

# The Virginias AP Broadcasters Contest

## 2023 Contest Rules

Virginias AP Broadcasters is an independent association comprised of local members of The Associated Press. All entries for the 2023 Virginias Associated Press Broadcasters Contest are submitted using BetterBNC Media Awards Platform. Contest information and rules also can be found at <https://vapb.org>. If you have questions, please contact Heidi Brown at [hbrown@ap.org](mailto:hbrown@ap.org) or call 434.465.0285.

### **DEADLINE:**

The contest opens Jan. 2, 2024. Entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m., Friday, Jan. 26, 2024

**IMPORTANT: BetterBNC is optimized for the Google Chrome browser; and Firefox for PC and Macintosh/Apple. Please have a recent version downloaded and installed for the best contest experience.**

### **Logging in for the first time:**

### **Temporary password**

- ❑ If this is the first time your station has logged into the system for this year's contest, you must select one contact who will be the primary person for submitting entries. That person is the "Contestant Manager." He or she must be the first person to log in for your station. After the Contestant Manager submits two entries, this person will be able to designate additional people who will be able to enter on behalf of the station. Those people will be called "Authorized Entrants."
- ❑ Visit <http://betternewspapercontest.com/2023-virginias-broadcast> and click the "Enter the Contest Here" button or visit <https://betternewspapercontest.com>.
- ❑ From the drop-down list select "2023 Virginias AP Broadcasters."
- ❑ If you are the Contestant Manager (the primary person who submits entries for your organization), check that option.
- ❑ In the Media Organization drop-down list, select your station name.
- ❑ If you are the Contestant Manager, the temporary password was provided to the email on record. If you did not receive it, please email me.

- ❑ The Contestant Manager will need to submit two entries. At that time, the BetterBNC system will email the primary contact to confirm your email address. There will be a link to click on in the confirmation email. If you do not see the email, check your junk mail or spam folder.
- ❑ After receiving the confirmation email and updating some general account information, the Contestant Manager can add the names and emails of anyone at the station who is eligible to submit entries. Those additional people would be considered “Authorized Entrants.” Authorized entrants are able to submit and pay for their own entries. They are unable to see what anyone else has submitted at your station.
- ❑ For problems logging in, contact Heidi Brown ([hbrown@ap.org](mailto:hbrown@ap.org)). **Do not use the “contact us” link on the online platform.**

## SUBMIT ENTRIES

- ❑ Click “Submit Entry” from the Manage Entries page
- ❑ Select the appropriate Division
- ❑ Select the appropriate Category
- ❑ Read the category note describing what is expected for the category’s entry content
- ❑ Enter the entry headline or title
- ❑ Add entry content (may vary by category)
  1. Written statements to support an entry may be added as a digital file attachment (other than audio/video). Click “Browse”, navigate to the desired file, and then click “Open”. Allowed file types are PDF, DOC/DOCX, TXT, JPG, GIF and PNG.
  2. To add web/audio/video content, copy and paste the content’s URL address into the provided Website URL field. To host your content online, either upload it to a free streaming content website (e.g.YouTube) or talk to your IT person about adding it to your stations/publications website. Make sure the content will be accessible online throughout the duration of the contest and awards process. Here are some examples of free streaming content websites where you can upload audio and video content:
    - a) Audio: [www.kiwi6.com](http://www.kiwi6.com), [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com)
    - b) Video: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com), [www.vimeo.com](http://www.vimeo.com)
  3. **IMPORTANT:** Please be sure that items are not behind a paywall or a password-protected area. If they are, you must provide username/password info in the Comments section of your entry. Judges may disqualify your entry if work samples are inaccessible.

- ❑ Enter credits. No more than three names may be included per entry. If more than three people are involved in producing the work, the award will be presented to the news organization. Please do NOT enter “staff”, “news team”, or “news organization” for the credit name. ***Please either enter individual names or leave this blank.***
- ❑ Click “Submit” and your entry will be submitted for judging. If you wish to review your entry click “Manage Entries.” Click on “Edit” to make changes. When you are done making changes, click “Submit.”
- ❑ For more detailed step-by-step instructions, go to: [www.betterbncsupport.com](http://www.betterbncsupport.com)

## GENERAL RULES

- ❑ AP Member news organizations are eligible to enter the contest. All entries must have been aired or posted in 2023.
- ❑ One First Place Award and one Second Place Award will be given in each category. All entries will be judged, but it is the discretion of the judge to declare no winner in a category with only one entry. There will not be any ties. The finalists will be notified prior to the awards banquet, but whether they won First Place or Second Place will not be announced until the Awards Banquet.
- ❑ There is no limit to the number of entries that can be made in each category unless otherwise noted.
- ❑ *There will be no multiple entering of the same exact entry in different categories.* However, it is acceptable to use portions of content in categories that require a compilation of work. For example, an entry for the Best Reporter category could include an excerpt from the Spot News category, as long as it was not duplicated in its entirety.
- ❑ No submission may be doctored after broadcast to improve quality of entry. Commercials and network material should be deleted.
- ❑ A written statement detailing how a story or stories originated and how obstacles in getting a story or stories were overcome may accompany any of the entries.
- ❑ Station entries may only include work done by its employees and is restricted to material that was shot within the station’s designated market or listening area, or that exhibits a strong Virginia or West Virginia connection.
- ❑ Stations are permitted to publicize that they have been named a finalist prior to the Awards Luncheon.
- ❑ Disqualification: an entry that does not adhere to all competition rules will be disqualified. Entrants will not be notified of disqualification, nor will entry fees be refunded.

**DIVISIONS**  
**(DETERMINED BY**  
**NIELSEN MARKET RANKINGS)**

**TV I/Large Market:** TV stations licensed to cities in Nielsen Markets 1-80 (Charleston-Huntington, Norfolk, Lynchburg, Richmond, Roanoke)

**TV II/Small Market:** TV stations licensed to cities outside of the TV I market

**Radio I/Metro:** AM/FM, AM only or FM only and non-commercial radio stations licensed to cities in Nielsen Markets 1-199 (Bristol, Charleston, Huntington, Lynchburg, Morgantown, Norfolk, Richmond, Roanoke)

**Radio II/Non-Metro:** AM/FM, AM only or FM only and non-commercial radio stations licensed to cities outside of the Radio I market

**ENTRY FEES**

\$50 Fee Per Television Entry  
\$30 Fee Per Radio Entry  
*(Plus \$2.50 Per Entry PayPal Fee)*

- Pay for Entries: Entry fees must be paid with a credit card directly through the BetterBNC site before the contest deadline.
  - When all entries are submitted log into your account
  - Navigate to the Manage Entries page
  - Click "Calculate Entry Fees"
  - Follow the on-screen instructions to pay for your entries

## CATEGORIES

### COMBINED AWARD (TV/RADIO)

**BEST PODCAST-AUDIO:** *(All divisions will compete against each other).* Entries should be an audio presentation no more than 30 minutes in length and produced for online distribution. The podcast entry may include some material previously broadcast, in addition to original content produced for online use.

### TELEVISION CATEGORIES:

- 1. BEST COVERAGE OF A SPOT NEWS STORY** -- Entries should consist of the treatment of one news story during a programming period not exceeding six hours. Entries limited to 15 minutes each.
- 2. BEST COVERAGE OF A CONTINUING NEWS STORY** -- Entries should show the station's ability to cover a story such as a strike, a scandal in government, a prolonged controversy, a political campaign, etc., developing over a period of weeks or months as opposed to a spontaneous occurrence. The emphasis should be on the station's thoroughness, consistency and accuracy in covering a continuing story in such a way that the viewer has a clear understanding of the significance of each development. Entries limited to 30 minutes each.
- 3. OUTSTANDING SPORTS OPERATION OF THE VIRGINIAS** -- The entry will be judged on **two factors:**
  - (a) written summary of the station's accomplishments in all areas of sports coverage throughout the year.
  - (b) audio or video of regularly scheduled sportscasts, sports specials, play-by-play, sports features, and sports interviews. The entry is limited to 15 minutes. The written summary is limited to a maximum of two typewritten pages, uploaded as an entry attachment.
- 4. BEST DOCUMENTARY OR IN-DEPTH REPORT** -- Entries should show the station's capability of producing documented reports on community problems and significant news events, or in-depth reports designed to interpret in detail news stories of more than passing impact. Entries limited to 30 minutes.
- 5. BEST SERIOUS FEATURE** -- A single report taking on a serious local incident or issue that was the result of the station's journalistic efforts. Criteria are significance, resourcefulness, fairness and thoroughness of coverage. Entries should not include investigative reporting. Entries limited to 10 minutes.
- 6. BEST LIGHT FEATURE** -- A single report highlighting a specific subject or perspective. Topics may be news, informational or lifestyle oriented. Criteria include significance, resourcefulness, creative writing, entertainment value, and effective use of audio and/or video. Entries limited to 10 minutes.

7. **BEST SPORTS FEATURE** -- Entries may be a single report or may include excerpts from a related series. Entries are limited to 15 minutes.
8. **BEST REPORTER** -- Entries should show outstanding reporting by an individual, either on a single story or a series, or outstanding work on profiles, editorials, commentary, and other material within the area of news and public affairs. Entries may include, but are not limited to, investigative reporting, and subjects may include any matter of importance or value to the community, whether religious, economic, governmental or human-interest. Entries limited to 10 minutes and must include one complete piece.
9. **BEST SPECIALTY REPORTING:** Entries will be accepted from a beat reporter in a specialist area, such as consumer, health, science, business, environment, and education. Entries will be considered on the basis of how well they convey important information about a topic within a specialist area. The reporter must regularly cover this beat. Entries limited to 15 minutes.
10. **BEST SPOT NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY** -- Entry may be a single story or series about the same topic. Not designed to be a "photographer" award, but awarded to station. Category will be judged on overall technical and aesthetic qualities. Each entry must be of a spot news event. Can be by one photographer or staff, but must be limited to a single-topic event. Entries limited to 15 minutes.
11. **BEST FEATURE PHOTOGRAPHY** -- Each entry may be a single story or series about the same topic. May include sports, but must be limited to single-topic event. This category will be judged for editing, imagination and impact. Entries limited to 15 minutes.
12. **BEST INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING** -- Entries must demonstrate original journalistic enterprise and clearly demonstrate research of documents, records and/or data. Entries are limited to 15 minutes and can be from a series of reports. **A written statement explaining the investigation process is required.**
13. **BEST MMJ/ONE-PERSON BAND REPORTER** -- For excellence by an individual who serves across disciplines as a photojournalist, editor, talent and writer. Can be a montage of work, but must contain one full segment. Entries are limited to 10 minutes and must be on-air coverage.
14. **BEST MULTI-PLATFORM STORY** -- Entries should demonstrate a station's coverage of a single story presented on-air, on web, and on other digital, mobile and social media platforms. Entry must include the primary report that was broadcast and at least two sub URL's and/or social media posts that support it digitally. You may include a letter describing the coverage for the judges to consider. Entries limited to 10 minutes.
15. **BEST WEBSITE** -- This award will be given to a station which effectively uses its website to disseminate news and information. The website will be judged in real time, as judges will be asked to view each website on the same day. Criteria shall include overall appearance, news/sports content, ease of navigation, variety of information available, relevant links, interactivity, use of audio, video and other technologies, and whether it appears to be a valuable resource to the community served by the station. Entrants must generate their own news content, in addition to any content generated from providers such as wire services or networks. The entry must include the website address, and up to five URLs in the same domain to highlight specific features or web pages from 2023 that are no longer "live" (e.g. an election page). **Only one entry per station.**

**16. BEST NEWSCAST** -- Stations may enter a complete, regularly scheduled newscast. Only one entry per station. Commercials and network material should be deleted.

**17. OUTSTANDING NEWS OPERATION OF THE VIRGINIAS** -- To win this award, a news department must demonstrate that it has used the resources at its disposal, however large or small, with ingenuity and imagination; that it has determined and dealt with major issues in its community in a responsible and thorough manner; that it has represented its station and its profession with energy, with honor and with dedication to truth and fairness. One entry only.

The category will be judged on:

- a) A one-page written statement summarizing the station's accomplishments and how it used its resources to serve its viewers.
- b) A video montage of the station's best work, summarizing accomplishments and demonstrating coverage. No narratives or voiceovers permitted. Promos are allowed as long as they were part of the original material. Entry is limited to 30 minutes. *(Those who go over the time limit won't be disqualified, but the judge may stop watching after 30 minutes).*
- c) Only one entry per station.

**18. EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE THROUGH JOURNALISM** -- This award is offered for outstanding examples of comprehensive, informed and effective television reporting in the public interest. The entry may be either an instance of unusually thorough coverage of an event of importance to the community served, or the effective presentation, through news and documentary programs, news specials or other informational programs prepared by the station's news department, of issues affecting the community's interest and well-being. Judges will give special attention to initiative, planning, comprehensiveness of coverage, clarity, interest, vision and understanding in promoting the public welfare, and usefulness in terms of goals sought. Entries limited to 30 minutes.

**19. BEST WEATHERCAST OF THE YEAR** -- This award recognizes the best overall performance by a station's weather team. To win this award, the station's weather department must demonstrate that it has used the resources at its disposal with ingenuity and imagination to cover the weather events during a 24-hour period in the 2023 calendar year. The entry will be judged solely on how the weather is covered during that period by the station's weather team and may include several weathercasters if they were on air during that timeframe. The presentation can be a compilation of weathercasts over the 24 hours. Presentation may be edited but is limited to 15 minutes.

**20. BEST WEATHERCASTER** -- This award is intended to recognize exemplary efforts by an individual weathercaster rather than the combined efforts of the weather or news team. Entries should show outstanding forecasting and presentation skills by the individual weathercaster or meteorologist. Entries may include, but are not limited to, reporting on instances of severe weather forecasting, daily weather presentations, explanations of weather trends or unusual occurrences, or live event coverage from the field, as it relates to weather. Entries limited to 10 minutes and must include one complete weathercast.

- 21. BEST TELEVISION NEWS ANCHOR OF THE YEAR** -- This award recognizes the best overall performance by an individual news anchor featured on a local newscast or news program. Entry should include a video montage representative of the entrant's on-air performance. It should include opening/intro identifying the anchor. It may be edited and must not exceed 15 minutes. NOTE: Special effects are permitted ONLY if they were part of the original newscast that aired. Only what was originally broadcast should be on the recorded entry.
- 22. BEST SPORTS ANCHOR OF THE YEAR** -- This award recognizes the best overall performance by an individual sports anchor featured on local newscasts. Entry should include a video montage representative of the entrant's on-air performance. Presentation may be edited and must not exceed 15 minutes. NOTE: Special effects are permitted ONLY if they were part of the original sportscast that aired. Only what was originally broadcast should be on the recorded entry.
- 23. BEST PRODUCER** -- This award recognizes exemplary producing by an individual, either of a single newscast or special program. To win this award, a producer must demonstrate creative, qualitative and meaningful use of the resources available, however large or small the market. Entry should demonstrate excellence in writing that conveys the significance of events to the viewer. Entries limited to 30 minutes and must include one complete program without commercials. NOTE: Material entered in this category cannot be entered for Best Newscast. Only what was originally broadcast should be on the recorded entry.
- 24. BEST TEAM NEWS COVERAGE** -- For excellence by a team involved in covering multiple news stories on a single subject, shot, edited, produced and aired within 24 hours. Entries limited to 15 minutes.
- 25. OLD DOMINION HERITAGE** -- For excellence in coverage of subjects that emphasize the heritage, history, culture or natural attributes of the state of Virginia. Entries limited to 15 minutes.
- 26. MOUNTAIN STATE HERITAGE** -- For excellence in coverage of subjects that emphasize the heritage, history, culture or natural attributes of the state of West Virginia. Entries limited to 15 minutes.
- 27. BEST STATION PROMO** -- Entry will demonstrate successful promotion and branding of the station's news/weather/sports departments. Entry must be written, conceived, produced and aired by the station. Entries limited to five minutes, and can include a single or combination of promotions. Each spot typically runs 15 to 30 seconds in length.
- 28. BEST NEWS PROMO** -- Promo should be of a single topic within 48 hours of the news event. Entries should demonstrate excellence in station's ability to quickly inform viewers/listeners about a particular story of importance to the community. Entries limited to two minutes.



## RADIO CATEGORIES:

1. **BEST COVERAGE OF A SPOT NEWS STORY** -- Entries should consist of the treatment of one news story during a programming period not exceeding six hours. If circumstances surrounding coverage of the story tend to strengthen the entry, these should be noted in a written summary. Entries limited to 10 minutes.
2. **BEST COVERAGE OF A CONTINUING NEWS STORY** -- Entries should show the station's thoroughness, consistency and accuracy in covering a continuing story in such a way that the listener has a clear understanding of the significance of each development. Entries limited to 30 minutes.
3. **OUTSTANDING SPORTS OPERATION OF THE VIRGINIAS** -- The entry will be judged on two factors:
  - (a) written summary of the station's accomplishments in all areas of sports coverage throughout the year.
  - (b) audio or video of regularly scheduled sportscasts, sports specials, play-by-play, sports features, and sports interviews. The entry is limited to 15 minutes. The written summary is limited to a maximum of two typewritten pages, uploaded as an entry attachment.
4. **BEST DOCUMENTARY OR IN-DEPTH REPORT** -- Entries should show the station's capability of producing documented reports on community problems and significant news events, or in-depth reports designed to interpret in detail news stories of more than passing impact. Entries limited to 30 minutes.
5. **BEST SERIOUS FEATURE** -- A single report taking on a serious local incident or issue that was the result of the station's journalistic efforts. Criteria are significance, resourcefulness, fairness and thoroughness of coverage. Entries should not include investigative reporting. Entries limited to 10 minutes.
6. **BEST LIGHT FEATURE** -- A single report highlighting a specific subject or perspective. Topics may be news, informational or lifestyle oriented. Criteria include significance, resourcefulness, creative writing, entertainment value, and effective use of audio. Entries limited to 10 minutes.
7. **BEST SPORTS FEATURE** -- Entries may be a single report or may include excerpts from a related series. Entries limited to 15 minutes.
8. **BEST SPORTS PLAY-BY-PLAY** -- The entry must be play-by-play coverage of a sporting event. The entry must be the program as broadcast, except that the segment submitted may be no longer than 5 minutes. In addition, the segment entered shall be "consecutive minutes" and not several samples of material chosen at various points from an athletic contest that, when edited and combined, equal five total minutes. A maximum of one page of typewritten supplemental data is optional, uploaded as an entry attachment.

9. **BEST REPORTER** -- Entries should show outstanding reporting by an individual, either on a single story or a series, or outstanding work on profiles, editorials, commentary, and other material within the area of news and public affairs. Entries may include, but are not limited to, investigative reporting, and subjects may include any matter of importance or value to the community, whether religious, economic, governmental or human-interest. Entries limited to 30 minutes.
  
10. **BEST SPECIALTY REPORTING** -- Entries will be accepted from a beat reporter in a specialist area, such as consumer, health, science, business, environment, and education. Entries will be considered on the basis of how well they convey important information about a topic within a specialist area. The reporter must regularly cover this beat. Entries limited to 15 minutes.
  
11. **BEST TALK SHOW** -- Best example of a regularly-scheduled, locally originated, news-oriented talk show program. Entries limited to 30 minutes and must include interactive listener component. Commercial breaks should be deleted, but no other editing may be done. Entries can include a written summary.
  
12. **BEST MULTI-PLATFORM STORY** -- Entries should demonstrate a station's coverage of a single story presented on-air, on web, and on other digital, mobile and social media platforms. Entry must include the primary report that was broadcast and at least two sub URL's and/or social media posts that support it digitally. You may include a letter describing the coverage for the judges to consider. Entries limited to 10 minutes.
  
13. **BEST MMJ/ONE-PERSON BAND REPORTER** -- For excellence by an individual who serves across disciplines as an audio journalist, talent and digital reporter. Entries should demonstrate the reporter's ability to tell the story effectively on multiple platforms including audio reports, as well as contributions to the station's web efforts, such as text stories, photos and/or video. Entries will show a single reporter's work on a maximum of three stories, and must include the original audio report as well as three links to the additional coverage. Entries limited to 10 minutes.
  
14. **BEST WEBSITE** -- This award will be given to a station which effectively uses its website to disseminate news and information. The website will be judged in real time, as judges will be asked to view each website on the same day. Criteria shall include overall appearance, news/sports content, ease of navigation, variety of information available, relevant links, interactivity, use of audio, video and other technologies, and whether it appears to be a valuable resource to the community served by the station. Entrants must generate their own news content, in addition to any content generated from providers such as wire services or networks. The entry must include the website address, and up to five URLs in the same domain to highlight specific features or web pages from 2023 that are no longer "live" (e.g. an election page). Only one entry per station.
  
15. **BEST NEWSCAST** -- Stations may enter a complete, regularly scheduled newscast. Only one entry per station.

**16. OUTSTANDING NEWS OPERATION OF THE VIRGINIAS** -- To win this award, a news department must demonstrate that it has used the resources at its disposal, however large or small, with ingenuity and imagination; that it has determined and dealt with major issues in its community in a responsible and thorough manner; that it has represented its station and its profession with energy, with honor and with dedication to truth and fairness. One entry only.

The category will be judged on:

- a. A one-page written statement summarizing the station's accomplishments and how it used its resources to serve its viewers.
- b. An audio montage of a station's best work, summarizing accomplishments and demonstrating coverage. No narratives or voiceovers permitted. Promos are allowed as long as they were part of the original material. Entry is limited to 30 minutes. *(Those who go over the time limit won't be disqualified, but the judge may stop watching after 30 minutes).*
- c. Only one entry per station.

**17. EXCELLENCE IN PUBLIC SERVICE THROUGH JOURNALISM** -- This award is offered for outstanding examples of comprehensive, informed and effective radio reporting in the public interest. The entry may be an instance of unusually thorough coverage of an event of importance to the community served, or the effective presentation, through news and documentary programs, news specials or other informational programs prepared by the station's news department, of issues affecting the community's interest and well-being. Judges will give special attention to initiative, planning, comprehensiveness of coverage, clarity, interest, vision and understanding in promoting the public welfare, and usefulness in terms of goals sought. Entries limited to 30 minutes.

**18. BEST RADIO NEWS ANCHOR OF THE YEAR** -- This award recognizes the best overall performance by an individual news anchor featured on a local newscast or news program. Entry should include one anchored and produced newscast from any ONE given day in the calendar year. The newscast should include opening/intro identifying the anchor. Audio may be edited and must not exceed 15 minutes. NOTE: Special effects are permitted ONLY if they were part of the original newscast that aired. Only what was originally broadcast should be on the recorded entry.

**19. BEST RADIO SPORTS ANCHOR OF THE YEAR** -- This award recognizes the best overall performance by an individual sports anchor featured on local newscasts. Entry should include a montage representative of the entrant's on-air performance. The piece may be edited and must not exceed 15 minutes. NOTE: Special effects are permitted ONLY if they were part of the original sportscast that aired. Only what was originally broadcast should be on the recorded entry.

**20. OLD DOMINION HERITAGE** -- For excellence in coverage of subjects that emphasize the heritage, history, culture or natural attributes of the state of Virginia. Entries limited to 15 minutes.

**21. MOUNTAIN STATE HERITAGE** -- For excellence in coverage of subjects that emphasize the heritage, history, culture or natural attributes of the state of West Virginia. Entries limited to 15 minutes.

**22. BEST STATION PROMO** -- Entry will demonstrate successful promotion and branding of the station's news/weather/sports departments. Entry must be written, conceived, produced and aired by the station. Entries limited to five minutes, and can include a single or combination of promotions. Each spot typically runs 15 to 30 seconds in length.

**23. BEST NEWS PROMO** -- Promo should be of a single topic within 48 hours of the news event. Entries should demonstrate excellence in station's ability to quickly inform viewers/listeners about a particular story of importance to the community. Entries limited to two minutes.

**24. BEST QA (ONE-ON-ONE) INTERVIEW** -- Entries will be accepted from an individual broadcaster conducting an interview with a subject(s). The interview subject should be a public official or subject matter expert and the conversation should give listeners the opportunity to learn about a topic or local situation. Interviewer will demonstrate organized questioning and ability to keep the conversation on topic. The single interview can be edited before airing. Entries limited to 10 minutes.

***Revised by the Board of Directors November 15, 2023***