

2026 Competition - Commercial & Network Radio Categories

1. COMMERCIAL (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

A single commercial or series of commercials for one client. May be any commercial announcement written and produced by station personnel. May not include announcements produced with outside advertising or production agency assistance or directions.

Entries should include a single commercial or series of commercials presented as a single compilation that is no more than three minutes in length.

Criteria: Creativity, effectiveness, and production.
Entries Allowed: Three

2. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

A series of actions by a station that result in a positive impact in one's community.

Entries should include a single compilation showcasing the station's annual community involvement initiatives that is no more than 10 minutes in length and an up to 500-word explanation of the initiatives.

Criteria: Station efforts, creativity, and community impact.
Entries Allowed: One

3. DIGITAL EXCELLENCE (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

Overall station use of social media platforms and website to connect with its audience and inform the public.

Entries should include links to relevant social media accounts and websites and an up to 200-word description of the station's social media and website strategy.

Criteria: Quality of updates, use of user-generated content, and use of audio and visuals.
Entries Allowed: One

4. ENTERTAINMENT INTERVIEW (NEW!)

A locally originated interview featuring an entertainer, celebrity, artist, athlete, or personality designed to engage, entertain, and connect with listeners. Entries may originate from a morning show, music program, or special broadcast.

Entries should include a single interview that is no more than 15 minutes in length. Interview may be edited for time and commercial breaks.

Criteria: Preparation, quality of questions, conversational flow, and overall presentation.
Entries Allowed: Three

5. FEATURE STORY (UPDATED!)

A single report that tells a compelling story through creativity, strong writing, memorable characters, or unique subject matter. Entries may include profiles, human interest stories, arts and culture coverage, lifestyle reporting, travel, history, or other non-breaking news stories designed to inform, entertain, or inspire.

Entries should include a single story that is no more than 10 minutes in length.

Criteria: Creative writing, human interest, and subject portrayal
Entries Allowed: Three



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6. INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW (NEW!)

A locally originated interview focused on informing listeners through meaningful conversation with a news maker, public official, community leader, subject matter expert, author, coach, business leader, or other individual whose perspective provides value to the audience. Entries may originate from a newscast, talk show, morning show, public affairs program, or special broadcast.

Entries should include a single interview that is no more than 15 minutes in length. Interview may be edited for time and commercial breaks.

Criteria: Preparation, quality of questions, conversational flow, and overall presentation.
Entries Allowed: Three

7. INVESTIGATIVE/ENTERPRISE REPORTING (UPDATED!)

Coverage of a significant issue affecting the community through investigative or enterprise journalism. Entries may include original reporting that uncovers new information, explains complex issues, or provides in-depth examination of topics important to listeners.

Entries should include a single report or series of reports presented as a single compilation that is no more than 20 minutes in length.

Criteria: Significance, presentation of facts, thoroughness, and delivery.
Entries Allowed: Three

8. MORNING SHOW BROADCAST PERSONALITY OR TEAM (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

Best local on-air morning broadcast personality or broadcast team. Syndicated programming is not eligible unless you are the flagship station.

Entries should include a single compilation that is no more than 10 minutes in length.

Criteria: Production, effectiveness, and creativity.
Entries Allowed: Three

9. NEWSCAST (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

A locally originated newscast.

Entries should include a single newscast that is no more than 20 minutes in length.

Criteria: Presentation, production value, interest of stories presented, and overall impact of the newscast.
Entries Allowed: Three

10. OTT CONTENT

Content produced exclusively for digital platforms, such as livestreams. Podcasts should be entered in the Podcast Series category.

Entries should include a single compilation of OTT content that is no more than three minutes in length and an up to 200-word explanation of content.

Criteria: Creativity, innovation, and production value.
Entries Allowed: Three



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11. PLAY-BY-PLAY SPORTS (UPDATED!)

Locally originated play-by-play live sports coverage of one game.

Entries should include up to 10 minutes of edited continuous coverage of one game. Commercial breaks may be removed.

Criteria: Presentation and production value.
Entries Allowed: Three

12. PODCAST SERIES

Best locally originated podcast series.

Entries should include a compilation of on-demand podcast content that is no more than 10 minutes in length and a link to the podcast feed that includes at least 10 episodes. Entries may also include station on-air promotion of the podcast.

Criteria: Creativity, innovation, and production value.
Entries Allowed: Three

13. REGULARLY SCHEDULED PERSONALITY OR TEAM (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

Best regularly scheduled on-air weekday or weekend broadcast personality or broadcast team. Morning show broadcast personalities or teams should enter in the Morning Show category.

Entries should include a single compilation that is no more than 10 minutes in length.

Criteria: Production, effectiveness, and creativity.
Entries Allowed: Three

14. SINGLE SUBJECT REPORTING (NEW!)

Coverage of a single news event, issue or topic through a series of reports. Entries may include coverage of breaking news, developing stories, enterprise reporting, severe weather, elections, public safety, or other significant issues affecting the community. National or international stories must include a local/Michigan angle.

Entries should include a series of reports edited into one single compilation that is no more than 20 minutes in length.

Criteria: Presentation of facts, depth of coverage, delivery, and overall impact.
Entries Allowed: Three

15. SPECIAL PROGRAMMING (NEW!)

A long-form special program or series focused on a single topic, issue, event, or theme. Entries may include public affairs, historical retrospectives, special event coverage, music specials, cultural programming, or documentary storytelling.

Entries should include a single program or series edited into one compilation that is no more than 20 minutes in length.

Criteria: Storytelling, production quality, creativity, and overall presentation.
Entries Allowed: Three



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16. SPECIAL SHOW BROADCAST PERSONALITY OR TEAM (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

Best on-air special broadcast personality or broadcast team.

Entries should include a single compilation that is no more than 10 minutes in length.

Criteria: Production, effectiveness, and creativity.
Entries Allowed: Three

17. SPORTS FEATURE OR SERIES

A series of reports on a single sports topic, or a single sports feature.

Entries should include a series of reports presented as a single compilation, or a single sports feature that is no more than 10 minutes in length.

Criteria: Presentation, production value, and interest of stories presented.
Entries Allowed: Three

18. SPORTSCAST

Best locally originated sportscast.

Entries should include a single sportscast that is no more than 10 minutes in length.

Criteria: Presentation, production values, and interest of stories presented.
Entries Allowed: Three

19. STATION PROMOTIONS & MARKETING (NEW!)

Audio, digital, or integrated promotional content designed to market the station, its programming, contests, events, community initiatives, or brand. Entries may include on-air promos, imaging campaigns, contest promotion, event marketing, cross-platform campaigns, or integrated promotional efforts produced by station personnel.

Entries should include a single promotion, series of promotions, or integrated campaign presented as one compilation that is no more than 10 minutes in length. Additional supporting marketing materials, including digital or social media examples, are encouraged and should be integrated into the single compilation.

Criteria: Creativity, effectiveness, branding, audience engagement, production quality, and overall impact.
Entries Allowed: Three

COMMERCIAL RADIO STATION OF THE YEAR

Station of the Year is based on the total cumulative points for all awards won, with additional points added in the weighted categories:

Commercial Newscast | **Community Involvement** | **Digital Excellence** | **Personality***

**Stations may enter any of the listed Personality categories. If a station wins Best or Merit in more than one Personality category, the highest points won in any of the Personality categories will be applied to the Station of the Year competition.*

Tie Breaker
In the event of a tie, the station with the most Best awards will be awarded Station of the Year. If a tie remains, the station placing highest in the Community Involvement category will be awarded Station of the Year.