue with environmental, health, economic and political angles. Loved the headlines. Some people think small-town papers can't do investigative work. Your work is proof that they are wrong. The clear winner.

Sludge

Sheila Harris

2nd Place **Maryville Forum**
A creative approach to a series, with great sourcing from law enforcement and people affected by scams. Good public-service element as well.

26 - Scam Series

Skye Pournazari

3rd Place **Cassville Democrat**
Good article exploring a concerning issue. No indication that commentary can be included in this category, so judge's evaluation did not include that material. Not clear that this would have changed its placement though. Nice work.

Out of Sight

Sheila Harris

26.) BEST INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Odessan**
Good investigative work once the violation of the Sunshine Law was discovered. Holding public officials accountable is at the heart of what good journalism does. Well done.

Covert County Business

Melody Cook and Hannah Spaar

2nd Place **Howell County News**

Search is on; Firefighters hurt;

Amanda Mendez

3rd Place **Howell County News**

Bears drop; Parents circulate; WS

Amanda Mendez

26.) BEST INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable

Award Winner(s), If Applicable

1st Place **Arnold-Imperial Leader**
Incredibly detailed on both the plan and the backlash. Would this project have been scuttled without this level of attention being paid by a reporter to inform the public? Unlikely.

Investigative reporting - Arnold

Tony Krausz

2nd Place **Jefferson County Leader**
Good buildout beyond the accounts of the two former church members. No wonder the project dissolved after this reporting.

Cult in Festus? **Kim Robertson**

3rd Place **Washington Missourian**
Quite a yarn — well-told and dramatic.

Seeking justice in felony dumping **Christopher Parker**

26.) BEST INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Missouri Independent**
Solid piece, thorough, with an abundance of data that clearly walks reader through the story

Questions swirl around Kansas City **Allison Kite**

2nd Place **Missouri Independent**
Very strong piece, clear narrative and data. Flows well and balances facts over a long period of time

New evidence in the Kurtis Watkins **Clara Bates**

3rd Place **Missouri Independent**
A dense but well crafter piece, balancing voices and data. Layout is clear and concise.

Transgender rights under attack. **Annelise Hanshaw**

26.) BEST INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Southeast Missourian**
This is an excellent example of investigative journalism, using public records, internal documents, and body cam footage to expose patterns of police violence and a legal system that shields accountability. The reporting is persistent, courageous, and serves the public with clarity and depth.

Alleged excessive force incidents **Bob Miller**

2nd Place **News Tribune**
An excellent investigation into alleged open-meetings violations that questions the transparency of local governance. The piece is well-documented, timely, and highlights the importance of Sunshine Laws in protecting public trust.

Councilman files Sunshine **Stephi Smith**

3rd Place **News Tribune**
The reporting is clear, well-sourced, and rooted in public records and competitive bid analysis. Solid investigative journalism.

Capitol Avenue contracts far below **Stephi Smith**

27.) BEST NEWS OR FEATURE OBITUARY | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Jefferson County Leader**
great full coverage. i enjoyed the pics and her life story.

Life story - Pat Foster **Laura Marlow**

2nd Place **Jefferson County Leader**
nice full coverage of vernon's life story

Vernon Sullivan dies **Kim Robertson**

3rd Place **Washington Missourian**
aw, too young. i am a navy veteran, so this is especially meaningful to me. rest in peace, young isaac.

Isaac Lashley **Bill Miller Jr.**

27.) BEST NEWS OR FEATURE OBITUARY | Classes 1 & 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Maries County Advocate**
opens with great quote. amy instantly became a friend in my head, may she rest in peace.

A fighter succumbs with grace **Roxie Murphy**

2nd Place **Ozark County Times**
huge loss, so talented and too young

Local community gathers to **Jessi Dreckman**

3rd Place **Courier-Tribune**
he lived an inspirational life, well told

Liberty outdoor activist 9-5-24 **Kellie Houx**

27.) BEST NEWS OR FEATURE OBITUARY | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **The Kansas City Star**

Nun leaves lasting impact **Laura Bauer**

2nd Place **Southeast Missourian**

Remembering Paul Schnare: area's **J.C. Reeves**

3rd Place **Columbia Missourian**

Byron Smith **Olivia Mizelle**

28.) BEST BUSINESS STORY | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Fulton Sun**
This piece neatly features all that is local about the Smokin' Pickle, from the locally-grown cucumbers to the owners' local roots. Highlighting the handmade process behind the food truck's work gives readers something to think about the next time they give the food a try.

Smokin' Pickle celebrates two years **Emily O'Leary**

2nd Place **Cassville Democrat**
This is a fascinating story about a fascinating artist, as well as the work that he creates. Excellent, colorful pictures and the overview of Native American history further elevate this story.

Carved by Wood **Sheila Harris**

3rd Place **Fulton Sun**
Compelling writing and a focus on the restauraners' aims in their decision making turns this story into a compelling feature of an interesting new business.

Greenhouse Cafe aims to bring **Emily O'Leary**

28.) BEST BUSINESS STORY | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Springfield Business Journal**
This is a fascinating story about a unique business and tourism opportunity, with detailed information about the extent of the city's partnership with the Chiefs and about the impact that partnership may have.

Branson invests \$6M in Chiefs **Mike Cullinan**

2nd Place **Ozark County Times**
This is a lovely feature on a special local business owner, with engaging details about the work she does in running the bakery.

Oh, how sweet! **Jessi Dreckman**

3rd Place **Springfield Business Journal**
This is an interesting piece about the changing appearance of the business world, with enlightening interviews and an engaging leading graphic.

'Dress for your day' **Karen Craigo**

28.) BEST BUSINESS STORY | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Washington Missourian**
This was an interesting story that did a good job explaining a novel form of gambling. The reporter does a good job reaching out to municipalities as well as breaking down the legal status of these no-chance machines in the state Legislature.

Gaming Business **Christopher Parker**

2nd Place Odessan
 Documents show meetings on Hannah Spaar and Melody Cook
 This story stands out for its depth and investigative rigor. Through diligent use of Missouri Sunshine Law requests, the reporters expose a shadow process to rewrite foundational land-use rules with little transparency or oversight. The public impact is significant, and the reporting is solid. However, the dense structure and lack of a strong visual presentation may limit reader accessibility. A powerful entry that deserves recognition for substance and public service. The community should be proud!

3rd Place Warren County Record
 Options proposed on how to fix Jack Underwood
 This article succeeds in breaking down a complex local government dilemma—how to fund repairs to a privately owned but widely used road. The writing is clear and well-structured, with a practical, solutions-focused approach.

29.) BEST STORY ABOUT GOVERNMENT | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Jefferson County Leader
 "Deadly water" Abby Stetina
 A clear standout in this category, this story tackles a complex and life-threatening issue—recurring drownings and water rescues at Rockford Park—and provides strong accountability coverage of how the County Council is responding. The piece excels in both urgency and clarity, integrating compelling data, resident and official perspectives, and historical context. The writing is concise and powerful, and the presentation is strengthened by strong visuals. Excellent public service journalism that blends policy, public safety, and storytelling.

2nd Place Washington Missourian
 Annexation Plan Questioned Jonathan Riley
 This coverage effectively tracks a major local government decision from proposal to reversal, driven by public input. The reporting offers a clear breakdown of the annexation proposal, citizen concerns, and the political process that followed. It scores highly on significance and demonstrates the importance of civic engagement in municipal decisions. Writing is clean and informative, and the structure allows the story to unfold naturally. The photo layout and quotes enrich the narrative, making this a well-rounded and responsive example of democracy in action.

3rd Place Washington Missourian
 Leslie Audit Poor Rating Jonathan Riley
 The writing is precise and digestible, explaining complex audit findings with clarity. While it's heavy on detail, the significance is high: the audit reveals structural failures in oversight, budget reporting, and compliance with state law. The article could be strengthened by more visual support or human impact framing, but it delivers on impact.

29.) BEST STORY ABOUT GOVERNMENT | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Columbia Missourian
 Legislative Session Dmitry Martirosov
 Easy to understand, accessible to readers. Navigates a complex topic clearly and concisely.

2nd Place The Kansas City Beacon
 The Missouri legislature is cutting Meg Cunningham and Josh Merchant
 Well done piece with good formatting, easy to read. Factual, accessible, and concise.

3rd Place Columbia Missourian
 Police Co-responder Program Camryn Kesselring and Erica Little
 Strong, solid piece. Strong quotes. Very well done overall and has good flow.

29.) BEST STORY ABOUT GOVERNMENT | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Southeast Missourian
 Aftermath of Cape's graduation J.C. Reeves, Bob Miller and Nathan Gladden
 A very thorough accounting of a tragic event. This story dives into what went wrong, who's to blame and what steps are being taken to prevent gun violence in the future. This is an important piece of local journalism to explain how government, the university, the public school system and others can and should be held accountable for their lapses.

2nd Place Southeast Missourian
 Show Me Center board inactive J.C. Reeves, Nathan Gladden and Bob Miller
 This piece relies on strong reporting to shine a light on a clear dereliction of duty at the Show Me Center board. It explains how the university has seized control of the center's operations in the absence of the board meeting and performing its duties.

3rd Place Springfield News-Leader
 This woman found municipal bonds Marta Mize
 What a wonderfully written piece, and a compelling story overall. The story also offers a cautionary tale of bonds, seemingly thought of as a safe, dependable investment, and what could potentially happen after decades of byzantine utility mergers and inaction by several government entities.

30.) BEST ELECTION STORY | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Fulton Sun
 Callaway County assessor prepares Emily O'Leary
 This issue might seem like a yawner to many readers and voters, but you led with impact and that made all the difference. You showed that this ballot question has real financial consequences, not immediately, but certainly down the road. This is smart journalism and storytelling. And you did it by using local voices, not the newspaper soapbox. So much more effective when you have people who will be affected planning for the consequences of a vote. Just a great approach.

2nd Place **Courier-Tribune** **ON THE BALLOT reproductive 10-31** Amanda Lubinski
Great job exploring the implications of a complicated ballot measure ahead of the vote, including not shying away from the controversial involvement of a regional religious leader who seems to have been spreading misinformation. Excellent idea to post the full letters online with the URL appearing in your legacy print product. Informative, and probably gave a boost to your online audience as well.

3rd Place **Fulton Sun** **House District 49 candidates would** Emily O'Leary
Of all the articles comparing candidates that were submitted in this category and division, this one stood out. You organized it topically so that we could see where each candidate stood on particular parts of the issue. This approach engages and informs readers while maintaining a health balance between the candidates. Great work.

30.) BEST ELECTION STORY | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Springfield Business Journal** **When Values Collide** Karen Craigo
An unusual story on politics . . . In the workplace. Should workers be limited in expressing their political views? Excellent sourcing, writing. Though workforce employees weren't included, professional administrators and consultants were. Limiting political dialogue among employees may also conflict with First Amendment rights to free speech. This story offers a good upper level discussion on how the core issue!

2nd Place **Odessa** **Voting Guide City of Odessa** Hannah Spaar
Excellent "conversations" in these candidates- for-city-offices stories! Reporter goes beyond just a question-answer interview style to get candidates to describe their views and provide suggestions for favored projects. The candidates offer little criticism of opponents, focusing instead on what they favor for community progress/development. Good writing/reporting!

3rd Place **Unterrified Democrat** **Lang protests Republican** Elise Brochu
Well-written account of an elected committee representative being refused a seat on the committee because he wasn't vetted as a candidate by the partisan committee. Limited sourcing narrows the story.

30.) BEST ELECTION STORY | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times** **Kirkwoodians To Choose A New** Melissa Wilkinson
This story really gives readers a good sense of both candidates for Kirkwood mayor. It avoids a lot of the meaningless political platitudes that often dilute stories like this. It is a true service that readers got to know both candidates as people, as well as their political positions on key issues affecting the town.

2nd Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times** **Millions On The Line With Prop W** Brandi Schubert
A thorough overview of the water park proposal and the bonding issue. Readers likely appreciated the depth and fairness of the story. The article was able to calmly weigh and explain the pros and cons of the various options before voters and local officials.

3rd Place **Jefferson County Leader** **"Republicans prevail"** Kim Robertson and Abby Stetina
The reporting shone brightly in this election results story. It was clear the reporters were out canvassing local poll workers for interviews and then they dutifully recap the results of local races. Readers probably appreciated the clear data presentation of the election results in a large box at the bottom of an inside page.

30.) BEST ELECTION STORY | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Missouri Independent** **'Why are you so weird?': Lucas** Rudi Keller
Great use of a brief but memorable social-media-ready jousting match to shine a light on many of the deeper issues at play in the election.

2nd Place **Missouri Independent** **Kehoe campaign for Missouri** Rudi Keller
A story that just lays out this very strange arrangement and has fun letting the campaign attempt to explain it. (Left me wondering why the no-comment lobbyist owns a big bus.)

3rd Place **Columbia Missourian** **Progressive Policies** Dmitry Martirossov
Comprehensive with an excellent selection of sources: real folks, academics and party people.

30.) BEST ELECTION STORY | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **News Tribune** **Mid-Missouri GOP worried about** Genevieve Tlustos
This article does an excellent job in laying out the politics of its leading figures and the impact of redistricting on the primary election it covers. The people and the needs of Central Missouri are kept front and center throughout the article, with in-depth reporting illustrating the hopes and concerns for that area's representation.

2nd Place Missouri Independent **Flora Farms cannabis dispensary** **Rebecca Rivas**
This story is well-written and well-researched. The writing is top quality and the photos are excellent as well. Overall excellent work.

3rd Place Columbia Missourian **Farmers Innovate** **Jana Rose Schleis**
Again, just an well-written story with the exact photos needed to make it come to life. Great job all the way around.

31.) BEST STORY ABOUT RURAL LIFE OR AGRICULTURE | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Springfield News-Leader **Accountability in the Ozarks: How** **Marta Mieze**
Good illustration of how perseverance by locals can pay valuable dividends in holding public officials in check. Kudos for following the actions of the citizens seeking change and accountability, and to the paper for its coverage.

2nd Place News Tribune **Report spotlights issues facing rural** **Anna Campbell**
This story does a nice job of pointing out the education challenges in rural areas, but also the benefits of rural school systems.

3rd Place News Tribune **Study offers rural asthma patients a** **Sophie Carite**
Good report on the challenges or getting health care in rural areas.

32.) BEST STORY ABOUT RELIGION | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Maries County Advocate **Mission trip Ukraine** **Colin Willard**
This is a great story about an important topic. The article teases out so much of the cultural and religious experience of this Missouri-Ukraine connection through its coverage of this one trip—of particular note are Cook's observations on the changes in Ukrainian culture over ten years of conflict and his thoughts on how his cross-cultural experience has shaped his understanding of his world and of his faith. Kudos to the writer and to the editorial team for taking the time and the space to tell this story right.

2nd Place Maryville Forum **32 - Glass project** **Skye Pournazari**
This article describes a crucial project in wonderful detail, with a neatly laid-out history of the original church and the move and the renovations of the stained glass windows. Some really well-chosen quotes from church members about the significance of the imagery and some great photos round out an excellent entry.

3rd Place Cassville Democrat **Reason For Season** **Kyle Troutman**
This is a lovely piece about a really lovely collection! The writing flows nicely between descriptions and direct quotes, and the ending beat explaining Fugitt's reasoning for putting up the display ties the story together with a really nice message.

32.) BEST STORY ABOUT RELIGION | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Ozark County Times **Visions and miracles: While they** **Sue Ann Jones**
This is a jaw dropping story, a phenomenal example of the kind of story only local news is able to tell, with longstanding, consistent community ties that let the writer draw on almost twenty years of first-hand presence with the story. The twists and turns of the Hatchers' narrative are laid out in clear, compelling detail, with engaging writing and evident care for their lives, their successes and their struggles. Wonderful work.

2nd Place Springfield Business Journal **Latter-day Saints temple** **Karen Craigo**
This is excellent reporting that blends a thorough regard for the financial and the real estate angles of the news with an engaged attention to what the temple will mean for Springfield's Latter-day Saints community.

3rd Place Sedalia Democrat **Cornerstone Baptist reopens 1897** **Chris Howell**
This article tells the story of a church's reopening with clear, engaging reporting and a keen eye for the effect on the community of having the presence of ministry there once again.

32.) BEST STORY ABOUT RELIGION | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Jefferson County Leader **"Homecoming"** **Teresa Inerra**
This article pairs a nice preview of the church's celebration plans with a thoughtfully-written look into its history, with well-chosen details throughout that give the reader a good sense of the significance of the 200th anniversary to come.

2nd Place **Washington Missourian**
This article reports out the news of the lawsuit with clear, precise language and thorough research.

Archdiocese sued **Christopher Parker**

3rd Place **St. Louis American**
The article on Rep. Cleaver's address translated a powerful message from the pulpit to the page, using carefully chosen quotes to make a compelling point about religion and its intersection with the most crucial social issues of our times.

Best Story About Religion **Alvin A. Reid and Ashley Winters**

32.) BEST STORY ABOUT RELIGION | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Missouri Independent**

Anti-abortion groups say more **Anna Spoerre**

2nd Place **Missouri Independent**

Judge weighs whether Missouri- **Annelise Hansaw**

3rd Place **Columbia Missourian**
Nice story (and great photos, too).

Rev. Faye Vaughn **Briana Iordan**

32.) BEST STORY ABOUT RELIGION | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **The Kansas City Star**
This very solid story does what journalism should: asks questions, reveals details that are backed up by documented proof, and explores the implications of the problem at hand. Held my interest through compelling writing. Well done.

IHOP KC prophecy incorrect **Judy Thomas**

2nd Place **Joplin Globe**
Really nice story. The strong lede drew me in and set high expectations that the rest of the story lived up to.

Joined in fellowship, 08-14-24 **Roger Nomer**

3rd Place **The Kansas City Star**
Another standout piece in this category. It strikes a balance between hard news and sensitive feature writing. Well done.

IHOPKC church founder groomed **Judy Thomas**

33.) BEST STORY ABOUT EDUCATION | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Focus on Oak Grove**
Comprehensive and well-organized — presents the full scope of the long-term staffing problem and possible solutions.

Teacher turnover, shortage hits Oak **Ruth Ann Hafner**

2nd Place **Kahoka Media**
Solid portrait of a key meeting and the issue that brought the community there.

School Board Considers Closing **Mike Scott**

3rd Place **Cassville Democrat**
Very interesting, with some nice and rather spicy quotes from the administrator about debtors. I wanted to hear from some of the families in arrears — a follow!

Unpaid Lunch Balances **Kyle Troutman**

33.) BEST STORY ABOUT EDUCATION | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Springfield Business Journal**
A profile that goes deeper; nice writing in here, such as: "His directness is at home in the board room, but it can clank like a monkey wrench against the walls of the ivory tower."

Remanufacturing Education **Karen Craigo**

2nd Place **Springfield Business Journal**
Complete description of the program; nice selection of a lead quote.

Graduating to Work **Mike Cullinan**

3rd Place **Houston Herald**

Houston educator attends Dolly's **Isaiah Buse**

33.) BEST STORY ABOUT EDUCATION | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times**
This article helped readers form their own opinions about a complicated, controversial topic, giving voice to differing perspectives on an issue challenging school districts nationally.

Webster Groves Schools: Paent **Melissa Wilkinson**

2nd Place **Washington Missourian**
This article served readers well, thoroughly covering a complicated, controversial topic.

Tensions rise over school policies **Christopher Parker**

3rd Place **Webster-Kirkwood Times**
This article does a good job of helping readers see why such a program is important for the district to have.

Preschool Reopens At WG High **Melissa Wilkinson**

33.) BEST STORY ABOUT EDUCATION | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Missouri Independent**
Lots of work went into this story about the implementation -- or lack thereof -- of the law that requires Missouri schools to have athletes compete according to their sex as assigned at birth.

Missouri schools lack public **Annelise Hanshaw**

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2nd Place **The Kansas City Beacon**
A terrific look at the question of year round school -- big student gains at first then teacher burnout and attendance issues. Clear. Well written and sourced.

Year-round school is out at three **Maria Benevento**

3rd Place **The Kansas City Beacon**
Moving to 4 day school week attracts audit from state auditor looking to expand his purview and who said he wants to conduct more audits, including of sexuality, gender or "critical race theory"

Independence's four-day school **Maria Benevento**

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33.) BEST STORY ABOUT EDUCATION | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Springfield News-Leader**
School board member secretly supports effort to strike down tax levy in her own district.

Report: MO school board member **Claudette Riley**

2nd Place **News Tribune**
Local districts battle substitute teacher shortage

Those who can teach **Anna Campbell**

3rd Place **Southeast Missourian**
Important story well done. Reporter does a terrific job of taking the national statistics about teens' mental health and bringing it down to the local level and includes useful tips about how to help.

New report highlights mental **Bob Miller**

34.) BEST STORY ABOUT THE OUTDOORS | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Cassville Democrat**
The writing in this piece stood out as mature, conversational, lively, and engaging. A lovely picture painted skillfully with words. This first-place award is well earned.

Come For The Fish **Kyle Troutman**

2nd Place **News Tribune**
Detailed, good flow, and strong pacing of content

Advocates bring controlled fire back Ceilidh Kern

3rd Place **Springfield News-Leader**
Really good sections of this story, lacks a strong lede to connect throughout the piece.
Still a great story overall.

'One of the friendliest cities' on the Marta Mieze

35.) BEST STORY ABOUT HISTORY | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Fulton Sun**
Fascinating, and well-told throughout.

Fulton slave pardoned 169 years Emily O'Leary

2nd Place **Maries County Advocate**

Found newspaper clipping gives Colin Willard

3rd Place **Cassville Democrat**

Cassville Powerhouse Sheila Harris

35.) BEST STORY ABOUT HISTORY | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Unterrified Democrat**
A memorable story that was worth sharing with readers.

Osage County Historical Society Elise Brochu

2nd Place **Gasconade County Republican**

Bland rock house demolished Roxie Murphy and Dave Marner

3rd Place **Wright County Journal**

Mills in Ozarks 09-25-2024 WCJ Sam MacPherson

35.) BEST STORY ABOUT HISTORY | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Washington Missourian**
Very impressive example of making a story out of an absence. From basically nothing but some old maps, we get a captivating, wry saga of a rival that never was. Pleasingly specific, using tangible locations and intuitive examples to show that there was something else under the surface of Washington.

Bassora **Dan Claxton and Lori Obermark**

2nd Place **Washington Missourian**
Riveting procedural look at how an easily overlooked service came to be and came to serve. Hits the past, present, and future fluidly, using each to illuminate the others. Timely and expansive.

Library Celebrates Centennial Dan Claxton, Eileen Wisniowicz and Lori Obermark

3rd Place **Jefferson County Leader**
There are lots of unsolved murder stories but not so many "we don't know if this was solved" stories. It's a fraught, thorny subject, an ugly history, and it's dealt with in a responsible way. Great piece about how long we can be left sorting out the ambiguity of a rush to justice. Sober retelling of the crime and strong pictures.

"Heartbreaking history" Laura Marlow

35.) BEST STORY ABOUT HISTORY | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Missouri Independent**
Wow. Terrific first person account of still-relevant events from recent local history, nicely tying the past into present events. Smart to use the writer's own association with the events to relate a compelling story.

For 32 years, dozens of deaths tied Rudi Keller

2nd Place **Columbia Missourian**
A thorough exploration of the history of a unique site as it approaches an important turning point in its history. A good read.

Missouri's Oldest Restaurant **Josh Stotler**

3rd Place **Independence Examiner**
Smart tie-in between current events and a little-known episode involving Missouri's own Harry Truman. Nice contrast between the events to explain the historical differences between the two events. Readers come away understanding past and present much better.

Today's headlines recall a previous **Mike Genet**

35.) BEST STORY ABOUT HISTORY | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **St. Louis Post-Dispatch**

Illinois college finds mastodon on **Bryce Gray**

2nd Place **The Kansas City Star**

Infamous kidnapping **Jeremy Drouin**

3rd Place **Joplin Globe**

Digging into mystery, 06-08-24 **Roger Nomer**

36.) BEST MILITARY STORY | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Maryville Forum**
A veteran's story with a twist: a female Russian sharpshooter. Not your typical veteran's story. The artwork and writing make this a very interesting story to read.

36 - Sharpshooter **Geoffrey Woehlk**

2nd Place **Maryville Forum**
A first-person, unexpected account of a veteran remembering his friends and comrades lost in Vietnam made this a compelling story.

36 - Florea **Geoffrey Woehlk**

3rd Place **Cassville Democrat**
A well-written remembrance of a Vietnam War hero who endured years of captivity at the hands of enemy kept this reader reading. Nice job.

Local Legend Flies **Sheila Harris**

36.) BEST MILITARY STORY | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Ozark County Times**
It's clear that quite a bit of time and research went into humanizing and retelling the final days of this World War II soldier whose story would otherwise have been lost to time were it not for the combined efforts of the reporter and a European author documenting his story.

French village prepares to honor... **Sue Ann Jones**

2nd Place **Odessan**
Like the veterans in this story working to ensure their fellow servicemembers continued to be honored long after they died, this reporter clearly put in legwork on this well-written piece highlighting an important tradition's grassroots.

Local veteran heads effort to **Melody Cook**

3rd Place **Wright County Journal**
A powerful story showing a family's dedication to honoring their Civil War veteran ancestor.

Civil War Veteran Forgotten No **Ron Schott**

36.) BEST MILITARY STORY | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Washington Missourian**

Bag Bagby and the Transcontinental **Dan Claxton and Lori Obermark**

2nd Place Webster-Kirkwood Times Sharing Golden Moments: 103- Julie Brown Patton

3rd Place Webster-Kirkwood Times Veteran Shares Vietnam Experience Julie Brown Patton

36.) BEST MILITARY STORY | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Springfield News-Leader

Why conservative Missouri Susan Szuch

2nd Place Columbia Missourian

Honor Flight Maya Dawson

3rd Place Southeast Missourian

From battlefield to brushstrokes Bob Miller

37.) BEST HEALTH STORY | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Cassville Democrat
Very strong piece, ending felt a bit abrupt but a solid and enjoyable read that felt natural and overall well paced.

Year-Long Journey Jordan Troutman

2nd Place Maries County Advocate
Another interesting perspective to share, easy to read, very well organized, and concise.

Preventing cancer gives Tyler family Roxie Murphy

3rd Place Cassville Democrat
Solid and succinct, a well researched and documented piece.

Bird Flu Sheila Harris

37.) BEST HEALTH STORY | Class 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Ozark County Times
Strong narrative and voice, feels representative of the community the paper serves. Very detailed.

Friends and strangers rush to Sue Ann Jones

2nd Place Ozark County Times
Strong details and informative yet a well balanced and paced piece

Man finds way out of drug Jessi Dreckman

3rd Place Wright County Journal
Short and sweet. A quick, easy, pleasant read.

Therapy Pigs 071024 WCJ Sam MacPherson

37.) BEST HEALTH STORY | Class 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Jefferson County Leader
Great reporting on a local woman who developed a rare disorder after a tick bite. Good job mixing her own accounts with those of medical experts for a thorough discussion. Smart to focus on the practical implications of the syndrome as well. Nice storytelling.

"Alpha Gal Syndrome" Kevin Carbery

2nd Place **Missouri Independent**
A very important story well told.

Therapists, social workers face **Annelise Hanshaw**

3rd Place **The Kansas City Beacon**
This was a deep dive that really outlined the issue and offered a breakdown on what's involved and why it all matters.

National conservative groups are **Meg Cunningham**

38.) BEST STORY ABOUT MARGINALIZED OR UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **News Tribune**
This hugely important story takes a close look at the challenges faced by the inmate population at Jefferson City Correctional Center, with compassion for the inmates' pain and with a watchdog eye on the administrative reasons why the problems described in the story are occurring. Excellent, in-depth research and reporting.

'Minimized, marginalized, **Genevieve Tlustos**

2nd Place **The Kansas City Star**
This story beautifully captures the impact Efrain Gonzalez had on his community. The thorough research the story does into the origins of Lowrider culture goes a long way toward challenging people's assumptions and cultural stereotypes.

Lowrider's Final Cruise **J.M. Banks**

3rd Place **The Kansas City Star**
This impactful article blends conversations with the real people impacted by the policy decision to scrap the shelter plans together with well-reported accountability journalism on the reasons for that policy shift. The article keeps its focus throughout on the real-world harm the decision will cause, making that harm clear to the paper's readers and to policy makers.

KC scraps shelter **Noelle Alviz-Granssee**

39.) BEST STORY ABOUT MARGINALIZED OR UNDERREPRESENTED COMMUNITIES | Classes 1 & 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Springfield Business Journal**
Superb reporting and writing.
A technology piece that qualifies as a warm-fuzzy story can be a rare thing. I suspect museums for the sight-impaired are just a promising start.

Technology opens doors for blind **Karen Craigo**

2nd Place **Odessan**
Compelling storytelling about a minister who undoubtedly can speak on the power of faith, even where he would have been forgiven for not initially believing it possible.

New Mayview pastor helps church **Melody Cook**

3rd Place **Edina Sentinel**
I once worked at paper where local schools were always closed the first day of deer season, because most of the boys in the county would not show. People who have that same passion regain the ability to do it again because of the kindness of both their neighbors and some people they have never met.

Deer Hunt **Echo Menges**

39.) BEST INFORMATION GRAPHIC | Classes 2 & 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Washington Missourian**
Both easily navigable visually and informative.

MoDOT Projects List **Lori Obermark**

2nd Place **Washington Missourian**
Easily imparts the disparities in expectations and results.

Student Performance **Lori Obermark**

3rd Place **Houston Herald**

Census data **Brad Gentry**

39.) BEST INFORMATION GRAPHIC | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Columbia Missourian**
Excellent mix of graphics. The timeline graphic, info boxes and use of photos in the graphic effectively tell the story of Sharp End.

Sharp End Shops **Emmet Jamieson**

2nd Place **Columbia Missourian**
Stunning!

River Town **Columbia Missourian Staff**

3rd Place **Columbia Missourian**
How heartwarming and important

Unelected Heroes **Missourian Video Staff and Benjamin Zweig**

43.) BEST HEADLINE WRITING | Class 1

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Cassville Democrat**
Good wordplay to draw attention to the story or photo.

CassDem Headlines **Cassville Democrat Staff**

2nd Place **Maryville Forum**

43 - Forum Best Headline Writing **Maryville Forum Staff**

3rd Place **Edina Sentinel**

Sunshine Trial Headlines **Echo Menges**

43.) BEST HEADLINE WRITING | Classes 2 & 3

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Springfield Business Journal**
All the headlines were appropriate for the story and were catchy. Loved the page design as well.

SBJ Best Headlines **Springfield Business Journal Staff**

2nd Place **Jefferson County Leader**

Best headline writing **Leader Staff**

3rd Place **Houston Herald**

Houston Herald headlines **Doug Davison**

43.) BEST HEADLINE WRITING | Classes 4 & 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Columbia Missourian**
Love these headlines. Short, catchy and look great in print!

Missourian Best Headlines **Columbia Missourian Staff**

2nd Place **Springfield News-Leader**
These headlines are catchy and draw the reader in without being overly long

Chalupa—County line—Gift—Black **Springfield News-Leader Staff**

3rd Place **The Kansas City Star**
Great descriptive headlines that made me want to read the stories.

Missouri ministry, "hellhole of **Alison Booth**

44.) BEST REPORTING USING THE SUNSHINE LAW | Class 4

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place **Columbia Missourian**
An outstanding review of a police-involved shooting death with responsive sourcing from various public agencies including the police! Superb writing/reporting (sourcing) in this account.

Delayed Police Program **Camryn Kesselring and Erica Little**

2nd Place Missouri Independent **Using the Sunshine Law to uncover** Clara Bates
 In-depth stories, deeply! These comprehensive accounts detail events, claims, counter-claims from multiple sources including related documents/records. The core conflicts in the stories were unresolved despite the reporter's initiatives to gain information. The "Sunshine" initiatives got the records, but efforts to gain response from individuals, in some instances, failed.

3rd Place Missouri Independent **Using the Sunshine Law to find** Clara Bates
 Excellent in-depth accountable reporting mostly with human sources, but with nudges from related documents and Sunshine authority.

44.) BEST REPORTING USING THE SUNSHINE LAW | Class 5

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Southeast Missourian **Aftermath of Cape's graduation** J.C. Reeves, Bob Miller and Nathan Gladden
 The three winners in this category all refused to walk away from a story after it was concluded. This winning entry did the important work of parsing the decisions made that led to a shooting at a graduation ceremony, and exploring what might have been done differently. It's necessary work to learn lessons from a potential tragedy.

2nd Place The Kansas City Star **Cop stole gun, kills family** Nathan Pilling
 Both second and third place winners here are separated by a very thin line. In this case, a triple tragedy deserved this deeper dive to identify where the system failed Domonique McGeachy and her 12-year-old son.

3rd Place The Kansas City Star **Jayden Robker found dead** Kendrick Calfee
 Despite the fact that the investigation into Jayden Robker's death didn't bring a clean resolution or answers to the questions surrounding the case, it was a worthwhile endeavor to refuse to accept a 13-year-old's demise without more attention paid.

44.) BEST REPORTING USING THE SUNSHINE LAW | Classes 1 & 2

Title of Entry, If Applicable *Award Winner(s), If Applicable*

1st Place Odessan **Covert County Business** Hannah Spaar and Melody Cook
 This is a great example of a newspaper going to bat for transparency, using the Sunshine Law effectively to uncover private meetings that led to important land use policy decisions. As the newspaper's editorial on the subject stated, "Planning and zoning, like all other areas of county government, should be for everyone." Watchdog journalism at its best.

2nd Place Howell County News **Search is on, firefighters hurt** Amanda Mendez
 The importance of this investigation became readily apparent when there was an incident involving injuries and damaged equipment. It raises the question: Did a lack of training make a difference? The newspaper was ahead of the news on this one because of an aggressive use of the Sunshine Law to ask difficult questions.

3rd Place Edina Sentinel **The Sunshine Trial** Echo Menges
 By devoting resources to covering this trial, and using the Sunshine Law in the process, this small newspaper demonstrated that it's important to chase the stories that matter, even when it's difficult.