

# AWARDS CONTEST PACKET



Dear MFCP Members,

The annual award contest is upon us! So, start thinking about all of the ads you've published this year that stand out and make plans to submit them for judging by your peers. The deadline for entering is Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

Plan now on entering the competition and attending the Spring Conference where we will announce the winners.

It is important to read the following rules and verify that your ads are entered correctly.

## **ENTRY FEE**

\$6.00 (for MCN publishers) per entry must accompany your entries. (No charge for category 20).

## **DEADLINE DATE:**

All entries must be postmarked by Wednesday, January 14, 2026.

## **PDFS OF EACH AD ENTRY:**

In addition to pulling physical copies of the ads, please place a PDF of the same ad onto a flash drive. When you mail your entries, simply send the drive along as well and we'll take it from there. Naming conventions are: Category-Division-Name of Business.

Be sure to send them to:  
MFCP Ad Contest  
c/o Lee Borkowski  
29160 Hell Hollow Road  
Richland Center, WI 53581

Please phone 888-899-MFCP and alert us that your entries have been shipped. Any late entries will not be allowed to enter the competition, so please be punctual. All entries become the property of MFCP and may be used by MFCP for future promotional benefits.

**\*\* The dates for this year's General Excellence (category 19) will be March 16 and two other weeks of your choice.\*\***

## **JUDGING**

Judges are peers from outside our association who have experience in print publishing. Entries will be judged on appearance, creativity and effectiveness.

## **WINNERS**

Winners will be announced at the Spring Conference. 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place honors will be awarded with the exception of category 19, Judge's Choice and Best of Show in which an overall winner will be selected. Honorable mentions will be given when the judges feel it is deserved.

Attached are the contest rules, entry blanks, and entry forms. Please review them carefully. If you have any questions feel free to call the MFCP headquarters at 888-899-MFCP.

Good luck with all your entries!

Sincerely, Lee Borkowski Executive Director

## —RULES—

NOTE: All entries must conform to these rules. Any entry not conforming may be eliminated.

1. Any MFCP member in good standing may enter competition.
2. Entries must have been published between January 1 and December 31, 2025.
3. All entries **MUST** have been generated within your own shop or at your contracted outsourced graphic design service. Any entry supplied by an advertising agency, client, or art service spec ad will be eliminated from competition.
4. If an entry is entered in the wrong category it may be removed from the entire competition.
5. There is no limit to number of entries per publication per division – (except categories 18 & 19 where the limit is one per publication and in category 20 where the limit is 1 per designer).
6. A brief explanation, if necessary, may accompany your entries.
7. Ads will not be judged if entered in any other category except for their specific category.

### **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Entries for category 19 (General Excellence) should be placed in a large envelope with the entry blank attached to the **BACK** of the envelope. Please download a PDF copy of one of the front pages to your flash drive.
2. All entries must be from the actual printed paper (**no laser copies will be accepted**) except for submissions in category 20.
3. **NO Mounting needed!** All entries should be submitted with the entry blank on the back.
4. Mastheads and Datelines **SHOULD NOT** be included.
5. Entry blanks shall be attached to the **BACK** of entries in the upper right hand corner or stapled to the back page of multiple page entries.

**ABSOLUTELY NO CONTEST ENTRY BLANKS ON FRONT OF ANY ENTRIES.**

### **NO FULL PAGE TEAR SHEETS:**

Full page tear sheets on the back of each entry are no longer required. In a rare situation, a publication may be asked to provide a full page tear sheet after the entry has been submitted.

# 2026 Awards Competition

(for ads that published 1/1/2025 through 12/31/2025)

file name for zip drive  
Category-Division-Name of business

## CATEGORY 1

### BEST DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT AD

*This category includes all restaurant, event and entertainment ads*

|          |   |                                    |            |
|----------|---|------------------------------------|------------|
| Division | 1 | Black & White - Any Size           | (1-1-name) |
| Division | 2 | Color - spot or process - Any size | (1-2-name) |

## CATEGORY 2

### BEST AUTOMOTIVE AD

*This category includes all automotive ads including vehicles, parts and service.*

|          |   |                                      |            |
|----------|---|--------------------------------------|------------|
| Division | 1 | Any Size Ad - Black & White or Color | (2-1-name) |
|----------|---|--------------------------------------|------------|

## CATEGORY 3

### BEST GROCERY AD

*This Category includes all grocery ads*

|          |   |                                                          |            |
|----------|---|----------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Division | 1 | Any Size Ad or Separate Section - Black & White or Color | (3-1-name) |
|----------|---|----------------------------------------------------------|------------|

## CATEGORY 4

### BEST AGRICULTURE AD

*This category includes all agriculture ads for products, equipment or services.*

|          |   |                    |            |
|----------|---|--------------------|------------|
| Division | 1 | Black and White ad | (4-1-name) |
| Division | 2 | Color Ad           | (4-2-name) |
| Division | 3 | Separate Section   | (4-3-name) |

## CATEGORY 5

### BEST PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AD

*This category includes ads for lawyers, finances, insurance, political ads and health*

|          |   |                                    |            |
|----------|---|------------------------------------|------------|
| Division | 1 | Black & White - Any Size           | (5-1-name) |
| Division | 2 | Color - spot or process - Any size | (5-2-name) |

## CATEGORY 6

### BEST HELP WANTED AD

*This category includes any advertisement for help wanted.*

|          |   |                         |            |
|----------|---|-------------------------|------------|
| Division | 1 | Black & White           | (6-1-name) |
| Division | 2 | Color - spot or process | (6-2-name) |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                |   |                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>CATEGORY 7</b>                                                                                                                                                                              |   |                                                                    |
| <b>BEST MISCELLANEOUS AD - Small space - quarter page or smaller</b>                                                                                                                           |   |                                                                    |
| <i>This category includes ads not included in the above categories</i>                                                                                                                         |   |                                                                    |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 | Black & White (7-1-name)                                           |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 | Color - spot or process (7-2-name)                                 |
| <b>CATEGORY 8</b>                                                                                                                                                                              |   |                                                                    |
| <b>BEST MISCELLANEOUS AD - Large space - larger than a quarter page</b>                                                                                                                        |   |                                                                    |
| <i>This category includes ads not included in the above categories</i>                                                                                                                         |   |                                                                    |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 | Any Size Ad - Black & White or Color (8-1-name)                    |
| <b>CATEGORY 9</b>                                                                                                                                                                              |   |                                                                    |
| <b>BEST AD SERIES (9-1-name)</b>                                                                                                                                                               |   |                                                                    |
| <i>This category includes single advertiser ads that have appeared in your publication at least three times within a three month time span. Ads must show continuity of theme and artwork.</i> |   |                                                                    |
| <b>CATEGORY 10</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |   |                                                                    |
| <b>BEST HOLIDAY AD - CHRISTMAS</b>                                                                                                                                                             |   |                                                                    |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 | Any Size Ad - Black & White or Color (10-1-name)                   |
| <b>CATEGORY 11</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |   |                                                                    |
| <b>BEST HOLIDAY AD - OTHER THAN CHRISTMAS</b>                                                                                                                                                  |   |                                                                    |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 | Any Size Ad - Black & White or Color (11-1-name)                   |
| <b>CATEGORY 12</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |   |                                                                    |
| <b>BEST ADVERTISING PROMOTION OR SPECIAL SECTION</b>                                                                                                                                           |   |                                                                    |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 | Promotion appearing as run of paper (12-1-name)                    |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 | Promotion appearing as special sections (12-2-name)                |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 3 | Promotion distributed separately from your publication (12-3-name) |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 4 | Signature page (12-4-name)                                         |
| <b>CATEGORY 13</b>                                                                                                                                                                             |   |                                                                    |
| <b>BEST SPECIAL SECTION FRONT PAGE</b>                                                                                                                                                         |   |                                                                    |
| <i>This category is for best special section cover pages.</i>                                                                                                                                  |   |                                                                    |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 | Division 1 newsprint publications without editorial (13-1-name)    |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 | Division 2 newsprint publication with editorial (13-2-name)        |
| Division                                                                                                                                                                                       | 3 | Division 3 glossy publications (13-3-name)                         |

| CATEGORY 14                                                                                                                               |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BEST SELF PROMOTION                                                                                                                       |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 1 | Print advertisements in your paper that promote the use of your paper by advertisers or acceptance by readers (14-1-name)                                           |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 2 | Promotion of your paper through publicity other than ads in your papers, but rather by direct mail, billboards, sell sheets, brochures, media kits, etc (14-2-name) |
| CATEGORY 15                                                                                                                               |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| BEST FRONT PAGE                                                                                                                           |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>This category is for your front page publication masthead. Entries will be judged on overall design appeal and composition quality</i> |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 1 | Division 1 newsprint publications without editorial (15-1-name)                                                                                                     |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 2 | Division 2 newsprint publication with editorial (15-2-name)                                                                                                         |
| CATEGORY 16                                                                                                                               |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| BEST NEWS/EDITORIAL                                                                                                                       |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>This category is for items written by your staff.</i>                                                                                  |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 1 | Best original News Story (16-1-name)                                                                                                                                |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 2 | Best original Feature Story (16-2-name)                                                                                                                             |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 3 | Best original Sports Story (16-3-name)                                                                                                                              |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 4 | Best original Editorial (taking a stand on an issue in your community) (16-4-name)                                                                                  |
| CATEGORY 17                                                                                                                               |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| BEST ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY                                                                                                                 |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Best original photo or series of photos, taken by a member of the paper's staff or a regular photo stringer.</i>                       |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 1 | Any published photo either editorial or within an advertisement (17-1-name)                                                                                         |
| CATEGORY 18                                                                                                                               |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| INTERNET SITE                                                                                                                             |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| This is for your website                                                                                                                  |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 1 | Overall Web Site (18-1-name)                                                                                                                                        |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 2 | Best Digital ad design - Banner ad or digital ad (18-2-name)                                                                                                        |
| CATEGORY 19                                                                                                                               |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| GENERAL EXCELLENCE                                                                                                                        |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <i>Publisher shall submit entire issue from week of March 16 and two other weeks of choice.</i>                                           |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 1 | For papers that carry news (19-1-name)                                                                                                                              |
| Division                                                                                                                                  | 2 | For papers that do not carry news (19-2-name)                                                                                                                       |
| CATEGORY 20                                                                                                                               |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| AD CREATION CONTEST                                                                                                                       |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |
| 1 entry will be allowed per designer                                                                                                      |   |                                                                                                                                                                     |

# MFCP 2026 Awards Competition

## REGISTRATION FORM

Please enter the number of entries per category you wish to enter.

Entries failing to meet specifications, including proper labeling will be disqualified. NO FEES WILL BE REFUNDED.

### CATEGORY 1

BEST DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT AD

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 2

BEST AUTOMOTIVE AD

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 3

BEST GROCERY AD

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 4

BEST AGRICULTURE AD

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 3 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 5

BEST PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AD

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 6

BEST HELP WANTED AD

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 7

BEST MISCELLANEOUS AD - Small space  
- quarter page or smaller

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 8

BEST MISCELLANEOUS AD - Large space  
- larger than a quarter page

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 9

BEST AD SERIES \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 10

BEST HOLIDAY AD - CHRISTMAS

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 11

BEST HOLIDAY AD - OTHER THAN  
CHRISTMAS

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 12

BEST ADVERTISING PROMOTION OR  
SPECIAL SECTION

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 4 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 13

BEST SPECIAL SECTION FRONT PAGE

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 3 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 14

BEST SELF PROMOTION

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 15

BEST FRONT PAGE

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 16

BEST NEWS/EDITORIAL

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 3 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 4 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 17

BEST ORIGINAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 18

INTERNET SITE

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 19

GENERAL EXCELLENCE

Division 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Division 2 \_\_\_\_\_

### CATEGORY 20

AD CREATION CONTEST

Designer Name \_\_\_\_\_

Designer Name \_\_\_\_\_

Designer Name \_\_\_\_\_

REMINDER TO SEND PDF ENTRIES ON A ZIP DRIVE WITH YOUR PRINTED COPIES.

NAMING CONVENTIONS: Category-Division-Name of business

**Publisher's Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Publication Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_ **City:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to: Midwest Free Community Papers

**Must be POSTMARKED by Wednesday, January 14, 2026.**

### MAIL ENTRIES:

MFCP Ad Contest

c/o Lee Borkowski

29160 Hell Hollow Road

Richland Center, WI 53581

Please phone and alert the MFCP headquarters  
that your entries and zip drive have been shipped: 888-899-MFCP.

TOTAL NUMBER OF PAID ENTRIES \_\_\_\_\_

### CALCULATE ENTRY FEE:

Entry Fee for MCN publisher

Number of entries \_\_\_\_\_ x \$6

**TOTAL DUE MFCP** \_\_\_\_\_

## 20. AD CREATION CONTEST

### **Earn up to \$200.00 for yourself!**

**This year we are asking you to create an ad for My Paper that promotes why an advertiser should use print and digital combined.**

**Design an ad that is attention-getting and something people will remember. Think outside the box when creating your ad.**

**This is the information you need to create the ad:**

1. The ad size is a quarter page (5" wide by 8" high)
2. The business information is as follows:

My Paper  
29160 Hell Hollow Road, Richland Center, WI 53581  
888-899-6327
3. Ad can be black and white or color, your choice.
4. **There is no entry fee for the Ad Creation Contest.**
5. No more than one entry per designer will be accepted.
6. Judging will be based on creativity, originality and adherence to the information provided.
7. Three winning ads will be chosen. The first place ad designer will be awarded \$200, the second place designer will receive \$100 and the third place designer will receive \$50.
8. Winners will be announced at the spring conference.
9. All entries must follow the information provided with the MFCP 2026 Awards Competition Official Rules for the development of this year's ad.
10. All ad entries will become the property of MFCP and will be distributed to our members for use within their publications.

The decision of the judges is final.

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_

# MFCP AWARDS CONTEST ENTRY

Publication: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Category#: \_\_\_\_\_

Division#: \_\_\_\_\_

Ad Designer: (for Ad Creation Contest Only): \_\_\_\_\_