



THE THRILL OF VICTORY

2011 OKLAHOMA PRESS ASSOCIATION

**BETTER NEWSPAPER  
CONTEST**

# GENERAL CONTEST INFORMATION

## DIVISIONS:

There are (10) divisions. OPA Business Membership Newspapers, Divisions 1-8, are determined by newspaper total paid circulation as shown on the **October 2011** U.S. Postal Service statement (PS Form 3526, line 15C) plus the number of paid electronic subscriptions as reported to OPA.

**DIVISIONS 1-7** will be determined when all entries have been received. Entries will be divided as equally as possible into three daily and four weekly divisions. If applicable, the lowest circulation division(s) will receive the fewest number of entries.

**SEMI-, TWIN AND TRI-WEEKLY** newspapers will compete in Division 8.

**SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP NEWS-PAPERS** will compete in Division 9.

**COLLEGE NEWSPAPERS** will compete in Division 10.

A newspaper will compete against only the newspapers in its division.

## POINTS:

Points in the contest are awarded on the following scale:

### EVENTS 1-3

1st Place	120 Points
2nd Place	90 Points
3rd Place	70 Points
4th Place	50 Points

### EVENTS 4-12

1st Place	100 Points
2nd Place	70 Points
3rd Place	50 Points
4th Place	30 Points

## ELIGIBILITY:

The 2011 Better Newspaper Contest is open to current OPA Business and Sustaining members in good standing, and all college newspapers.

### BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

#### NEWSPAPER ENTRIES – DIVISIONS 1-8

All entries must be published within a legal newspaper as defined by Title 25, O.S. 106. TMCs and free distribution products are not eligible as entries from Business Membership Newspapers.

### SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP

#### NEWSPAPER ENTRIES – DIVISION 9

All entries must be published within a newspaper of general interest that is distributed to the general public. Eligible newspapers must publish at least once per month and contain at least 25% local news content. Corporate and/or industry newsletters or publications are not eligible for participation in the contest.

### COLLEGE NEWSPAPER

#### ENTRIES – DIVISION 10

All entries must be published within a college or university newspaper. OPA membership is not required.

## ELIGIBILITY PERIOD:

To be eligible, newspapers must have been OPA members for a minimum of six full months immediately preceding the final day of the contest period (since July 1, 2011). (Newspapers may submit entries from the entire contest period – Sept. 1, 2010 to

Dec. 31, 2011 – even if they have not been members for the entire contest period.)

## OTHER INFORMATION:

**ENTRY FEES:** Entry fee for each event is \$5.

**AWARDS:** Every event will have first through fourth place winners. Each division's Sweepstakes winner, which is determined by the amount of points accumulated in the contest, receives the Sequoyah Award – the highest honor in the contest. Sweepstakes and First Place winners receive plaques; second, third and fourth place winners receive certificates. Each winning newspaper receives the privilege of publishing the 'Prize Winning Logo' in its newspaper for the entire year. Awards will be presented at the OPA Convention at the Reed Center in Midwest City on June 8, 2012.

**ENTER ALL EVENTS:** Entering all 12 events improves your newspaper's chance of winning the Sequoyah Award.

**CONTACT INFORMATION:** For clarification of rules contact Jennifer Gilliland or Lisa Potts, at (405) 499-0020, or 1-888-815-2672 (toll-free in Oklahoma).

Contest rules are available on the OPA website at [www.okpress.com/awards](http://www.okpress.com/awards)

Please check OPA Web site to verify your entries were received (allow 3 to 5 days after mailing entries).

# ENTRY RULES

**CONTEST PERIOD:** The 2011 OPA Better Newspaper Contest period is from September 1, 2010, through December 31, 2011.

**ENTRY DEADLINE:** All entries must be postmarked by Monday, January 23, 2012. Mail, ship or deliver entries to OKLAHOMA PRESS ASSOCIATION, 3601 N. Lincoln Blvd., Oklahoma City, OK 73105-5499.

**ENTRIES:** Original tear sheets and issues are required for entries. Entries will be judged only in the event indicated on the label attached to the entry. Judges are not permitted to move entries to other events.

All entries become the property of OPA and may be reproduced in print or electronic format as educational material and/or exhibits.

**ENTRY PREPARATION:** Place each event entry in a large envelope (preferably 9x12). The corresponding event label must be completed and attached to the top left corner of the front of the envelope. Tuck the envelope flap; please DO NOT SEAL THE ENVELOPE. Place all event entry envelopes into a single package or box to be mailed or shipped to OPA.

**MULTIPLE PUBLICATIONS:** Newspapers having multiple publications or editions under one ownership with the majority of pages in common (news and/or advertising) may only enter issues of the publication or edition having the largest circulation.

**IDENTICAL MATERIAL:** Identical material cannot be entered by separate newspapers in the same division.

**STAFF PRODUCED:** All contest entries must have been produced by the newspaper's staff or regular paid contributors. Syndicated material will not be considered.

**ALTERNATE ENTRY DATES:** Newspapers not published during the month specified in the guidelines of an event should contact OPA for alternate dates and must write a letter to the judges explaining the alternate date.

**LETTERS TO JUDGES:** Comment letters to judges are required in Event 4, Sales Promotion, and Event 12, Community Leadership. Letters to judges may be included in other events but are not required.

**TIES:** There will be no ties within events.

# 2011 OPA BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST EVENT RULES

## EVENT 1: NEWS CONTENT

### SUBMIT THREE (3) FULL ISSUES:

- One (1) issue from May 2011;
- Two (2) issues from anytime within the contest period.

Judges will evaluate the extent and quality of the overall news product that is representative of that community.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Local Coverage (emphasis on staff-written copy rather than wire, syndicate or canned copy); Balance (variety of community group and people coverage and approaches, mix of news and features, plus spot news); Government (quality and completeness of local, city, school board, county coverage); Headlines (variety of styles with consistency of design, clean, easy-to-read, show creativity); Organization (news is organized with reader in mind, easy to find in paper); Photos, Graphics (variety and quality of local news photos and graphics accompanying stories); Writing (creativity and initiative).

## EVENT 2: LAYOUT & DESIGN

### SUBMIT THREE (3) FULL ISSUES:

- One (1) issue from October 2011;
- Two (2) issues from anytime within the contest period.

Judges will consider layout and design of the complete newspaper. Judging will be based on selection and effective use of faces, general makeup and advertising display.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Page 1 (grabs attention; lead story display; good mix of news, photos and/or graphics; heads; white space); Inside Pages (bright and interesting; good mix of news, photos, heads, ads; well organized); News Typeface Selection & Layout (easy to read; clean; appropriately sized typefaces used for stories, cutlines, graphics); Headlines (consistent style and appropriate sizes to give clean appearance; indicate relative importance of news; show creativity and grab attention); Ad Type Selection & Layout (good variety of typefaces in ads; good mix of appropriate artwork; borders selection; ads displayed well; classified pages invite reading); Overall Layout & Design (creativity; typographic & design continuity; adequate white space; pages clean and easy-to-read); Organization (guides reader easily throughout issue).

## EVENT 3: ADVERTISING

### SUBMIT THREE (3) FULL ISSUES:

- One (1) issue from December 2010;
- Two (2) issues from anytime within the contest period.

*Pre-printed inserts, unless composed at the newspaper, are to be omitted.*

**DISPLAY ADVERTISING:** Judges will consider the advertising enterprise of the paper (wide variety of merchants), headlines, copy and layout, imaginative use of illustrations, apparent effectiveness and creativity.

**CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING:** Judges will consider the ease of finding classifications, display (use of type and attractiveness), enterprise, neatness and lack of clutter.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Design (variety of sizes, shapes, type styles; layout); Balance (good ad/news blend on every page, wide variety of advertisers); Makeup (reader benefit headlines; clean illustrations, clean logo, address and telephone); Classifieds (clean headers, well organized, classified phone number, ad rates and information, type size and style readable); Creativity (attention compelling, ads show initiative and originality in writing and design); Page Makeup (smaller ads not buried by larger ads).

## EVENT 4: SALES PROMOTION

- Submit One (1) Revenue-Producing Promotion published and delivered in your newspaper anytime within the contest period.

*A letter must accompany this entry explaining the promotion.*

Include all sales support materials such as pre-publicity ads and news stories, direct mail, flyers and point of purchase materials used relating to the event.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Creativity (attention compelling; ads show initiative and originality in writing and design); Design (shows consistency in presentation with ads, news copy, design); Balance (variety of advertisers and ad sizes); Makeup (ads grab attention; typographically clean; smaller ads not buried by larger ads); Writing (ad and promotion copy well written, appealing to the reader).

## EVENT 5: IN-DEPTH ENTERPRISE

- Submit One (1) In-Depth Enterprise project published anytime within the contest period.

*Submit full-page tear sheets with article(s) prominently outlined.*

Entry may be a single story or series of stories (no more than 10) and may include additional materials. A brief letter outlining the background that led to the story or series may be submitted.

**DEFINITION OF IN-DEPTH ENTERPRISE:** A story or series of stories that explores a significant topic in-depth with multiple sources.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Entries will be judged on completeness, thoroughness of research, excellence of writing, community-wide interest, execution and commitment of the newspaper to the project.

## EVENT 6: EDITORIAL COMMENT

- Submit Three (3) full-page tear sheets published anytime within the contest period.

*Prominently outline one editorial per tear sheet to be judged.*

Only those marked will be judged and nothing else on the page will be considered. Each editorial must be limited to a discussion of one topic. They need not be signed. Page location does not matter, but editorials must clearly express an opinion.

**DEFINITION OF AN EDITORIAL:** An article that intentionally expresses an opinion of those in control of the publication on a matter of current interest. Personal columns may be entered if they are limited to one subject and fulfill the other qualifications of an editorial.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Quality of Writing (clear, easy to read); Originality/Creativity (ideas, arguments presented in a fresh way, a different light, passionate); Attention-Compelling Lead (first sentence makes reader want to keep reading); Logical Construction (arguments presented in a logical manner that helps persuasion); Strong Concluding 'Kicker' (editorial ends with strong turn-of-phrase or sentence that drives the point home).

# 2011 OPA BETTER NEWSPAPER CONTEST EVENT RULES (continued)

## EVENT 7: PERSONAL COLUMNS

- Submit Three (3) full-page tear sheets published anytime within the contest period.

*Prominently outline one column per tear sheet to be judged.*

Only those marked will be judged and nothing else on the page will be considered. Columns submitted may be by different columnists, since the purpose of the contest is to determine the quality of the newspaper and not an individual writer. Personal columns may be on any subject matter.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Attention-Compelling Lead (makes you want to keep reading); Quality of Writing (clear, tightly written, conversational tone); Effective Humor (used with impact when appropriate); Organization (ideas presented in logical sequence); Originality/Creativity (ideas, arguments presented in a fresh way, different light; has passion); Strong Conclusion.

## EVENT 8: NEWS WRITING

- Submit Three (3) full-page tear sheets published anytime within the contest period.

*Prominently outline one news article per tear sheet to be judged.*

Only those marked will be judged and nothing else on the page will be considered. Judging will be based on writing skill, clarity, and organization of story. No syndicated stories will be accepted.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Strong Leads (short, to-the-point; carries only necessary information; written to grab and keep interest); Organization of Facts (news presented in logical order, with most important information first; all questions answered); Grammar, Punctuation, Sentence Structure (correct English usage; articles easy to read); Clarity/Conciseness (articles avoid wordiness and present ideas in a way that is easy to understand); Quotes (effectively used to make stories human; long, official press release quotes avoided); Human Interest (writing appeals to readers' interests).

## EVENT 9: FEATURE WRITING

- Submit Three (3) full-page tear sheets published anytime within the contest period.

*Prominently outline one feature article per tear sheet to be judged.*

Only those marked will be judged and nothing else on the page will be considered. Judging will be based on writing skill, clarity, and organization of story. All stories must have been locally written.

**DEFINITION OF A FEATURE STORY:** A story of human interest. It may or may not be of a timely nature and it may or may not be news related. It is not a regular feature, i.e., personal column, and may or may not carry a byline and it may or may not have supportive pictures.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Creative Leads (leads grab the readers' attention and emotions in a way that makes them want to read the rest of the story); Organization (stories keep the readers' attention by flowing in a logical order toward a conclusion); Grammar, Punctuation, Sentence Structure (correct English usage; articles easy to read); Literary Techniques (articles appeal to human emotions with imagery, description, anecdotes and specific detail); Quotes (quotes used effectively to make the stories human; long, official press release quotes avoided); Human Interest (writing appeals to readers).

## EVENT 10: SPORTS COVERAGE

### SUBMIT THREE (3) FULL SPORTS PAGE, PAGES OR SECTIONS:

- One (1) entry from September 2010 thru April 2011;  
 One (1) entry from May thru December 2011; and  
 One (1) entry from anytime within the contest period.

Judging will be based on writing skill, clarity, photography and organization of sports page, pages or section.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Local Coverage (emphasis on staff-written copy rather than wire or syndicate); Completeness (a variety of sports and events covered, with necessary statistics, columns); Creativity (initiative in writing; layout, story ideas beyond the routine); Headlines (imaginative, boost impact of design, are effective); Organization (sports presented with reader in mind; easy-to-find format); Photography (adds excitement to stories in size, impact and quality).

## EVENT 11: PHOTOGRAPHY

### SUBMIT SIX (6) FULL-PAGE TEAR SHEETS published anytime within the contest period including:

- Two (2) News Photos;  
 Two (2) Sports Photos; and  
 Two (2) Feature Photos;

*Prominently outline each photo to be judged and identify as news, sports or feature.*

Only those marked will be judged and nothing else on the page will be considered. A picture page or related photos on the same subject matter may be considered as one photo selection. Judges will consider the six entries as a package and not individual photographs. Each category of pictures will be judged equally. Judging will be based on subject composition, originality, technical skill demonstrated, and use of photographs.

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Local Coverage; Composition (photos grab the readers' attention; not just snapshots); Technical (focus, properly cropped, clean and properly lighted); Cutlines (grammatically correct and adequately explain photo content).

## EVENT 12: COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

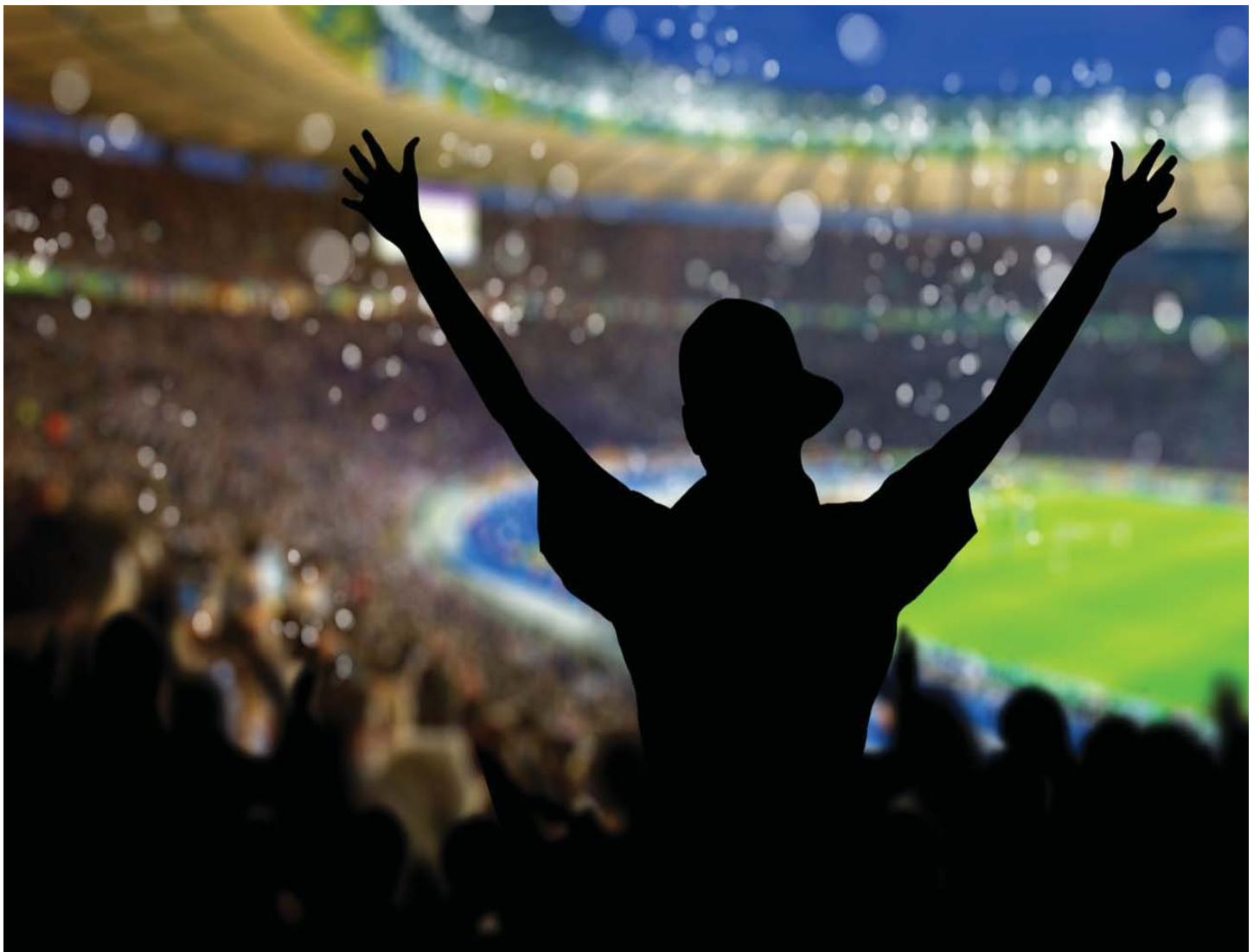
- Submit One (1) project, over and above the normal duties of a newspaper, which is aimed at service to the community rather than revenue.

*A letter must accompany this entry explaining the promotion.*

*Submit full-page tear sheets and prominently outline articles to be judged.*

Only those articles marked will be judged and nothing else on the page will be considered. The Community Leadership event recognizes the efforts of Oklahoma newspapers that address a broad range of issues and problems in the community and that demonstrate their commitment to civic responsibility. Projects should be developed through the newspaper's own efforts, and should be completed or have significant progress made during the contest period. Include all relevant information (i.e., news stories, editorials, advertising, reports of events).

**JUDGING CRITERIA:** Consideration of relative importance of the topic, quality of effort, depth of research, degree of involvement and results.



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