

THE ALLIANCE OF AREA BUSINESS PUBLISHERS
2021 EDITORIAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS LIST OF WINNERS

DESIGN CATEGORIES

1. Best Cover - Magazine

Bronze: *Insight On Business*; “Sour Power”; Brian Rasmussen, MaryBeth Matzek, Jessica Thiel

This entry’s success arises from fun risk taking, creating a cover that is an attention grabber. The facial expression creates immediate connection with the viewer, and the analogous color palette contributes additional freshness to the design.

Silver: *Hawaii Business*; “Best Places to Work”; Kelsey Ige, Shar Tuiasoa

A stylish and vibrant illustration rewards readers with more surprises the longer they look. The dynamic composition of the artwork effectively moves the eye around the page – seemingly through some elements via layering and sizing – evoking the feeling of a well-designed mural. A little airplane dragging the “2020” banner at the top is a particularly nice touch, complementing a well-integrated nameplate.

Gold: *D CEO*; “Where Real Estate Is King”; Hamilton Hedrick, Sean Berry

The formal balance with typography plays off a reverent portrait, reinforcing the thematic message of modern royalty. Along with the gorgeous portrait, the headline is well-integrated, right down to a subtle layering of a letter behind the subject’s arm. The overall effect feels sophisticated and contemporary.

2. Best Feature Layout - Magazine

Bronze: *D CEO Magazine*; “Where Real Estate Is King”; Hamilton Hedrick, Sean Berry

These pages were full of good-looking snippets of information and entry points, packing a lot of value into the space. Beautiful environmental portraits are paired with informational images of buildings in an informative and effective way.

Silver: *Hawaii Business*; “The World Changed – So Did Local Business”; Amy Ngo

Through multiple pages of charts and data, this non-narrative approach builds an understanding of the business and economic climate. Information is well-organized, employing many creative ways to visually interpret the numbers.

Gold: *Biz New Orleans*; “Black in Business”; Sarah George

The consistent portraits use crisp light combined with excellent use of toning for contrast. This style honors the people through wonderful images, anchoring the beautiful pages. The design supports the structure of the story, and the navigation has been turned into a design element. A restrained use of shading divides the space without drawing attention to itself. The display type effectively ties the pieces together. Typography is sophisticated, reinforcing the serious tone.

3. Best Overall Design – Magazine

Bronze: *dbusiness*; Austin Phillips, Alexander Shammami

Beautiful typographic treatment, spot color and art heads make the pages pop. Covers are approached in different ways, and each is successful, with solid illustrations, photographs and type. White space is used well, and the many pullouts break up pages and allow for multiple access points. Of note are “A Dam Shame,” with documentary photographs and a helpful graphic to explain the location of the damage; and “The Sport of Business,” with elegant typography.

Silver: *D CEO*; Hamilton Hedrick

Excellent covers with powerful typography grab attention, particularly “Where Real Estate is King” and “Power Shift.” The helpful, two-page table of contents talks directly to the reader, providing helpful page numbers on images, written explanations and information about the cover. Gray pages come alive through the excellent use of white space, pullouts and creative typography. Strong portraits are sized well throughout the magazine, and fascinating historical images close out each issue in a recurring feature at the back of the book.

Gold: *Biz New Orleans*; Sarah George

Everything about the design is regal and stately. Outstanding branded covers open to a solid table of contents and consistent “In the Biz” front-of-book section. Designers commit to an elegant, minimalist vision in such features as “Business People of the Year” and “Black in Business.” Overall, this is outstanding work.

4. Best Front Page – Newspaper

Bronze: *BizTimes Milwaukee*; “Coronavirus”; Shelly Tabor

A frenetic illustration uses bold, saturated colors layered over the human form, accented by the faux chart, in a visually compelling attraction to the topic of the year and the lead story. The cover concept successfully communicates the tension of the situation.

Silver: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “America’s swagger succumbs to a virus”; Thomas J. Linden, Jason McGregor

The strong, bold, colorful lead package communicates the foreboding drama of the situation. The typography enhances the emotional image. The designer provides a clear hierarchy among the various elements across the page.

Gold: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; “The Day Everything Changed”; David Kordalski, Beth Jachman, Michael Lee, Dawn Bradbury, Amy Elliott Bragg, Kelley Root, Chad Livengood, Andrea Levy, Peter Strain

A literal in-your-face, full-cover illustration, accompanied by a great headline, leads into an exclusive story. The hierarchy of visual elements is well conceived, with balance and striking color. The bold design is daring in its successful departure from the usual cover page template. A sense of grit on the illustrated face speaks to the difficulties of the interview subject’s medical recovery.

5. Best Feature Layout – Newspaper

Bronze: *Mainebiz*; “Mainebiz Women to Watch 2020”; Matt Selva, Peter Van Allen

Excellent environmental portraits are given ample space. Design elements carry consistently across the many pages of the layout. Typography shows good hierarchy. Subheads, pull quotes and sidebar items are arranged effectively and offer many points of entry along the way.

Silver: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; “Reversal of Fortune”; David Kordalski, Michael Hogue, Michael Lee, Dawn Bradbury, Kirk Pinho

The bold pair before-and-after illustrations grabs attention and elevates the multipage layout. It’s a creative approach for a difficult topic to visualize. The timeline across the bottom of the interior spread is informative and well done. Text is arranged for easy reader flow.

Gold: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “Best New Restaurants For Business 2020”; Karen Freese Zane

Eye-catching food photos are well played across the layouts. Typography is sophisticated, and there is good relative sizing of the various elements. Interesting use of shape and white space creates an airy, attractive, and inviting reading experience. The arrows pointing to the food add a nice touch.

6a. Best Overall Design – Small Tabloids

Bronze: *The Business Journal, Fresno*; Gabriel Dillard, Jessica Surrett, Michael Yang

This publication is full of news without being gray or dense. The covers are above average. The “In the Blink of an Eye” cover story about Covid-19 is exceptional. The table of contents sells and helps readers navigate the publication. The organization is consistent from issue to issue, which helps readers quickly find their favorite departments.

Silver: *Greater Wilmington Business Journal*, Suzi Drake

Readers are invited in by strong covers that use both documentary photos and illustrations. Inside, information is conveyed through text, photos and various kinds of graphics. To help readers navigate, the publication has a consistent organization and uses clear labels.

Gold: *San Fernando Valley Business Journal*, Nina Bays and Marci Shrager

The multiple-element front page gives the publication an active, newsy look. Cover stories get special display on the front and inside. Despite the high story count throughout the publication, white space is used intelligently to brighten the pages. Good-quality photographs brighten enliven the layouts, and designers seem to work every page.

6b. Best Overall Design – Medium Tabloids

Bronze: *Worcester Business Journal*, Mitchell Hayes

The designer really succeeded with the combination of photo and words on the “Black businesses matter,” cover. The environmental photo is top-notch. Inside, readers are treated to two pages of briefs to get them off and running. Headlines feature a typographic combination

that adds dimension to the pages. Stories are told with text, photos and an array of graphics. The “40 under 40” package has individual pandemic-era photos that offer a nice assortment and subdivisions.

Silver: *Biz Times Milwaukee*, Shelly Tabor and Alex Schneider

Covers are especially good. The gray color on the “Lost Year,” the art type on “Leading the Charge,” and the illustration on “The Coronavirus” all attract attention and promote the stories. The inside package on heroes featured strong photos and individual treatment on five pandemic “heroes.” Ample white space and typographic color contrast ensure that each page has layers.

Gold: *Springfield Business Journal*, Heather Mosley and Amanda Miller

Springfield offers an active, aggressive inside design and is bright and inviting. Designers use pullouts to break up stories and increase readership. Information graphics and photographs are essential elements in story telling throughout the publication. As readers page through the colorful inside pages, they will find something on every page to attract their attention.

6c. Best Overall Design – Large Tabloids

Bronze: *Crain’s Cleveland Business*; David Kordalski, Sue Walton, Kevin Kleps, Scott Suttell, Elizabeth McIntyre

Each issue’s cover story stands out and grabs attention, with elements combined well to indicate the subject matter. Illustrations include a nice range of styles and are well integrated into the layouts. There is good typographic and design consistency throughout.

Silver: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; Thomas J. Linden, Karen Freese Zane, Jason McGregor

Cover pages effectively juggle a lot of story elements to engage readers without overwhelming. Multi-page features like “20 in their 20s” and “40 in their 40s” showcase excellent photography and are thoughtfully arranged. Similarly strong photos appear throughout the publication. There also were many examples of good illustrations and effective use of charts and graphics.

Gold: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; David Kordalski, Beth Sundria Jachman

Cover designs use a variety of bold approaches to attract and welcome the reader. Inside the publication images are well-sized throughout and include a lot of good documentary photography. The design is clean and consistent, and yet nearly every well-organized page has something visually interesting to grab attention. The “Newsmakers” multi-page feature is particularly well done, with a unique set of illustrations.

7a. Best Use of Photography/Illustrations – Newspapers

Bronze: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; Brad Turner, Wendy Shapiro, Audrey Pelsor, Sarah Ellis

Real photography shows the heart and soul of Indianapolis. Readers see honest moments of people in action, such as a woman and child playing basketball and the downtown in crisis, all displayed for impact. The “Challenging Times” photo page demonstrates great respect for documentary photography.

Silver: *Crain's Chicago Business*; Thomas J. Linden, Karen Freese Zane, Jason McGregor, John R. Boehm, Alex Garcia, Andrea Levy, Brian Stauffer, Gordon Studer

There is an excellent mix of photographs and illustrations in this entry. The Forum front uses large, bold portraits for “The Damaging Divide” and “Education Equation,” while the “40 Under Forty” package displays outdoor portraits with dramatic light and background colors. Illustrations are conceptually and stylistically interesting, with eye-catching shapes and edges. Standout examples are “America’s Swagger” and “Taxed to the Max.’

Gold: *Crain's Detroit Business*; David Kordalski, Beth Jachman, Michael Lee, Dawn Bradbury, Amy Elliott Bragg, Kelley Root, Chad Livengood, Andrea Levy, Peter Strain, Nic Antaya, Michael Hogue

These visuals make the content feel important and compelling. Impactful photography examples are “\$13 an Hour?” and “Serve and Protect,” with design that respects the quality of the images. The tone of the illustration style fits the content, particularly the “Arithmetic of Inequality” and “The Day Everything Changed.” The visual content of this entry is vibrant and conveys a sense of urgency.

7b. Best Use of Photography/Illustrations – Magazines

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

A solid variety of portraits, illustrations and graphics make this entry stand out. Illustrations use shape and color to create dynamism for the page, particularly in the “Face of Florida” and “Where the Revenue Meets the Road” spreads. The Herb Snitzer portrait gives a vivid sense of the person, while “First Call” and “Best Foote Forward” use light to create mood and pull viewers into the story.

Silver: *Insight on Business*; Brian Rasmussen, MaryBeth Matzek, Jessica Thiel

These photographs and photo illustrations show a high degree of technical prowess and a great sense of fun. The “Green Machine” group portrait is a wonderful idea that captures upbeat emotion. The “Kraut King” spread demonstrates effective color theory and a strong union between graphics and visuals. Finally, the “Serpentarium” photograph is a showstopper, perfectly edited and displayed.

Gold: *D CEO Magazine*; Hamilton Hedrick, Elizabeth Lavin, Trevor Paulhus, Tim Roberts, Lance Traicher, Sean Berry, Jonathan Zizzo, Justin Clemons

These photographs give a great feel for the subject, including gorgeous portraits that are worthy of the powerful people being photographed. The “Stacking Bread” portrait is sophisticated and technically excellent, while “The Power of the People” is a surprising study in white. Photographers are going out to locations and conveying environments in compelling ways.

ONLINE CATEGORIES

8a. Best Use of Multimedia

Bronze: *Biz New Orleans*; “Glass Act: Local Students Create Their Own Recycling Project”; Rich Collins, associate news editor

The character-driven narrative is a fun and approachable way to meet the next generation’s innovative minds. It draws in the viewer and delivers a lot of memorable and amusing moments.

Silver: *Des Moines Business Record*; “Black Lives Matter Photo Gallery”; Joe Crimmings, creative director

This collection showed honest emotion through a comprehensive and rich selection of documentary photojournalism. The images detailed the passionate emotions of those supporting Black Lives Matter. The pictures also caught uncomfortable interactions with police from a vantage point right in the middle of the action. Meanwhile, the collection of building photographs provided an interesting study of the protest’s aftermath.

Gold: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “Crain’s Forum”; Jason McGregor, digital design director, Alex Garcia, photojournalist, Stephen J. Serio, photographer, John R. Boehm, contributing photographer, Bob Sectar, editor

It’s hard to overstate how impressive this collection was. Each story was told with care and creativity, each component via the correct medium guided by the content. The scrolling nature of stories like “Reform Dilemma” created a dynamic presentation. The interactive CTA map powerfully engaged and informed about the disproportional impact Covid-19 had on lower income neighborhoods.

8b. Best Podcast

Bronze: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “Beyond COVID”; Lesley Weidenbener, editor

The team pairs solid writing and editing skills with a personable host, and enlists guests willing to talk candidly about leadership through crisis. The result is compelling conversation through challenging times.

Silver: *Twin Cities Business*; “By All Means”; Allison Kaplan, editor-in-chief

This podcast is great listening—smart, vibey, and captures important conversations with the people making things happen in this vibrant city. The result is engaging, enlightening public service, through sound.

Gold: *Springfield Business Journal*; “No Ceiling”; Christine Temple, executive editor

This entry is a stand-out, pure and simple. Innovative branding boldly announces the important mission behind the podcast. An engaging host, creative use of audio, excellent guests, and thoughtful storytelling all come together to make it a clear winner.

9. Best Daily Email

Bronze: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; “Crain’s Michigan Morning”; Crain’s Staff

Subscribers are sure to start the day off right when they open this digest of the day’s top business stories. The writing is concise, maximizing the power of each word. The design

effectively replicates the look and feel of the publication’s website, reinforcing the brand with readers.

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

Imagine having a personal assistant to both craft and curate a morning briefing guaranteed to prepare you for the day. That’s this daily email, which lands in readers’ inboxes each morning like a trusted friend. The writing is conversational, and the detailed descriptions explain what’s beyond the click, be it second-to-none reporting, a visually captivating photo gallery or a podcast for the morning commute.

Gold: *Arkansas Business*; “Arkansas Morning Roundup”; Lance Turner, Kyle Massey

If ever there was a daily email that lived up to its name, it’s this one. The Arkansas Morning Roundup delivers what readers need to know and provides context, making it clear *why* they need to know it. Additional features include information on financial markets, employment listings and links to partner publications, not to mention sharing tools for passing along the material.

10. Best Specialty E-Newsletter

Bronze: *Twin Cities Business*; “Sunday Primer”; Dan Niepow

This Sunday newsletter offers an opportunity for a lean-back experience to read and reflect on diversity and inclusion issues within the local business community. It stands apart from others with its strong headlines and well-written introductions meant to prompt personal introspection among readers.

Silver: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “IBJ’s The Rundown”; Lindsey Erdody

Giving politics some personality isn’t easy, but it you wouldn’t know it reading this specialty newsletter. The reporter’s exceptional access and expertise shines through in this thorough weekly dispatch from the statehouse. Additional features such as the bill tracker offer readers utility to the very bottom of the email.

Gold: *Des Moines Business Record*; “Fearless”; Emily Blobaum, Emily Barske, Lauren Burt, Suzanna De Baca, Annabel Wimer, Chris Conetzkey

This newsletter stands apart in its commitment to a large and continuously growing facet of the publication’s readership. The staff uses its editorial content to connect readers while acknowledging the real-life challenges that come with leadership in today’s environment. Editors share a strong voice that sets a tone offering actionable advice while encouraging community and comradeship.

JOURNALISM CATEGORIES

11. Best Scoop

SMALL

Silver: *Delaware Business Times*; “N.Y. firm acquired Concord Mall before foreclosure”; Jacob Owens, reporter

When a prominent Delaware mall announced an ownership change but didn’t say who the buyer was, it sent the reporter into high gear. His reporting discovered that the mall, in financial trouble, sold to a predator company that was buying distressed malls at deep discount. This is reporting that informs, not just announces.

Gold: *Corridor Business Journal*; “Lightening the (real estate) load”; Katharine Carlon, correspondent

This forward-looking scoop not only recognizes the trend that companies are trying to free up capital by selling off buildings and leasing them back, but also breaks big news. Using county records, the reporter uncovered that Whirlpool had sold its Amana plant, but the \$93 million sale would not affect operations. Competitors jumped on the story, a true sign that this was a major scoop.

MEDIUM

Silver: *BizTimes Milwaukee*; “Amazon facility planned for former JCPenney warehouse in Wauwatosa”; Alex Zank, reporter

Everybody was hunting down the company interested in taking over the vacant JCPenney warehouse. But this reporter’s sharp eyes saw “Amazon” scrawled on a building drawing submitted to the city. Even insiders appreciated his hustle, and sources complimented when he phoned to follow up the tip. The news is backed up with thorough and detailed records reporting that beat the competition.

Gold: *Ottawa Business Journal*; “Shopify set to vacate 170,000-square-foot Elgin Street HQ in bid to reduce office footprint”; David Sali, reporter

The pandemic was crushing to commercial real estate as companies rethought their office space. When the news hit in August that Shopify was ditching its trendy office space in a downtown area, the reporter scooped everyone with what it would mean for nearby real estate, other Canadian companies and also workers. This comprehensive scoop left no angle uncovered and became one of the publication’s most-read stories.

LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; “Art Van said to explore sale, possible bankruptcy”; Dustin Walsh and Sherri Welch, reporters

The tip was nearly unbelievable – a well-known furniture chain was considering bankruptcy about three years after it was sold. The iconic Art Van Furniture is a household name in Michigan, so the story was a big one. Working against a Friday deadline, the reporters captured the news as well as the context in a crisp, detailed story.

Gold: *Crain’s Cleveland Business*; “Dark Money in School Levy”; Michelle Jarboe and Stan Bullard, reporters

When slick ads began to appear against a proposed school levy, everyone wondered, Who’s against this? Strong shoe leather and records reporting led to the scoop that it was bankrolled by a shadowy group called Cleveland’s Future Fund LLC. A subsequent scoop

surfaced local developers behind the effort. This story is a great example of sustained and thorough reporting to shed light on dark money used to influence voters.

12. Best Feature

SMALL

Silver: *dbusiness*; “Buy-In, Sellout”; Norm Sinclair, reporter

Through dogged reporting and analysis, the writer captured the nuances of corporate power, Wall Street greed and disrespect for a traditional family business. Art Van furniture was a treasure throughout the Detroit region, yet was brought to its knees by new owners. The writer’s pacing was pitch-perfect, making this cautionary tale almost impossible to put down until reaching the sad conclusion.

Gold: *Corridor Business Journal*; “Affording Health – Big bills & bitter pills”; Katharine Carlon, Dave DeWitte, Julia Druckmiller and Adam Moore, reporters

This exploration of the crisis of health care affordability as it relates to employers and employees is a well reported, complex and clear-eyed view of one of the nation’s most divisive issues. The reporting is tireless and comprehensive, from bleak projections from health care CEOs, overworked physicians, to patient after patient desperate for affordable healthcare.

MEDIUM

Silver: *Biz New Orleans*; “If Oak Street is a Microcosm of N.O. Economy, the Outlook is Encouraging”; Rich Collins, reporter

The writer breathes life, vitality and consequence into this story about the economy of a New Orleans street known for its many restaurants and bars. It details the decline, dying, coming to life again and then thriving life cycle. It’s a familiar story powered along by strong writing and deft observation.

Gold: *Worcester Business Journal*; “Disrespected: Sexual Harassment leaves professional women & their companies dealing with the fallout”; Sarah Connell, reporter

In an era of rising furor over harassment of women in the workplace, embodied by the #metoo movement, this feature offers a bold portrait of courageous corporate executives struggling to transform the Old Boys Club that has long subdued them. Their stories are sobering and infuriating, but their determination and resilience is ultimately inspirational.

LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Chicago Business*, “Crain’s Forum, Regional Planning”; Steven R. Strahler, reporter

This deep dive into Chicago’s struggle to weather – and thrive – during a pandemic, along with a spike in gun violence is impressive. Avoiding the trap of economic abstraction, the reporter instead talked to “real people” to capture a community’s emotional pain due to financial loss and stress.

Gold: *Crain’s Detroit Business*, “Reversal of Fortune,” Kirk Pinho, reporter

What a yarn – absolutely unbelievable yet believable, too, because the writer captured all the twists and turns to catalog the list of legal infractions to fund the perpetrator’s gambling addiction. Kirk’s Pinho’s feature was like reading a really good “whodunit.”

13. Best Personality Profile

SMALL

Silver: *dbusiness*; “Due Diligence”; Dale Buss

Visual reporting and plentiful details make this story come alive as it weaves the compelling tale of business success after what could have been personal tragedy.

Gold: *Vermont Business*; “A Herculean Task: Xusana Davis, Vermont's Racial Equity Director”; Joyce Marcel

Robust sourcing and reporting is evident throughout this intriguing sketch. The piece uses the profile form as an introduction to a new state director while also outlining the meaning and importance of diversity and equity.

MEDIUM

Silver: *Hartford Business Journal*; “A maturing restaurateur, Tyler Anderson learns that being a celebrity chef doesn’t guarantee success”; Sean Teehan

This piece tells the story of one chef’s journey as well as the ups and downs of the restaurant industry. Rich in description and personality details, readers are left wanting to say a friendly hello to this kitchen-focused chef during their next restaurant visit.

Gold: *Columbus CEO*; “Open-hearted: Dionte Johnson”; Tatyana Tandanpolie

This story of a small business owner is a relatable human tale of strength and community pride amid adversity. It is both newsworthy and an effective profile of a shoe store entrepreneur’s philosophy on life.

LARGE

Silver: *Baton Rouge Business Report*; “Passion Play: Tom Galligan”; Caitie Burkes

Dripping with personality details, this story pulls up a chair in the subject’s living room and invites the reader to get to know this LSU leader and what makes him tick.

Gold: *Florida Trend*; “First Call”; Amy Martinez

Candid interviews and great quotes run throughout this piece about a high-profile civil rights attorney who is no stranger to media coverage. Strong sourcing and reporting come together to create a vivid picture of his expertise and commitment.

14. Best Body of Work, Single Writer

SMALL

Silver: *Insight on Business*; MaryBeth Matzek, writer

MaryBeth Matzek scouts for fascinating subjects—such as snakes or sauerkraut—and treats them as if she were producing a documentary film, with thorough reporting, a wealth of

details and a winning, original style. Her writing is so graceful and compelling that it's almost impossible to stop before reaching the final paragraph.

Gold: *dbusiness*; Norm Sinclair

Norm Sinclair gets to the heart of every matter in his wide-ranging body of work, capturing the personalities and motivations of each central character in an unfolding drama. His investigation into flood destruction (“A Dam Shame”) and the aftermath, for example, takes the reader right to the site where he delivers a rather sinister, heartbreaking backstory. The emergency status of road repairs in Michigan is also thoroughly investigated, showing how good intentions have often been waylaid by poor judgment calls. Sinclair definitely works his stories for all they are worth, and they are worth a great deal to the audience.

MEDIUM

Silver: *Ottawa Business Journal*; David Sali, writer

David Sali takes the reader directly into the space where big players in big businesses make big decisions. He works the story behind their professional accolades and brings the personality and the background of each notable character to life. It's an inside look at the C-Suite that readers don't often have a chance to observe.

Gold: *Providence Business Journal*; Nancy Lavin, writer

Every article in Nancy Lavin's portfolio asks important questions and answers them with authority and masterful reporting. Why don't minority business owners trust banks? Why have working women been hit so hard by the pandemic? She uses facts, data and the techniques of a sociologist to discover the questions and then turns to her superb writing talents to deliver the well-informed answers.

LARGE

Silver: *Los Angeles Business Journal*; Howard Fine, writer

Howard Fine mines unpredictable territory to find stories that surprise and satisfy. A story about the way glass companies in L.A. rallied after a series of riots, for example, captured the urgency, dedication to customers and willingness of workers to meet the crisis. Likewise, the way Fulgent Genetics became a COVID testing juggernaut is an inspired tale of grit and good timing. Fine's diligent, exhaustive research produces engaging stories that keep readers deeply involved until the end.

Gold: *Crain's Chicago Business*; John Pletz, writer

John Pletz's body of work shows a keen eye for stories you want to talk about, from the stunning value of airline frequent flier programs to the growing luxury of marijuana distribution outlets. Finding unusual angles within a topic seems to be his specialty, and he is a master of the well-crafted narrative, knowing when and how to turn perfect pace and tone into a great reading experience.

15. Best Recurring Feature

SMALL

Silver: *Delaware Business Times*; “In the C-Suite”; Katie Tabeling, writer; Jacob Owens, editor

This feature takes profiles of business leaders to a higher level with its thoughtful approach to each subject, revealing both the professional and personal attributes that underpin their achievements. Each installment is a clear-eyed, refreshing look at the many layers of being accomplished and successful.

Gold: *dbusiness*; “Closing Bell”; Ronald Ahrens, writer

These engaging slices of history illustrate the richness of Detroit’s commercial past, with a look at circus impresario James A. Bailey and automotive design pioneer Helen Rother, among others. The writing has the literary grace of good historical narratives, and beautifully toned vintage photographs add elements of authenticity and charm.

MEDIUM

Silver: *Hartford Business Journal*; “Executive Profiles”; Sean Teehan, writer

A set of deeply reported profiles puts outstanding interviewing and writing skills on display. A particularly candid story about celebrity chef Tyler Anderson, for example, charts his journey from missteps and miscalculations to the heights of television and restaurant stardom. For the reader, the stories are satisfying as well as memorable.

Gold: *Providence Business News*; “Everybody’s Business”; Nancy Lavin, writer; Mary MacDonald, writer; James Bessette, editor

A series of conversations with minority business owners and leaders gives a platform to those whose voices are not always present. Unflinching questions about racism, discrimination, trust and acceptance are met with astute, insightful answers. It was a stroke of genius to establish a forum that gathers such clarity, wisdom and honesty in one place.

LARGE

Silver: *Florida Trend*; “Icon”; Art Levy, writer

These inspired interview notes from fascinating, influential people, reported in their own words, are composites of personality, character, wit and knowledge. A retired astronaut shares the challenges and thrill of flying in space, then pivots to the mechanics of watercolor painting in zero gravity. The payoff for the reader is an enlightening read every time.

Gold: *D CEO Magazine*; Pursuits/Off Duty; Christine Perez, Ben Swanger and Brandon J. Call, writers

The personal side of Dallas/Fort Worth business leaders is unpredictable, eye-opening and thoroughly entertaining. Attorney David Coale is a father of four children and an expert at reading tarot cards. Attorney Jeff Dorrill is the reigning ultradistance triathlon national champion. Tech company CEO and founder Vanessa Ogle is a rock guitarist with an employee-fronted band. Who knew? Now we all do, and readers can thank some inspired, dedicated writers and editors at D CEO for the exceptional experience.

16: Best Coverage of Local Breaking News

SMALL

Silver: *New Hampshire Business Review*; “Banks scramble to keep up with NH businesses’ emergency loan needs”; Bob Sanders, reporter

Early April was a scramble after the government quickly made small business loans available to owners struggling with Covid closures. The reporter quickly assembled the right sources to tell a compelling story about the race to secure a share of much-needed money and produced a comprehensive report.

Gold: *Vermont Business*; “Quiros pleads guilty to Jay Peak EB-5-related fraud, faces 8 years”; Mike Donaghue, correspondent

The scheme was complicated – a new biotechnology center was to be built with money from immigrants who would contribute \$500,000 each to effectively buy U.S. residency while creating a company that would create American jobs. Except the funds went toward a lavish lifestyle for Ariel Quiros. When the local ski resort owner pled guilty to fraud charges, the reporter delivered a quick turnaround story that detailed an international conspiracy, complete with twists and turns worthy of a suspense novel.

MEDIUM

Silver: *BizTimes Milwaukee*; “Pharmacist spoils Covid vaccines”; Lauren Anderson, reporter

In a highly competitive national story, the reporter providing an intensive level of detail and context. She filed three stories in rapid fire succession, including an important one that indicated some recipients may have received compromised vaccine.

Gold: *Arkansas Business*; “Murphy Oil to Close El Dorado headquarters, move to Houston”; Kyle Massey and Lance Turner, reporters

Murphy Oil has deep roots in the small town of El Dorado in southern Arkansas. When the company decided, after plummeting oil revenue, to close its headquarters there and relocate 82 jobs, it was significant breaking news. The reporting team did a great job of separating fact from emotion. They parsed out which Murphy Oil jobs would go, and which jobs would stay. They also keenly reassured nervous locals that the El Dorado promise, in which Murphy companies fund college educations for local high school grads, would continue despite the economic downturn.

LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “Landmark deal for Catholic Schools in Chicago”; A.D. Quig, reporter

When donors announced they’d pump \$50 million into 30 struggling Catholic schools on Chicago’s south and west side, it was big news. History and context were major elements of this story, and the reporter delivered a first-day story that was concise and complete, answering questions on where the money came from, how it would be used, and how much control the donors would have over the schools. This was a real public service.

Gold: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “Elanco Picks Downtown Indy for new HQ”; John Russell, Mickey Shuey, Lindsey Erdody, Samm Quinn, Lesley Weidenbener, Greg Andrews, Jeff Newman, reporters

Elanco Animal Health had kept everyone guessing – it was known they might be leaving suburban Indianapolis for a new headquarters, but where? IBJ staff were tipped to an upcoming announcement, and they delivered with a multistory analysis on the new plant, what would

happen to the old facility, and the jobs that would be kept and added. This package provided citizens the complete story, not just a headline.

17. Best Investigative Reporting

SMALL

Silver: *New Hampshire Business Review*; “Where Did the \$40 million in NH COVID Contracts Go?”; Bob Sanders, reporter

Good shoe-leather journalism looked into recipients of Covid contracts and turned up some odd and questionable decisions.

Gold: *dbusiness*; “A Dam Shame”; Norm Sinclair, reporter

A well-written, well-documented aggregation of information and documentation about a dam disaster that could have been prevented without the jousting between the state and the dam owner over control and management. The efficient and thorough story carefully traces the missteps that compromised safety, wiped out towns and cost property owners their homes.

MEDIUM

Silver: *BizWest*; “Historic Demands on Colorado Unemployment Trust Fund Pose Risk of Payroll Tax Hike”; Dan Mika, reporter

This eye-opening look at how unprepared Colorado was for the rush of unemployment claims offers a useful, step-by-step explanation of how it happened and what it means.

Gold: *Worcester Business Journal*; “Under Negotiation: Worcester Yet to Finalize PawSox Deal Or Obtain Lease for Ballpark Property”; Grant Welker, reporter

This report sweeps up the loose ends in what seems to be a stunningly inept deal to bring a minor league baseball team to town. With just months before the anticipated first pitch, the delays and cost overruns and lack of clear direction are laid out clearly and with an appropriate sense of bewilderment.

LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s New York Business*; “Raiding the Register”; Aaron Elstein, reporter

Basic, straightforward reporting compares executive perks with the earnings of rank-and-file workers. It is especially ironic that the executives who reaped the bonuses led the grocery company in question down a road to bankruptcy. A great, well-documented example of the so-called “golden age of the bankruptcy bonus.”

Gold: *Florida Trend*; “Connecting the Dots”; Amy Keller, Nancy Dahlberg

It’s so gratifying when a journalist doesn’t take what is touted as an undeniable improvement at face value. This report digs into both the expected benefits and the unintended consequences of electronic health records, the whiz-bang aspects that ended up as a windfall for vendors and the daily use frustrations that ended up as a burden for users — and an actual hazard for patients.

18. Best Explanatory Journalism

SMALL

Silver: *New Hampshire Business Review*; “State Still Struggling for School Funding Solution”; Michael Kitch

A complicated, long-standing problem was handled with clarity and care. At the heart of the issue is the need to address unequal educational opportunities, and the writer makes it clear how funding and taxing issues complicate the matter.

Gold: *Biz 417*; “What We Can Be”; Jenna deJong, Danielle Giarratano, Brandon Alms, Katie Estes

An important topic told in a smart way. The individual profiles packaged with photos give readers many entry points and humanize the story. The “Five Top Takeaways” and “Resources” give readers information they can act on.

MEDIUM

Silver: *Hartford Business Journal*; “Breaking Barriers”; Greg Bordonaro, Matt Pilon, Sean Teehan

The team analyzed companies across the state to produce a data-driven picture of racial and gender disparities within the top leadership ranks. Additional solid contextual reporting explores what might be done to change the situation and what some companies have already been doing.

Gold: *Biz New Orleans*; “Black in Business”; Kim Singletary, reporter

A effectively told, nicely paced story on a vital topic that humanizes its subject while also providing plenty of data to make its points. Layout and presentation add to the content.

LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; “How Coronavirus Chopped the Food Chain”; Dustin Walsh, Sherri Welch, Annalise Frank

Great explanations and specific examples help walk readers through the issues. The specificity made the story real and the reporters showed a side of the pandemic’s impact that many were ignoring, or only covering in passing.

Gold: *Baton Rouge Business Report*; “Shock Waves”; J.R. Ball, Stephanie Riegel, Caitie Burkes, Holly Duchmann, Allan Schilling

Incredibly impressive, comprehensive report on the many different ways the pandemic was affecting local business and industry. The speed with which this comprehensive package was done is noteworthy, and the design and execution were fantastic. The result is clear and easy to understand and navigate.

19: Best Local Coverage of a National Business/Economic Story

SMALL

Silver: *New Hampshire Business Review*; “NH businesses step up on climate change”; Bob Sanders

Strong sourcing and crisp writing show the innovative, thoughtful approaches local companies are taking to do their part to help the planet. The in-depth report also captures the complexity of the production process.

Gold: *Corridor Business Journal*; “Pandemic impacts”; Dave DeWitte, Katharine Carlton, Adam Moore, Becky Lyons

Authoritative, compelling reporting takes readers behind the scenes as bankers, airport executives and manufacturers scramble to help their customers through the crisis. The stories are highly readable while being packed with data.

MEDIUM

Silver: *Providence Business News*; “The Battle Within: Pandemic fight at nursing homes proves costly on many levels”; Elizabeth Graham, Alexa Gagosz

The writers offer a vivid account of the stress faced by nursing home administrators and caregivers as they fought to keep patients and their business models healthy. The stories deftly weave together financial details, historical context and personal accounts.

Gold: *Columbus CEO*; “COVID-19 Special Issue”; staff

This insightful package puts the economic impact of the pandemic in perspective while highlighting the heroic efforts of those in the business, health care and university communities. The snapshots of smaller businesses reflect the city’s diversity and detail the tough decisions made.

LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “COVID-19’s impact on restaurants”; Ally Marotti

It takes a strong beat reporter with deep sourcing to produce such authoritative accounts of the restaurant scene in a large city. Good graphics and statistics further enhance the compelling storytelling.

Gold: *Florida Trend*; “The Way to Affordable Housing”; Mike Vogel

This solutions-oriented package relies on in-depth interviews supported by strong data to make a convincing case that changing zoning rules could help alleviate the shortage of affordable housing. And, just in case people weren’t convinced there is a problem, smart graphics tracking home prices and availability make it all too clear.

20. Best Ancillary Publication

SMALL

Silver: *The Business Journal, Fresno*; “Diversity in Business 2020”; Gabriel Dillard, Edward Smith, Frank Lopez, Breanna Hardy, Donald Promnitz

This covers important issues and does a great job of capturing the diversity of Fresno. The subjects of the many profiles are people trying to make a difference in their community. Of note is “Vision Without Limits,” about women teaching classes on building wealth.

Gold: *Delaware Business Times*; “Stuff Magazine 2020”; Randy Clark, Tina Irgang Leaderman, Kim Fortuna

This publication is a must-read for young people entering the workforce or graduating high school. It provides innovative ideas and unique paths for the future, particularly through profile stories. The Top Jobs section explains four major industries, with fun accompanying Myth Buster boxes. Additionally, each story includes a wide range of sources.

MEDIUM

Silver: *Virginia Business*; “Hampton Roads Business Guide”; Kate Andrews, Richard Foster, Joel Smith

Strong, efficient tables and graphics present facts in an accessible way, and well-edited and photographs enhance the content. “The Big Dig” and “By Land, Sea and Air” are fascinating stories about local business topics. The spread “Overview of Hampton Roads” gives helpful information about the community.

Gold: *Arkansas Business*; “Greenhead”; Chris Bahn, Brent Birch, Todd Traub, Dean Wheeler

This Arkansas duck hunting magazine covers a wide range of stories, reported with expert knowledge and appreciation for the sport. Readers are treated to a historic article on family tradition at the Bill Byers Club, a profile on duck call maker Maverick Dunn and a food story about chefs at duck lodges. Sophisticated design and gorgeous photography, particularly in the photo essay “Other Flyaways,” make this even more of a joy to read.

LARGE

Silver: *Los Angeles Business Journal*; “Wealthiest Angelinos”; Scott Robson, Nina Bays, Stephanie Barbaran

This publication tells you everything you need to know about LA’s wealthiest. There are fascinating, short explanations of how each acquired their money, along with facts about the person, or “the buzz.” Charts and graphics provide quick data about wealth by industry, age and more. This is a solid package with excellent reporting and aggregation.

Gold: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; “IBJ Celebrates 40 Years/Book of Lists”; IBJ Staff

In addition to fabulous lists, this is full of original, local reporting. A helpful list of advertisers and great table of contents make for easy navigation. The Year in Review, with many articles and documentary photographs, is a good way to catch up on what happened during COVID. Snapshot sidebars add interest and information to the lists.

21. Best Bylined Commentary

SMALL

Silver: *Corridor Business Journal*; “The Fifth Estate”; Joe Coffey

Being an experienced and savvy observer of media is great, but it’s a real service when the columnist offers behind-the-scenes insight. That includes giving readers realistic ways to support local journalism, or introducing readers to a just-hired local TV reporter. These stories behind the story are often overlooked or unexplored, and result in surprising insights.

Gold: *San Fernando Valley Business Journal*; “One More Thing”; Charles Crumpley, editor and publisher

This entry is all about strengthening the community, with thoughtful analysis and ideas for moving forward. While the Valley has an abundance of tourism, the current tax structure sends local hotel tax revenue to support the adjacent Los Angeles market. Another example offers a well-documented look at the financial arrangements between city government and developers, which is likened to a perpetual shakedown. These hard hitting columns add value and gravitas to the publication and the community.

MEDIUM

Silver: *Springfield Business Journal*; “Truth Be Told”; Christine Temple

The author combines a point of view with solid reporting and delivers it in a nicely written package. She sidesteps the politics to explain how mask wearing during the pandemic could blunt the economic downturn and benefit the entire community. Following the pandemic focus, she explains how she views racism as its own pandemic. These are difficult topics, addressed with a thoughtful, clear voice.

Gold: *Virginia Business*; “Our View from the Publisher”; Bernie Niemeier, publisher

This publisher doesn’t shout but offers reasoned, thoughtful explanations for his viewpoints, taking the “side” of his community as a whole, not of a faction. With this approach he advocates that the federal government has a role in addressing the current crisis, in addition to what local officials can and should do. He also puts forth a detailed case that it’s good for business to support racial equality and eliminate Confederate statues; that the business community pays a price for social injustice, inequality and poverty.

LARGE

Silver: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; “Joe Cahill on Business”; Joe Cahill

Clear and concise reporting challenges business leaders and readers to step up and be part of needed solutions, not mere critics and observers. Cahill urges business leaders that it’s not enough to spend time and money defeating something they don’t like, but to spend equal or more money and time putting forth alternate solutions. He takes to task an errant top executive the board that should have overseen him. The author is forthright, and doesn’t pull punches.

Gold: *Baton Rouge Business Report*; “Viewpoint: The Big Picture”; Stephanie Riegel

The writing is superb, and the passion jumps off the page. The author is not afraid to take on one of the largest employers in the market, accusing it of moral bankruptcy. This is not a backdoor condemnation but in your face disappointment, if not outrage. The passion continues as she attacks a Covid narrative that blames the most vulnerable. Writing about issues of interest to the audience, the author wasn’t afraid to take potentially unpopular stances.

22. Best Editorial

SMALL:

Silver: No award.

Gold: Delaware Business Times, “Delaware is staring down a crossroads on its R&D future”; Jacob Owens

This entry offers a clear-eyed view of Delaware at an economic crossroad. The argument to build a stronger future by supporting the city’s burgeoning entrepreneurial ecosystem is balanced, engaging and persuasive.

MEDIUM:

Silver: *Hartford Business Journal*, “Federal gov’t must fill business interruption insurance gap”; Greg Bordonaro

It’s tough to side with big insurance companies, but the writer makes a strong case for protecting them during the pandemic. This column is hard-hitting, accessibly written and high-impact.

Gold: *BizWest*, “It’s time for voters, at last, to repeal Colorado’s Gallagher Amendment”; Christopher Wood

It’s hard to haggle with this case to the repeal the Gallagher Amendment, a decades-old property tax measure which the writer cogently argues unfairly burdens commercial enterprises, small businesses and agriculture. Reasonable, insightful, and straight-talking, the editorial courageously leads on a controversial and complex issue with drop-the-mic persuasiveness.

LARGE:

Silver: *Crain’s Detroit*, “Release all data on COVID-19 testing in Michigan”; Chad Livengood

As the pandemic crippled Michigan’s economy, Crain’s leveraged hard-nosed reporting and data to push state government towards transparency and accountability in collecting, analyzing and processing COVID-19 data from hospitals and labs – and getting that critical information to the public as quickly as possible.

Gold: *Indianapolis Business Journal*, “NCAA must embrace new world order”; Greg Andrews

In this editorial the publication becomes a gutsy advocate for NCAA athletes. The argument for this big hometown organization to share the financial bounty with players is timely and persuasive.

BEST OF SHOW CATEGORIES

23. Most Improved Publication

Winner: *Los Angeles Business Journal*; Scott Robson, Nina Bays, Stephanie Barbaran

Issues after the changes are design-driven and bolder. Increased white space and larger visuals create a clean, consistent look. Cover page format focuses on one striking image to grab attention. In-depth features like the “Wealthiest Angelinos” special section provide visual variety and multiple points of entry.

24. Best Website

Bronze: *Providence Business News*; Chris Bergenheim, web editor, PBN staff

There is a nice mix of breaking news and features, with the availability of both “free” and premium content reserved specifically for subscribers. The website had a nice touch by dividing stories by relevant topics and also by subject matter. The site was simple and easy to navigate.

Silver: *Crain’s Detroit Business*; Crain’s Staff

This website does a terrific job of offering a full picture of the business community that reflects the diversity that is the Detroit Metro area. The site makes active use of promoting the app and extras, like newsletters and podcasts. Headlines are written in active voice, using strong verbs that grab the reader.

Gold: *Crain’s Chicago Business*; Staff

This website is robust and offers a full-on digital experience. Among the highlights was Covid vaccine rollout coverage that included several unique features that each showed its content to maximum potential. The multimedia work is top notch and the reporting is excellent.

25. Best Magazine

Bronze: *Baton Rouge Business Report*; J.R. Ball

Solid writing and vibrant, useful design characterized this entry. The stories worked hard, with pull-outs, differing approaches and infographics to help the content hit home. The Startup section was particularly appealing, and the features presented topics that were both broad and interesting.

Silver: *dbusiness*; R.J. King, Tim Keenan, Grace Turner, Austin Philips, Alexander Shammami

Local people and local businesses are at the heart of this robust publication. The Ticker section was a well-written and brightly visual entry into the magazine. Features were compelling and varied, from looking at the future of business post-COVID to a tale of the demise of a popular furniture store.

Gold: *D CEO*; Christine Perez, Hamilton Hedrick, Will Maddox, Bianca R. Montes, Kelsey J. Vanderschoot, Brandon J. Call

In addition to great writing and stellar design, the diversity in the story selection was evident. The Dossier section offered a collection of timely and interesting pieces. The features were engrossing, useful and timely – including the “New Normal” package that was people focused and cleanly designed, and “Fight for Funding” that used plentiful sidebars and infographics. Strong photography carried readers through these stand-out issues.

26a. Best Newspaper – Small Tabloids

Bronze: *Delaware Business Times*; Jacob Owens, Katie Tabeling, Mike Rocheleau, Chris Johnson, Lisa Minto, Charlie Tomlinson, Carol Houseal

The Delaware Business Times seems well in touch with its business readership. The publication offers a wide variety and volume of local content. Front pages are consistently strong with large dominant images, and visuals are sought for every story. The topics reflect an emphasis on issues like diversity and renewable energy, setting a positive and thoughtful example for the community.

Silver: *Daily Herald Business Ledger*; Orrin Schwarz, Richard Klicki, John Lampinen

A newsy publication that covers a diversity of topics. Well-executed features are found throughout, such as the story on the Smithe sisters who run a family-owned furniture store. A variety of guest columns bring unique expertise, avoid self-promotion and are written in a compelling manner. There is a nice balance between personal finance and business news, providing many entry points.

Gold: *San Fernando Valley Business Journal*; Charles Crumpley, Joel Russell, Andrew Foerch, Michael Aushenker, Mark Madler, Amy Stulick

An excellent publication from the front page to the final words by the editor. Headlines are creative and pull the reader into stories. Story count is high, even on the front page. Topics go beyond the business community and are relatable to the general public. Easy navigation throughout and strong overall design. The breadth and depth of reporting is impressive.

26b. Best Newspaper - Medium Tabloids

Bronze: *Worcester Business Journal*; Brad Kane, Grant Welker, Monica Busch, Mitchell Hayes, Kira Beaudoin, Timothy Doyle, Heide Martin

This entry stands out for spectacular themed sections and outstanding sourcing and writing on subjects that are critical to business. “The Boardroom Gap” and “Disrespected” are stories that show an ability to do extraordinary interviewing on women’s work issues. Design is clean, and covers thoughtful, with a mix of photographs and graphics.

Silver: *Des Moines Business Record*; Chris Conetzkey, Emily Barske, Lauren Burt, Joe Crimmings, Kurt Heland

This publication is solid throughout, in both content and visuals. The staff tackles tough social subjects, relates them to business and executes them well. Thoughtful stories and outstanding design make the publication live up to its mission.

Gold: *BizTimes Milwaukee*; BizTimes staff

This publication hits all the buttons, with classy design, strong visuals, plenty of news, smart enterprise and superior graphics. When not devoted to news, the space is used well to provide stories readers are unlikely to get anywhere else. Design is clean and thoughtful, and white space gives visuals room to breathe.

26c. Best newspaper — Large tabloids

Bronze: *Indianapolis Business Journal*; staff

This publication does a great job of going beyond just the city to provide coverage with statewide impact. A large part of that comes from consistent reporting on state government and its effect on business. The opinion section is particularly strong and thoughtful, with articles about a variety of subjects that were constructive and solutions-oriented. Columns and other features seem focused on helping readers become smarter and more successful. The design feels simultaneously traditional and contemporary, with good use of documentary photography. The

content also seems to foster a sense of community, exemplified by the inclusion of photos and contact info for reporters and beats in each issue.

Silver: *Crain's Chicago Business*; staff

In addition to news, readers get an exceptional array of deeply reported, hard-hitting enterprise packages. The coverage throughout the publication presents a lot of insightful, individual human examples to represent larger trends, and those characters are brought to life via accompanying portraits. Stories approach the news from a variety of vantage points, including the point of view of workers and not just business leaders. Opinion pages, along with special features like the Forum on Regional Resiliency, incorporate a range of diverse community faces and voices. Design and visuals also are really solid.

Gold: *Crain's Detroit Business*; staff

This entry included multiple standout examples of investigative and explanatory work with a hard edge, including a great yarn about a local real estate executive's lottery shenanigans, and an interesting dive into the state's reserve finances. The publication also provided an impressive array of coverage related to the pandemic. Readers are regularly treated to well-written columns by people offering expertise, insight and solid advice. Coverage included many documentary photos of real people doing real things. The design choices are bold, with a variety of sophisticated approaches to engaging readers' eyes.