

2026 ALL-OHIO EXCELLENCE IN JOURNALISM AWARDS

Presented by the Press Club of Cleveland

June 5, 2026

WRITING

ANALYSIS

1st Place

“Davon Fields use of force incidents”

Bryce Buyakie

Akron Beacon Journal

Judges' comments: Clear reporting, context and analysis here. An Akron police officer killed a teen and the reporter found that same officer had at least 36 use of force reports to his name and alarming video of his behavior. Important accountability work and good marriage of writing and multimedia. Well done.

2nd Place

“Columbus' flawed district voting system failed voters. Their will was usurped.”

Amelia Robinson

The Columbus Dispatch

3rd Place

“Politics, race and crime: Why a fight in Cincinnati went viral on social media”

Dan Horn, Erin Glynn

Cincinnati Enquirer

ARCHITECTURE/DESIGN

1st Place

“In Cincinnati's abandoned subway, some still dream of transit's future”

Sydney Franklin

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Comprehensive and fully lays out the pros and cons for using the old tunnels for new mass transit or to repurpose them for other activities. Excellent historical background.

2nd Place

“Snoop out the new Fidelity Hotel in historic Baker Building with Cleveland Restoration Society

Karin Connelly Rice
FreshWater Cleveland

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

1st Place

“Almost Famous”

Cedric Rose

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: Really fun and engaging story on the musicians who play in tribute bands. Terrific interviews and insights into the why people play in these bands and why people go to their gigs.

2nd Place

“OUR Place open mic night a good vibe on Saturdays in Ravenna ”

Jeff Saunders

Record Courier

3rd Place

“Dual Urban Arts Space exhibitions transcend borders”

Andy Downing

Matter News

BREAKING NEWS

1st Place

“A chain of violent events”

Cameron Knight, Quinlan Bentley, Bebe Hodges, Dan Horn

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Well done piece!

2nd Place

“Atlanta mourns shop owner”

Shane Hoover

Tire Business Newspaper

BUSINESS/FINANCIAL

Overall category judges' comments: It was such a pleasure reading this year's business submissions. Many of them reflected the chaos in the country and the innovative ways local businesses have adapted to it. From woolly pigs to airplane tires to the impact of tariffs, this year's selection of stories was informative and, in many cases, entertaining. The judging was extremely difficult. Taken as a whole, the entire complement of stories presented a highly

informative picture of the year in business. With energy at a premium and grocery prices rising, businesses have had both opportunities and challenges, and these amazing journalists, as a group, did an amazing job of documenting this era in our history.

1st Place

“New at the Top — Best Bang for the Buck”

Steve Watkins

Cincinnati Business Courier

Judges' comments: The sheer effort to collect the data in this story is impressive. The well-written, well-sourced, and brilliant way this story is crafted and presented reflects excellence in journalism that every student in America should study.

2nd Place

“Independent grocery stores battle for their share”

Dan Eaton

Columbus Business First

Judges' comments: From a business point of view, this is another story that leapt from the dinner table to the headlines. This story was well-reported and presented with sufficient data and sourcing to present a snapshot of an industry on every consumer's mind.

3rd Place

“Federal funding freeze threatens Woolly Pig”

Andrew Theophilus

TheReportingProject.org

Judges' comments: An interesting story about a local business that earned a spot in the community's heart, only to be challenged by its own government, which froze funding that had already been spent.

COLUMN OR BLOG: GENERAL NEWS

1st Place

“What Vivek Ramaswamy's fight with Nick Fuentes' army tells us”

Amelia Robinson

The Columbus Dispatch

2nd Place

“An open letter to Rupert Murdoch urging action to protect our free press”

Cliff Anthony

3rd Place

“Scandal magnet Gordon Gee doesn't deserve Ohio State job. His wings are too heavy”

Amelia Robinson

The Columbus Dispatch

COLUMN OR BLOG: SPORTS

Overall category judges' comments: Great to see the range in storytelling happening in the sports scene, from heartfelt profiles of courage to personal histories of fandom.

1st Place

“Terry Francona's friend returns to baseball after grandson's 2020 death”

Jason Williams

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Incredible profile of a coach dealing with tragedy. Good story structure with an engaging lede. Great to hear from various sources about the importance of family, in blood and in choice.

2nd Place

“Scars and humor: Raising a Cleveland sports fan is worth it”

Nate Ulrich

Akron Beacon Journal

Judges' comments: Heartfelt story about what it means to grow up a fan and understanding that there are highs and lows. Love the anecdote about admiring players of others teams but not too much -- we don't need rival players jerseys in the closet.

3rd Place

“Another playoff disappointment shows Cleveland Cavaliers still missing physical, mental toughness”

Dave "Dino" DeNatale

WKYC

Judges' comments: Really good post mortem analysis on a promising but ultimately too-short season. Thought it was clever to expand on the theories submitted by the coach himself.

COLUMN OR BLOG: BUSINESS

1st Place

“What tires are in the popemobile?”

David Manley

Tire Business Newspaper

Judges' comments: Delightful! Creative idea, dogged reporting, and fun twist ending. All with a distinct voice and perspective. Excellent column.

2nd Place

“Air emergency hits close to home”

Don Detore

Tire Business Newspaper

Judges' comments: Interesting and well-written column.

3rd Place

"Blimps are cool. Buy tires."

Don Detore

Tire Business Newspaper

Judges' comments: Engaging tale of a creative marketing approach; would have been even better if it were shorter!

COLUMN OR BLOG: LIFESTYLE/FEATURE

Overall category judges' comments: All of the entries were very interesting. There is a lot of very engaging writing styles within them, and hope to see more of it in the future!

1st Place

"Relatively Speaking"

Raul Ascunce

AIM Media Midwest dba Sentinel-Tribune

Judges' comments: The column showcases a great variety of real-life situations, which very well represents the lifestyle of the writer. They are very lighthearted and easy to read.

2nd Place

"Setting the stage: Beachland Ballroom marks 25 years of music, friends, and Collinwood advocacy"

Chris Abood

FreshWater Cleveland

3rd Place

"No hocus pocus: Tire exec has the magic touch"

Don Detore

Tire Business Newspaper

Judges' comments: The content of the story has a very engaging style. This is a topic that is very enjoyable for the reader, it is a very fun thing to depict a hobby as someone's double life.

CRIME & JUSTICE

1st Place

"Antoine Tolbert: a Cleveland superhero or a vigilante?"

Matthew Richmond

idea stream

Judges' comments: Strong, compelling public-safety feature with engaging writing. Reads like a plot of a comic book. Brilliant story-telling. Great article! Interesting read.

2nd Place

“Aren't you supposed to go after lost sheep?”

Andy Downing

Matter News

Judges' comments: Well-written, emotionally powerful human-interest story.

3rd Place

“Experts say rash of Pride flag vandalism across Ohio points to shifting trend in anti-LGBTQ+ violence”

Ben Jodway

The Buckeye Flame

Judges' comments: A well-crafted, socially engaged feature story that documents and contextualizes a perceived trend in anti-LGBTQ+ incidents

DATA JOURNALISM

Overall category judges' comments: Both the permitting and JobsOhio stories had enlightening uses of data. The Crain's story went further by using the data to push harder for accountability on an issue where the city's performance was causing clear harm for prospective businesses and developers.

1st Place

“As Cleveland struggles to reform permitting process, developers say they still bear the brunt”

Zachary Smith

Crain's Cleveland Business

2nd Place

“JobsOhio casts a wider net”

Carrie Ghose

Columbus Business First

3rd Place

“7 in 10 ICE detainees at Butler County Jail have no criminal convictions”

David Ferrara, Victoria Moorwood

Cincinnati Enquirer

EDITORIAL

1st Place

“One free kill. Irresponsible Ohio dog owners must be held accountable for attacks.”

Amelia Robinson

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: Thorough analysis and strong supporting material for conclusion.

2nd Place

“Delays in sexual harassment investigation inexcusable ”

Cheryl Powell

Akron Beacon Journal

Judges' comments: Balanced, informed effort in calling out public officials who are shirking their responsibilities.

3rd Place

“Time to move on from stadium, set new goals”

Scott Suttell

Crain's Cleveland Business

Judges' comments: Detailed, informative reporting and analysis that supports a likely controversial conclusion.

EDUCATION

1st Place

“As SB 1 impacts ripple across Ohio college campuses, students, faculty say 'the chill is real'”

Sheridan Hendrix

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: Really solid legislative impact reporting. The lead really draws readers in. All the questions I had as a reader were answered throughout the story and while it was long, the organization of the story didn't make it feel that way.

2nd Place

“Ohio GOP lawmakers want to eliminate DEI, ban faculty strikes at public universities”

Jessie Balmert

Columbus Dispatch, Cincinnati Enquirer, Akron Beacon Journal, Canton Repository

Judges' comments: Great statehouse reporting. The story really broke down a complex state law. It was quite long but the most important details were up high, so readers wanting a big picture view could stop reading midway while impacted readers still had all their questions answered. Nice work.

3rd Place

“Shauna Murphy Is Here for Kids”

Carrie Blackmore

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: A thorough profile of an important Ohio education figure. Really nice mix of interviews and personal background, along with contextual information about the state of the school district.

ENVIRONMENT

1st Place

“Farmers and industry on a collision course over water”

Alan Miller

TheReportingProject.org

Judges' comments: Solid journalism on a timely topic. Stories like this will be important reference points in the future. Strong reporting and writing, and a great accountability question: What more can Ohio do to preserve its water?

2nd Place

“Why is Noble County having so many earthquakes?”

Grace Springer

The Repository

Judges' comments: A fascinating piece! I loved the fresh, somewhat unexpected perspectives from residents on this, and the well-interpreted data to add context. New concepts were clearly explained. Nice work!

3rd Place

“Atomic City”

Annie Nickoloff

Cleveland Magazine

Judges' comments: Artful writing on a topic that seems rich for exploration. Great job weaving together historical pieces, current happenings and emotion.

ESSAY

1st Place

“More than 'food noise' is disappearing”

Josh Boose

Ideastream

Judges' comments: Thoughtful take on a topic that tens of thousands are experiencing.

2nd Place

“The healing power of forgiveness recognized through the ages”

Richard Perloff

The Plain Dealer

Judges' comments: This piece is a compelling view on the power of forgiveness.

FOOD/RESTAURANT

1st Place

“A new era for the North Market”

Dan Eaton

Columbus Business First

Judges' comments: Engaging local story that is vibrant and brings to light the soul of a community.

2nd Place

“How does fresh seafood get to landlocked Columbus? The journey is quick, cold and frequent”

Bob Vitale

The Columbus Dispatch

3rd Place

“How a New Orleans chef changed the Cincinnati dining scene after Katrina”

Keith Pandolfi

Cincinnati Enquirer

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

1st Place

“It's not Mike DeWine's Republican Party anymore!' How outsiders are winning in Ohio”

Jessie Balmert

Columbus Dispatch, Cincinnati Enquirer, Akron Beacon Journal, Canton Repository

Judges' comments: Excellent political analysis. Kudos to the reporter for 1) Identifying an interesting trend and 2) Writing a well-sourced and engaging explainer on why it matters.

2nd Place

“A persistent rumor”

Noah Fishman, Owen Baker

TheReportingProject.org

Judges' comments: Very good accountability reporting, which not only revealed the facts behind a political narrative but also forced public officials to answer for spreading it.

3rd Place

“How Signal 99 became an big player in Cincinnati politics”

Scott Wartman, Cameron Knight

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Great sleuthing to unmask an anonymous political operator. Also, a strong, balanced profile that gives readers the information they need to decide whether this influential source is trustworthy.

HEADLINE

Overall category judges' comments: Clever headline titles that capture the audience attention, especially egg-spensive.

1st Place

“An Egg-spensive Passover”

Bob Jacob

Cleveland Jewish News

Judges' comments: Clever wordplay with egg-spensive. Excellent headline.

2nd Place

“Seafood Chain Plays Chicken”

Matthew Hall

Shop! Association

Judges' comments: "Plays Chicken," is a clever word play with the subject of the story.

3rd Place

“Five Star's new signature scent, Home, passes the sniff test”

Lois Bowers

Lois Bowers

Judges' comments: Clever play on signature scent and sniff

HEALTH & MEDICAL

1st Place

““Saving Grace””

Cameron Gorman

akronlife magazine

Judges' comments: Excellent layout, fascinating emotional story, and kept me interested throughout the entire article.

2nd Place

“Postpartum Psychosis: The Danger We Aren't Talking About”

Erin Sernoffsky

Northeast Ohio Parent magazine

Judges' comments: I'd never heard of this, and it's a fascinating story of one woman's experience and the importance of being aware of it. Riveting read.

3rd Place

“How Gender Bias in Medical Care Impacts Your Health”

Elizabeth Miller Wood

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: A superb article with some great sources and stories. Great topic to explore. My only criticism is that it dragged a bit on the last page.

HISTORY

1st Place

“The Edmund Fitzgerald: Remembering tragedy on the Great Lakes 50 years later”

Tom Matowitz

FreshWater Cleveland

Judges' comments: I really enjoyed the topic. A good amount of research was done, but the writer did very well making sure it still read as a journalistic story and not a research paper.

2nd Place

“Shelby's bicycle history rides through generations”

David Jacobs

Shelby News

Judges' comments: I liked the topic, but it started to stray away from sounding journalistic with using phrases such as "observed" and "noted." Other than that, it was written well.

3rd Place

“Meet Terry Klausman, 'spirit keeper' of ballplayer graves and memories”

Marc Bona

Cleveland.com

HUMOR

1st Place

“Essence of Skunk”

Jill Sell

Akron Beacon Journal

Judges' comments: A brilliant, funny, relatable well-told story.

2nd Place

“Our newest family member”

Cliff Anthony

Cliff Anthony

3rd Place

“Trapped for days, well, maybe an hour, in an elevator”

Jill Sell

Akron Beacon Journal

IN-DEPTH REPORT OR SERIES

Overall category judges' comments: Please pass along to all of those who entered this category in the Ohio contest-- congratulations on this body of work from 2025. The people of Ohio are

well-served by the thoughtful reporting on a wide range of issues in your communities. Keep up the good work!

1st Place

“Beyond the Chip”

Cheryl Splain, Grace McCormick, Grant Ritchey

Knox Pages

Judges' comments: Knox Pages has imagination and guts. An enormous undertaking and dedication of resources.

2nd Place

“Deaths in Custody”

Mark Puente, Scott Noll, Brittany Hailer, Doug Livingston

The Marshall Project-Cleveland

Judges' comments: Outstanding example of accountability reporting.

3rd Place

“Impact of Hate”

David R. Hertz II

Cleveland Jewish News

Judges' comments: Well-written and presented story on the kind of issue we should all do more reporting on.

LIFESTYLE FEATURE

1st Place

“World Wars, Piano and Poetry: Mantua woman to celebrate 110th birthday”

Diane Smith

Record Courier

Judges' comments: A beautiful piece on Ethelyn VonHelmerts Fitzsimmons, which has lived a long and amazing life.

2nd Place

“How to style a Buckeye: Ohio State leaders show spirit with bow ties and bomber jackets”

Sheridan Hendrix

The Columbus Dispatch

3rd Place

“Powerful punch: How a boxing gym in an old Akron church changes lives”

Nate Ulrich

Akron Beacon Journal

NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY NEWS

Overall category judges' comments: This was a tough category as all of the articles had merit and were interesting to read. Taken together, they told stories of thriving and interesting communities in Ohio.

1st Place

“A real quiet phenomenon”

Ella Diehl

TheReportingProject.org

Judges' comments: A compelling and important topic for this community is covered in this article. Three human-centered stories bring the data to life and resources at the end of the article provide an important public service. Very well done.

2nd Place

“Bus tours bring Cleveland's Black history and civic spirit to life ”

Nate Paige

Signal Cleveland

3rd Place

“A trailblazing woman-owned butcher shop is turning Covington into a meat mecca”

Keith Pandolfi

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: The writing here is so well done, drawing the reader in instantly and bringing the place and people to life in a highly engaging way. A fun read.

NEWSLETTER

Overall category judges' comments: Really good use of local writers throughout all sections. Photos are well done/well placed.

1st Place

“The To-Do List”

Jean-Marie Papoi, Dave DeOreo, Kabir Bhatia

ideastream

Judges' comments: Punchy, to the point, brief but informing, all the things I'd want a Newsletter to be.

2nd Place

“Shelby News Reporter newsletter”

David Jacobs

Shelby News

3rd Place

“Hello, Licking County! The Reporting Project newsletter”

Julia Lerner

TheReportingProject.org

OBITUARY

1st Place

“Kohrman dedicated life to service, philanthropy, Jewish community”

Casey Couch

Cleveland Jewish News

Judges' comments: The additional materials beyond just the obituary made this tribute really special.

2nd Place

“Remembering Oliver ‘Pudge’ Henkel, key player behind Playhouse Square's rebirth”

Kabir Bhatia

ideastream

3rd Place

“Siegel, recalled as NBC journalist, executive, with 'coolest job”

Casey Couch

Cleveland Jewish News

PROFILE

1st Place

“Visiting Pike County judge shows 'bias,' 'ego,' critics say”

Patricia Gallagher Newberry

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: A thorough profile story on Judge Jonathan Hein, which showcases how much local judges matter, and how little people may be aware of judges backgrounds.

2nd Place

“A baptism, a boat and Danny DeVito. Get to know Hoban star Sam Greer”

Nate Ulrich

Akron Beacon Journal

Judges' comments: A great profile story on local football star that is reminiscence of Sports Illustrated's profile on All American High School Sports Stars.

3rd Place

“Unofficial mayor of historic Glenville neighborhood fights developers to preserve community character ”

Olivera Perkins

Signal Cleveland

Judges' comments: A great profile on a neighborhood fighting gentrification and remembering the history of the neighborhood.

RACE & DIVERSITY REPORTING

1st Place

“A Chilling Effect”

Steve Watkins

Cincinnati Business Courier

Judges' comments: A excellent story on DEI programs in the new era as affirmative action programs are being cut across the country.

2nd Place

“Lincoln Heights' struggles began long before racist march”

Dan Horn, David Ferrara

Cincinnati Enquirer

3rd Place

“Controversial Cuyahoga County Deputy Unit Tickets Mostly Black Drivers”

Mark Puente, Tara Morgan, Doug Livingston

The Marshall Project-Cleveland

REAL ESTATE

1st Place

“We have to build more”

Chris Wetterich

Cincinnati Business Courier

Judges' comments: Interesting and in-depth look at the complex problem (and possible solution) of building on these profitable plots of land. The map is a nice touch in making the sheer number of potential properties more digestible.

2nd Place

“Why the battle of Hyde Park matters to every Cincinnati neighborhood”

Sydney Franklin

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Appreciate the History of Hyde Park section and the wide variety of sources, giving a well-rounded look at the overall issue.

REVIEW/CRITICISM

1st Place

“Cleveland Museum of Art's Murakami show is big and bold but maybe too much of a good thing”

Steven Litt

ideastream

2nd Place

“Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds find time for joy at the Palace Theatre”

Andy Downing

Matter News

3rd Place

“Why Cincy-shot 'Alto Knights' movie could use one less Robert De Niro”

Haadiza Ogwude

Cincinnati Enquirer

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1st Place

“In the Blink of AI”

Carrie Blackmore

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: A detail story on the cautions of AI taking over the work force over the previous few years.

2nd Place

“TikTok creators fall victim to scam”

Ed Balint

The Repository

3rd Place

“First in sales, first in innovation”

Bruce Meyer

Rubber News

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN- ALL PLATFORMS

1st Place

“Black History Month restaurant series”

Haadiza Ogwude

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Engaging storytelling

2nd Place

“Reporter eats”

Tawney Beans

Akron Beacon Journal

3rd Place

“Cincinnati's Top Content Creators”

David Wysong, Haadiza Ogwude, Grace Tucker, Kaycee Sloan

Cincinnati Enquirer

SPORTS FEATURE

Overall category judges' comments: Nice entries throughout, was a tough judgement to pick three.

1st Place

“Brutus hit first. Ohio State's mascot shares the inside scoop on his brawl with Rufus”

Sheridan Hendrix

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: Fantastic concept and execution. Love that it's different from the traditional sports feature topics.

2nd Place

“Why the Reds need Tito Francona and he might need them even more”

Gordon Wittenmyer

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Very nice work here. Terry is an excellent quote!

3rd Place

“Antonio Gates 'emotional' about journey from Kent State hoops to HOF”

Nate Ulrich

Akron Beacon Journal

Judges' comments: More than a career retrospective, this piece is quite comprehensive.

SPORTS NEWS

1st Place

“Ohio, Michigan midsize sports programs adapt to survive”

Joe Scalzo

Crain's Cleveland Business

2nd Place

“Paid to Play”

Steve Watkins

Cincinnati Business Courier

3rd Place

“We're doing this for Jimmy': Green dedicates football season to coach”

Nate Ulrich

Akron Beacon Journal

TRADE REPORT

1st Place

“Rubber product suppliers soar into aerospace”

Andrew Schunk

Rubber News

Judges' comments: It's not where the rubber meets the road, it's where the rubber meets the sky in this fascinating look an important but little-known aspect of the rubber and aircraft industries.

2nd Place

“An in-depth look at the Polymer Industry Cluster”

Sam Cottrill, Bruce Meyer, Andrew Schunk, Martin McConnell

Rubber News

3rd Place

“Silicone maintains upward momentum despite tariffs”

Andrew Schunk

Rubber News

TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION

1st Place

“Hour-long Buffalo City Hall tour worth a stop for history, art, architecture lovers (photos)”

Marc Bona

Cleveland.com

Judges' comments: Writing is first rate and along with the photos give the reader a sense of the unique nature of City Hall.

2nd Place

“Finding a Scorpion in Death Valley”

Don Detore

Tire Business Newspaper

Judges' comments: Well researched and in-depth look at these tires.

3rd Place

“Are all-weather tires taking over in Canada, eh?”

Kathy McCarron

Tire Business Newspaper

WEATHER

1st Place

“Rain: Black Fork River updates, live radar, flood info, forecast, more”

David Jacobs

Shelby News

NON-DAILY NEWSROOMS

WRITING, ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

1st Place

“Worthy of Lasting Love”

Kelly Blewett

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: Just a beautiful story that grabs you from the first paragraph and never lets up. Deep and thoughtful, written with care, just exceptional work.

2nd Place

“Park Preservation Plan”

CJN Staff

Cleveland Jewish News

3rd Place

“Cleveland native brings hometown soul food flair to Cleveland Restaurant Week”

Karin Connelly Rice

FreshWater Cleveland

WRITING, FEATURES - GENERAL

1st Place

“Going Wild: The Zoo at 150”

Staff

Cincinnati Magazine

2nd Place

“Tanking a Company Town”

David Holthaus

Cincinnati Magazine

3rd Place

“One-on-one with Amy Acton as she seeks to become next governor”

CJN Staff

Cleveland Jewish News

WRITING, FEATURES - PERSONALITY PROFILE

1st Place

“Refugee turned plastic surgeon mentors young women in STEM, gives back through charity work”

Jess Starr

FreshWater Cleveland

Judges' comments: Wonderful profile of a successful immigrant helping young women in STEM fields. The details about her early life convey the hardship her family overcame and the information about the women she has mentored completes the story.

2nd Place

“Drama Queen”

Laurie Pike

Cincinnati Magazine

3rd Place

“Councilman Mike Polensek nears half a century of sparring, serving Clevelanders”

Grant Segall

The Land

WRITING, PUBLIC SERVICE/COMMUNITY COVERAGE

1st Place

“Choose Your Own (Career) Adventure”

Emma Balcom, Brianna Connock, Claire Lefton, Jaclyn Youhana Garver

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: Nice writing and graphics about people finding their way in life.

WRITING, SPORTS

1st Place

“Living the Dream”

Charlie Goldsmith

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: Wonderful profile of an unheralded player who made it big. Great quotes and details.

VISUALS, PICTORIAL/PHOTO ESSAY

1st Place

“The Tin Man Follows His Heart”

Andrew Doench, Brianna Connock

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: Excellent photography of the photographer and crisp writing to explain how he found himself wanting to do tintypes, learning the process and making a go of it. Very interesting story.

2nd Place

“Faded memories: Ghost Signs of CLE”

Jeff Christina

FreshWater Cleveland

VIDEO

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

1st Place

“Actor grapples with 'Black Excellence' at Cleveland Public Theatre”

Jean-Marie Papoi

ideastream

Judges' comments: Creative portrait of an poet/actor/performer refining his voice. Well-chosen segments from interviews along with insights from others make for a engaging presentation.

BUSINESS/FINANCIAL

1st Place

“It's one of Cleveland's hidden strengths”

Michelle Jarboe, Dennis Spronck

WEWS-TV 5

Judges' comments: Exceptionably well done. Big in scope up easy to follow. Loved it.

CONTINUING COVERAGE

1st Place

“SNAP benefits theft in Ohio”

Michelle Jarboe

WEWS-TV 5

Judges' comments: Brilliant reporting. Thoughtful, thorough, super interesting and obviously important.

2nd Place

“Kratom: Saving Lives or Taking Lives?”

Lisa Rantala, Ryan Taylor

WSYX

3rd Place

“Bernie's Battle”

Peggy Gallek, Ed Gallek

WJW Fox 8

CRIME & JUSTICE

1st Place

“Guards Gone Wild”

Scott Noll, Rob Klein

WEWS-TV 5

Judges' comments: Solid storytelling and exceptional editing.

2nd Place

“Inside Operation Queen City Justice”

Jenna Jordan

Spectrum News

3rd Place

“Multi-agency forces targeting repeat violent criminals in Ohio cities”

Jo Ingles, Daniel Konik

Ohio Public Television

DOCUMENTARY

1st Place

“Fallout: Contamination, Cancer & Death”

Duane Pohlman, Holden Robinson, Richard Henry, News Staff

WKRC-TV

Judges' comments: Exceptional large scale story telling. Huge in scope but the narrative was easy to follow and understand.

ENVIRONMENT

1st Place

“Flowing Fear & Fractured Trust”

Duane Pohlman, Holden Robinson, Richard Henry, News Staff

WKRC-TV

GENERAL NEWS

1st Place

“Nobody's Trying To Help Him”

Scott Noll, Mark Puente, Brittany Hailer

WEWS-TV 5

Judges' comments: Lots of effort went into this report.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

1st Place

“Medically fragile kids shut out of child care in Ohio”

Jo Ingles, Daniel Konik

Ohio Public Television

2nd Place

“Bernie meets donor family”

Peggy Gallek, Ed Gallek

WJW Fox 8

HISTORY

1st Place

“Ghost stories of 'The Shawshank Redemption' prison live on in Mansfield”

Jean-Marie Papoi, Dave DeOreo

ideastream

2nd Place

“Station 26”

Ciarra Nelson, Niki Farahmand, Ken Scheck, Andy Benesh

TV20

HUMAN INTEREST

1st Place

“Saddles and Service ”

Eleanor Hayes, Andy Benesh, Niki Farahmand, Janelle Bass Hawthorne

TV20

Judges' comments: Very interesting to see how this all works with a mounted police.

2nd Place

“Candy maker's sweet social media stunt melts bureaucratic barriers”

Michelle Jarboe, Dennis Spronck

WEWS-TV 5

Judges' comments: Good feature to get things changed in city government.

3rd Place

“Pointy hats off to the witches who made Ohio history”

Ygal Kaufman

ideastream

IN-DEPTH REPORT OR SERIES

1st Place

“Fallout: Contamination, Cancer & Death”

Duane Pohlman, Holden Robinson

WKRC-TV

Judges' comments: Just a marvel of local reporting. Incredibly well-researched and in-depth and obviously, incredibly important material that otherwise might be ignored.

2nd Place

“Browns to Brook Park”

Michelle Jarboe

WEWS-TV 5

Judges' comments: Outstanding reporting. Complicated topics clearly explained, just superb reporting overall and these stories featured spectacular editing.

3rd Place

“A Reporter's Survival Story”

Tiffani Tucker, Kevin Rans, Steve Durning, Eric Walls

WOIO-TV

Judges' comments: Compelling emotional story.

LIVE ON-THE-SCENE REPORT

1st Place

“Boone Co. SWAT Standoff”

Tyler Madden, Jake Cail

WKRC-TV

Judges' comments: While the reporter and videographer were clearly limited in their ability to move or access more compelling video, they thoroughly conveyed all of the critical information for viewers. The live update with the Sheriff's spokesman and the outstanding and timely live phone interview with a neighbor provided a clear and compelling picture of the action as it was happening.

NEWS FEATURE

1st Place

"Justice Delayed: The Search for Lester Eubanks"

Jenna Jordan

Spectrum News

2nd Place

"A Mom's Pain Turned Into Passion"

Tiffani Tucker, Tim Dubravetz

WOIO-TV

PROFILE

1st Place

"Why your Egg McMuffin has a Northeast Ohio connection"

Michelle Jarboe, Dennis Spronck

WEWS-TV 5

Judges' comments: The writing was crisp and easy to follow and the editing was brilliant. Excellent overall.

PUBLIC SERVICE/PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1st Place

"A New Day Breast Cancer Awareness Special"

Tiana Henry, Myra Moellman, Peter Kasprzcki

WCPO 9

Judges' comments: Beautiful idea to honor a friend with this important show.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1st Place

"Youth Helmet Safety Standards"

Duane Pohlman, Holden Robinson

WKRC-TV

Judges' comments: A informative technology piece showing the helmet lab studying CTE, and youth helmets with a great video.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN- ALL PLATFORMS

1st Place

“Hidden History”

Anna Huntsman, Dmitri Ashakih, Jean-Marie Papoi

ideastream

Judges' comments: Gives excellent reporting on Wade Park through social media.

SPORTS COMMENTARY

1st Place

“Ken Carmantary”

Ken Carman

WEATHERCAST

1st Place

“Watches and Warnings”

Johnny Gormly

Marquee Broadcasting Ohio

Judges' comments: Creative use of tacos to help explain the differences between storm watches and warnings. It's an attention-grabber.

AUDIO

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

1st Place

“Sweet harmony rings as Ohio singers hone their barbershop performances”

Ygal Kaufman

ideastream

Judges' comments: Old-timey barbershop music continues to thrive as the singer presented here show why. Informative with the history and intricacies of singing in harmony.

BUSINESS/FINANCIAL

1st Place

“Akron guitar pedal maker for Coldplay, Black Keys worries tariffs could force it to offshore operations”

J. Nungesser

ideastream

Judges' comments: Excellent choice of a local business to show the impact of tariffs on a niche product.

CONTINUING COVERAGE

1st Place

“Tracking the \$60 billion Ohio budget”

Karen Kasler, Jo Ingles, Sarah Donaldson, Daniel Konik

Ohio Public Radio

Judges' comments: Incredibly well done and well researched. Each piece dives into a different topic of how the budget impacts crucial programs and departments. Great work!

CRIME & JUSTICE

1st Place

“Special prosecutor shares insight on business owner Bobby George's domestic violence plea deal”

Sound of Ideas Team

ideastream

Judges' comments: For the public, plea deals are one of the most vexing and misunderstood parts of the criminal justice system and this entry does a wonderful job probing into a plea deal in a deeply troubling domestic violence case. It offers great insight from the special prosecutor who handled the case as well as other experts. And it captures the fact that the pursuit of justice can often be imperfect. Nice job with the interviews.

2nd Place

“Aliza: Her Story”

Michael C. Butz, Sara Shookman, Stephanie Holmes, Jennifer Sherman

Cleveland Jewish News

Judges' comments: Cold cases have long been catnip to the public, but this podcast nonetheless does a very good job drawing in the listener and making them care and want to hear more. Nice pacing and explanation of the timeline of the crime.

EDUCATION

1st Place

“Why are so many adults struggling with low literacy in Cleveland and beyond?”

Conor Morris

ideastream

Judges' comments: What an impactful interview!

ENVIRONMENT

1st Place

“Can 'mycotecture' provide the building block for Cleveland's housing needs?”

Zaria Johnson

ideastream

Judges' comments: Engaging local feature story on a unique and compelling solution to address housing challenges.

2nd Place

“On Lake Erie, Ohio agencies are bracing for gutted clean water funds”

Sarah Donaldson

Ohio Public Radio

Judges' comments: Well-executed public-interest reporting that rings the alarm bells of what funding cuts could mean for Lake Erie and maintaining clean water supply.

FOOD/RESTAURANT

1st Place

“The Menu | Food experts say veganism is becoming more popular, accessible in Northeast Ohio”

Sound of Ideas Team

ideastream

Judges' comments: A great overview to veganism that highlights personal journeys and ways to ease into the lifestyle.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

1st Place

“These Cleveland candidates are unopposed, but they're still campaigning to increase low voter turnout”

Abbey Marshall

ideastream

Judges' comments: Excellent man-on-the-street reporting. It was an engaging look at the subjects and the reason why they are campaigning the way they are. Congrats!

2nd Place

“Draft legislation puts \$600M for Cleveland Browns stadium into state budget”

Karen Kasler

Ohio Public Radio

Judges' comments: Very detailed, well-researched article. Although the heavy focus on data made the story a bit hard to follow. Still excellent background and summation of the issue.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

1st Place

"You nurtured it": How dehydration, sugar and salt lead to kidney stones"

Stephen Langel

ideastream

Judges' comments: Walks an excellent line between first-person observation, useful factual reporting, and humor; nicely done!

2nd Place

"Medically fragile kids shut out of child care in Ohio"

Jo Ingles

Ohio Public Radio

Judges' comments: Well-reported

3rd Place

"A welcome gift for some Ohio parents - a nurse at the door"

Taylor Wizner

ideastream

HISTORY

1st Place

"The haunting of Cleveland's Fire Engine House No. 6 and other forgotten cemeteries"

Abbey Marshall

Ideastream

HUMAN INTEREST

1st Place

"This Amherst artist is healing trauma scars with tattoo art"

J. Nungesser

ideastream

LIFESTYLE FEATURE

1st Place

"For the love of ghost stories: a look at two of Columbus' 'haunted' historic homes"

Allie Vugrincic

WOSU 89.7 FM

Judges' comments: Who doesn't love a good ghost story? This was a fun look at two supposedly haunted Columbus homes that made great use of audio elements.

2nd Place

“What's the ‘Ohio accent’? Depends on where exactly you're from”

Richard Cunningham

ideastream

NEIGHBORHOOD/COMMUNITY NEWS

1st Place

“Despite Cleveland's unpredictable weather, these beekeepers hope to keep the hive alive”

Richard Cunningham

Ideastream

NEWS FEATURE

1st Place

“‘Journey is not yet over’: Wooster woman shares barriers deaf immigrants face in citizenship process”

Anna Huntsman

ideastream

Judges' comments: Both the written story and the audio story were really well done. The added special needs component of the citizenship story made it really compelling.

PODCAST

1st Place

“Akron punk queen Tracey Thomas returns with new acoustic album and memoir”

Amanda Rabinowitz, Brittany Nader

ideastream

Judges' comments: Very interesting stuff but also, really well edited. The extra touch of adding the music to the podcast made it so much more fun to listen to.

2nd Place

“This News is So Gay”

Ken Schneck

The Buckeye Flame

3rd Place

“Untangled: The Cost of Learning”

Amy Juravich, Marcus Charleston, Erin Esmont Rabinowitz

WOSU 89.7 FM

PROFILE

1st Place

“World's 'oldest practicing doctor' lives in Cleveland Heights”

Taylor Wizner

ideastream

Judges' comments: Super interesting, fun story.

PUBLIC SERVICE/PUBLIC AFFAIRS

1st Place

“Early diagnosis and individualized treatment can aid those living with ADHD”

Sound of Ideas Team

ideastream

Judges' comments: Very interesting exploration into an obviously important topic.

RACE & DIVERSITY REPORTING

1st Place

“I'm suffering here': Trans woman shares struggles from behind bars in Lorain County men's prison”

J. Nungesser, Cardell Belfoure

ideastream

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

1st Place

“Tech leaders look to nuclear power to help solve rising power demand”

Sound of Ideas Team

ideastream

SPORTS FEATURE

1st Place

“Hundreds tried out to be the Akron RubberDucks announcer. Here's who knocked it out of the park”

Anna Huntsman

ideastream

USE OF SOUND

1st Place

“Cleveland's historic performing arts camp, Showagon, stars in another summer of shows”

Gabriel Kramer

ideastream

Judges' comments: A nice feature on Cleveland's performing arts camp where we hear singing, dance performances, and heartfelt comments from instructors and students.

VISUALS

ANIMATION/MOTION GRAPHICS

1st Place

“December issue: Social media animation”

Matthew Spoleti

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: Nice use of Instagram to highlight an issue

DRONE PHOTOGRAPH

1st Place

“New Richmond Flooding”

Sam Greene

The Cincinnati Enquirer

FEATURE PHOTOGRAPH

1st Place

“2025 Book of Lists ”

Corrie Schaffeld

Cincinnati Business Courier

Judges' comments: A beautiful perspective. Knowing where to be when you shoot makes a world of difference

2nd Place

“Ms. McGinnis”

Cara Owsley

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Some photos capture a moment of pure joy. Well done.

3rd Place

“PorchROKR”

Jeff Lange

Akron Beacon Journal

Judges' comments: A good photographer knows exactly where to shoot from. The change in perspective creates a standard photo into an excellent story with no cutline needed.

FEATURE VIDEOGRAPHY

1st Place

“Jeffrey Harris”

Sam Greene

The Cincinnati Enquirer

ILLUSTRATION SINGLE IMAGE

1st Place

“Ready or not, here it comes”

Michael McCrady

Rubber News

Judges' comments: Brilliant illustration that perfectly fits the tone of the story.

2nd Place

“Bootsy Collins”

Jessica Dunham

Cincinnati Magazine

GENERAL NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

1st Place

“Rainbow Illumination”

Adam Cairns

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: Stunning!

2nd Place

“Long Day”

Sam Greene

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Captures a moment of humor in an otherwise would be boring photo.

3rd Place

"Reopened"

Sam Greene

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: A good photographer knows exactly where to shoot from. The change in perspective creates a standard photo into an excellent story with no cutline needed.

MULTIPLE-PHOTO ESSAY- GALLERY OR SLIDESHOW

1st Place

"No gloves, no walks, chalkboard scorekeeping — vintage base ball plays by 1860s rules"

Adam Cairns

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: Vintage baseball has the widest variety of creative shots, mixing types of depth, lighting and framing to create all kinds of action shots.

2nd Place

"Is Cincinnati Fine dining dead?"

Corrie Schaffeld

Cincinnati Business Courier

3rd Place

"First Snow Fall"

Andrew Dolph

Akron Beacon Journal

MULTIPLATFORM PROJECT

1st Place

"Go inside tryouts for the Ohio State Marching Band"

Adam Cairns

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: What a great idea to make a fun yet compelling video and a gallery of photos of the Ohio State University band tryouts!

PAGE DESIGN- COVER- BROADSHEET- TABS & MAGAZINES

1st Place

"Global Tire Report"

Michael McCrady

Tire Business Newspaper

Judges' comments: Clean design and creative use of a tire perfectly illustrate the global report without unnecessary clutter.

2nd Place

“Sandwiches!”

Brittany Dexter

Cincinnati Magazine

3rd Place

“April 4, 2025 Cover”

Stephen Valentine

Cleveland Jewish News

PAGE DESIGN- SINGLE PAGE- BROADSHEET- TABS & MAGAZINES

1st Place

“The Vegan Issue”

Abigail Archer

Cleveland Magazine

Judges' comments: Beautiful layout. I love the creativity in finding ways to center the food photography by wrapping the headline.

2nd Place

“In Conversation: Darius Garland and Tristan Thompson”

Erin Stinard

Cleveland Magazine

Judges' comments: A creative presentation that allows focus on both main subjects without one detracting from the other!

PORTRAIT/PERSONALITY PHOTOGRAPH

1st Place

“Poet laureate Richard Hague”

Corrie Schaffeld

Cincinnati Business Courier

Judges' comments: Very nice portrait, the leading lines of the shelves bring your eye right to the subject.

2nd Place

“Paper mill closed”

Adam Cairns

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: Nice frame, I wish there was a bit more light on this side of his face but otherwise the color is beautiful.

SPOT NEWS PHOTOGRAPH

1st Place

“2025 Opening Day Parade”

Corrie Schaffeld

Cincinnati Business Courier

Judges' comments: The winner did a great job of showing the full interest of the attendees. Fun, colorful shots.

2nd Place

“Exchange Fire”

Lisa Scalfaro

Akron Beacon Journal

3rd Place

“Immigration protest”

Adam Cairns

The Columbus Dispatch

SPORTS PHOTOGRAPH

1st Place

“Touchdown”

Jeff Lange

Akron Beacon Journal

Judges' comments: Touchdown perfects the touchdown shot in motion, with an added touch of the snow.

2nd Place

“Hockey crash”

Adam Cairns

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: A great shot showcasing with a balance of sports action and framed perfectly.

3rd Place

“Eyes on the basket”

Adam Cairns

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: A creative shot with the eyes looking through the hoop.

STUDIO PHOTOGRAPH

1st Place

“Glass half full”

Corrie Schaffeld

Cincinnati Business Courier

Judges' comments: Great composition. Good eye for what is needed in creating a photo that fits a story and can be used in illustration

COLLEGE STUDENT MEDIA

WRITING- GENERAL NEWS

1st Place

“3 BGSU football players arrested”

Tyler Kavalecz, Nate Hinnens, Foster Roesti, Curt Lydy

BG Falcon Media

Judges' comments: Good solid piece of reporting. No frills just the facts.

2nd Place

“A timeline of President Bloomberg's involvement with the Inter-University Council of Ohio and SB1”

Jane Matousek

The Cleveland Stater

3rd Place

“Student journalist convicted of misdemeanor in Kentucky court, acquitted of all other charges”

Joe Carey, Chloe Hall

The News Record

WRITING- FEATURE

1st Place

“Rewriting the Small Town Narrative: Why Journalism Matters in Rural Communities”

Evelyn Megery

Northern Review

Judges' comments: A feature that convey's the importance of local journalism, and an added bonus the article included video.

2nd Place

“Loneliness on JCU's campus”

Anna Maxwell

John Carroll University

3rd Place

“A 50-year-evolution of tuition costs at John Carroll University”

Amelia Marlow

John Carroll University

WRITING- SPORTS

1st Place

“The unmistakable voice: Resilience, records and Grace Bodrock's lasting mark on BGSU swimming ”

Dawson Pelter

BG Falcon Media

2nd Place

“Kal-EI Pascal: 'The Voice of God'”

Rhys Patrykus

BG Falcon Media

3rd Place

“Josh Risko outruns cancer and finds his stride ”

Tyler Kavalecz, Holden Ruck

BG Falcon Media

AUDIO- GENERAL NEWS

1st Place

“Heights Now: Local communities and leaders alarmed by antisemitic displays”

Brendan Elbin

John Carroll University

Judges' comments: Nice stories with some very good interviews. Look at rising antisemitism is well done.

2nd Place

“Heights Now: New Owners for Jack's Deli”

Tate Farinacci

John Carroll University

3rd Place

“Heights Now: Cleveland Heights Mayor denounces recall effort in exclusive interview”

Brendan Elbin

John Carroll University

VIDEO- SPORTS

1st Place

“A 'Nail Biting Interview' with Sydnie Hernandez”

Andrew Smith, Ben Corak

BG Falcon Media

Judges' comments: Clever approach that leads to a conversational and compelling discussion. Could use more video of Hernandez in her element rather than just stills from volleyball, but the nail-painting activity puts a fun spin on what's usually the least visually compelling part of the standard sitdown interview.

VISUALS- GRAPHICS

1st Place

“Ticket Outrage: 2025 Shatters Citation Record”

Janessa Jewel

BG Falcon Media

Judges' comments: Well done and creative graphic. The visuals aid in the storytelling!

VISUALS- PAGE DESIGN

Overall category judges' comments: Really well done entries! All were very creative.

1st Place

“Ticket Outrage: 2025 Shatters Citation Records”

Janessa Jewel

BG Falcon Media

Judges' comments: Very creative! The visual design plays to the nature of the story, well done.

2nd Place

“Kal-EI: The Voice of God”

Emerald Shanefelt

BG Falcon Media

Judges' comments: Creative sports graphic, I like the use of the comic book style design.

3rd Place

“Best of BG”

Ali Khoramshad

BG Falcon Media

Judges' comments: The design feels very playful which is fitting for its purpose.

VISUALS- PHOTOGRAPHY

1st Place

“Above The Rockets”

Kamon Molina

BG Falcon Media

Judges' comments: Excellent composition in capturing a second of time.

2nd Place

“All Out Effort”

Coyle Withrow

BG Falcon Media

Judges' comments: Great action shot with good clarity for sports.

3rd Place

“Tearful Comeback”

Curt Lydy

BG Falcon Media

Judges' comments: You really captured a moment here.

EDITORIAL & COMMENTARY

1st Place

“Why WCSB matters to me”

Nicole Wloszek

The Cleveland Stater

Judges' comments: Nicole captured the meaningful excitement of joining the radio station in college, and how the joy vanished when the station's management changed.

2nd Place

“The Five Stages of Going Vegan at ONU: Final Thoughts”

Sunny Lloyd

Northern Review

BEST IN OHIO

BEST IN OHIO: COLLEGE REPORTER (PRINT/ONLINE)

1st Place

Evelyn Megery

Northern Review

Judges' comments: The reporter presents an impressive collection of pieces from a story about the formerly losing school football team and profiles of the college mascots, to a look at the challenges facing rural and college journalism and one student's journey to becoming a Polar Bear. All well written and imaginative. What really stands out is the punchy leads and the subtle details in the writing: "That eagerness dwindled after we lost the next game. And the next one. And the two following that." Well done.

2nd Place

Jacob Meyers

John Carroll University

BEST IN OHIO: COLLEGE REPORTER (AUDIO)

1st Place

Brendan Elbin

John Carroll University

Judges' comments: Nice stories with some very good interviews. Look at rising antisemitism is well done.

BEST IN OHIO: FREELANCE REPORTER

1st Place

Grant Segall

The Land

Judges' comments: Articles on a variety of topics and all of them are engaging. Wonderful reporting and writing.

2nd Place

Matt Florjancic

The Chronicle-Telegram and The Blade

3rd Place

Jill Sell

Akron Beacon Journal

BEST IN OHIO: HEADLINE WRITER

1st Place

Matthew Hall

Shop! Association

Judges' comments: Clever, concise, and compelling headlines from this publication.

2nd Place

Bob Jacob

Cleveland Jewish News

3rd Place

Lisa Mauch

Dayton Daily News

BEST IN OHIO: OPINION WRITER

1st Place

Cheryl Powell

Akron Beacon Journal

Judges' comments: These editorials rely on facts to make a strong case against federal spending cuts and other Trump administration policies affecting Ohio's only National Park, housing and food assistance for needy state residents, Akron's schools, and the public's confidence in vaccines.

2nd Place

Kevin Aldridge

Cincinnati Enquirer

3rd Place

Theresa Bennett

Akron Beacon Journal

BEST IN OHIO: GRAPHIC DESIGNER

1st Place

Stephen Valentine

Cleveland Jewish News

Judges' comments: Varied use of graphics and photography to clearly illustrate the stories.

2nd Place

Jessica Simon

Cleveland Jewish News

3rd Place

Michael Nyerges

Cincinnati Enquirer

BEST IN OHIO: ART DIRECTOR

1st Place

Emi Villavicencio

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: Nice collection. Parts 1 and 3 are especially creative.

2nd Place

Michael McCrady

Rubber News

BEST IN OHIO: ILLUSTRATOR

1st Place

Jeff Darcy

Cleveland.com

Judges' comments: Cartoons by local papers are a rarity now but this collection shows their value in adding a different dimension of journalism. Nice collection. Parts 1 and 3 are especially creative.

BEST IN OHIO: PHOTOJOURNALIST (STILL IMAGERY)

Overall category judges' comments: This was a tough category. Each one of these photographers demonstrate that they know the nuances of taking great photos that tell a story, capture a second in time, and bring a different perspective that can turn a dull photo into something phenomenal. A job extremely well done by all.

1st Place

Adam Cairns

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: Only one word for this work. Stunning!

2nd Place

Kevin Whitlock

The Repository

Judges' comments: Excellent work. Such an array of photos with different styles, angles with each telling a story in time.

3rd Place

Sam Greene

The Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: A great photographer has patience, waiting for that click to capture the perfect moment.

BEST IN OHIO: SPORTS REPORTER (PRINT/ONLINE)

1st Place

Joey Kaufman

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: This is how you cover a beat: with expertise honed by experience that shines on game day; by forging relationships that provide access for a great feature on Coach Ryan Day's relationship with his high school quarterback son; and by filing open records requests to get details behind a coach's firing--and in attempt to learn more about payments to athletes.

2nd Place

Gordon Wittenmyer

Cincinnati Enquirer

3rd Place

Jonah Rosenblum

Record Courier

BEST IN OHIO: SPORTS REPORTER (VIDEO)

1st Place

Chris Renkel

WKYC

Judges' comments: A great display of the multiple talents and multiple levels of sport that are at the core of any talented sports journalist!

BEST IN OHIO: ON-AIR TALENT (AUDIO)

1st Place

Amanda Rabinowitz

ideastream

Judges' comments: Excellent delivery -- calm and confident, which supports credibility. Talent excels at that classic NPR sound.

BEST IN OHIO: NEWS REPORTER (PRINT/ONLINE)

1st Place

Tim Botos

The Repository

2nd Place

Stephanie Warsmith

Akron Beacon Journal

3rd Place

Annie Nickoloff

Cleveland Magazine

BEST IN OHIO: NEWS REPORTER (VIDEO)

Overall category judges' comments: Three strong storytellers: investigative, puts human faces to the issues, stories. Strong production to compliment the journalism.

1st Place

Duane Pohlman

WKRC-TV

Judges' comments: Outstanding work. Emotional, human, backed up with documentation, quotes from gov. What journalism should be.

2nd Place

Jenna Jordan

Spectrum News

Judges' comments: Strong, human stories. Impressive work by reporter who shot and edited as well. The quality of the shots and edits helped produce strong storytelling

3rd Place

Lisa Rantala

WSYX

Judges' comments: Good, aggressive reporting. Wondering why there wasn't a response from the hospital or their attorney in story No. 2?

BEST IN OHIO: NEWS REPORTER (AUDIO)

1st Place

George Shillcock

WOSU 89.7 FM

Judges' comments: Strong writing, excellent use of ambient sound, and compelling storytelling make this reporter's portfolio standout.

BEST IN OHIO: COLLEGE NEWSPAPER

1st Place

"The Carroll News"

Staff

John Carroll University

Judges' comments: Nice story selection and placement. Good sports photos. Nice blend of news and features.

BEST IN OHIO: COLLEGE WEBSITE

1st place

["CarrollNews.org"](http://CarrollNews.org)

Staff

John Carroll University

Judges' comments: Strong student website with a good mix of news and features. Intuitive design, good visual variety.

2nd Place

["NorthernReview.org"](http://NorthernReview.org)

Staff

Northern Review

BEST IN OHIO: WEBSITE

Overall category judges' comments: All of the entries demonstrated a strong commitment to delivering timely, relevant content to their audiences, and it was clear a great deal of care goes into maintaining each platform. Across the board, sites were informative and purposeful, making this a competitive category to evaluate.

Several entries stood out for their functionality and consistent user experience, with WKYC Studios and Cincinnati Business Courier coming very close to placing. Both offered strong navigation and well-organized content, though ultimately the top selections edged ahead in overall design cohesion, visual storytelling, and a more distinctive user experience. Well done to everyone!

1st Place

["CincinnatiMagazine.com"](http://CincinnatiMagazine.com)

Claire Lefton, Staff

Cincinnati Magazine

Judges' comments: Best overall design, feels like a true extension of a print magazine (which is hard to do well). Strong visual storytelling with high-quality photography and layout. Easy, intuitive navigation without feeling templated. Has a clear editorial voice + brand identity. This is the only one that really balances beauty + usability + brand at a high level.

2nd Place

["Ideastream Public Media Website"](#)

Ideastream Public Media

ideastream

Judges' comments: Excellent UX, clear pathways for news, streaming, and education content. Smart use of multimedia (audio/video actually enhances experience). Clean, modern, purpose-driven design.

it's arguably the most functional and thoughtfully structured.

3rd Place

["WOSU Public Media website"](#)

Jared Brown, Nick Houser, Michael DeBonis

WOSU Public Media

Judges' comments: Very clean, user-friendly interface. Strong balance of readability + media integration. Cohesive, calming design that supports content well.

BEST IN OHIO: PUBLIC AFFAIRS/NEWS TALK SHOW (VIDEO)

1st Place

“The State of Ohio: July 25, 2025”

Karen Kasler, Daniel Konik, Jo Ingles, Sarah Donaldson

Ohio Public Television

Judges' comments: Important coverage with plenty of context.

2nd Place

“Sound of Ideas Community Tour - The Future of Shaker Lakes”

Sound of Ideas Team

ideastream

BEST IN OHIO: PUBLIC AFFAIRS/NEWS TALK SHOW (AUDIO)

1st Place

“Many women go through menopause without support or access to treatment”

Sound of Ideas Team

ideastream

2nd Place

“All Sides with Amy Juravich: How can the problem of hunger in America be solved?”

Amy Juravich, Marcus Charleston, Erin Esmont Rabinowitz

WOSU 89.7 FM

BEST IN OHIO: AUDIO NEWSCAST IN OHIO IN A MAJOR MARKET

(Cleveland- Columbus or Cincinnati)

1st Place

“Morning Edition”

Amy Eddings

ideastream

Judges' comments: Solid reporting, excellent audio quality and excellent delivery by the anchor.

BEST IN OHIO: VIDEO NEWSCAST IN OHIO IN A MAJOR MARKET

(Cleveland- Columbus or Cincinnati)

1st Place

“3News at 11: What's Next”

Sia Nyorkor, Kelly Salandro, Joshua Bailey, Bailey Lustic

WKYC

Judges' comments: High-quality newscast, start to finish, but the handling of the Cold Case lead story was excellent. Terrific cold open, comprehensive coverage with solid reporting.

2nd Place

“Fox 8 News”

Andy Fishman, Marc Singer, Jessica Bates

WJW Fox 8

3rd Place

“19 News At Noon”

Jodi Sproul, Nichole Vrsansky, Scott Carlson, Cassandra Nist

WOIO-TV

BEST IN OHIO: PRINT PERIODICAL

1st Place

Staff

Cleveland Magazine

Judges' comments: Great variety of articles. I particularly like the mix of short and long reads. Like the dining guide breakout at the end

2nd Place

Staff

Cincinnati Magazine

BEST IN OHIO: PRINT NON-DAILY

1st Place

Staff

Cincinnati Business Courier

Judges' comments: This is what a top-notch business weekly provides: interesting news stories from a wide variety of beats and a longer enterprise piece. I particularly appreciated the package of smaller apartment developer profiles and the insider look at the animosity between the Cincinnati Bengals and the public stadium owner--based on emails obtained through an open records request. Well done!

2nd Place

Staff

Columbus Business First

3rd Place

Staff

Rubber News

BEST IN OHIO: PRINT DAILY

1st Place

Staff

Cincinnati Enquirer

Judges' comments: Really good use of local writers throughout all sections. Photos are well done/well placed

2nd Place

Staff

The Columbus Dispatch

BEST IN OHIO: A-MARK PRIZE FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM IN OHIO

1st Place

“Fallout: Contamination, Cancer & Death”

Duane Pohlman

WKRC-TV

Judges' comments: In a very strong field, this work stood out for the depth of its reporting on a community often overlooked.

2nd Place

“Vicious: An investigation into how Ohio laws fail thousands of dog attack victims”

Laura Bischoff, Stephanie Warsmith

The Columbus Dispatch, Cincinnati Enquirer, Akron Beacon Journal and Canton Repository

Judges' comments: Strong reporting with vivid writing made this an impactful series.

3rd Place

“Invisible Killer”

Max Filby, Danae King, Samantha Hendrickson, Samantha Madar

The Columbus Dispatch

Judges' comments: This series provided potentially life-saving information that would not have otherwise been uncovered.