118th

GATHERING OF THE
NEW MEXICO PRESS ASSOCIATION
2026

NMPA FOUNDATION BETTER NEWSPAPER Awards Gala

PEOPLE. STORIES. COMMUNITIES.

A stronger New Mexico.

October 17, 2026 • Albuquerque, NM



Second Place feature photo, *Currents of Light*, *Santa Fe New Mexican,* Gabriela Campos

El Rito Media, LLC

Ruidoso News

Rio Grande Sun — The Voice of Northern New Mexico

Artesia Daily Press

Carlsbad Current-Argus

Roswell Tribune — Local News. Real Impact.

Alamogordo News

El Rito Media congratulates all our employees on this year's New Mexico Press Awards.

Our team earned 43 awards. Their hard work, dedication and commitment to telling news, sports and entertainment stories will continue. We will serve our region and communities with truthful, accurate and compelling stories online and in print.

Congratulations to all!

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Carol Clark
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Carol A. Clark is owner/publisher of the *Los Alamos Daily Post* newspaper. Born in Los Angeles, Calif., she has lived in Los Alamos for 20 years. Her experience in the newspaper business began in 2003 as a reporter, then managing editor of the *Los Alamos Monitor*. She founded the *Los Alamos Daily Post* in 2012. Clark studied journalism with a specialization in print media at UCLA and human resources management at Cornell. Her community involvement includes vice president of United Way of Northern New Mexico, Rotary Club member, Los Alamos Commerce & Development Corporation Executive Committee and YMCA Chairman's Round Table.



FIRST VICE PRESIDENT
Frank Leto
Rio Grande Sun
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Frank Leto is the General Manager and Chief Revenue Officer for El Rito Media. El Rito Media owns five newspapers in New Mexico. They are the *Alamogordo News, Artesia Daily Press, Carlsbad Current-Argus, Rio Grande Sun and Ruidoso News*. Leto has served on the New Mexico Press board for the last year and previously served on the board from 2012-2015 when he was publisher of the *Las Cruces Sun News*. Leto is a 40 year veteran of the newspaper industry. He lives in Santa Fe.



SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
Patrick Dorsey
Santa Fe New Mexican
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Patrick Dorsey is the publisher of *The Santa Fe New Mexican* since April 2023. Patrick started in publishing with *Gannett* in 1993 as an internal auditor in Virginia. He served as controller for Tucson Newspapers, Inc., in Tucson, AZ; director of finance for *Army Times* Publishing Co. in Springfield, VA; group controller for Gannett Offset, also in Springfield, VA; director of finance of *FLORIDA TODAY* and group controller of the *Gannett South* newspaper group headquartered in Melbourne, FL. He was appointed publisher of the *Tallahassee Democrat* in 2005 and of the *Herald-Tribune* in Sarasota, FL in 2012, where he also assumed responsibilities as Vice President over all GateHouse FL properties.



TERM EXPIRING 2026
Donn Friedman
Albuquerque Journal
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Albuquerque NM 87109
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dfriedman@abqjournal.com

Donn Friedman is a technology consultant and outdoors columnist at the *Albuquerque Journal*. He has been trying to figure out computers since grade school in Denver using teletypes and punch cards.

He has worked in news for more than 40 years including the past three decades at the home-owned Albuquerque Journal.



TERM EXPIRING 2028
Daniel Russell
Hobbs News-Sun
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Hobbs, N.M., 88240
(575) 391-5416
drussell@hobbsnews.com

Daniel Russell is the co-owner of Sunrise Publishing, which owns the *Hobbs News-Sun* and the *Lovington Leader*. Russell began his career at the *News-Sun* in 1995 as a reporter, eventually became editor and finally publisher before he along with other partners purchased the News-Sun in 2022.

Daniel has won numerous awards from the New Mexico Press Association over the years — from news writing to in-depth coverage to photography to general excellence.

Prior to joining the News-Sun, Daniel was a reporter at the Artesia Daily Press and a graduate of Eldorado High School.

Daniel currently serves on the New Mexico Foundation for Open Government and the New Mexico Press Association board. He also has been president of the Hobbs community theater and currently serves as chair of the Hobbs Public Arts Committee.



TERM EXPIRING 2028
Shane Atkinson
Taos News
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Taos, NM
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satkinson@taosnews.com

Shane is the Sales Manager at *Taos News* where he has worked for the past 18 years. During this time, he served on the Board of Directors of the Taos County of Chamber of Commerce, won numerous National Newspaper Association & New Mexico Press Association awards for advertising, was chosen as a E&P's 2024 Sales Superstar and recently joined the board of the NM Press Association. Shane believes strongly in the importance of local journalism and its vital role as a watchdog and fostering civic engagement.

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PEOPLE. STORIES. COMMUNITIES. *A stronger New Mexico.*



First Place, General News Photo, *Ruidoso News,* Todd Fuqua



Second Place, General News Photo, *Albuquerque Journal,* Jessica Baca



Second Place, General News Photo, *Alamogordo Daily News,* Todd Fuqua



Second Place, General News Photo, *Rio Rancho Observer,* Kevin Opsahl



Second Place, Online Photo Gallery, *Taos News,* Clementine Miller

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Weekly Class II
01. NEWS WRITING
2nd Place
Sierra County Sentinel
Jim Shiley - Sierra County Sentinel
"Bringing Farm To Classroom"

Weekly Class II
01. NEWS WRITING
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Todd Fuqua
"Emotions ran high for survivors of flood"
Nice account of the event. Concise story-telling without the use of too much quoting. Puts a lot of things in perspective.

Weekly Class I
01. NEWS WRITING
2nd Place
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Clara Garcia
"Belen Library Director Kathleen Pickering retiring after filing sexual harassment claim"
Great story about a controversial issue. Used public records, reached out to all sources and more, included what they would and wouldn't say.

Weekly Class I
01. NEWS WRITING
1st Place
The Paper
Jesse Jones & Pat Davis
"PACs spend $300,000 on school board races, and no one noticed"
Well done piece using campaign finance reports, talking with candidates and more to show how a national PAC was investing heavily in getting its preferred candidates elected in a local school board race. The sourcing is the key in this story.

Daily Class II
01. NEWS WRITING
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Andy Brosig
"Walking the walk"
This is a clear telling of a complex story. I appreciated the graphic, and thought it was an effective use of AI. I appreciated the disclosure. Thank you!

Daily Class II
01. NEWS WRITING
1st Place
Carlsbad Current Argus
Adrian Hedden
"Damien Vasquez acquitted of murder charge"
This is a complicated story well-told. I thought you weaved the story of the alleged crime itself and the courtroom happenings together deftly. Thank you!

Daily Class I
01. NEWS WRITING
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Carina Julig
"Awash in encampments"

Daily Class I
01. NEWS WRITING
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
André Salkin
"Unrecovered: Migrant remains still dot New Mexico's inhospitable southern border"
Wide variety of sourcing, multimedia elements and structure add to the piece. Emotional element of the piece was left til the end and the article could have benefitted from it being added in earlier to the story. Shows all angles and agencies involved, fair and unbiased reporting shown.

Weekly Class II
02. BREAKING NEWS
2nd Place
Ruidoso News
Adrian Hedden
"Plane crash details emerge"

Weekly Class II
02. BREAKING NEWS
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Ruidoso News Staff
"The aftermath of Ruidoso Floods"
Strong reporting and presentation on a devastating community tragedy.

Weekly Class I
02. BREAKING NEWS
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Michaela Helean, Kevin Opsahl
"Suspected Bernalillo shooter arrested"

Weekly Class I
02. BREAKING NEWS
1st Place
Taos News
Olivia Lewis
"Army deserters charged with murdering missing veteran"
Insane story and amazing reporting. The reporter interviewed a lot of people and everyone that was important or involved in the case. Great work by them and super tough story to write, I'm sure. Definitely deserving of first place.

Daily Class I & II
02. BREAKING NEWS
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
André Salkin
"Celebration and uncertainty in Santa Fe over ousting of Maduro"
Well balanced report

Daily Class I & II
02. BREAKING NEWS
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Esteban Candelaria
"'Systematic moral failing' at CYFD"
In the moment solid reporting. Solution/resolution based with call to action.

Weekly Class II
03. DIGITAL BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE
2nd Place
NMSU Round-up
Addisyn Hartman
"NMSU fires Jody Adams, begins search for new head coach"
This feels less like a breaking news story and more like a big sports headline.

Weekly Class II
03. DIGITAL BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE
1st Place
Artesia Daily Press
Adrian Hedden, Mike Smith
"Explosion at Navajo Refinery"
Great detail, great information!

Weekly Class I
03. DIGITAL BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Kevin Opsahl
"Water main break drags on days"

Weekly Class I
03. DIGITAL BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE
1st Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Michaela Helean, Kevin Opsahl
"Bernalillo Active Shooter"
The reporter brought together key information on police, schools and transit in a breaking news story that affected many families. The story was clear, useful and easy to follow.

Daily Class I & II
03. DIGITAL BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Daniel J. Chacón, Clara Bates, Gabriela Campos
"Epstein victims' memorial removed"

Daily Class I & II
03. DIGITAL BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Esteban Candelaria, Gabriela Campos, Lily Alexander
"University of New Mexico dorm shooting"
The story has multiple perspectives from parents to students, activists groups, university officials and more. The coverage tell the most important information first but builds off that to create human interest and connect with audiences. Amazing, sensitive coverage.

Weekly Class II
04. SPORTS WRITING
2nd Place
Ruidoso News
Todd Fuqua
"Mosher a globe-trotting volleyball star"
Super interesting read. It was a bit long, but every question I had about the player ended up getting

answered. Mosher has had a lot of things going on in her life so I actually think the lengthier feature was completely understandable.

Weekly Class II

04. SPORTS WRITING
1st Place
The Tri-City Record
Steven Bortstein
"Aztec's Levi Stout continues to build on impressive history"
It's a very impressive story with a lot of impact. The coverage was very good and informed the reader of the overarching story. Great read.

Weekly Class I

04. SPORTS WRITING
2nd Place
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Mike Powers
"NMAA: Mistake made in BHS relay disqualification"
This is a challenging and complicated story to get right, and I think you did a solid job.

Weekly Class I

04. SPORTS WRITING
1st Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Dan Allison
"Working behind the scenes"
Well-written story on an interesting subject matter that doesn't often get covered. Great stuff!

Daily Class II

04. SPORTS WRITING
2nd Place
Alamogordo Daily News
Todd Fuqua
"Thursday night lights"
Really interesting story about something that I'm sure is a concern everywhere but doesn't get the attention it probably deserves. Thank you!

Daily Class II

04. SPORTS WRITING
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Jason Farmer
"A culture for Eunice volleyball"
Cool story on an interesting character. Appreciated the detail and narrative. Also, the graphic at the top of the story is really nicely done!

Daily Class I

04. SPORTS WRITING
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Will Webber
"New Mexico Highlands tapping into Samoan culture for football recruiting"

Daily Class I

04. SPORTS WRITING
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
James Barron
"Battles on two fronts"
A perfect telling of the human condition in the world of sports that inspires from headline to the final line of the story.

Weekly Class II

05. BUSINESS WRITING
2nd Place
The Tri-City Record
Lenora Lare
"Fireworks Family Tradition"

Weekly Class II

05. BUSINESS WRITING
1st Place
The Tri-City Record
Debra Mayeux and David Edward Albright
"Farmers markets open throughout San Juan County"
This was a well written and well reported look at the arrival of farmers market season. The photographs were a strong accompaniment in a package that was not only informative but a fun read.

Weekly Class I

05. BUSINESS WRITING
2nd Place
Taos News
Olivia Lewis
"Creampuff lovers, rejoice"
What a fun, touching story! Thank you.

Weekly Class I

05. BUSINESS WRITING
1st Place
Taos News
Olivia Lewis
"Tribal Slice reboots at Picuris Pueblo"
This was a really excellent and fascinating story about such a unique business. Thank you!

Daily Class II

05. BUSINESS WRITING
2nd Place
Carlsbad Current Argus
Adrian Hedden
"A legacy to die for: West Funeral home in business for 120 years"

Daily Class II

05. BUSINESS WRITING
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Levi Hill
"Hobbs is hungry ... for retail"
Retail development is a big deal — and a topic readers care about in every community. The writer does a nice job breaking down what's coming to Hobbs and what's next on the horizon.

Daily Class I

05. BUSINESS WRITING
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Mike Easterling
"AI data center proposal in Raton draws opposition"

Daily Class I

05. BUSINESS WRITING
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Kylie Garcia
"'Don't give up'"
Amazing article that covers the issue from all angles, lovely photos and perspectives.

Weekly Class II

06. ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURE REPORTING
2nd Place
Las Vegas Optic
Vanessa Maciel
"Bonita Estates residents express concern over mining project"

Weekly Class II

06. ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURE REPORTING
1st Place
Cibola Citizen
Diego Lopez
"Cibola Drought Monitor"
Right away the story gives readers the impact and dives into data to back that up. The story lays out for readers why these data points matter and why readers should continue to pay attention.

Weekly Class I

06. ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURE REPORTING
2nd Place
Taos News
Emily Sender, Clementine Miller
"Irrigation season begins without water with which to irrigate"

Weekly Class I

06. ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURE REPORTING
1st Place
Taos News
Emily Sender, Clementine Miller
"Llamas don't need roads, don't disturb protected bird species"
This was a unique and well written story. Nice work.

Daily Class II

06. ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURE REPORTING
2nd Place
Carlsbad Current Argus
Adrian Hedden
"Is Holtec pulling out of New Mexico"

Daily Class II

06. ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURE REPORTING
1st Place
Carlsbad Current Argus
Adrian Hedden
"Oil spills draw concern"
Really great information and detail

Daily Class I

06. ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURE REPORTING
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Alaina Mencinger and Margaret O'Hara
"New Mexico farmers heavily rely on a federal visa program facing an overhaul"
What an easy-to-digest explanation of a really critical issue in this space. Loved the explainers throughout and the graph. Thank you!

Daily Class I

06. ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURE REPORTING
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Matthew Reisen
"Wolf trapping on the rise"
I loved this story. It's well-sourced, nuanced, and brings in the voices of multiple different stakeholders in a way that is classy and useful. Thank you!

Weekly Class II

07. EDUCATION WRITING
2nd Place
Las Vegas Optic
Vanessa Maciel
"Highlands top leadership ousted"

Weekly Class II

07. EDUCATION WRITING
1st Place
The Tri-City Record
Alx Lee
"How will no-cost plan affect San Juan County childcare?"
In-depth coverage of an important news development.

Weekly Class I

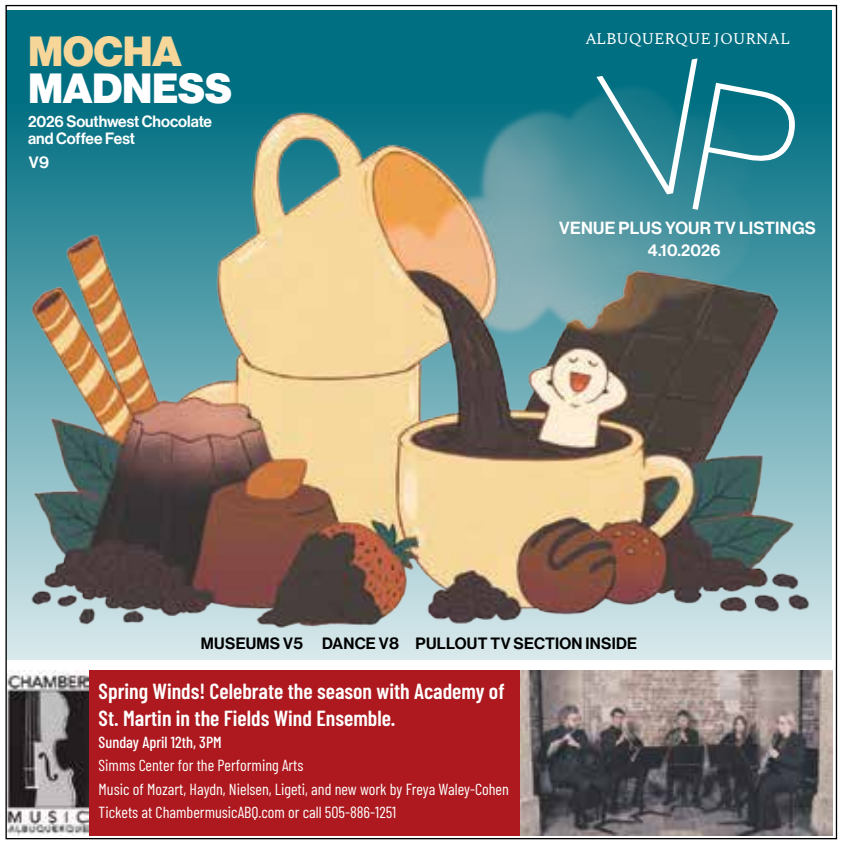
07. EDUCATION WRITING
2nd Place
Las Cruces Bulletin
Kurt Johnson
"Adrian Galaz education feature"



Second Place, Photo Series, *Gallup Sun,* Jenny Pond



Second Place, Self-Promotion or House Ad, *Las Cruces Bulletin,* Matthew Meerbott



Second Place, Advertising Campaign, *Albuquerque Journal,* Jeremy Tafoya & Diane Berry



First Place, Advertising Campaign, *Artesia Daily Press,* Tim Keithley

Weekly Class I

07. EDUCATION WRITING
1st Place
Las Cruces Bulletin
Kurt Johnson
"School data"

This story gave a clear and highly readable look at one of the most complex stories to tell—education data, in this case mainly reading. The result of the author's work is an engaging and highly informative piece that every parent with a school-aged child in New Mexico should read.

Daily Class II

07. EDUCATION WRITING
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Andy Brosig
"Clickin' around"

Daily Class II

07. EDUCATION WRITING
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Andy Brosig
"Dream becomes reality"

Great story about a visionary paying it forward.

Daily Class I

07. EDUCATION WRITING
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Dan Boyd
"NM's universal child care push draws praise and pushback"

Daily Class I

07. EDUCATION WRITING
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Natalie Robbins
"Students read aloud. AI scores them"

Extremely timely piece, regardless of what you think of AI. Though I personally find it scary that it's being implemented in schools with children so young, I can't help but commend good reporting on a topic that's so relevant to our day and age.

Weekly Class II

08. FEATURE WRITING
2nd Place
Roswell Daily Record
Jim Hilley
"World War II veteran celebrates 100 years"

Weekly Class II

08. FEATURE WRITING
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Richard Coltharp
"A Mayor's life"



First Place, Sports Photo
Ruidoso News, Todd Fuqua

A well-told story of a mayor whose small town is trying to recover from a disaster.

Weekly Class I

08. FEATURE WRITING
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Tracy Goldizen
"UFO records center explores history of the phenomena"

Weekly Class I

08. FEATURE WRITING
1st Place
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Julia M. Dendinger
"Danette Farnsworth, BHS graduate & NASA astrophysicist, contributes to Artemis II mission"

This piece was, without question, my favorite of the contest. It was well-crafted, engaging, and left a lasting impression

Daily Class II

08. FEATURE WRITING
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Andy Brosig
"A reason to be thankful"

Really touching story. Thanks for approaching this with the deft necessary.

Daily Class II

08. FEATURE WRITING
1st Place
Carlsbad Current Argus
Adrian Hedden
"Carlsbad seniors learning about warning signs, solutions when fighting dementia"

Thanks for tackling this challenging but important topic. Really well done.

Daily Class I

08. FEATURE WRITING
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Logan Royce Beitmen
"Beyond Georgia"

After reading Logan Royce Beitmen's feature, I have thought about it dozens of times and talked about the story with friends and family. The piece so perfectly and succinctly captured the issues around O'Keeffe's legacy as well as the importance of the artists and curator looking to set things right with this historic exhibition. It captured what feels like a pivotal moment for Santa Fe in a way that was engaging, entertaining and deeply memorable.

Daily Class I

08. FEATURE WRITING
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Cormac Dodd
"Gentrifying countryside?"

Cormac Dodd's feature captured the complexity of a community in transition in a way that stayed with me. I came away feeling like I had a deep understanding of the unique challenges facing rural New Mexican towns stuck between a lost past and an uncertain future. His writing was immersive and compassionate and helped humanize a story about economy and the cost of growth. Excellent reporting and writing.

Weekly Class I & II

09. BEST HEADLINE WRITING
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Tracy Goldizen
"Land of Engagement"

Weekly Class I & II

09. BEST HEADLINE WRITING
1st Place
Lovington Leader
Ruth Campbell, Angela Taylor
"'Bawk' again! Chickens return; top officials reappointed"

This is eye catching but also tells you what the story is going to be about!

Daily Class II

09. BEST HEADLINE WRITING
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Jason Farmer
"Storm grounds Eagles"

Daily Class II

09. BEST HEADLINE WRITING
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Jason Farmer
"Eunice tames Lions in quarterfinals"

Nice headline. It captures the article very well with how Eunice tamed the Lions, despite all the flags. The "color" writing also painted a nice picture of the opponents including the "yellow" flags.

Daily Class I

09. BEST HEADLINE WRITING
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Eric J. Hedlund
"Ecks factor"

Daily Class I

09. BEST HEADLINE WRITING
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Carolyn Graham
"The Fault in Our Stars"

A creative and engaging title

that balances — much like the exhibit described — history and contemporary relevance.

Weekly Class II

11. OBITUARY WRITING
2nd Place
Roswell Daily Record
Toby Martinez
"Per aspera ad astra"

Weekly Class II

11. OBITUARY WRITING
1st Place
Eastern New Mexico News
Alex Ross
"Music legend remembered for bridging divides"
Alex Ross' obit of a man adored by many paints a beautiful picture of a life well-lived. It hooks you early on with a quote that sums up a lot about Howell's personality and then continues to give you more anecdotes and quotes that help showcase Howell's life and personality.

Weekly Class I

11. OBITUARY WRITING
2nd Place
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Clara Garcia
"Casey Luna revered & remembered"

Weekly Class I

11. OBITUARY WRITING
1st Place
Rio Grande Sun
Jennifer A. Garcia
"Rancho de Chimayó's 'Mrs. J' Dies at 94"
Such great background and details

Daily Class II

11. OBITUARY WRITING
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Andy Brosig
"Irreplaceable: Appleton's loss mourned"
Good information about her career

Daily Class II

11. OBITUARY WRITING
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Christina Holt
"'A warrior for right'"
Really well written!

Daily Class I

11. OBITUARY WRITING
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
John Miller
"Ted Turner"

Daily Class I

11. OBITUARY WRITING
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Gabrielle Porter
"Chaplain was tireless advocate for the homeless"
In a field of entries that made choosing the best truly difficult, this piece by Gabrielle Porter stood tall. Her writing captured not only the soul of a man but also the soul of the community he served. An outstanding effort.

Weekly Class II

12. BEST NEWS COVERAGE
2nd Place
Eastern New Mexico News
Staff of the *Eastern New Mexico News*
"Five Days of Violence_ Music Legend"

Weekly Class II

12. BEST NEWS COVERAGE
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Staff of the *Ruidoso News*
"*Ruidoso News* Coverage - A Tragedy and its Aftermath"
The pictures of the flood give an impactful feeling of the tragedy these communities faced. The reporting was engaging.

Weekly Class I

12. BEST NEWS COVERAGE
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
***Rio Rancho Observer* staff**
Rio Rancho Observer

Weekly Class I

12. BEST NEWS COVERAGE
1st Place
Rio Grande Sun
Jennifer Garcia
March and October entries
Given its staffing challenges, the Rio Grande Sun has done a commendable job covering the news in smart, engaging ways. kudos to those who keep it together

Daily Class I

12. BEST NEWS COVERAGE
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
***Albuquerque Journal* staff**
Albuquerque Journal Best News Coverage

Daily Class I

12. BEST NEWS COVERAGE
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
***Santa Fe New Mexican* news reporting team**
Section A *Santa Fe New Mexican*
I believe this publication has very well-rounded story and a good hyper-local focus on stories that matter in the community.

Weekly Class II

13. BEST SPORTS COVERAGE
2nd Place
Ruidoso News
***Ruidoso News* Sports Staff**
Ruidoso News Sports Coverage

Weekly Class II

13. BEST SPORTS COVERAGE
1st Place
Roswell Daily Record
Dave Sterling & Marco Antonio Martinez
Roswell Daily Record Sports Coverage
Covering high school sports isn't easy. But here, The Roswell Daily Record has a game recap, a college signing and a fun story on weightlifting. A solid variety of topics.

Weekly Class I

13. BEST SPORTS COVERAGE
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Rio Rancho Observer
Rio Rancho Observer

Weekly Class I

13. BEST SPORTS COVERAGE
1st Place
Taos News
Blynn Beltran
Taos News is the Best Sports Section
The breadth of topics here is impressive. There's a wide variety of coverage and it's all done with care and passion. The design is also top-tier.

Daily Class II

13. BEST SPORTS COVERAGE
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Jason Farmer & Peter Stein
Hobbs News-Sun Sports

Daily Class II

13. BEST SPORTS COVERAGE
1st Place
Alamogordo Daily News
Alamogordo News Sports Staff
Alamogordo News Sports Coverage
Solid decision on display of the athlete vote and strong explanatory writing on the new district for the school's program.

Daily Class I

13. BEST SPORTS COVERAGE
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Albuquerque Journal Sports department
Albuquerque Journal sports coverage

Daily Class I

13. BEST SPORTS COVERAGE
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Will Webber, James Barron, Eric J. Hedlund, Richard Olmsted, Nathan Burton, Jim Weber, Gabriela Campos
Sports coverage, March 13, 2026, Nov. 26, 2025
Strong and clean design, eye-catching presentation throughout. In particular, the centerpiece with players of the year. The lead stories complemented each other, bringing the reader into those personalities immediately.

Weekly Class II

14. COLUMNS
2nd Place
Las Vegas Optic
Phil Scherer
"'...And there was no one left to speak out for me'"

Weekly Class II

14. COLUMNS
1st Place
Eastern New Mexico News
Betty Williamson
"Emma's heart – big enough for two"
Heartwarming, heartbreaking and overall just a very well done piece that could bring a tear to the most cynical of eyes.

Weekly Class I

14. COLUMNS
2nd Place
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Kenn Rodriguez
"Memories of Ozzy, Class of 2000 make social media nice for a while"

Weekly Class I

14. COLUMNS
1st Place
Rio Grande Sun
Richard Connor
"Milton Johnson column"
Very impressive and interesting!

Daily Class II

14. COLUMNS
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Levi Hill
"Gun truth buying column"

Daily Class II
14. COLUMNS
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Denise Marquez
"Holiday blues"
A really important issue with a compelling story and resources for readers. Actionable.

Daily Class I
14. COLUMNS
2nd Place
NM Jewish Journal, LLC
Judith Fein
"My Relationship Wasn't Great, But His Father Changed My Life"

Daily Class I
14. COLUMNS
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Milan Simonich
"For a day, SF City Hall backs off signing-in rule"
I enjoyed this story of the journalist standing for what he believes is right even coming back with an attorney the next day.

Weekly Class II
15. SPORTS COLUMNS
2nd Place
Ruidoso News
Tim Keithley
"The most successful stallion never to see the winner's circle"

Weekly Class II
15. SPORTS COLUMNS
1st Place
The Tri-City Record
Steven Bortstein
"Sorsby not first, won't be last to face gambling addiction"
Tremendous writing here. Really enjoyed the author's personal perspective on the issue, which is now almost an epidemic.

Weekly Class I
15. SPORTS COLUMNS
2nd Place
Taos News
Blynn Beltran
"On Accolades"

Weekly Class I
15. SPORTS COLUMNS
1st Place
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Mike Powers
"The reasons why?"
Strong subject to explore, given its common thread with so many other situations in sports and life. Had to get over a couple of grammar issues (need to capitalize Dad in the lead; it's a proper noun, and the single quotes in Graf 6 were confusing; should be double quotes for quoted material). Insider analysis ultimately lifted this column to the top, with real-life comparisons.

Daily Class II
15. SPORTS COLUMNS
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Jason Farmer
"Family-friends New Year's time travel tradition lives on"

Daily Class II
15. SPORTS COLUMNS
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Levi Hill
"Thorny zebra and soda pops"
This is an example of great narrative writing. The author immediately sets the scene and hooks you in. The flow and structure of the story are very appealing.

Daily Class I
15. SPORTS COLUMNS
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Will Webber
"Calling all would-be referees: Put up or shut up"

Daily Class I
15. SPORTS COLUMNS
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Milan Simonich
"They called him 'Sugar' — until he lost it all"
A revealing look at a bygone star's heart-wrenching tarnish.

Weekly Class II
16. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW
2nd Place
NMSU Round-up
Uziel Ramos
"Citlali Delgado's "Unexpected Pedestrians" brings Borderland realities to life"

Weekly Class II
16. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW
1st Place
NMSU Round-up
Hannah Saltman
"Downtown Las Cruces gets a taste of drag brunch"
Sounds like drag brunches don't happen often there. To cover it and to demystify what it is was likely the goal of this reporter and it worked.

Weekly Class I
16. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW
2nd Place
Gallup Sun
James Jay Edwards
"'The Fantastic Four: First Steps' lays decent groundwork for MCU's sixth phase"

Weekly Class I
16. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW
1st Place
Gallup Sun
Glenn Kay
"Michael will please fans of the King of Pop"
Engaging & well-written. The writing is informative, entertaining and easy to follow.

Daily Class I
16. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW
2nd Place
NM Jewish Journal, LLC
Judith Fein
"A Dazzling Fashion Show for the Most Famous Jewish Mother in the World"

Daily Class I
16. ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Mark Tiarks
"The Marriage of Figaro"
This entry simply rose to the top for me. Every submission had merit, but this piece captured my attention and held it — a clear standout.

Weekly Class II
17. EDITORIALS
2nd Place
Ruidoso News
Richard L. Connor
"We won't let disaster define us"

Weekly Class II
17. EDITORIALS
1st Place
Artesia Daily Press
Artesia Daily Press Editorial Board
Editorial: "Voters need to approve the Artesia hospital mill levy"
The pair of editorials about the mill levy give readers a look behind the scenes of the editorial process in order to lay bare concerns over management of a rural hospital that is fundamental to the region. It holds power to account by exposing the behaviors of hospital administrators who are asking voters to continue funding them, even if they can't answer basic questions. A good example of the power of the editorial board.

Weekly Class I
17. EDITORIALS
2nd Place
Taos News
Geoffrey Plant
"Elmer Fudd with a hand grenade"

Weekly Class I
17. EDITORIALS
1st Place
Taos News
Geoffrey Plant
"Mark Casias presumed innocent of murder"
A sobering commentary on the need for society to slow down especially in life or death matters.

Daily Class I & II
17. EDITORIALS
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Jeff Tucker
"Mayor's ethics complaint threatens free speech rights"

Daily Class I & II
17. EDITORIALS
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Inez Russell Gomez
"Public meetings? No need for a sign-in sheet"
Very interesting

Weekly Class II
18. BEST SERIES
2nd Place
Roswell Daily Record
Terri Harber
"Chaves County wrestles with public Nativity scene"

Weekly Class II
18. BEST SERIES
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Todd Fuqua, Dave Tomlin, Adrian Hedden, Marshall Mecham
"Ruidoso Flood Coverage"
Ruidoso News brought thorough, up-to-date coverage about an incredibly timely and important issue to their audience. I especially enjoyed the "A week later" story.

Weekly Class I
18. BEST SERIES
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Michaela Helean
"Dispatch Dispute"

Weekly Class I

18. BEST SERIES
1st Place
Las Cruces Bulletin
Kurt Johnson
"Senior olympics series"

These stories are interesting and well written. Great job selecting these individuals and telling their stories in a compelling way. Excellent work!

Daily Class II

18. BEST SERIES
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Jason Farmer
"Free Transfers"

Daily Class II

18. BEST SERIES
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
News-Sun Staff - Caleb A. Gallegos; Denise Marquez; Levi Hill
"Hollywood in Lea County"

This was a really fun series! I loved the cast of characters that readers were introduced to in their own community through this Hollywood set. Great stuff.

Daily Class I

18. BEST SERIES
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Alaina Mencinger, Cormac Dodd
"Trinity: 80 years later"

Daily Class I

18. BEST SERIES
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Margaret O'Hara, Esteban Candelaria
"Issues in focus: Filling the child care deficit"

I thought this series was very topical to a lot of families. It had a very nice mix of public records and real families impacted by the high cost of childcare.

Weekly Class II

19. CONTINUING COVERAGE
2nd Place
Ruidoso News
Todd Fuqua, Adrian Hedden, Dave Tomlin, Sarah Rubinstein
"Flooding in Ruidoso"

Weekly Class II

19. CONTINUING COVERAGE
1st Place
Las Vegas Optic
Vanessa Maciel
"Highlands University fires president, others"

This story series does a good job at showing the ramp up to a potential pay-to-play scheme. It appears to be an ongoing story that readers are sure to follow about Franken Construction.

Weekly Class I

19. CONTINUING COVERAGE
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Kevin Opsahl, Tracy Goldizen
"RRPS superintendent search"

Weekly Class I

19. CONTINUING COVERAGE
1st Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Tracy Goldizen, Michaela Helean
"Project Ranger selects Sandoval County for hypersonic missile development campus"

Very interesting topic and great, thorough information. Impressive that it was closely followed for nine months.

Daily Class II

19. CONTINUING COVERAGE
2nd Place
Carlsbad Current Argus
Adrian Hedden
"WIPP vs. The State of New Mexico"

Daily Class II

19. CONTINUING COVERAGE
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Levi Hill
"War on Water"

Coverage dissects an important community and environmental issue through several frames and developments. Nice job.

Daily Class I

19. CONTINUING COVERAGE
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Matt Reisen
"Overdose in the MDC"

I realize the comments here for 2nd place are optional, but having been a part of the radio and TV news media since 1989, I'm fairly jaded when it comes to incarcerated suicide. But this piece reminded me that a narcotic used to deter withdrawal in heroin addicts can also have its original fatal effect on the person intending harm to himself. The ultimate irony here is that the preferential treatment Acee received as a legacy son was moot; his own father's influence was ultimately outweighed by Acee's suicidal ideation using methadone. Ultimately, the entitled "Cop Kid" carried out his final act of surrender successfully, which in the end saves taxpayers money and



the court system time.

Daily Class I

19. CONTINUING COVERAGE
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Phaedra Haywood
"Teen boys accused of targeting homeless in Española"
News copy is impacting, good flow, easy to read. The piece had me talking to myself when the paragraph described these [15-year-old] literal boys randomly targeting pedestrians in the middle of the night. Horrendous, but justifies a capital murder charge.

All Divisions

20. COMMUNITY EVENT PROMOTION
2nd Place
Cibola Citizen
Diego Lopez
"MLK Day Celebration 2026"
Not sure if it was meant to be a newsletter or promotion. Too busy, and context gets lost.

All Divisions

20. COMMUNITY EVENT PROMOTION
1st Place
Taos News
Taos News Staff
"Tradiciones"
The artwork for the 25th was a favorite, "Chicano, caminos distintos", as not all roads are the same for Latinos/Chicanos.

Daily Class I

21. TRANSPARENCY & NEWS LITERACY
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Bill Church
"How local news quietly made the Legislature's best-hits list"

Daily Class I

21. TRANSPARENCY & NEWS LITERACY
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Albuquerque Journal
"CENTENNIAL SUNDAYS"
In a category filled with strong entries, this was the best of the best. This was an outstanding series highlighting the history of the newspaper and the community it serves. Strong from start to finish. Excellent work!

Weekly Class II

22. BEST SPECIAL SECTION
2nd Place
Cibola Citizen
Cibola Citizen Staff
"Cibola Citizen Letters to Santa 2026 - MAILED"
Unable to judge as I never received the hard copy in the mail.

Weekly Class II

22. BEST SPECIAL SECTION
1st Place
Eastern New Mexico News
ENMN Staff
"Halloween Thrill Guide"
Charming and a great way to engage with the community.

Weekly Class I

22. BEST SPECIAL SECTION
2nd Place
Rio Grande Sun
Richard Coltharp and Richard Connor
"Hold Onto Your Montecristi"
Milton Johnson's profile was such a great read. What a life — and what a wonderful story. The writing and presentation really brought it all to life. I may never be able to afford a $25,000 Panama hat, but I hope to stop by his shop someday, meet him and tell him how much I enjoyed learning about his life and work.

Weekly Class I

22. BEST SPECIAL SECTION
1st Place
Taos News
Taos News Staff
"Tradiciones"
Every profile in the 56-page Tradiciones section was well-written, packed with telling details and quotes that gave readers a strong sense of why each person was chosen as an unsung community hero. The mix of portraits and scene photos worked well, and the clean, engaging layout made the section a quick, enjoyable read. The legends portion was especially fun. Everyone involved in producing the section should be proud of the result.

Daily Class I & II

22. BEST SPECIAL SECTION
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
News-Sun Staff
"Progress Edition 2026"

Daily Class I & II

22. BEST SPECIAL SECTION
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
News-Sun Staff
"National Energy Appreciation 2025"
This is a high-energy section that complements its subject material very well. Strong images and layout grace some excellent writing.

Weekly Class II

23. BEST MAGAZINE
2nd Place
Cibola Citizen
Cibola Citizen Staff
Best Magazine - Cibola Relocation Guide 2026 - MAILED

Weekly Class II

23. BEST MAGAZINE
1st Place
El Defensor Chieftain
Jessica Carranza Pino, Ungelbah Davila, Rob Wulff, Regina Barnett, Stephanie McFadden
Socorro County Visitor's Guide
Interesting stories. Visually appealing. Well designed.

Weekly Class I

23. BEST MAGAZINE
2nd Place
Las Cruces Bulletin
Sandra Moulton, Matthew Meerbott
Southwest Wedding & Celebrations
I really liked the way it stuck to the bridal theme in the design and layout of the magazine. It all fit together nicely.

Weekly Class I

23. BEST MAGAZINE
1st Place
Taos News
Taos News Staff
Taos Woman
Stayed true to the theme of the magazine - drew you in from the start. The advertisements were relevant the articles well done.

Daily Class I

23. BEST MAGAZINE
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Carolyn Graham, Editor, Marcella Sandoval, Taura Costidis, Brian Sandford, Ania Hull, Holly Weber, Pamela Beach
Pasatiempo Native Fashion, May 8, 2026
Beautiful magazine, well laid out. Was a very close call.

Daily Class I

23. BEST MAGAZINE
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Ashley M. Biggers
2025 Legacy
Very well themed magazine. Visually enticing and well designed

Weekly Class II

24. BEST WEBSITE
2nd Place
Artesia Daily Press
Artesia Daily Press Staff
Artesia Daily Press
Well designed and clean site. Lot of news on the cover page. Good mix of sections, good use of photos.

Weekly Class II

24. BEST WEBSITE
1st Place
NMSU Round-up
Elizabeth Anne Andrews
NMSU Round Up
Nicely designed. Large photos dominate. A good mix of local and national news. Really like the staff members down the right rail. A list of trending stories to keep readers coming back. Very thoughtful elements placed on page.

Weekly Class I

24. BEST WEBSITE
2nd Place
Las Cruces Bulletin
Matthew Meerbott
Las Cruces Bulletin online
Great use of photos and slides on featured items. Really makes the page pop. Organization is clean. Flow of page works well. Links to social media featured prominently. Inside section pages aren't as crisp, but still lot of information and reasons to click through.

Weekly Class I

24. BEST WEBSITE
1st Place
Taos News
Heather Owen
Taos News
Well done site. Tons of information with a quick scroll. Good use of photos. Sports and Arts pages make use of photos well. Would like to have seen some on opinions. Only concern is that when the site comes up you get one story in that featured spot, but if users scroll down they will be more than rewarded with a clean layout and plenty of clickable links.

Daily Class II

24. BEST WEBSITE
2nd Place
Alamogordo Daily News
Alamogordo News Staff
Alamogordo News
Nicely designed and clean site. Presentation of various sections is good. Lots to draw in readers.

Daily Class II

24. BEST WEBSITE



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Pretty winter views, but still pretty cold

By Tobin Harbeck
Roswell Daily Record

Monday was a picture postcard-type of winter day in Roswell with blue skies and white snow. However, the temperatures weren't worth writing home about because some were already stuck there.

Chaves County government offices were closed on Monday. The Roswell Independent Schools District opted for remote learning. Roswell Transit planned to stop running buses at 4:30 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday because of the icy road conditions.

The forecast on Monday into early Tuesday still contains a cold weather advisory. Overnight into Tuesday, thermometers were expected to drop to only 3°F, with more freezing fog in some locations until about 9 a.m. Tuesday, according to the overnight forecast by the National Weather Service (NWS).

In Roswell today, the high is predicted to reach 37°F once the freezing fog evaporates by around 9 a.m. The low temperature is expected not to drop below 11°F, the NWS also reports.

Temperatures are projected to creep upward during the day as the week progresses, while overnight and early temps will continue to drop below freezing.

The warming center at Westminster Presbyterian Church at 2801 W. 4th St., and the Salvation Army location at 612 W. College Blvd., both announced plans to continue operating through Wednesday morning, weather permitting.

Cold weather sheltering offered by the Roswell Homeless Coalition was scheduled to end at 9 a.m. Tuesday. However, the Roswell Transit office on North Main Street closed at 4:30 p.m. on Monday and will close at the same time on Tuesday.

The Roswell Community Disaster Relief Services planned to leave Pioneer Park, where they set up a warming center over the weekend, and will refocus efforts on driving around to pick up the

See COLD, Page A3

Terri Harber Photo

The roofline of a residence on Roswell's southeast side on Sunday afternoon, once the sun came out and the clouds cleared. Drivers in this part of the state are reminded to be mindful of icy patches of road and the potential for freezing fog during early hours of the day, with daytime temperatures in the 40s while the lows stay below freezing.

Jim Hilley Photo

BRAVING THE STORM

Heavy snow and temperatures near zero mean hard work for anyone tending livestock in the area this week. Dickie McIntosh of McIntosh Horse Company clears accumulated snow and ice off a water trough set out for cows grazing on farmland in East Grand Plains as snow continued to fall Sunday morning. While the snow has ended in Chaves County, the National Weather Service is predicting the Roswell area will remain in the grip of well below average temperatures for much of the week, with lows in the teens today and tomorrow.

Lawsuit filed over imperiled Pecos River turtle



Photo courtesy of RKO

A Rio Grande cooter (Pseudemys Gorzugi) swimming in its namesake river.

By Adrian Hedden
Carlsbad Current-Argus

CARLSBAD — A struggling turtle native to the waters of New Mexico, including the Pecos River, is at the center of a federal lawsuit.

The Rio Grande cooter was denied federal protections under the Endangered Species Act in 2022 after a petition by the Center for Biological Diversity called for it to be added to the federal list of "endangered" species.

Endangered status means the federal government, namely the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, believes a species' extinction is imminent.

Such a listing means the agency must devise a recovery plan, require stricter analysis before development can occur near or in habitat, and potentially set aside lands for the species' recovery.

The lesser "threatened" status indicates the service believes an endangered listing may soon be warranted and results in similar requirements to prevent extinction.

In response to the service denying the cooter endangered status about three years ago, the Center for Biological Diversity sued the Fish and Wildlife Service Jan. 8 in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia seeking to reverse the agency's 2022 decision and calling for a judge to set a hearing on the matter.

The complaint cited data and research the national environmental nonprofit argued was proof that protections were needed.

The cooter dwells in a "fragmented range" across the Pecos, Rio Grande and Rio Bravo rivers in New Mexico, West Texas

See TURTLE, Page A3

Clouds and sun; very cold
38° / 16°
See A8

RECYCLE

Classifieds B7
Comics/Horoscopes B6
Obituaries B3
• Robert Martinez
Lotteries A3
Opinion B4
Region A2
Sports B1

First Place, Best Use of Multimedia, *Albuquerque Journal,* Gillian Barkhurst and Chancey Bush

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Target officially set to anchor Lobo Crossing

More tenants revealed for the $150M project as land sale crosses finish line

By Kylie Garcia
Journal Staff Writer

The sale of a major piece of property on the University of New Mexico's South Campus is complete, moving the area one step closer to welcoming a major retail hub.

Arizona-based developer SimonCRE is officially the new owner of roughly 38 acres of land previously owned by UNM after a transaction that began last year closed on Tuesday, founder and CEO Josh Simon told the Journal.

Simon also confirmed a portion of tenants slated to join Lobo Crossing Shopping Center — a 363,000-square-foot, open-air food and retail development planned for the land SimonCRE has acquired.

The tenants officially leased so far include Sierra, HomeGoods, Marshalls, Michaels, Burlington, Boot Barn, Five Below, Spencer's and Jersey Mike's Subs.

Target will headline the list, according to a memorandum of lease document reviewed by the Journal on Tuesday.

"This is a pretty powerful lineup," said Tom Neale, chief operating officer of UNM's real estate arm, Lobo Development Corp. "This is also the first major retail center in Albuquerque in over two decades, and we're really proud that it's in the South Campus and it's helping out the southern tier of the city."

The Target lease document ends months of speculation and years of conversations — the first of which were made public when university officials revealed talks to potentially incorporate a Target into UNM's South Campus Tax Increment Development District, or TIDD, in 2023.

Simon could not comment on Target but said the project's anchor tenant "does offer grocery" — and will help to address UNM South Campus' current existence as a food desert.

See RETAIL on A7



Courtesy McKAA Architecture

An aerial rendering of the proposed Lobo Crossing Shopping Center in Southeast Albuquerque. The development is expected to be the single-largest revenue generator for the University of New Mexico's South Campus Tax Increment Development District.

LEADING NEWS

BUDGET CUTS? The Santa Fe-based Institute of American Indian Arts could face another round of federal funding cuts. **A3**

THE ABQ CITY COUNCIL kills a proposal to use ranked choice voting for municipal elections. **A3**

ONE OF TWO women charged in the 2023 death of a disabled woman in their care pleads to six felonies and faces decades in prison. **A3**

MAYOR KELLER signs a "safe spaces" ordinance aimed at protecting immigrants. **A3**

BUSINESS OUTLOOK

PACIFIC FUSION has named a new head for its New Mexico operations. **A5**

SPORTS

PREP BASEBALL saw a clash of titans as No. 1 Cleveland defended its home turf against No. 2 Piedra Vista. **B1**

LOBO FOOTBALL has a new position coach … why did longtime NFL coaching veteran Carson Walch come to UNM? **B1**

LOBO HOOPS got some good news when star guard Uriah Tarsufia announced his plan to return next season. **B1**

NATION & WORLD

WAR IN IRAN: President Trump pulls back on his threats to launch devastating strikes on Iran. **A2**

INSIDE

CLASSIFIEDS B5
COMICS B8
OBITUARIES A6
PUZZLES A8, B5
WEATHER A7

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ALBUQUERQUE'S 'SKYLINE'

Shaped by a tragic backstory, a local superhero patrols Central to aid those experiencing homelessness and advocate for civic engagement



Chancey Bush/Journal

Skyline, Albuquerque's local superhero, hands new socks to David Ellis, who is experiencing homelessness, on Central Avenue while out on patrol in Downtown Albuquerque on March 5.

By Gillian Barkhurst
Journal Staff Writer

Not all heroes wear capes — this one carries Narcan.

Recently, an Albuquerque local, known by the superhero moniker Skyline, went viral online for his civic powers rather than his super ones.

Skyline sits in on City Council meetings, attends protests and helps out people experiencing homelessness — all while in blue and white tactical gear.

"Anybody can be a superhero," he said. "I mean, I'm just a short little dude. I didn't have a whole lot of anything growing up and I'm still out here doing it."

Skyline began patrolling along Central eight months ago with a backpack and painted armor dug out of bins at military surplus stores and pawn shops.

Almost overnight, support for his mission exploded. Now, he rents a storage

See SKYLINE on A6

Meow Wolf names former Epic Games executive as CEO

Matthew Henick

Matthew Henick had also served as the CEO of AI company Deep Voodoo

By Justin Horwath
Journal Staff Writer

Meow Wolf, the arts and entertainment company that opened its immersive "House of Eternal Return" in Santa Fe in 2016, said Tuesday that it hired Matthew Henick as its CEO.

Since the Santa Fe installation opened 10 years ago, Meow Wolf has established its quirky installations in cities across the nation, with permanent locations in Texas, Nevada and Colorado. It is currently working on installations in New York and Los Angeles.

"Matthew brings a remarkable combination of media, technology and immersive experience leadership at exactly the right moment for Meow Wolf," said Christopher Sobecki, chair of Meow Wolf's board of directors. "With the company expanding both its geographic footprint as well as its new media presence beyond the four walls, the board is confident he is the right leader to build on Meow Wolf's artistic foundation while guiding its growth in a rapidly evolving entertainment landscape."

Before joining Meow Wolf, Henick worked as the senior vice president of consumer products for The Trade Desk, a California-headquartered digital marketing company. Before that, he was the CEO of Deep Voodoo, an AI and visual effects studio founded by the creators of the animated television series "South Park," "Trey

See CEO on A6

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First Place, Advertising Campaign, *Taos News,* Chris Wood and Sara Kollig

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2025 Taos Pueblo Governor Edwin Concha. Photo: Rick Romancito for the Taos News.

TAOS MOUNTAIN CASINO
MAIN STREET TAOS

First Place, Self-Promotion or House Ad, *Cibola Citizen,* Sylvia Anzures Gonzales



Second Place, Self-Promotion or House Ad, *Santa Fe New Mexican,* Rick Artiaga and the Marketing Team

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Congratulations to the Albuquerque Journal and its community newspapers, the Rio Rancho Observer, Valencia County News-Bulletin and El Defensor Chieftain for your achievements.

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dchieftain.com/newsletter

VALENCIA COUNTY News-Bulletin

news-bulletin.com/newsletter

1st Place
Carlsbad Current Argus
Carlsbad Current-Argus Staff
Carlsbad Current-Argus
Nicely designed site. Clear and clean, good size photos, consistent across sections, many entry points for readers.

Daily Class I
24. BEST WEBSITE
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Matt Dahlseid, Brian Barker
Santa Fe New Mexican website

Daily Class I
24. BEST WEBSITE
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Albuquerque Journal staff
Abqjournal.com
The Albuquerque Journal website stood out for its clean, user friendly design and overall ease of navigation. I especially appreciated that the navigation bar remains at the top of the page as you scroll, making it easy to move between sections without having to return to the top of the page. The site is intuitive and well organized, allowing readers to quickly find the content they are looking for.
Visually, the teal/turquoise accents are a nice touch. They add personality and visual interest while still keeping the overall design professional and polished. The color is used effectively to help break up content and create a clear visual hierarchy without becoming distracting.
I also liked how much content is available while still being organized into clearly defined sections. The site feels current and actively maintained, with a good balance of prominent stories, local and statewide news, sports, lifestyle content, and other features. Overall, the combination of strong navigation, thoughtful organization, attractive design elements, and an easy to use reader experience made the Albuquerque Journal stand out.

Weekly Class I & II
25. PUBLIC SERVICE
2nd Place
Cibola Citizen
Diego Lopez
TMobile Grant to Improve Parks

Weekly Class I & II
25. PUBLIC SERVICE
1st Place
Taos News
Taos News Staff
Tradiciones
What an informative, aesthetically pleasing and beautifully laid out publication. The vintage art, especially the Carson mother and wife, were amazingly authentic. The tin-type photos usually lose their full effect, but not here. Great care was obviously taken to cultivate the look of this feature insert. Well done!!

Daily Class I
25. PUBLIC SERVICE
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Santa Fe New Mexican news reporting team
Politics Check

Daily Class I
25. PUBLIC SERVICE
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Carina Julig
Homelessness in Santa Fe
After careful deliberation, this article distinguished itself through strong writing and overall execution.

Weekly Class II
28. GENERAL NEWS PHOTO
2nd Place
NMSU Round-up
Melanie Zepeda
Stories to tell: A Report Back from Palestine

Weekly Class II
28. GENERAL NEWS PHOTO
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Todd Fuqua
Jarvis Family
This photo does a great job of capturing the fear and desperation of the Jarvis Family, while also showing their relief.

Weekly Class I
28. GENERAL NEWS PHOTO
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Kevin Opsahl
Water woes

Weekly Class I
28. GENERAL NEWS PHOTO
1st Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Michaela Helean
Claw arcade opens in RR despite chilly air
The use of color and perspective in this photo is really fun.

Daily Class II
28. GENERAL NEWS PHOTO
2nd Place
Alamogordo Daily News
Todd Fuqua
Sudderth Drive Flood
The photo is very dynamic. Use of leading lines takes the viewer throughout the photo to truly see devastation of the storm. 2nd place because we can not see the subjects face, although I do understand that is not always possible.

Daily Class II
28. GENERAL NEWS PHOTO
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Andy Brosig
Habitat Volunteer
Framing is very strong. This photo tells me the story of what is happening before reading the caption. Subject is over-exposed but allows viewers to see clearly the wood so it still works.

Daily Class I
28. GENERAL NEWS PHOTO
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Jessica Baca
Water Main Break
The contrast of the emergency situation to the playful kids shows how life goes on.

Daily Class I
28. GENERAL NEWS PHOTO
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Chancey Bush
ICE Agents Clash with Protesters
Not only does the photo capture the news, but each character in it tells their own story from the bloodied protestor in anguish, to the security officer subduing her to the perceived nonchalance of the other officer.

Weekly Class II
29. SPORTS PHOTO
2nd Place
NMSU Round-up
Adrian Villegas
Aggies go up in smoke: Flames win 77-75

Weekly Class II
29. SPORTS PHOTO
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Todd Fuqua
Faith Roper Pitches to Olyse Gonzalez
It's not easy to capture a photo with the ball perfectly still — but it's done perfectly here.

Weekly Class I
29. SPORTS PHOTO
2nd Place
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Mike Powers
Lady Tigers

Weekly Class I
29. SPORTS PHOTO
1st Place
Taos News
Clementine Miller
Flips a calf
The choice to use the shot with the dust in the foreground helped immerse the reader. The capper was the youth celebration: Emmylou Sant and the young, fluffy goat.

Daily Class II
29. SPORTS PHOTO
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Peter Stein
District title bound (main photo)
So much is going on and nothing is out of focus. It captures the intensity of the players and the caption names everyone involved. Amazing photo. Honestly, this one could also be 1st place.

Daily Class II
29. SPORTS PHOTO
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Jason Farmer
Buck Brandon Classic (Main photo)
It's a very dynamic photo that's just great to look at. Getting the sand crashing upwards was a great opportunity to show movement and impact.

Daily Class I
29. SPORTS PHOTO
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Nathan Burton
Last second
The emotions here are raw and authentic. Sports are filled with the highest of highs and lowest of lows, and this moment is one of them.

Daily Class I
29. SPORTS PHOTO
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Jessica Baca
Celebratory backflip
People don't fly — or do they? This photo here makes you question that. Perfectly captured moment in a fast paced sport.

Weekly Class II
30. FEATURE PHOTO
2nd Place
Roswell Daily Record
Jim Hilley
Braving the storm

Nice capture of a moment where the job needs to get done. The expectation of the cow matches the viewer's desire to see what happens next.

Weekly Class II

30. FEATURE PHOTO
1st Place
Sierra County Sentinel
Steve Mull
Veteran Salute
Having the subject in shadow with a bright background pulls in the eye and gives the gesture deeper meaning that begs for contemplation.

Weekly Class I

30. FEATURE PHOTO
2nd Place
Rio Grande Sun
Bob Eckert
Waiting for the Cows to Go Home
A shot that beautifully captures the landscape while telling a story. Monochrome was a great choice to highlight the sky and ground textures.

Weekly Class I

30. FEATURE PHOTO
1st Place
Rio Grande Sun
Bob Eckert
A Storm Blowing Through
This is a wonderful shot that captures both the event and place, but also makes a reader pause and peer in to figure out what they are seeing.

Daily Class II

30. FEATURE PHOTO
2nd Place
Carlsbad Current Argus
Adrian Hedden
It's Apples
Really nice photo.

Daily Class II

30. FEATURE PHOTO
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Andy Brosig
Easter Egg Hunt
Really nice photo. Well lit and nicely framed.

Daily Class I

30. FEATURE PHOTO
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Gabriela Campos
Currents of light
visually compelling

Daily Class I

30. FEATURE PHOTO
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Chancey Bush
Holy Week
Fantastic capture of the lighting / water / feel like I'm there.

Weekly Class II

31. PHOTO SERIES
2nd Place
Roswell Daily Record
Christina Stock, Alex Ross, Terri Harber & Marco Martinez
2025 UFO Festival Photos
The snapshot quality of the images makes viewers feel like they are at the event themselves.

Weekly Class II

31. PHOTO SERIES
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Ben Koelkebeck
Inn of the Mountain Gods celebrates 50 years
Image captures the sequential action of cooking, serving, then eating, completing the story on the page.

Weekly Class I

31. PHOTO SERIES
2nd Place
Gallup Sun
Jenny Pond
Celebrating culture

Weekly Class I

31. PHOTO SERIES
1st Place
Gallup Sun
Kim Helfenbein
Lady Bengals come up short to the Lady Broncos
The placement of these photos works at a high level. Each photo is not only representing the game, but shows contested plays, either shot attempts or strong defense.

Daily Class I & II

31. PHOTO SERIES
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Jim Weber
Meow Wolf turns 10

Daily Class I & II

31. PHOTO SERIES
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Gabriela Campos
Ruidoso Flood
The cover photo here is captivating — beautifully shot. Photographer captured how devastating the flood was.

Weekly Class I & II

32. ONLINE PHOTO GALLERY
2nd Place
Taos News
Clementine Miller
Pray for Rain

Weekly Class I & II

32. ONLINE PHOTO GALLERY
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Ben Koelkebeck
A Weekend of Tattoos
This was the strongest entry in the contest, hands down. Congratulations, well earned.

Daily Class I

32. ONLINE PHOTO GALLERY
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Gabriela Campos
Day at the State Fair

Daily Class I

32. ONLINE PHOTO GALLERY
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Gabriela Campos
Ruidoso flash flooding
This gallery stood out for its powerful storytelling and emotional impact. The photographer captured not only the immense physical destruction left by the Ruidoso flash floods, but also the very human aftermath. The residents returning to damaged homes and businesses, salvaging belongings and beginning the difficult work of recovery. The mix of wide scenes, intimate moments and small details tells a complete story, with each image adding something meaningful rather than feeling repetitive. A compelling and thoughtfully documented gallery that puts the viewer in the middle of the aftermath.

Weekly Class I & II

33. BEST USE OF MULTIMEDIA
2nd Place
Taos News
Taos News Staff
"Tradiciones"

Weekly Class I & II

33. BEST USE OF MULTIMEDIA
1st Place
Taos News
Stephanie Gates, Clementine Miller
"'Reciprocal relationship' - Youth fly fishing camp teaches tradition"
Outstanding!! I recognize well shot and edited videography. Couple that with a program that teaches fishing and tradition to youth? Great job and the move to YouTube for you videos only guarantees more views, more donations, and sustainability.

Daily Class I

33. BEST USE OF MULTIMEDIA
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Nathan Burton, Gabriela Campos, Brian Barker
"New Mexico's strained river systems"
A lovely data driven piece with a wealth of information and visuals. The use of drone shots as well as human interest photos made a perfect balance between the dwindling nature and the people involved/being impacted by that. The use of graphs illustrated well the changes in water resources in a visual way.

Daily Class I

33. BEST USE OF MULTIMEDIA
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Gillian Barkhurst and Chancey Bush
"Meet 'Skyline': Albuquerque's street superhero takes on homelessness"
Amazing photos and videos, the music could have been better chosen. The lo-fi beats often did not match the narrative and using classic superhero royalty free sound effects/ music would have added a great level of interest. The tight shot of the interview had slightly too much head room, I understand the intention to show his antennas but going tighter to draw the focus to the subjects eyes would have made him feel more human and connected better with audiences.

Weekly Class II

34. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
2nd Place
Roswell Daily Record
Aric Loomis
"Vision Magazine Coming Soon"

Weekly Class II

34. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
1st Place
NMSU Round-up
Karla Hernandez Chew
"NMSU Round Up Instagram"

Weekly Class I

34. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
2nd Place
Taos News
Taos News staff
"Taos Plaza Bomb Threat"

Weekly Class I

34. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
1st Place
Taos News



Second Place, Best Front Page Design, *Lovington Leader,* Angela Taylor



Second Place, Best Front Page Design, *Valencia County News-Bulletin,* Clara Garcia



First Place, Best Front Page Design, *Hobbs News-Sun*, News-Sun Staff



First Place, Best Front Page Design, Weekly Class I, Tracy Goldizen



First Place, Best Front Page Design, *Santa Fe New Mexican,* Nick Baca and Michael Seamans



First Place, Best Front Page Design, *Roswell Daily Record,* Toby Martinez

Taos News staff
"Taos County Sheriff's deputy killed in on-duty motorcycle crash"
Through eight days of this tragedy, followers were kept in the loop with the facts, figures and explanations for each new, sad chapter in the story.

Daily Class I

34. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Ernesto Cisneros, Lily Alexander, Nathan Burton
"Santa Fe mourns slain transgender teen"

Daily Class I

34. BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Jaclyn Ruiz
"A commitment to reaching new audiences"
A great capture of the excitement surrounding this event. I wasn't there but I felt like I was!

Weekly Class I & II

35 BEST VIDEO JOURNALISM
2nd Place
Ruidoso News
Ruidoso News Staff
"Ruidoso Flood Coverage"

Weekly Class I & II

35 BEST VIDEO JOURNALISM
1st Place
Taos News
Clementine Miller
"3D Printed Housing in Taos"
This video couples high quality production with an interesting and important local innovation.

Daily Class I

35 BEST VIDEO JOURNALISM
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Chancey Bush
"Echoes of Fallout"

Daily Class I

35 BEST VIDEO JOURNALISM
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Chancey Bush
"'Skyline' Albuquerque's Local Superhero"
I thought this was going to be a quirky story about a kid who loves cosplay, but it got more interesting the longer the video went. The dark turn at the end caught me off guard, but it also gave the story some real depth and helped explain what drives Skyline. And him kicking his legs from the interview chair while insisting he's just a "little guy" — perfect. You can tell his heart is in the right place.



First Place, Feature Photo
Albuquerque Journal, Chancey Bush

All Divisions

36. BEST PODCAST / AUDIO JOURNALISM
2nd Place
Taos News
Stephanie Gates
"Voices of Taos - Regenerative Agricultural Practices"
This is a tough topic - the host did a great job of keeping it interesting and keeping the guest engaged.

All Divisions

36. BEST PODCAST / AUDIO JOURNALISM
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Will Webber, James Barron, Matt Dahlseid
"The New Mexican Sports Den"
The hosts were knowledgeable and did a great job of moving the conversation forward and keeping it interesting.

Weekly Class II

37. BEST EMAIL NEWSLETTER
2nd Place
El Defensor Chieftain
Denise Ortega
El Defensor Chieftain Newsletter
These one-chance-to-engage-readers opportunities have to be clear of grammatical errors. This felt too prominent to ignore (should be "were" and not "was"): "We have new and returning school board members who was sworn in as well."

Weekly Class II

37. BEST EMAIL NEWSLETTER
1st Place
Las Vegas Optic
Phil Scherer, Maria Sanchez
Las Vegas Optic Weekly Headlines
Clean, clearly segmented presentation with just enough content to inspire readers to click for the full story. So important for these newsletters to keep clear of grammatical errors.

Weekly Class I

37. BEST EMAIL NEWSLETTER
2nd Place
Las Cruces Bulletin
Matthew Meerbott, Kurt Johnson
Best email newsletter
Nice newsletter! It's aesthetically pleasing and very clear. Love the graphics and variation throughout. I like that it's a blue background. I also appreciated the tasteful integration of ads. I also like the redirect to your sites as well as the national day header!

Weekly Class I

37. BEST EMAIL NEWSLETTER
1st Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Rio Rancho Observer
Rio Rancho Observer Leading News
Really nice newsletter. Well structured. Great balance of lede giving you just enough to make you want to read more. Love the layout of the weather projections. Nicely done!

Daily Class I & II

37. BEST EMAIL NEWSLETTER
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Daniel J. Chacón, Nathan Brown
The Roundhouse Report

Daily Class I & II

37. BEST EMAIL NEWSLETTER
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Rachel Berry
Leading News
"Leading News" is a great way for Albuquerque Journal readers to get quick bites of hard news, arts and events. Each newsletter entered offered a strong mix of content, with engaging writing throughout. The clean layout made it easy to scan and quickly find what interested you.

Weekly Class II

38. SELF-PROMOTION OR HOUSE AD
2nd Place
Las Vegas Optic
Maria Sanchez
Rack Locations

Weekly Class II

38. SELF-PROMOTION OR HOUSE AD
1st Place

Cibola Citizen
Sylvia Anzures Gonzales
Santa Letters House Ad
It grabs your attention with fun, standout holiday graphics and colors that captures the Christmas spirit.

Weekly Class I

38. SELF-PROMOTION OR HOUSE AD
2nd Place
Las Cruces Bulletin
Matthew Meerbott
Signature edition promotional ad

Weekly Class I

38. SELF-PROMOTION OR HOUSE AD
1st Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Susan Saunier, Tracy Goldizen
Even dogs love the Observer
Great eye-catching ad that draws you in to read it. You can never go wrong with a cute puppy in your ad.

Daily Class I

38. SELF-PROMOTION OR HOUSE AD
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Rick Artiaga and the Marketing Team
In the Huddle ~ Newsletter Promotion

Daily Class I

38. SELF-PROMOTION OR HOUSE AD
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Justin Bixler
C.A.R.E. Magazine Promotion Ad
Beautiful ad that visually displays the importance of C.A.R.E.

Weekly Class II

39. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
2nd Place
Ruidoso News
Tim Keithley
Small Business Spotlight

Weekly Class II

39. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
1st Place
Artesia Daily Press
Tim Keithley
Small Business Spotlight
I like the spotlight actually looking like a spotlight, caught my attention. Also the photos were a good added feature to the ad

Weekly Class I

39. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
2nd Place
Taos News
Chris Wood and Jason Rodriguez
State Farm, Wanda Lucero

Weekly Class I

39. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
1st Place
Taos News
Chris Wood and Sara Kollig
Taos Pueblo
These ads deliver with striking, dignified portraits that pull you right in and honor a rich cultural legacy with real authenticity.

Daily Class I & II

39. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Jeremy Tafoya, Diane Berry
Chamber Music 2026

Daily Class I & II

39. ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Christie Harkness
Hobbs Community Players
These ads make me want to see every play. They are fun and colorful and on theme with each production. Every ad was great!

Weekly Class I & II

40. BEST USE OF ADVERTISING IN A SPECIAL SECTION
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Rio Rancho Observer
Readers' Choice 2026

Weekly Class I & II

40. BEST USE OF ADVERTISING IN A SPECIAL SECTION
1st Place
Santa Fe Reporter
Tierna Unruh-Enos, Rachel Mills & Santa Fe Reporter staff
Best of Santa Fe 2026
The ads in this section were all fantastic. They all went with the theme of the section and were well placed. Each was very unique and well crafted. You can tell a lot of hard work went into this section. Excellent!

Daily Class II

40. BEST USE OF ADVERTISING IN A SPECIAL SECTION
2nd Place
Carlsbad Current Argus
Ashley Curbello
Carlsbad Entertainment Guide

Daily Class II

40. BEST USE OF ADVERTISING IN A SPECIAL SECTION
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
News-Sun Staff
Graduation 2026
Great ads that are on point with the special section. Nice flow and placement

Daily Class I

40. BEST USE OF ADVERTISING IN A SPECIAL SECTION
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Diane Berry, Valerie Martinez, Autumn Gray, Jeremy Tafoya, Elisa Cummings
Summer Guide 2026
Like the overall look and feel of the section, consistency is key

Daily Class I

40. BEST USE OF ADVERTISING IN A SPECIAL SECTION
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Diane Berry, Wayne Barnard, Valerie Martinez, Autumn Gray, Jeremy Tafoya, Lois Trujillo
Made in New Mexico
Cover is intriguing and the overall look and feel of the entire section kept me engaged in looking through it

Weekly Class I

41. INNOVATIVE DIGITAL ADVERTISING
2nd Place
Taos News
Sara Kollig
Ryan Trujillo, Berkshire Hathaway

Weekly Class I

41. INNOVATIVE DIGITAL ADVERTISING
1st Place
Taos News
Chris Baker, Jason Rodriguez
Taos Map Ad Sales Promotion
Great idea, use of photos and content

Daily Class I

41. INNOVATIVE DIGITAL ADVERTISING
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Valerie Martinez, Diane Berry, Autumn Gray, Robert Rivera
Food Truck Festival

Daily Class I

41. INNOVATIVE DIGITAL ADVERTISING
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Valerie Martinez, Diane Berry, Autumn Gray
ABQJ Leading News Newsletter-MOW
Very clever ad about City Council. I liked it a lot!

Weekly Class I & II

42. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - BLACK & WHITE
2nd Place
Las Vegas Optic
Maria Sanchez
The Mandalorian

Weekly Class I & II

42. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - BLACK & WHITE
1st Place
Taos News
Shane Atkinson
Taos County
Love the sepia coloring, it makes the ad/photo look authentic

Daily Class I

42. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - BLACK & WHITE
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Elspeth R Hilbert
Retail_BW_BrownBlakeburn_Elspeth_Hilbert.pdf

Daily Class I

42. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - BLACK & WHITE
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Elspeth R Hilbert
Retail_BW_SantaFeLightandLazer_Elspeth_Hilbert
This small ad really caught my attention on a page of color ads this one stood out more.

Weekly Class II

43. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
2nd Place
Las Vegas Optic
Maria Sanchez
Plaza Grill - Dine With Us

Weekly Class II

43. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
1st Place
Roswell Daily Record
Aric Loomis
Roswell Galacticon Ad
Great ad with a lot of information but it doesn't feel crowded. Good pictures that make me want to go to Roswell Galacticon. Great ad!

Weekly Class I

43. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
2nd Place
Taos News
Sara Kollig
Bread Club

CONGRATULATIONS

to the teams of

SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

SEARCHLIGHT NEW MEXICO

2026 New Mexico Press Association Better Newspaper Contest

NEWS WRITING
André Salkin

NEWS WRITING
Carina Julig

BREAKING NEWS
André Salkin

BREAKING NEWS
Esteban Candelaria

DIGITAL BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE
Daniel J. Chacón, Clara Bates, Gabriela Campos

DIGITAL BREAKING NEWS COVERAGE
Esteban Candelaria, Gabriela Campos, Lily Alexander

SPORTS WRITING
James Barron

SPORTS WRITING
Will Webber

BUSINESS WRITING
Mike Easterling

ENVIRONMENTAL & AGRICULTURE REPORTING
Alaina Mencinger and Margaret O'Hara

FEATURE WRITING
Cormac Dodd

BEST HEADLINE WRITING
Carolyn Graham

BEST HEADLINE WRITING
Eric J. Hedlund

A-MARK PRIZE FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING
Clara Bates, Ed Williams

OBITUARY WRITING
Gabrielle Porter

BEST NEWS COVERAGE
Santa Fe New Mexican News Reporting Team

BEST SPORTS COVERAGE
Will Webber, James Barron, Eric J. Hedlund, Richard Olmsted, Nathan Burton, Jim Weber, Gabriela Campos

COLUMNS
Milan Simonich

SPORTS COLUMNS
Milan Simonich

SPORTS COLUMNS
Will Webber

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT REVIEW
Mark Tiarks

EDITORIALS
Inez Russell Gomez

BEST SERIES
Alaina Mencinger, Cormac Dodd

BEST SERIES
Margaret O'Hara, Esteban Candelaria

CONTINUING COVERAGE
Phaedra Haywood

TRANSPARENCY & NEWS LITERACY
Bill Church

BEST MAGAZINE
Ashley M. Biggers

BEST MAGAZINE
Carolyn Graham - Editor, Marcella Sandoval, Taura Costidis, Brian Sandford, Ania Hull, Holly Weber, Pamela Beach

BEST WEBSITE
Matt Dahlseid, Brian Barker

PUBLIC SERVICE
Carina Julig

PUBLIC SERVICE
Santa Fe New Mexican News Reporting Team

SUNSHINE AWARD
Phaedra Haywood

SPORTS PHOTO
Nathan Burton

FEATURE PHOTO
Gabriela Campos

PHOTO SERIES
Gabriela Campos

PHOTO SERIES
Jim Weber

ONLINE PHOTO GALLERY
Gabriela Campos

ONLINE PHOTO GALLERY
Gabriela Campos

BEST USE OF MULTIMEDIA
Nathan Burton, Gabriela Campos, Brian Barker

BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
Ernesto Cisneros, Lily Alexander, Nathan Burton

BEST USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA
Jaclyn Ruiz

BEST PODCAST / AUDIO JOURNALISM
Will Webber, James Barron, Matt Dahlseid

BEST EMAIL NEWSLETTER
Daniel J. Chacón, Nathan Brown

SELF-PROMOTION OR HOUSE AD
Justin Bixler

SELF-PROMOTION OR HOUSE AD
Rick Artiaga and the Marketing Team

RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - BLACK & WHITE
Elspeth R. Hilbert

RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - BLACK & WHITE
Elspeth R. Hilbert

RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
Elspeth R. Hilbert

RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
Rick Artiaga

DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY
Santa Fe New Mexican Staff

BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
Nick Baca, Michael Seamans

BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
Zach Taylor

SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE
Classified Advertising Department

SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE
Muriah Harding

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION
Classified Advertising Department

DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION PROMOTION
Elthea Miguel

Weekly Class I
43. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
1st Place
Taos News
Sara Kollig
Made in New Mexico
This ad grabs you with New Mexico artistic flair, using a sharp, playful caption that sells the flavor without missing a beat.

Daily Class II
43. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Cindy Bentle
Corey Helton Ad

Daily Class II
43. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Cindy Bentle
Cheerleading Event
Good use of color and photography.

Daily Class I
43. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Rick Artiaga
Malibu Skin & Goods Ad

Daily Class I
43. RETAIL ADVERTISEMENT - COLOR
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Elspeth R Hilbert
Retail_Color_RJSConstruction_Elspeth_Hilbert
This ad was striking and I found myself coming back again and again to look at it. Great creativity and design. Very effective!

Weekly or Daily Class I
44. DIGITAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
2nd Place
Taos News
Sara Kollig, Chris Baker
Zekes Auto

Weekly or Daily Class I
44. DIGITAL ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
1st Place
Las Cruces Bulletin
Matthew Meerbott
Heart of the desert digital advertising campaign
Nice imagery and use of animation to catch the scroller's attention.

Weekly or Daily Class I
45. PRINT ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
2nd Place
Taos News
Chris Wood
State Farm Insurance, Wanda Lucero

Weekly or Daily Class I
45. PRINT ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN
1st Place
Taos News
Isabel Pena
Parcht
The slogan, the colors and also the artful simplicity made me want a sip. I do not drink! Nicely done.

Weekly Class I & II
46. BEST WEB ADVERTISEMENT
2nd Place
Las Vegas Optic
Maria Sanchez
Las Vegas Arts Council General Ad
Great color. It was the only entry

Weekly Class I & II
46. BEST WEB ADVERTISEMENT
1st Place
Taos News
Jason Rodriguez
Peñasco Schools
Nice layout/graphics

Daily Class I
46. BEST WEB ADVERTISEMENT
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Valerie Martinez
Enchanted Handbells

Daily Class I
46. BEST WEB ADVERTISEMENT
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Valerie Martinez
Braver Angels
Overall Impression: This ad design demonstrates solid visual appeal, immediately drawing attention through its color palette. The composition feels clean and professional. Overall a strong ad design.

Weekly or Daily Class I
47. BEST SPONSORED CONTENT / NATIVE ADVERTISING
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Jeremy Tafoya, Diane Berry, Autumn Gray
Law4SmallBusiness10122025

Weekly or Daily Class I
47. BEST SPONSORED CONTENT / NATIVE ADVERTISING
1st Place
Taos News
Chris Wood and Sara Kollig
Success Stories
Beautiful. Well written, engaging - and truly feels like true editorial content.

Weekly Class I & II
48. DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY
2nd Place
Las Cruces Bulletin
Matthew Meerbott
Las Cruces Bulletin design & typography

Weekly Class I & II
48. DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY
1st Place
Taos News
Paul Gutches, Sara Kollig
Taos News 2026 Design and Typography Entry
A strong, polished entry with an excellent overall design system and consistently effective typography.

Daily Class I & II
48. DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
News-Sun Staff
Design and Typography
The Hobbs News-Sun

Daily Class I & II
48. DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
SFNM staff
The Santa Fe New Mexican
The layout is clean and visually engaging, with typography that complements the content and enhances readability. The blue newspaper flag really stands out and looks very nice, adding a strong visual element to the overall design.

Weekly Class II
49. BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
2nd Place
Lovington Leader
Angela Taylor
Best front Page Design

Weekly Class II
49. BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
1st Place
Roswell Daily Record
Toby Martinez
Roswell Daily Record Front Page March 14, 2026
Very nice front page with great pictures. Very good placement of stories that are clear and easy to read

Weekly Class I
49. BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
2nd Place
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Clara Garcia
Valencia County News-Bulletin
nice looking page, although the cutline in the corner over the photo seems awkward. Nice, clean design.

Weekly Class I
49. BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
1st Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Tracy Goldizen
Rio Rancho Observer Sept. 14, 2025
Love the look of the top of the paper. Clean, attractive centerpiece. Nice use of fonts, both the look and size. Effective and attractive page design

Daily Class II
49. BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
2nd Place
Hobbs News-Sun
News-Sun Staff
News-Sun May 6 Front
Rocket is clever, but a little too disconnected from the story

Daily Class II
49. BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
News-Sun Staff
HNS April 19 Front
Easy to read and interesting graphic for the masthead

Daily Class I
49. BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Zach Taylor
Oct. 31, 2025
Typography choices feel purposeful and the contrast between headline and body text creates a clean reading rhythm.

Daily Class I
49. BEST FRONT PAGE DESIGN
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Nick Baca, Michael Seamans
Aug. 30, 2025
The color palette is cohesive and reinforces the tone/brand without overwhelming the content. The eye moves smoothly across the page, with a natural entry point and clear focal areas.

Weekly Class II
50. SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE
2nd Place
Roswell Daily Record
Roswell Daily Record Staff
Best of Chaves County Signature Ad Page

The New Mexico News

New Mexico Newsroom Rule #7

If your story missed the deadline and the graphic designer stays late to include it anyway, you owe her a breakfast burrito tomorrow.



Congrats to all the nominees and winners across our newsrooms!

The Paper. | Reporter | Roswell Daily Record | City Desk ABQ | Political Report | Corrales Comment | Sandoval Signpost | the indy

nm.news

Weekly Class II

50. SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE
1st Place
Cibola Citizen
Cibola Citizen Staff
Cibola Honors Veterans
Great ads with pictures of real veterans from the community. Made for a very touching page.

Weekly Class I

50. SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE
2nd Place
Taos News
Isabel Pena
Taos Map

Weekly Class I

50. SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE
1st Place
Taos News
Chris Wood
Enchanted Circle Map
This map was fun and easy to read.

Daily Class I

50. SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Classified Advertising Dept.
ReSell Theme Pages
Clever theme

Daily Class I

50. SHARED / SIGNATURE PAGE
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Muriah Harding
Faith Directory
Clean and informational layout. I appreciate that it's not necessarily a money maker but a good community service.

Weekly Class II

51. CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION
2nd Place
Roswell Daily Record
Noely Martinez
Classifieds & Legals Layout

Weekly Class II

51. CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION
1st Place
Las Vegas Optic
Maria Sanchez
Classified Page July 5, 2026
The layout was clean, and easy to read. The font allowed for small print to be easily read.

Weekly Class I

51. CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION
2nd Place
Rio Grande Sun
Rio Grande SUN Staff
RGS Classifieds 8/14/25

Weekly Class I

51. CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION
1st Place
Taos News
Mary Chavez, Sean Linton, Melissa Tyler
Taos News Classifieds Section
Very nice classified page with colors and pictures which makes the pages really stand out. Spacing is good and it is easy to read.

Daily Class I

51. CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Wayne Barnard, Lois Trujillo, Mark Morales, Steve Yoder, Michele Aster, David Montoya
Best Classified Section
Good layout, nice ad designs, easy to read

Daily Class I

51. CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING SECTION
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Classified Advertising Department
Classified Advertising Section
Good layout, nice ad designs, easy to read, like the 6 column format

All Divisions

52. OBITUARY PAGE
2nd Place
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Clara Garcia
Valencia County News-Bulletin
Felt dignified.

All Divisions

52. OBITUARY PAGE
1st Place
Las Vegas Optic
Maria Sanchez
Obituary Page January 9, 2026
I liked that the images were of consistent size. The wider column felt easier to read. Clean layout.

All Divisions

53. BEST RATE CARD OR MARKETING KIT
2nd Place
Las Vegas Optic
Maria Sanchez
LV Optic 2026 Rate Card

All Divisions

53. BEST RATE CARD OR MARKETING KIT
1st Place

Albuquerque Journal
Diane Berry, Valerie Martinez, Wayne Barnard, Autumn Gray
Albuquerque Publishing Media Kit 2026

This is easy to read with all the information you would need to place an ad in any of their many papers. Great layout.

All Divisions

54. DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION PROMOTION
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Elthea Miguel
The Gift of Local Journalism

Only entry, so I'm assuming we need to give them first place? Good results, but I thought the "12 days of Newsmas" was not very customer centered.

All Divisions

55. PRINT SUBSCRIPTION PROMOTION
2nd Place
Las Vegas Optic
Maria Sanchez
Never Miss An Issue

All Divisions

55. PRINT SUBSCRIPTION PROMOTION
1st Place
Cibola Citizen
Sylvia Anzures Gonzales
Cibola Citizen Print Promo for Subscription Drive

Nice offer - well laid out.

Weekly Class II

26. SUNSHINE AWARD
2nd Place
Cibola Citizen
Diego Lopez
Charter Crisis: Representation Crisis Unfolds to Citywide Charter Collapse

Weekly Class II

26. SUNSHINE AWARD
1st Place
The Tri-City Record
Debra Mayeux
U.S. Marshal shooting

Great public records and accountability journalism here. This story could have been missed as another police shooting.

Weekly Class I

26. SUNSHINE AWARD
2nd Place
Rio Rancho Observer
Rio Rancho Observer
FOG, ACLU findings not surprising/ Transparency requires talking to the press

Weekly Class I

26. SUNSHINE AWARD
1st Place
Taos News
Olivia Lewis, Geoffrey Plant
Forensic audit uncovers kickback scheme, years of alleged fraud at Taos Schools

Great watchdog reporting. It's clear the reports really went deep into these documents to pull out important details in these kickback scheme.

Daily Class I

26. SUNSHINE AWARD
2nd Place
Albuquerque Journal
Colleen Heild, Matt Reisen
Tip from 2022 surfaces that alleged DWI corruption on part of BCSO deputy

Daily Class I

26. SUNSHINE AWARD
1st Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Phaedra Haywood
Failed by the system

Being on a silent witness board of directors for our local police department, we are the fundraising arm that is tasked with rewarding people who help locate violent parents who flee because they know it's the easy way out of town.

In Lake Havasu City, many parents work in the service industry, specifically with liquor. I do an interview with the executive director of our local family resource center. The stories, statistics, lasting damage and the toll domestic violence takes on families should be a main talking point this election.

The writer summed up a huge problem with respect to the bodycam law. Officers who don't wear them should be held accountable. Bravo to Ms. Haywood for standing up to a "legal network of enablers."

It starts with a crappy 90-day statute of limitations in NM, like sexual abuse has an expiration date. Then the bad cops whose attitudes bleed over to the good officers who throw up their hands. This coverage is definitely deserving of an award.

All Divisions

10. A-MARK PRIZE FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING
3rd Place
The Paper
Pat Davis, Kevin Hendricks & Jesse Jones
City Desk ABQ in The Paper: Albuquerque elections

All Divisions

10. A-MARK PRIZE FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING
2nd Place
Santa Fe New Mexican
Clara Bates
Epstein in New Mexico: Beyond the DOJ files

Second Place: Clara Bates, the Santa Fe New Mexican Clara Bates work demonstrates why local reporting is so important. With all due respect to our colleagues at the nationals, Bates gives a master class in owning a story.

All Divisions

10. A-MARK PRIZE FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING
1st Place
Searchlight New Mexico
Ed Williams
Out of the office and into the fire

First Place: A tie. Ed Williams at Searchlight New Mexico and Esteban Candelaria at the Santa Fe New Mexican Searchlight New Mexico and the Santa Fe New Mexican produced an outstanding investigation of the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department. This reporting serves as an indictment of this department, its administrators and government leaders.

The Searchlight lead delivers a gut punch, "In the New Mexico Children, Youth and Families Department's office in Hobbs, an eight-year-old boy wandered from room to room, desperately hungry, scrounging for food. An empty feeding tube was taped to his stomach, and a pacemaker implanted in his chest." From that beginning these journalists documented systemic failures and crafted riveting storytelling using public records, cold calls, door-knocking – great shoe-leather reporting.

Calling this a systematic moral failing doesn't begin to address how those in authority abandoned their responsibility to our children. Absolutely outstanding reporting. Congratulations to Ed Williams and Esteban Candelaria and their editors at Searchlight New Mexico and the Santa Fe New Mexican.

Weekly Class II

27. GENERAL EXCELLENCE
1st Place
Ruidoso News
Ruidoso News Staff
From powerful photos displayed powerfully to riveting writing. Engaging headlines and a great story mix, the Ruidoso News is a true public service for the community it covers and a genuine treat for its readers. Its coverage alone of the flash floods was a textbook example of why newspapers remain not only a vital component of a community but also how a talented newsroom rises to the occasion of a catastrophe with solid factual reporting and necessary emotion. Overall, the paper is well-organized, relevant and INTERESTING. Hard to beat that combination.

Weekly Class I

27. GENERAL EXCELLENCE
1st Place
Taos News
Taos News Staff
Nice big photos jump off the page and the design is clean and crisp. Ads are really strong, especially the simply Sheriff's Political Ad. Wish I could get my politicians to buy ads that big.

Strong, strong Sports Section and liked the Business Section and the "Lifestyles" Section. The one I saw had the cooking theme and it looked really good.

Classified Pages are very interestingly done with photos going with nearly every ad. Must be nice to have the color capability that this paper has available to it because the color photos on the Classified Pages (yes, pages) really make them "pop" while also generating extra revenue, which is always nice.

Daily Class II

27. GENERAL EXCELLENCE
1st Place
Hobbs News-Sun
Hobbs News-Sun Staff
I found this paper's front pages to be eye-catching with unique graphics, solid writing and a good mix of different topics. Those positive features continued throughout the paper.

Daily Class I

27. GENERAL EXCELLENCE
1st Place
Albuquerque Journal
Albuquerque Journal staff
Well designed and packed to the brim with content that is helpful to community members. From stories on money in politics to the inclusion of world news that is likely to hit home, the Albuquerque Journal provides readers with all the information they need to be informed members of society. Ads don't take over and information that needs to be large and upfront clearly is. Well designed and implemented.



From investigative reporting

to engaging special sections, we're committed to

AWESOME, BLUE-CHIP, CHOICE, DYNAMITE, EXCEPTIONAL, FIRST-CLASS, GREAT, HIGH-GRADE, INCOMPARABLE, INIMITABLE, INSPIRING, JUST, KEEN, LIVELY, MARVELOUS, NUMERO UNO, PAR EXCELLENCE, QUALITY, RESPONSIBLE, SPLENDID, STELLAR, SUPERIOR, SUPERLATIVE, TIP-TOP-NOTCH,

UNPARALLELED EXCELLENCE.

TAOS NEWS

BEST LARGE WEEKLY NEWSPAPER IN NEW MEXICO

2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025 and 2026.