

THE ALLIANCE OF AREA BUSINESS PUBLISHERS  
2026 EDITORIAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS LIST OF WINNERS

DESIGN CATEGORIES

**1. Best Cover - Magazine**

Bronze: *Virginia Business*; “Women in Leadership”; James Lee, Kate Andrews, Joel Smith

This impressive gatefold involves a difficult level of logistics, fashion, lighting and location. The elegant typography reflects the values in the photograph. There is a high level of attention paid to the details in the posing and positioning of the leaders. The orchestration creates a graceful balance. The additional attention to the colors in the fashion is integral, reinforcing how each part had succeed to make this impressive cover.

Silver: *Twin Cities Business*; “Fit for Life”; Mike Novak, Bill Phelps

There’s a wonderful level of visual complexity to this cover that evokes an ethereal feel that mixes time and life. The strongly placed subject is offset by the contrasting typography. This typographic treatment activates the space by its placement in the negative and physical spaces. The subject becomes an interactive subject within the headline. The black and white passes through him, moving the eye back and forth through the page and landing on the word “Life.”

Gold: *Insight On Business*; “True Colors”; Amelia Compton Wolff, Kelly Fochs

A beautiful use of fashionable and expressive type treatment graces the main cover line. The monochromatic color scheme ties together the image, allowing the subtle textures to make the subject more prominent. She’s the focal point and the cover lines are the natural secondary element. The gorgeous portrait, lovely color palette, good expression and placement of type is sophisticated. Examples of this sophistication are reflected in the way the typography references the dress and the background – as well as the layering of the headline. The clipping path of the stray hairs and the translucent type are further evidence of excellent execution.

**2. Best Feature Layout - Magazine**

Bronze: *Greater Baton Rouge Business Report*; “Next-gen Design”; Hoa Vu, Jackie Haxthausen

Wonderful interior architectural photography is published large so viewers can enjoy every detail. The exquisite photos anchor pages with portraits styled for the spaces. The viewers is able to feel like they’ve entered these spaces. The text is played lower, restrained and classic. Perfect balance, with subtle color pulled from the photographs, gives continuity to each spread. White space designed into the presentation draws attention to the minimal elements.

Silver: *Biz New Orleans*; “Pioneering Puppetry”; Sarah Majeste, Edmund Fountain

The opening typography effectively leans into the opportunity to use puppet strings as a design element. The continuation of the strings as column dividers is a clever way to carry the motif throughout subsequent pages. The overall quality of the photography and imagery is excellent. As the series of spreads ends, the layout visually “unmasks” the five story subjects as the final unveiling, another demonstration the design adding another layer of narrative flow.

Gold: *D CEO*; “Hitting Their Stride”; Hamilton Hedrick

Multiple unifying elements work together to create well-balanced page designs, starting with a clean, bold, sans-serif headline with wonderfully designed extended lines and hints of color. Smart, subtle ideas are placed with motion and flow in mind. Lovely maps and graphics help readers understand the story more effectively, and increase the fun and interest. There’s a lightheartedness, with pops of red and little graphic elements creating so many visual entry points. Readers stop, enter, begin and then do it all again. This design thoughtfully guides the reader through the text.

### **3. Best Overall Design – Magazine**

Bronze: *Hawaii Business*; Jeff Sanner, creative director; Aaron Yoshino, photographer; Jennifer Ablan, editor-in-chief; Steve Petranik, senior editor

Bright, engaging design captures a strong sense of place through vibrant color and expressive imagery. Photography highlights people in action, creating energy and authenticity across features, while page designs consistently integrate color in ways that feel purposeful and cohesive. Layouts are clean and highly navigable, with thoughtful use of simple shapes and lines to guide the reader. Standout spreads, including “Women Who Save Lives,” demonstrate compelling visual storytelling, and the anniversary issue reflects an ambitious effort to honor past styles. Altogether, the work conveys pride and personality through a lively and inviting visual approach.

Silver: *Biz New Orleans*; Sarah Majeste, art director

A confident, contemporary approach defines this magazine. Striking covers balance bold color, dynamic lighting, and engaging portraiture. Inside, the design utilizes a strong structure and hierarchy, making complex stories easy to navigate while maintaining visual interest. Typography plays a central role, with innovative and expressive treatments—including oversized forms and distinctive drop caps—that add personality and rhythm throughout. Strategic use of white space allows designs to breathe, while features such as “Eye on the Future,” “Saving More Than Scrim,” and “Real Estate Influencers” demonstrate the ability to do more with less through smart composition. The integration of illustration and vibrant photography further elevates the work, creating a publication that feels energetic, polished, and consistently engaging.

Gold: *D CEO Magazine*; Hamilton Hedrick, design director

Bold, vibrant photography defines the visual experience, gracing both covers and interior pages with a standout level of quality. Careful attention to detail elevates every spread, with the thoughtful inclusion of graphic elements—such as custom iconography for features like Women’s Wealth Managers and Corporate Counsel Awards—adding depth and distinction. Color is expertly selected and seamlessly integrated, creating striking accents and natural entry points that guide the reader through each page. The result is a cohesive, polished design that feels both refined and visually compelling.

### **4. Best Front Page – Newspaper**

Bronze: *Des Moines Business Record*; “April 25, 2025”; Kate Meyer, creative program director;

Patrick Herteen, designer; Sarah Diehn, editor

A strikingly minimal composition creates immediate intrigue, allowing a single, commanding image to anchor the page with confidence. Dramatic use of light and shadow adds depth and texture, transforming a simple subject into a refined visual statement. The restrained approach feels intentional and sophisticated, while a limited color palette reinforces a polished, authoritative tone. This front page demonstrates how bold simplicity can deliver lasting impact.

Silver: *Greater Wilmington Business Journal*; “March 2025”; Suzi Drake, art director; Mark Weber, artist

A clear and engaging layout guides the reader effortlessly through the page, supported by a strong and confident hierarchy. A conceptual illustration introduces the main story with a light, approachable tone, effectively translating complex ideas into a visually accessible format. Typography remains clean, consistent, and highly readable, allowing key headlines and entry points to stand out with purpose. The overall structure creates a balanced and approachable reading experience.

Gold: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “Will the Madigan verdict change anything?”; Thomas J. Linden, creative director

A disciplined and confident design approach delivers immediate visual impact, anchored by a dominant, emotionally charged photograph that conveys tension and gravity. The subject’s gaze draws attention directly into the headline, creating a powerful connection between image and text. Large-scale typography works in tandem with the photography to establish a compelling focal point, while thoughtful spacing reinforces a clear and intentional hierarchy. A restrained color palette—anchored by a signature red—provides cohesion and subtle emphasis, resulting in a front page that feels focused, authoritative, and deeply resonant.

## **5. Best Feature Layout – Newspaper**

Bronze: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “The Year in Sports”; Audrey Pelsor, lead designer

A thoughtfully designed timeline structure anchors the layout and guides readers through the year with clarity and precision. A substantial amount of content is handled with impressive control, maintaining readability while creating a dynamic visual flow across a single spread. Photography is seamlessly integrated within the timeline, adding energy and personality while reinforcing key moments. A clean and consistent typographic system supports hierarchy and organization, allowing important information to stand out.

Silver: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “Crain’s Forum on Neighborhood Vitality”; Jamey Fry, designer; Thomas J. Linden, creative director

A confident, well-structured layout carries the feature across multiple pages with clarity and cohesion. Strong hierarchy keeps complex content accessible, while the information graphics transform dense data into visually compelling and easily digestible insights. Photography, charts, and editorial elements create a steady visual rhythm that guides the reader through the narrative. A restrained yet purposeful use of color unifies the feature, directing attention to key data points and enhancing overall readability.

Gold: *Arkansas Business*; “Who’s Selling the Buds? (marijuana package)”; Wayne DePriest,

editorial art director; Kyle Massey, assistant editor; Mark Friedman, senior editor

Stunning full-bleed photography immediately captures attention, drawing readers into an immersive and visually rich experience. The imagery carries a strong, atmospheric tone that remains consistent throughout the package, creating a cohesive visual narrative. Typography, color, and layout work in harmony with the photography, maintaining clear hierarchy while enhancing each spread. Creative compositions—particularly those that blend text and image through effective use of negative space—add depth and visual interest. A strong variety of imagery, from detailed close-ups to dynamic scenes, sustains engagement and showcases a high level of design craft and storytelling sophistication.

## **6a. Best Overall Design – Small Tabloids**

Bronze: No award.

Silver: *The Business Journal, Fresno*; Gabriel Dillard, Cecilia Lopez, Israel Meave

The dynamic range of front-page compositions establish an immediate sense of energy and intent, offering a fresh visual approach for each issue. Large bold headlines anchor the pages, provide visual entry points, and help establish an elevated sense of visual hierarchy. The thoughtful use of color paired with creative photography, like coffee beans and wine, further elevate the overall design.

Gold: *Greater Wilmington Business Journal*; Suzi Drake

Illustrations and photography bring richness and vitality to the pages. Nowhere is this more evident than in the annual food event coverage. The typography is consistent and commanding, complementing art elements in a balanced and thoughtful manner. The use of color is reserved but purposeful, and the overall result is an elevated and inviting publication.

## **6b. Best Overall Design – Medium Tabloids**

Bronze: *Springfield Business Journal*; staff

The news-oriented designs are executed with precision, delivering a substantial amount of information in an efficient and highly readable manner. Bold and distinctive headlines as well as a thoughtful grid structure ensure that the content never feels overwhelming. Photography also plays a key role in elevating the storytelling, particularly in features like the “Office Envy” piece. The overall design successfully blends bold expression with journalistic clarity.

Silver: *Worcester Business Journal*; Mitchell Hayes

The beautiful and captivating cover photography commands attention. The page designs consistently pack a visual punch and skillfully present layers of content through appealing information graphics and well-crafted and informative sidebars. The photography is vibrant, expressive, infusing each page with a strong sense of personality from cover to cover. When design fosters such a personal connection, it’s sure to leave a lasting and timeless impression on its readers.

Gold: *Mainebiz*; Matt Selva

Quirky covers, photography full of personality, and creative typographic solutions

contribute to a winning design with a relaxed, inviting presence that feels genuinely fun. Meanwhile, the use of color plays a pivotal role in reinforcing a strong and distinctive brand identity. The graphic elements and the page designs are unique and create an immediate and lasting visual connection to the publication and the overall brand.

## **6c. Best Overall Design – Large Tabloids**

Bronze: *Los Angeles Business Journal*; Nina Bays, Marci Shrager, Pearl Beltran, Zane Hill, Monee Fields-White, Josh Schimmels

Conceptual illustrations—whether a whimsical unicorn or a mountain of money—create immediate intrigue, drawing readers in with clever, idea driven visuals. The opening pages are packed full of news and yet maintain a balance of density and clarity that ensures the abundance of information never feels overwhelming. Purposeful and wide-ranging color plays a key role in the organization of content as well as adding visual interest to each page. The use of color, inventive illustrations, and commanding photography come together to form an expressive and vibrant visual identity that reflects the personality of the city.

Silver: *Crain's Detroit Business*; Crain's staff

Be it the 40th Anniversary piece, or the “40 Under 40” feature, the covers exhibit a sense of harmony with imagery, headlines and text working together to deliver a cohesive and compelling first impression. The covers and page designs feel intentional and purposefully communicate a clear sense of hierarchy and organization. The page designs feature large photography, notably in the “Expectations Loom Large” feature, and demonstrate a dynamic visual rhythm with coherent and refined typography.

Gold: *Crain's Chicago Business*; Thomas J. Linden, Jason McGregor, Jamey Fry

Strong photography defines the visual tone, most notably in the “40 under 40” feature, where striking portraits capture both personality and leadership with clarity and confidence. The design throughout is marked by thoughtful choices that reflect a consistent sense of professionalism and sophistication. This approach is showcased particularly well in the “Neighborhood Vitality” feature, where the designs supports complex storytelling while maintaining an elevated and approachable aesthetic. The overall execution embodies the essence of business with both style and substance.

## **7a. Best Use of Photography/Illustrations – Newspapers**

Bronze: *Los Angeles Business Journal*; Nina Bays, David Sprague

Information graphics and photography enjoy a strong presence in content and display. “Money Talks” is an impressive, comprehensive data look at the city’s financial sector. The impact of recent wildfires is captured in a comprehensive graphic. The Snapshot packages include an abundance of photographs, including closeups, scene-setters and images of people enjoying the city.

Silver: *Mainebiz*; Matt Selva, Jim Neuger, Tim Greenway

A stunning package of Maine manufacturing images highlights this package of entries. Elsewhere, a beautiful set of images of oyster harvesting pulls readers out in to experience it all.

Overall the photography is consistently inviting, informative and engaging.

Gold: *Crain's Chicago Business*; Jason McGregor, Thomas J. Linden, Organic Headshots

There is so much to like in these examples, starting with bold lead or cover images that both grab attention and deliver information. The graphics provide a comprehensive dive to the numbers behind the stories. Vertical, scrolling presentation plays well to the online medium. Many of the charts use an effective mouseover technique to display individual data. The SNAP recipients graphic efficiently provides five different data sets in the space of one by toggling tabs across the top. Strong, informative photographs help bring the data to life. The “40 Under 40” portraits are of high technical quality, with beautiful color and composition.

### **7b. Best Use of Photography/Illustrations – Magazines**

Bronze: *Insight on Business*; Angela O’Kray, Amelia Compton Wolff, Kate Bruns

Stunning portraits feature composition, color, environment and background. The cover and inside lead photographs for “Behind the Curtain” tap into humor. The color and style of the “True Colors” cover is sophisticated and the inside pictures include a strong environmental portrait. The “Manohar Singh” portrait is simple yet strong. The beautifully shot for “Like Nowhere Else” provides a glimpse of the evolution of the business.

Silver: *D CEO*; Hamilton Hedrick

The consistently high technical quality of the photographs are sure to grab readers’ attention. Perhaps the best example is the stunning single-image, full spread “From Tragedy to Triumph.” Another full spread, “Choosing to Bloom” also sport a lively layout. A more storytelling, documentary approach delivers power to the “Don’t Tell Tiffany Derry No” journey.

Gold: *Florida Trend*; Gary Bernloehr, Jason Morton

Strong, generously displayed lead photos for the “When Ice Melts,” “Land Lords,” and “Beneath the Surface” packages transport the viewer around the world. Beautiful, seldom seen images of ice floes command attention. Images are consistently played well and of excellent quality. Editors use ample size and white space to enhance the effect. The Yacht Whisperer portrait pulls off difficult subject lighting in bright, harsh sunlight.

## ONLINE CATEGORIES

### **8a. Best Use of Multimedia**

Bronze: *Ottawa Business Journal*; “Forty Under 40”; Michael Curran, Khaled Abdel Jabbar, Brittney Meaghar

The personality of each Ottawan mover-and-shaker shines through in this fun series of get-to-know-you videos. The editing and framing of the participants makes for some humorous moments that will certainly encourage viewers to learn more about their innovative and high-achieving neighbors.

Silver: *Hawaii Business*; “I.C.E. Map”; Ken Wills, Randall Libramonte, Jennifer Ablan

This interactive map is an outstanding example of community journalism that invites the audience and community at large to meaningfully participate in the reporting. The map is dynamic and user-friendly, offering a public service while also explaining the larger impact of intensified immigration enforcement on a local economy.

Gold: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “Crain’s Forum”; Jason McGregor, Cassandra West, Judith Crown, John Pletz, Steve Hendershot, Ally Marotti

Data visualizations and illustrations are smoothly incorporated into the story layout, providing an approachable entry into subject matter that could otherwise feel intimidating or complex. While the narratives are excellent enough to stand on their own, these multimedia packages expertly consider how to elevate the content and provide an immersive and additive reading experience.

## **8b. Best Podcast**

Bronze: *Insight On Business*; “Episode 96: Meet Oshkosh Door's Chris Calawerts”; Kate Bruns, associate editor

This podcast does an excellent job of combining its guests’ professional insights with a personal touch, ensuring their humanity comes through in addition to their business acumen. The audience gets to know guests in their totality, which helps contextualize their advice and experience.

Silver: *Corridor Business Journal*; “Real Success with Nate Kaeding”; Nate Kaeding, host, Logan Schultz

The standout element of this podcast is host Nate Kaeding’s affable personality and his ease with the show’s guests. While the podcast features a wide variety of voices from the Iowa business community, Kaeding is able to seemingly effortlessly connect with each, leading to conversations that feel not just insightful, but candid and genuine.

Gold: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “IBJ Podcast”; Mason King, host, Chris Spangle, director of digital content

There is a specific attention to structure that sets this podcast apart from competitors, with each episode clearly laying out the stakes of the conversation to come. Host Mason King’s delivery is easy to follow, and he shifts gears seamlessly from narration to interview, engaging guests with curiosity and establishing a free-flowing rapport.

## **9. Best Daily Email**

Bronze: *Arkansas Business*; “Arkansas Business Morning Roundup”; Scott Carroll

News headlines in this daily email are intentionally woven into short, organized narratives. It’s a thoughtful approach that goes beyond the method of simply providing a list of links to instead break down stories into brief, informative summaries. The summaries themselves feel complete, but readers can easily pick out parts that interest them and click through to dive deeper into the full stories online.

Silver: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “IBJ’s Eight@8”; Mason King

This daily news email is both parts substantive and concise. It includes a digestible roundup of headlines with blurbs that provide adequate context and leave room for subscribers to click through and learn more on the website. This achieves the goal of any regular newsletter: to add value to the reader experience while expertly driving in more website traffic.

Gold: *Business North Carolina*; “Daily Digest”; David Mildenberg, Kevin Ellis

Packed with reporter personality and creative display text, this daily email delivers essential information in a format that catches readers’ attention and makes them feel invested. The email takes users through an experience that is delightful to unfold, with regular segments that appeal to several different backgrounds and preferences.

## 10. Best Specialty E-Newsletter

Bronze: *Des Moines Business Record*; “InnovationIowa Weekly”; Lisa Rossi

The newsletter opens in an engaging way that draws in readers immediately. The ads are placed in a way that doesn’t overpower and helps readers work through the content. Overall, the newsletter provides important information of about innovation, with high marks for narrative tone and overall experience.

Silver: *Business News*; “Mining Weekly Wrap”; Isabel Vieira, Jack McGinn, Tom Zaunmayr

The newsletter stands out for its clear specificity and a compelling narrative approach. The opening is particularly engaging, drawing readers in with a confident, well-framed lead that sets the tone effectively. The topic remains focused and well-defined throughout, reinforcing its credibility. The design makes it easy for readers to move through the content.

Gold: *Business North Carolina*; “NC Military Report”; Dan Barkin

The newsletter opens with a strong, credible narrator who immediately gets to the point, knows his audience, and is well-versed in the nitty gritty. This sense of authority and expertise carries through the tone and voice, which feel consistent and well-aligned with the publication’s purpose. The structure is also well executed, with blurbs and lists that are concise yet informative, striking a balance between depth and readability. Finally, the layout is highly navigable, with clean design followed by easy-to-follow organization.

## JOURNALISM CATEGORIES

### 11. Best Scoop

#### SMALL

Silver: *Crain’s Grand Rapids Business*; “Aquarium planned for nearly 200-acre contaminated landfill site along Grand River”; Kate Carlson, reporter

The story on purchasing a new aquarium at a contaminated landfill site stood out for its deeply investigative and research-driven approach. Strong sourcing, environmental context and compelling graphics combined to create a powerful and memorable scoop.

Gold: *Corridor Business Journal*; “\$28M foreclosure ruling sends iconic Iowa City properties to auction”; Annie Smith Barkalow, reporter

The story was published four days prior to official announcement, with other outlets following their coverage. The article was well written and clearly identified barriers that prolonged the project and outlined how innovative the company’s strategy was. In addition to highlighting property discussions, the piece did an excellent job of wrapping in critical housing discussions concerning mixed used development for these structures that many cities face.

#### MEDIUM

Silver: *Springfield Business Journal*; “Businesspeople sound alarm on MoDOT plans along Highway 60”; Geoff Pickle, reporter

The story highlighting MoDOT’s plans along Highway 60 captured attention through its strong local relevance and impactful opening quotes. The reporting encouraged readers to think more broadly about accessibility, infrastructure and how transportation decisions shape daily life.

Gold: *Arkansas Business*; “Arkansas Blue Cross Undergoes Major Restructuring Amid \$100M Loss & Merger Talks”; Mark Friedman, reporter

From the beginning it was clear that the story had strong reporting and wide-reaching impact. The detailed graphic helped readers clearly understand how the changes could affect employees, customers and the broader business landscape.

#### LARGE

Silver: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “The demolition of a historic crane”; Mickey Shuey, reporter

The story stood out showing how the loss of a familiar industrial landmark reflected broader changes in the city’s landscape and identity. The reporter was able to blend the history, development and community impact in an effective way.

Gold: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; “\$4B meat distributor lays off 1,500; plans to shut down, sell off assets”; Dustin Walsh, reporter

The reporter exemplified a high-level of reporting by connecting the company’s struggles to larger national trends, including rising meat prices and declining consumption across the U.S., giving readers important context behind the business collapse.

### **12a. Best Feature Single Story**

#### SMALL

Silver: *South Sound Business*; “Local Women Tattoo Artists Are Leaving a Mark”; Destiny Valencia, reporter

A vivid and emotionally resonant feature that elevates a personal and cultural story into something larger and lasting. With strong character development and immersive storytelling, the piece captures identity, resilience, and community through a fresh and compelling lens. The writing is fluid and evocative, drawing readers in while maintaining clarity and purpose. A memorable and beautifully executed narrative that lingers well beyond the final line.

Gold: *Crain’s Grand Rapids Business*; “The Grand Rapids Art Museum opened to world

renown. 18 years later, it's falling apart.”; Rachael Watson, reporter

A deeply reported and sharply written feature that turns a local cultural institution into a compelling accountability story. With strong narrative control and clear explanatory power, the piece unpacks how a celebrated museum now faces structural and financial strain, revealing broader lessons about ambition, design, and long-term stewardship. The reporting is authoritative, the writing confident, and the impact unmistakable. This is feature journalism doing exactly what it should—engaging, illuminating, and consequential.

## MEDIUM

Silver: *Twin Cities Business*; “The Miracle of Matt’s”; Adam Platt, reporter

A masterfully told narrative that transforms a beloved neighborhood bar into a broader story about endurance, identity, and the business of staying true to a winning formula. With vivid detail and strong character-driven storytelling, the piece traces how a modest establishment grew into an iconic brand without losing its soul. The writing is confident, engaging, and deeply observed, offering both nostalgia and sharp insight into longevity in a changing marketplace. A memorable and finely crafted feature that resonates well beyond its setting.

Gold: *Mainebiz*; “Portland at a Crossroads”; Renee Cordes, deputy editor

A richly reported and deeply textured feature that captures a city at a pivotal moment, blending on-the-ground reporting with clear economic stakes. Through vivid scenes and authoritative sourcing, the story reveals how public safety, homelessness, and real estate pressures are reshaping Portland’s downtown core, with tangible consequences for businesses and investment. The writing is immersive yet disciplined, allowing complex urban challenges to unfold with clarity and urgency. A standout example of local business journalism with national relevance and impact.

## LARGE

Silver: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “The House in the Backyard”; Daniel Bradley, reporter

A deeply engaging feature that blends history, personal commitment, and community identity into a richly layered narrative. The story follows one family’s painstaking restoration of a pre-Civil War home, using their journey to illuminate broader themes of preservation, development pressure, and the value of place. With vivid detail and strong narrative pacing, the piece turns a local renovation into a compelling meditation on stewardship and legacy. A beautifully told story that resonates far beyond its immediate setting.

Gold: *Florida Trend*; “Timber’s Tipping Point”; Brittany J. Miller, reporter

An ambitious and beautifully constructed feature that elevates a regional industry story into a sweeping narrative about risk, resilience, and economic transformation. Through vivid character-driven reporting and authoritative data, the story captures the cascading pressures—natural disasters, mill closures, and market shifts—bearing down on Florida’s \$25 billion timber industry. The writing is immersive and deeply human, grounding complex economic forces in the lived experiences of families and communities. A compelling, urgent, and masterfully executed piece of business journalism.

## 12b. Best Feature Story Series

### SMALL

Silver: *South Sound Business*; “Ask Column”; John Stearns

With warmth and personality, this series goes beyond the basics to deliver surprising depth about an interesting cast of local business characters. It effectively centers leadership and layers in rich context and backstory.

Gold: *Corridor Business Journal*; “Energy in Iowa Story Series”; Richard Pratt

This well-researched, well-sourced series digs deep into Iowa’s growing energy needs. Journalists looked in unpredictable corners to uncover the causes behind energy shortages, and they examine emerging practical solutions to meet demand and secure the state’s energy future.

### MEDIUM

Silver: *Arkansas Business*; “10 Years of Medical Marijuana in Arkansas”; Kyle Massey, Mark Friedman

This deeply reported series exposes persistent confusion and opacity in the system. Through hard-fought battles for transparency and compelling profiles of licensees, the reporting reveals who profits, who’s stalled and why accountability still matters.

Gold: *Hartford Business Journal*; “CT’s Economic Competitiveness”; Greg Bordonaro, Andrew Larson, Michael Puffer, David Krechevsky, Harriet Jones

Built on strong data reporting, this series offers a clear, authoritative look at just how competitive the region is. This series is a must-read examination of the true costs of doing business, giving decision-makers and readers context, comparisons and insights.

### LARGE

Silver: *D CEO Magazine*; “”Healthcare Annual”; Will Maddox

Taking an innovative approach to defining health, this series explores its impact across personal, professional and business spheres. The sharp writing and diverse sourcing combine to broaden the conversation around health while delivering thoughtful, inclusive and compelling journalism.

Gold: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “Crain’s Forum: Federal budget cuts”; Cassandra West, Judith Crown, Jason McGregor

This compelling series examines the local impact of federal budget cuts on food security, health care access and scientific research. With a hyperlocal focus, clear interactive displays of data and people-centered reporting, it makes complex policy consequences understandable, urgent and deeply human.

## 13. Best Profile on a Person or Company

### SMALL

Silver: *Insight on Business*; “Heart-centered”; Amelia Compton Wolff, editor

A compelling anecdotal lead pinpoints the moment a working-class teenager dreamed of more. But becoming a successful CEO takes more than drive; the writer elicits strong quotes

from the source and those around her to show the lessons in humility she learned along the way.

Gold: *South Sound Business*; “Selling Spooky”; Joanna Kresge, managing editor, Destiny Valencia, staff writer, Blake Peterson, digital content manager, Hailee Wickersham, staff writer

A quirky business like Tacoma’s Haunted Farmers Market deserves snappy writing, and this story delivers, capturing the effervescence of the market’s founder. The sidebars add value by showcasing the expertise and enthusiasm of participating vendors. The package is delightful.

#### MEDIUM

Silver: *Providence Business News*; “DaRosas weaving impactful legacy”; Matthew McNulty, staff writer

This gem of a story offers a tactile, behind-the-scenes look at what it takes to keep a family business alive even as the United States has lost tens of thousands of manufacturing jobs. Thanks to strong writing, the reader can visualize the process of making textiles and understand how critical their manufacture is to the local community and even nation.

Gold: *Hartford Business Journal*; “Patent King”; Andrew Larson, web editor

Descriptive writing transports the reader into Priceline founder Jay Walker’s sleek corporate headquarters and impressive private home library on all things innovation. More important, good interviewing skills provide insight into how a successful innovator approaches problem-solving and pursues his next venture.

#### LARGE

Silver: *D CEO Magazine*; “Don’t Tell Tiffany Derry No”; Ben Swanger, executive editor

Great pacing and anecdotes engage and inspire the reader from beginning to end. Becoming a celebrity chef is not without its challenges, especially for a young Black woman from Beaumont, Texas. This well-sourced story captures her drive, chronicles her successes and highlights her efforts to pay it forward.

Gold: *Hawaii Business*; “He Served His Country. His Country Ordered Him to Leave.”; Ken Wills, managing editor

The typical business profile might explain how a business person has made or lost millions, but this story is not typical. Deep reporting fuels a complex tale of a young immigration attorney and his client -- a Purple Heart recipient who made the difficult decision to self-deport to South Korea. Good storytelling need not always be pleasant; important stories like this one let readers feel the impact of national policies.

### 14. Best Recurring Feature

#### SMALL:

Silver: *Greater Wilmington Business Journal*; “In the Zone”; Vicky Janowski, Cece Nunn, Suzi Drake, Emma Dill

These monthly snapshots provide news and data from a specific area within the publication’s region. The reporting includes useful updates on infrastructure development and business opportunities, made human by the voices of locals connected to the issues. The feature provides a lot of insight in a concise package.

Gold: *DBusiness*; “Patents & Inventions”; Norm Sinclair

This feature presents fascinating profiles of historical figures from the area whose ideas changed the world but are taken for granted today. Packed with interesting details, each installment brings the featured inventor to life in a way that is relatable to modern-day businesspeople.

MEDIUM:

Silver: *Hartford Business Journal*; “Politics & Policy”; David Krechevsky

Great topic selection provides readers an interesting look at a specific policy proposal or idea gaining traction in the state, such as differing approaches to supporting workers, a movement to make gold and silver legal tender in the state, or a look at legislators’ professional occupations. The writing each time weaves a good story rather than just presenting facts.

Gold: *Mainebiz*; “Made in Maine”; Renee Cordes, Peter Van Allen, Alexis Wells

This feature profiles businesses making unique items in the state of Maine. Great pictures draw the reader in, but the comfortable, informative writing nimbly carries each story.

LARGE:

Silver: *Greater Baton Rouge Business Report*; “Thought Leader”; Dillon Lowe

Experienced business leaders share their expertise in a highly digestible way. Each piece translates real-world expertise from a compelling expert into actionable insight to help other business leaders compete and win. The writing is accessible and presented in a format that offers clarity, energy and high value.

Gold: *Crain’s New York Business*; “Who Owns the Block?”; C.J. Hughes

Ambitious, in-depth reporting springboards off a piece of news to slowly unravel a question people often wonder: Who actually owns New York City? Strong research and sourcing bring to light hidden details that reveal deeper truths about ownership, power, and the forces shaping the business landscape.

## **15: Best Coverage of Local Breaking News**

SMALL

Silver: *Crain’s Grand Rapids Business*; “Steelcase to sell to rival HNI in \$2.2B deal”; Mark Sanchez, Reporter

The article provided thorough reporting on the approval of the \$2.2 billion sale. The story stood out for quickly explaining the business implications of the deal and what it could mean for the region’s workforce and economy.

Gold: *The Business Journal, Fresno*; “How the Central Valley got a preview of Trump-style immigration enforcement”; Frank Lopez, Reporter

The reporter provided strong sourcing and vivid details from farmers illustrating the immediate fear and labor disruptions rippling through the agricultural community within a short period of time.

## MEDIUM

Silver: *Virginia Business*; “U.Va. president resigns under pressure from DOJ”; Kate Andrews, Reporter, Katherine Schulte

The reporter broke the news of University of Virginia President James E. Ryan resigning under pressure from the DOJ with speed and authority. The story balanced the political, legal and institutional stakes while emphasizing the broader implications for higher education leadership.

Gold: *Worcester Business Journal*; “Clark University to lay off up to 30% of faculty, significantly restructure degree tracks amid financial strain”; Mica Kanner-Mascolo, Reporter

The reporter captured the significance of layoffs for Clark University faculty and the restructuring of degree programs amid financial strain. The story clearly outlines the scale of the cuts and the lasting impact on students, faculty and the institution’s future.

## LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; “Comerica-Fifth Third merger”; Anna Fifelski, Reporter, Jay Davis, Reporter, Kirk Pinho, Reporter

The way the story was written brought history to life with a look back at the 175-year roots of Comerica in Detroit. The timeline format made the story especially engaging, showing how the bank’s growth has mirrored the city’s own economic evolution.

Gold: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “Nuclear energy startup to establish HQ, operations in Indiana”; Alex Brown, Reporter Marek Mazurek, Reporter, Dan Lee, Reporter

The story highlighted the company’s proposed \$4 billion investment, the creation of 5,000 jobs and the broader significance for a state looking to become a leader in nuclear energy. The reporters clearly communicated how the impact to the community will shift the landscape and have a longstanding economic impact.

## 16. Best Investigative Reporting

### SMALL

No awards.

### MEDIUM

Silver: *Business North Carolina*; “How North Carolina got a Legal-ish Weed without legalizing it”; Shannon Cuthrell, reporter

This report shows how higher potency THC has become available for consumers in a state with no legal cannabis dispensaries. The reporter shows how CBD vape shops flourish, thanks to a loophole in the state law.

Gold: *Arkansas Business*; “Arkansas Office of Professional Conduct”; Mark Friedman, reporter

This report lifts the veil of secrecy surrounding the state office charged with investigating complaints against lawyers. The reporter and publication stuck with the story through a six-month investigation.

### LARGE

Silver: *Business News*; “Pilbara water woes”; Tom Zaunmayr, reporter

This story shows how rural mining companies drain water that's supposed to be protected by regulators. The reporter tapped into documents and interviews to show the harm caused by government inaction.

Gold: *Crain's Chicago Business*; "The Red Line extension is now a \$5.75B gamble for the CTA – and taxpayers"; Ed Zotti, reporter

In this eye-opening expose, the reporter shows how rail extension cost overruns top those in other cities. The reporter used documents, data and timelines to show how the city had missed opportunities to cut costs.

## 17. Best Explanatory Journalism

### SMALL

Silver: *South Sound Business*; "Local Space Sector Has the Ingredients for Growth"; John Stearns, staff writer

Rich reporting shines a light on the region's sizeable and growing space industry. Stretching back to the 1960s, the reporter helps readers see how a diverse space ecosystem has taken root in the area and what it is growing toward next.

Gold: *Crain's Grand Rapids Business*; "Michigan Tribes Borrow from Warren Buffett's Playbook to Grow Outside of Gaming"; Rachel Watson, reporter

Thorough reporting features multiple voices to help readers understand the locally focused, diversified economic engines that native tribes are building in the region and how they fit into a larger national trend.

### MEDIUM

Silver: *Twin Cities Business*; "Under Water"; Adam Platt, editor

This story offered readers a deep look at commercial real estate in the region and why it was in catastrophic shape. The story is brought to life through case studies of a variety of different properties and the financial reasons for their distress.

Gold: *Providence Business News*; "Primary Duties"; Katie Castellani, staff writer, Providence Business News staff

A masterful story that takes readers, layer by layer, through the complexities of the dynamic relationship between medicine and state policy even at the micro level. What starts as an examination of nurse practitioners providing an increasing amount of primary-care medicine quickly delves into larger statewide labor trends, educational and financial structures, and state policy responses.

### LARGE

Silver: *Hawaii Business*; "Meet the Early AI Adopters in Our Schools"; Ann Auman, contributing writer

This story stands out for the number of voices it brings to bear on an important topic in an important setting: AI in schools. Drawing on extensive teacher interviews, this two-part story paints a clear yet sober picture of AI's potential as a classroom collaborator within a structure of ethical use.

Gold: *Florida Trend*; “Labor Pains”; Michael Fechter, reporter

This deeply reported story shows readers how state law criminalizing abortion could put further pressure on ob-gyn staffing in a state already facing a shortage of doctors. The story does not settle for easy explanations, examining multiple converging trends challenging the industry and how providers are responding.

## 18a. Best Beat Reporting, Economics and Finance

### SMALL

Silver: *The Business Journal, Fresno*; “Shark Tank Investor Kevin O’Leary Endorses Hanford Doc’s Diabetes Education Startup; FFB Bank Anticipates Hit to Merchant Services But Will Follow FDIC Path; SBA to Require Citizenship Verification for Loans, Local Lenders Say Compliance Will Continue”; Ben Hensley, reporter, Dylan Gonzales, reporter

These reporters handle a variety of stories with a clear voice – sifting through banking regulations to explain an announced consent decree on a local lender – and a light touch – showcasing a promising startup endorsed by TV’s “Mr. Wonderful.”

Gold: *Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business*; “PNNL Layoffs Prompt Criticism, Concern Amid Budget Cuts; Feds Terminate Leases Around Region, Including in Richland; New Ams Owner Reopens Talk of Replacing Toyota Center”; Ty Beaver, reporter

Whether it’s government layoffs, lease cancelations or the merits of a new hockey venue, these stories were written and reported with an eye for the humans at the center of them, bringing an important layer of community concern to timely business developments.

### MEDIUM

Silver: *BizTimes Milwaukee*; “Associated Bank Expanding to Omaha with \$600 Million Acquisition; How Do Wisconsin Bankers See the State of the Economy?; Economic Uncertainty Takes Bank Relationships Beyond Lending”; Arthur Thomas, associate editor

This reporter drew on a breadth of industry sources to cover a variety of banking issues, including a breaking-news bank acquisition, a broad economic overview and a second-order trend story downstream from economic turbulence of the day.

Gold: *Mainebiz*; “Trouble in Toyland, Capital Gains, Data Blackout”; Renee Cordes, reporter

Thorough and creative reporting shine through in these stories, which showcase the human element in business as well as the financial. A highlight is a deep, colorful and approachable look at Maine’s toy industry in the crucible of global tariff turmoil.

### LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; “Plans Scrapped for Massive Semiconductor Factory Near Flint; Inside the Collapse of Michigan’s Largest Economic Development Deal; ChatGPT Creator OpenAI Plans Massive Data Center Near Ann Arbor with Multibillion-dollar Investment”; Kurt Nagl, senior reporter, David Eggert, senior reporter

This coverage stands out for the reporting team’s ability to follow a manufacturing development story wherever it went — from national politics to state politics to boardroom politics. Well sourced and well explained, the stories guide readers firmly through an often-

shifting landscape.

Gold: *D CEO Magazine*; “How the Great Transfer of Wealth Will Reshape the North Texas Business Scene; Inside the Battle on Y’all Street: Can the Texas Stock Exchange Really Challenge the NYSE-Nasdaq Duopoly?; Why Water Is Coltala Holdings’ Next Big Bet”; Ben Swanger, executive editor

Excellent sourcing, deep research and clear writing distinguish this package. A new push for a Texas-based stock exchange is a standout, setting the story in the context of the state’s multi-decade rise as an economic power and a corporate magnet.

## **18b. Best Beat Reporting, Real Estate**

### SMALL

Silver: *Crain’s Grand Rapids Business*; Body of work; Kate Carlson, reporter

Carlson delivers authoritative, policy-driven real estate reporting that consistently connects development trends to broader economic and community impacts. Her coverage demonstrates deep sourcing, clarity, and command of complex issues—from incentive programs to land use—making her portfolio both insightful and highly relevant. The work stands out for its consistency, rigor and clear sense of the real estate beat as a system.

Gold: *Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business*; “Collection of work”; Ty Beaver, reporter

Ty Beaver delivers a well-rounded and deeply local portrait of the Tri-Cities real estate market, combining sharp reporting with clear, accessible writing. His work captures the full spectrum of forces shaping the region—from a surge in luxury home sales to the uncertain ripple effects of federal lease cancellations on small communities and local economies. His reporting on government lease terminations stands out for elevating a policy decision into a human story, showing how abrupt federal actions can disrupt workers, tenants and entire towns. Beaver demonstrates a strong command of data, sourcing and regional context, delivering journalism that is both informative and immediately relevant.

### MEDIUM

Silver: *Hartford Business Journal*; “Real Estate Coverage”; Michael Puffer, reporter

Puffer brings exceptional command of the commercial real estate landscape, particularly the structural challenges in office markets and the shift toward conversions. His reporting is sharp, policy-aware, and economically sophisticated, offering readers a clear lens into post-pandemic real estate disruption.

Gold: *Mainebiz*; “Real Estate Coverage”; Renee Cordes, deputy editor

Cordes stands out for delivering a fully realized real estate beat—combining vivid, on-the-ground storytelling with data, sourcing, and market context. Her work captures the human side (flippers, communities, developers) while also explaining the underlying economics and supply dynamics, giving readers both texture and understanding. It’s the most complete portfolio in the field, with clear range, authority, and sustained impact across stories.

### LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “Real Estate Coverage”; Danny Ecker and Rachel Herzog,

reporters

Danny Ecker and Rachel Herzog deliver a smart, cohesive examination of a commercial real estate market in transition, capturing both the uncertainty and the emerging opportunities in Chicago. Their stories skillfully track the bifurcation of the office market. What stands out is their ability to synthesize complex market dynamics into clear, accessible reporting without oversimplifying. The reporting is well-sourced and forward-looking, helping readers understand how investors, landlords, and tenants are recalibrating in real time. Together, the package offers a nuanced, sharply observed snapshot of a major metro market navigating post-pandemic disruption—grounded in data, rich in insight, and highly relevant to business readers.

Gold: *Crain's Detroit Business*; “Real Estate Coverage”; Kirk Pinho, reporter

Kirk Pinho delivers a deeply reported portrait of a real estate market under stress, anchored by a compelling narrative of rise and reversal. The coverage connects individual stories to broader structural challenges. His reporting on the Renaissance Center redevelopment and Detroit's rental market crisis further demonstrates a command of both deal-level detail and systemic trends, supported by data and on-the-ground voices. The result is journalism that is both explanatory and evocative, illuminating not just what is happening, but why it matters.

### **18c. Best Beat Reporting, Tech and Innovation**

SMALL

Silver: *Quad Cities Regional Business Journal*; “Tech and Innovation Coverage”; Kendra Burrows, reporter

Kendra Burrows offers a compelling and wide-ranging look at innovation across industries, demonstrating how technology is reshaping both economic development and quality of life in the Quad Cities region. Her reporting spans advanced manufacturing at Deere's Davenport Works, the intersection of art and technology at the Figge Art Museum, and emerging medical therapies offering new hope for patients. What stands out is her ability to find innovation in unexpected places. Rather than focusing solely on traditional tech sectors, Burrows highlights how technological change is embedded across manufacturing, healthcare, and even cultural institutions—broadening the definition of innovation for her audience. The stories are well-reported, accessible, and rooted in tangible impact, offering readers a thoughtful and engaging view of how technology is influencing a diverse regional economy.

Gold: *Corridor Business Journal*; “Tech and Innovation Coverage”; Richard Pratt, reporter, Annie Smith Barkalow, reporter

Pratt and Barkalow deliver a clear-eyed and deeply relevant exploration of how artificial intelligence is moving from hype to practical application in a regional economy. Their reporting stands out for its range—from local governments deploying chatbot tools to improve public service, to major infrastructure investment from global players like Google, to businesses testing real-world uses of AI beyond the buzzwords. What distinguishes this package is its balance of scale and specificity. The reporters connect billion-dollar investment trends with on-the-ground adoption, showing how smaller municipalities and regional companies are navigating both the promise and limitations of emerging technology. The result is nuanced, authoritative journalism that cuts through the noise around AI and delivers a grounded understanding of how innovation is actually unfolding in communities—not just in theory, but in practice.

## MEDIUM

Silver: *Arkansas Business*; “Innovation and Tech coverage”; Chloe McGeehee, reporter

Chloe McGeehee’s reporting provides a sharp and cohesive look at how technology is reshaping business and infrastructure across Arkansas. From startup ecosystem development to the financial habits of Gen Z and the realities of broadband expansion, the stories combine policy, innovation, and consumer behavior into a clear narrative of a state adapting to rapid change. What distinguishes this work is its balance of accessibility and depth. Complex topics—such as federal broadband funding, digital banking trends, and the challenges facing emerging tech hubs—are translated into reporting that is both understandable and meaningful for a broad business readership. The package is well-sourced, forward-thinking, and rooted in economic impact, offering a nuanced view of how technology is influencing growth, opportunity, and risk in a regional market.

Gold: *Rochester Business Journal*; “Tech and Innovation Coverage”; Andrea Deckert, reporter

Andrea Deckert delivers a forward-looking and locally grounded examination of how technology is reshaping a regional economy. From AI-driven workforce development to emerging industrial and cybersecurity innovation, the reporting captures a market in transition—one where legacy strengths are intersecting with new technological opportunity. Her stories stand out for their ability to connect individual business developments—such as robotics partnerships, industrial expansion, and next-generation authentication technology—to broader economic themes, including workforce readiness, global investment flows, and the growing role of AI across sectors. Grounded in strong sourcing and real-world examples, this package offers readers both clarity and context, illustrating how innovation is taking root beyond traditional tech hubs. It is insightful, accessible, and highly relevant to a business audience seeking to understand where growth is happening—and why.

## LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; “Tech and Innovation Coverage”; Anna Fifelski, reporter

Anna Fifelski offers a sharp, deeply reported look at the startup ecosystem in Michigan, with particular focus on the challenges of retaining high-potential companies and capital within the state. Her reporting identifies a critical tension: world-class research institutions generating innovation yet struggling to keep that value local. Across her stories, Fifelski combines strong sourcing with a clear narrative throughline—tracking promising startups, investor sentiment, and the role of key players shaping the region’s tech future. She moves fluidly between individual companies and broader ecosystem dynamics, giving readers both specificity and strategic insight. The package stands out for its cohesion and forward-looking perspective, delivering a compelling examination of how regional innovation economies succeed—or falter—in the competition for talent, funding, and growth.

Gold: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “Technology coverage”; Susan Orr, reporter

Susan Orr delivers authoritative, policy-savvy reporting that captures the real-world stakes of technology infrastructure and innovation. Her coverage of broadband expansion and federal BEAD funding cuts through bureaucratic complexity to show how shifting rules directly affect providers, timelines, and ultimately access for underserved communities. What elevates this work is Orr’s ability to translate dense regulatory change into consequential business

journalism. She brings in key stakeholders—from state officials to local providers—to illuminate how policy decisions ripple through markets, competition, and long-term infrastructure investment. The result is essential reporting that connects technology, government, and economic development with clarity and urgency—demonstrating how innovation policy shapes who gets access to the digital economy and when.

## 19. Best Ancillary Publication

### SMALL

Silver: *Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business*; “Focus: Agriculture + Viticulture in the Columbia Basin”; Kristina Lord, executive editor; Ty Beaver, reporter; Rachel Visick, reporter; Nathan Finke, news assistant/researcher; Tiffany Lundstrom, associate publisher for sales; Chad Utecht, advertising account manager; Vanessa Guzman, production manager; Erin Landon, business assistant

A focused and informative exploration of the agricultural landscape unfolds through a clear, crop-by-crop structure that brings both organization and variety to the content. Each section highlights key aspects of the region’s agricultural economy while maintaining a cohesive thematic thread. The coverage remains practical and accessible, offering insights that are especially valuable to those within the industry. A straightforward presentation keeps the material easy to follow, resulting in a cohesive and serviceable package.

Gold: *Greater Wilmington Business Journal*; “Wilmington Biz Magazine 2025 Commercial Real Estate Issue”; Vicky Janowski, editor; Suzi Drake, art director—editorial; Cece Nunn, managing editor; Emma Dill, reporter

Depth, variety, and thoughtful organization define this comprehensive look at commercial real estate. A wide range of topics is seamlessly connected through a clear editorial thread, beginning with the letter from the editor and continuing throughout the issue. Photography centers people and place, bringing authenticity and energy, while charts, infographics, and illustrations enhance clarity and visual engagement. Creative elements—such as the flipped cover designed for multiple audiences—demonstrate innovation and strong audience awareness. The result is a robust, information-rich publication with polished design and a compelling sense of purpose.

### MEDIUM

Silver: *Mainebiz*; “2025 Fact Book”; Peter Van Allen, editor; Matt Selva, art director; Stephanie Meagher, research director; Renee Cordes, deputy editor; Laurie Schreiber, senior writer; Tina Fischer, staff writer; Alexis Wells, digital editor; Heide Martin, research assistant; Tim Greenway, photographer; Jim Neuger, photographer; Fred Field, photographer

An ambitious and comprehensive collection of information comes together in a cohesive and visually engaging package. Extensive use of infographics and charts communicates complex data, while well-written stories and strong photography provide balance and narrative depth. Photo essays stand out as particularly compelling, offering moments of beauty and human connection that enrich the data-driven content. A range of visual formats adds dimension and reinforces a commitment to both clarity and engagement, resulting in a resource that is as informative as it is visually compelling.

Gold: *Arkansas Business*; “Greenhead”; Eric Olson, publisher of business special publications; Brent Birch, editor; Dean Wheeler, art director; Caitlan Butler, editor – business special publications

A highly focused and visually stunning publication immerses readers fully in its subject matter from the first page to the last. Engaging storytelling is paired with exceptional photography and thoughtful design, creating a cohesive and compelling experience. Photo essay sections are especially noteworthy, showcasing remarkable composition and narrative strength. Typography and layout are handled with precision, supported by subtle illustrative details that elevate the overall design. Content is carefully tailored to its audience, balancing history, current issues, and personal stories to create a rich and memorable publication. The result is a breathtaking, fully realized package that leaves a lasting impression through its artistry, depth, and unmistakable sense of excellence.

## LARGE

Silver: *Hawaii Business*; “Celebrating Our 70th Anniversary”; Steve Petranik, editor; Jeff Sanner, creative director; Ann Auman, writer; Kathryn Wagner, writer; Noelle Fujii-Oride, writer and engagement editor; Aaron Yoshino, photographer; Maria Torres-Kitamura, writer; Vicki Viotti, writer; Beverly Creamer, senior writer

A thoughtful retrospective explores the deep connections between business and community over time. Historical imagery and archival materials provide meaningful context, while contemporary stories add relevance and immediacy. Each feature is designed with care, creating a varied yet cohesive reading experience. Timelines and visual storytelling elements guide readers through key moments, while compelling narratives bring emotional weight and local significance to the forefront. The result is a well-crafted and meaningful celebration of both history and impact.

Gold: *D CEO Magazine*; “D CEO Magazine City of Champions 2025”; Christine Perez, editor; Hamilton Hedrick, design director; Ben Swanger, executive editor; Will Maddox, senior writer; Layten Praytor, associate editor; Audrey Henvey, associate editor

A dynamic and visually rich exploration of its subject combines engaging writing with innovative, highly polished design. Photography and illustration work together to create visual variety, while thoughtful layouts support both historical storytelling and forward-looking analysis. Structural elements such as timelines and in-depth profiles add clarity and momentum, allowing the narrative to unfold seamlessly. Consistent attention to detail across every page results in a refined and immersive reading experience, demonstrating a high level of editorial ambition and execution that sets this work apart.

## 20. Best Bylined Commentary

### SMALL

Silver: No award.

Gold: *Corridor Business Journal*; “Iowa City Community School District must protect our teachers”; John Lohman, CEO and editor.

We often hear talk of school safety and violence prevention, but seldom do we hear it from the vantage point of teachers and staff as we do in this piece. This commentary is well

written with plenty of facts and details to back up its stance that there is a lack of consequences when the students are the offenders of workplace violence.

#### MEDIUM

Silver: *Hartford Business Journal*; “Editor’s Take”; Greg Bordonaro

The writing here is clear and takes on issues worthy of notice for their impact on the community. Arguments are convincing, and each commentary combines news, historical context, and insider knowledge.

Gold: *BizTimes Milwaukee*; “Commentary”; Andrew Weiland

Sharp writing forcefully argues a firm stance on each issue. The commentary is clear and addresses a range of problems facing the region in a succinct manner that offers valuable insight for its audience.

#### LARGE

Silver: *Florida Trend*; “Editor’s Page”; Amy Keller

Heavily reported columns dive deep into issues with wide potential impact and help readers understand the full complexity. The writing is vivid and clear, with good voice included from both the author and the sources interviewed for each piece.

Gold: *Crain’s New York Business*; “On Real Estate”; Eddie Small

These commentaries are well-written and provide authority on a range of high-profile concerns. The writing has character and verve and feel like an insider explaining the situation.

### **21. Best Editorial**

#### SMALL

No awards.

#### MEDIUM

Silver: *BizTimes Milwaukee*; “Developing, attracting and retaining talent is crucial to our future”; Andrew Weiland.

This editorial takes on not only the population growth in the state but also quality of life issues in Wisconsin. Several issues are addressed at once under the umbrella of future talent.

Gold: *Worcester Business Journal*; “High drama at the CCC is bad for business”; Brad Kane, Peter Stanton

This editorial about the state’s cannabis industry is direct and succinct in stating both the problem at hand and its solution, with a clear call to action. The writing carries a sense of authority that comes from deep reporting and insight.

#### LARGE

Silver: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “Sniping doesn’t solve the issues that plague city, state”; IBJ staff

Grounded in solid reporting, this piece calls out the infighting from officials that stands in the way of progress. The writer effectively parses the issue, holds leaders accountable, and points

directly to what needs changing.

Gold: *Crain's Chicago Business*, "Johnson must drop head tax stance and strike a budget deal"; Ann Dwyer

A budget crisis looms as this editorial takes on a pressing issue for the city. Its writing is upfront and respectful yet still reinforces that taxpayers will be the ones impacted by the political spat.

## BEST OF SHOW CATEGORIES

### 22. Most Improved Publication

*Florida Trend*; Jason Morton, Gary Bernloehr

Key strengths remain in place, including strong story selection, good use and placement of photos, and deft use of sidebar material. Meanwhile, new typography, restrained colors, and additional white space built into the format give the publication a more modern and inviting look. Updated Table of Contents is easier to follow, and new labeling for regional news sections incorporates a nice graphic element.

### 23. Journalist of the Year

SMALL:

*Tri-Cities Area Journal of Business*; Ty Beaver

Ty Beaver takes his reporting up a notch by looking for the ways business and industry intersect with the lives of his readers. In "Residents bristle at new lines needed for growing energy needs," for example, he chronicles how an invasion of new transmission lines marches across front yards with little concern for homeowners. In "Controversial wind farm plans fewer but taller turbines," he underlines the potential environmental and aesthetic impact of wind turbines that will be taller than the Seattle Space Needle. Beaver's work demonstrates how thoughtful observation can deliver first-rate reporting and writing.

MEDIUM:

*Worcester Business Journal*; Eric Casey

Eric Casey writes about economic trends, personalities, opportunities and realities with a clear eye and a thorough command of reporting skills. In "Revolutionary collapse: The rise and fall of the once-largest cannabis employer in Central Mass," Casey levels with readers about the collapse of a cannabis heavyweight, but he also puts it in context with a broad state perspective. His writing takes a sturdy, no-frills approach, and he excels in finding ways to connect with readers through examples, solid data and smart analysis.

LARGE:

*Florida Trend*; Brittney Miller

Brittney Miller is an exceptionally thoughtful, capable business writer whose work matches solid reporting and deep sourcing with a vibrancy in language, pace and tone. In "Timbers Tipping Point," for example, the weather-battered decline in Florida's timber industry

is documented from a number of angles, including landowner, mill operator and large-scale manufacturer. Each segment is a study of the ways economic prosperity can quickly be exposed to serious setbacks. Overall, Miller's stories are information-rich and thoroughly readable.

## 24. Best Website

Bronze: *BizTimes Milwaukee*; BizTimes Media staff

Editors excel at connecting readers to the publication's rich journalism through thoughtful presentation and evolving coverage. Strong visuals support the reporting, while a photo-driven layout invites discovery.

Silver: *Arkansas Business*; Scott Carroll, Chloe McGhee, Sophie Baker

This website clearly signals its strongest journalism through bold lead imagery that defines the top story of the day. Intuitive navigation guides readers smoothly between sections, while extensive use of original photography reinforces the staff's commitment to distinctive newsroom-driven storytelling.

Gold: *Business News*; Andreas Koepke, Sean Cowan, Jack McGinn, Isabel Vieira, Elisha Newell, Poonam Sanepara, Claire Tyrell, Tom Zaubmayr, Mark Beyer, Mark Pownall, Neale Prior, Nadia Budihardjo, Justin Fris, Sam Jones, Ella Longeragan, Aba Rawlings, Kobe Cooke, Nicholas Clarke

This website demonstrates a clear editorial focus, with a restrained design that consistently elevates the day's most important reporting. Strong centerpiece presentation, clean navigation and integrated stock tickers create a reliable, reader-first experience that rewards attention and reinforces editorial authority.

## 25. Best Magazine

Bronze: *Florida Trend*; Amy Keller, Mike Brassfield, Mike Vogel, Michael Fechter, Brittney J. Miller, Gary Bernloehr, Jason Morton

This publication lives up to its name and does an incredible job exploring business news from across the state, as well as diving into its history. The "Daughters in Charge" feature stood out as an example of its engaging stories and great photography. A piece about shark research or an investigation of Boar's Head show the range of what *Florida Trend* can do.

Silver: *D CEO*; Christine Perez, Hamilton Hedrick, Ben Swanger, Will Maddox, Layten Praytor, Audrey Henvey

The pages in *D CEO* feature polished design alongside an undeniable knowledge of what (and who) makes the Dallas business community tick. There's a familiar flow to the magazine while the content continues to surprise, whether that's a piece about flip-flop entrepreneurs or a CEO's U2 memorabilia collection. Stories are thorough and written with verve, and the publication covers a lot of ground.

Gold: *Hawaii Business*; Jennifer Ablan, Ken Wills, Jeff Sanner, Ryann Coules, Steve Petranik, Cynthia Wessendorf

With people-centered stories and creative design, *Hawaii Business* focuses on the big

issues facing the state — and looks forward not back. A piece about toxic bosses stood out as a combination of investigative reporting and information about the law, while a story about women who save lives was a different take on looking at the business world. This is a publication that clearly understands its community and how to serve them.

## **26a. Best Newspaper – Small Tabloids**

Bronze: *The Business Journal, Fresno*; Gabriel Dillard, Cecilia Lopez, Israel Meave

Interesting cover stories grab attention, particularly the thoughtful feature on the closing of a local wine distributor. The People on the Move section does a nice job of highlighting the community, while Executive Profile offers deeper introductions. Cover photo illustrations for “The Final Pour” and “Startup Grind” were particularly noteworthy.

Silver: *Corridor Business Journal*; Alexandra Olsen, Julia Druckmiller, Richard Pratt, Becky Lyons, Annie Smith Barkalow

This entry offers deep dives into local issues facing the business community, such as renewable energy, tariffs and AI. The cover story on how youth sports and the complexes needed for them offers an interesting perspective and strong local reporting. Covers are branded, providing a consistent look, while interior design is clean and easy to navigate.

Gold: *Greater Wilmington Business Journal*; Vicky Janowski, Cece Nunn, Suzi Drake, Emma Dill

This publication knows its community well, covers a wide range of business sectors and features many local people and businesses. They can take a seemingly mundane topic like the school calendar and turn it into a fascinating look at how important the calendar is to the tourism industry. The Roundup section and Economic Indicators are quick, easy-to-navigate features, full of great data. Consistent design is a strong point, including well-composed cover photographs and a strong illustration about Amazon, as well as an emphasis on documentary photography of people in action.

## **26b. Best Newspaper - Medium Tabloids**

Bronze: *Worcester Business Journal*; Brad Kane, Eric Casey, Mica Kanner-Mascolo, Mitchell Hayes, Kira Beaudoin, Stephanie Meagher, Heide Martin

Each issue opens with a table of contents and nice letter from the editor to set the stage. The publication offers important, explanatory stories with national context and strong deep dive features that tackle important local stories, such as those on skyscrapers, hospitals and cannabis. The paper shows good community leadership with its spotlight on how local businesses continue to value diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. The Shop Talk Q&A is a nice way to close out the offerings.

Silver: *Mainebiz*; Peter Van Allen, Matt Selva, Renee Cordes, Alexis Wells, Laurie Schreiber, Tina Fischer

Strong portraits and documentary photographs complement a creative mix of stories that highlight the unexpected – a business building custom stairs – and the important, such as the challenges facing Portland’s downtown and the successful efforts to build affordable housing

more quickly. Short snippets at the front of the book draw in readers and offer something for everyone, most notably the statewide roundup of news in each issue. “Slurpin’ USA” offers a diverse set of images that create a great photographic essay on oysters.

Gold: *Hartford Business Journal*; Greg Bordonaro, Andrew Larson, Michael Puffer, David Krechevsky, Harriet Jones

Overall, the reporting offers depth and great context whether it’s covering local law firms, international student enrollment at local colleges or a Social Equity Council finding its way. Strong headlines sell the story and their relevance, and tight story leads get to the point and pull readers in. The Politics & Policy feature provides a good public service with its briefs on what lawmakers are doing. Solid design and photography support the content and reading experience.

## **26c. Best newspaper — Large tabloids**

Bronze: *Crain’s New York Business*; Anne Michaud, Lizzie Simon, Buck Ennis

This publication dives deep into how the city and its business community function, focusing on infrastructure and wider issues that underpin the city’s economy. Leads are clear and capture the news, often cleverly. The deep exploration on the waning influence of the Real Estate Board for New York included an easy-to-digest visual summing up the package. Good trend stories included “Hospitals struggle to kick travel nursing habit” and “Church-to-housing conversions take center stage.”

Silver: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; IBJ staff

Cover story features are excellent, notably “20 Startups to Watch,” “Trade War Trepidation” and “Trouble Averted.” There is a wide variety of content in each issue and many columnists and viewpoints alongside the news. “Indiana 250” is a strong opening standing feature, and the “Forefront” insert of columns from thought leaders is an interesting addition to the publication.

Gold: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; staff

The covers feature strong visual elements and always provide enough of the lead story to entice the reader. The publication establishes itself as the go-to source for understanding the housing market and the local impact of national policies. Strong nut graphs put almost every news story into broader context. The “40 under 40” section features engaging, beautifully executed photographs and reflects Chicago’s diversity. Strong use of graphics, data and documentary photographs of people in action support the in-depth reporting.