

2026 Competition - Commercial & Network Television Categories

1. BREAKING NEWS STORY (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

A series of reports on initial coverage of a breaking or "unplanned" news event, branded as "Breaking News," under immediate deadline, and within 24 hours of the breaking news event (Extended, in-depth coverage should be submitted in the Continuing Coverage category). National or international stories must include a local/Michigan angle.

Entries should include a series of reports edited into a single compilation that is no more than 20 minutes in length and may also include an up to 200-word description.

Criteria: News organization's response, presentation of facts, delivery, follow-ups, and news elements uncovered.
Entries Allowed: Three

2. COMMERCIAL

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 edited into a single compilation that is no more than three minutes in length.

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

3. 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 200-word explanation of the initiatives.

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

4. CONTINUING COVERAGE

Coverage of current events over an extended number of reports.

Entries should include a single compilation of the station's best news coverage of a continuing current event that is no more than 20 minutes in length and may also include an up to 200-word explanation of coverage.

Criteria: Presentation of facts, thoroughness, story advancement, significance, and delivery.
Entries Allowed: Three

5. 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



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6. FEATURE STORY

A single report which aired in a newscast.

Entries should include a single report that is no more than 10 minutes in length and may also include an up to 200-word description.

Criteria: Human interest, subject portrayal, creative writing, and effective use of audio and video.
Entries Allowed: Three

7. INVESTIGATIVE STORY

Coverage of a significant event or issue affecting the community. May be an investigative or enterprise story.

Entries should include a single investigative story or series of stories presented as a single compilation that is no more than 30 minutes in length.

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

8. MARKETING MATERIALS AND PROMOS

Promotion of your station or a promotional announcement for a program your station produces and airs. Must be written, produced, and aired on your station.

Entries should include a single promotion or series of promotions presented as a single compilation that is no more than 10 minutes in length.

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

9. NEWS SERIES

A series of reports on a single topic which may be included in regularly scheduled newscasts.

Entries should include a series of reports presented as a single compilation that is no more than 30 minutes in length.

Criteria: Significance, resourcefulness, comprehensiveness, thoroughness of research and production values.
Entries Allowed: Three

10. NEWSCAST (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

A locally originated newscast.

Entries should include a single newscast that is no more than 30 minutes in length.

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

11. NEWS ANCHOR

A compilation clip highlighting the news anchor's abilities. Entrants who submit in this category are not eligible to submit an entry in the News Reporter category.

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

Criteria: Story approach, on-air presence, and delivery.
Entries Allowed: Five



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12. NEWS REPORTER

A compilation of 3-5 events or stories highlighting an in the field news reporter, no montages will be accepted. Entrants who submit in this category are not eligible to submit an entry in the News Anchor category.

Entries should include a single compilation of 3-5 events or stories that is no more than 10 minutes in length.

Criteria: Writing, story approach, on-air presence, and delivery.
Entries Allowed: Five

13. NEWS SPECIAL

A single program or documentary which aired separately from a regularly scheduled newscast.

Entries should include a single program that is no more than 60 minutes in length.

Criteria: Significance, resourcefulness, comprehensiveness, thoroughness of research and production value.
Entries Allowed: Three

14. OTT CONTENT

Content produced exclusively for digital platforms, such as livestreams or podcasts.

Entries should include a compilation of OTT content edited into a single video that is no more than 30 minutes in length and an up to 200-word explanation of content.

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

15. PHOTOJOURNALIST

A compilation of 3-5 events or stories showing the photojournalist's best work, no montages will be accepted.

Entries should include a single compilation of 3-5 events or stories that is no more than 10 minutes in length.

Criteria: Creativity, continuity, and technical production.
Entries Allowed: Five

16. SPECIAL INTEREST PROGRAMMING

A full public affairs program featuring issues of interest to Michigan citizens of all ages (may be children's programming, recreation, sports, special performances, parades, concerts, etc.) at local or state levels

Entries should include a full public affairs program that is no more than 60 minutes in length.

Criteria: Presentation, production, and comprehensiveness.
Entries Allowed: Three



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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 15 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 15 minutes in length.

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

Entries Allowed: Three

19. WEATHER FORECASTER (NEW!)

A compilation clip highlighting the Weather Forecaster's abilities.

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

Criteria: Clear presentation of facts, effective use of available technology, and delivery/communication skills.
Entries Allowed: Five

20. WEATHERCAST (WEIGHTED CATEGORY)

A locally originated regularly scheduled weather broadcast or breaking weather event.

Entries should include a full weather broadcast or compilation of weather reports from one breaking weather event that is no more than 20 minutes in length.

Criteria: Clear presentation of facts, delivery/communication skills, and effective use of available technology.
Entries Allowed: Three

COMMERCIAL TELEVISION 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:

Breaking News Story
Community Involvement
Digital Excellence
Newscast
Weathercast

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.