



BEST IN BUSINESS 2007

**at the Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel
Baltimore, Maryland**

Sunday, April 27, 2008

**Reception: 6:00 p.m.
followed by Awards Ceremony**

S·A·B·E·W

Best in Business Judging Panel Coordinators

Cathie Anderson
The Sacramento Bee

Dave Berman
Florida Today

Bill Choyke
The Virginian-Pilot

John Corrigan
The Los Angeles Times

Lisa Gibbs
The Miami Herald

Robert Goldfield
Portland Business Journal

George Gombossy
The Hartford Courant

Dan Haar
The Hartford Courant

Jill Jorden Spitz
Arizona Daily Star

Stephen Keating
Politics West

Josh Mills
Baruch College, CUNY

Kevin Noblet
*Formerly of
The Associated Press*

Joanna Ossinger
TheStreet.com

Grove Potter
Buffalo News

Frank Quaratiello
The Boston Herald

Patrick Scott
The Charlotte Observer

Rex Seline
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Marty Steffens
University of Missouri

Susan Tompor
Detroit Free Press

Dave Wilson
Bloomberg News

Dawn Wotopka
Dow Jones News Service

SABEW members and guests,

Tonight we celebrate a year of outstanding business journalism. We also celebrate a step into the future for the Best in Business contest, which expanded its reach this year to include magazines and online publications. In the process the number of entries grew to a record-setting 842. Thanks to you all for making that happen.

We offer our sincere congratulations to all of tonight's winners. Your contributions were judged by three-member panels of highly respected and award-winning business journalists from throughout the industry. The pool of winners proves journalistic excellence can shine in small newspapers and large websites, in monthly magazines and up-to-the-minute wire services, in the largest daily newspapers and the smallest weeklies.

Whether you're taking home an award tonight or whether you're here to applaud your colleagues as they pick up awards, congratulations to you all for continuing to produce journalism that rights wrongs, educates readers and improves our communities. Even in a time of adversity within our industry, it is heartening to see that our commitment to our craft remains strong.

Until next year,

Your Best in Business co-chairs

Jill Jorden Spitz
Assistant Managing Editor
Arizona Daily Star

Lisa Gibbs
Executive Business Editor
The Miami Herald

S·A·B·E·W

SABEW Best in Business 2007

Welcome

- Jill Jorden Spitz and Lisa Gibbs, *Best in Business* coordinators
- A word from our sponsors:

Andrew Leckey, Director, *Donald W. Reynolds National Center for Business Journalism*

Betty Wong, *Managing Editor, Reuters America*

Mortgage Madness

- Presented by the SABEW board

Written and produced by Jill Jorden Spitz, Jonathan Blum, Marty Steffens, Dave Wilson and Rob Reuteman

Awards

- Student Contest
- Online Contest
- Magazine Contest
- News Contest
- General Excellence Contest

I will survive redux

- Performed by Rachel Wiederhold, *The (Baltimore) Sun*
Dedicated to all those who lost business newshole, pages - or their entire Business section - in 2007

*Special thanks to the generous sponsors of our
always-popular awards reception:*

**Donald W. Reynolds National Center
for Business Journalism and
Reuters America**
We appreciate your support!

STUDENT CONTEST

STORIES WRITTEN FOR PROFESSIONAL PUBLICATIONS

Seattle Times

"Grape-growing town not on wine lovers' map" by Daniel Johnson

A terrific piece of expository journalism. A complicated situation with many confusing angles, it is well laid out by Johnson in a way that is easily understood by most readers. The first paragraph sucks you right in, with descriptive detail that hammers home the point. When I finished, I was surprised and delighted to realize how much I had just learned.

STORIES WRITTEN FOR STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

Columbia Missourian

"Funding farming" by Jessica Nunez

Explained to readers how a small number of regional farmers received an outsized federal subsidy, using a database compiled by the Environmental Working Group to find the names. Nunez used this story as an opportunity to instruct her readers about why the subsidy program exist, to challenge the program's structure and continued relevance, and to give them a glimpse of what it could look like. She took on an ambitious topic and drove hard on the reporting.

ONLINE CONTEST BREAKING NEWS

SMALL WEBSITES

Dallas Business Journal

"Questions dog press club" by Chad Eric Watt and Dave Moore

An inside account of an organization that appears to draw significant financial support from corporations and a foundation but is unable to manage its affairs, including the inability to name the judges in contest that was a centerpiece of a gala event in Dallas. The story suggests that the organization began to respond to its problems after the DBJ started asking questions.

Crain's Chicago Business

"LaSalle's Richman near deal to join private bank" by Steve Daniels

The reporter here not only got the inside story on a likely corporate defection, but he has shown the significance of the defection to the local banking industry.

Crain's Chicago Business

"Kennedy, developer plan big Wolf Point project" by Alby Gallun

The writer reports the news of an important downtown development and provides a clear explanation of its importance and how it will fit into the cityscape of Chicago.

LARGE WEBSITES

CNET News

"Launch of the iPhone" by Tom Krazit, Caroline McCarthy, Erica Ogg, Kent German, Leslie Katz and Brian Cooley

Although reams of copy had already been written about the iPhone, CNET came up with a way to report on the first few hours it went on sale that the judges felt was original and aggressive. The package ranged from on-site reporting at stores besieged by iPhone buyers to an insightful real-time review of the gadget to a blog about ripping the phone apart. The judges felt the package would engage geeks and casual readers alike, and made good use of the visual possibilities of the Internet, with plenty of photos and videos. The writing was bright and engaging and the package contained several angles that others missed.

CNNMoney.com

"Turmoil in the mortgage and credit markets" by Staff

The judges found this a comprehensive, timely package that played well to several audiences – from Wall Street insiders and investors to Main Street borrowers and consumers. The main story, "Mortgage meltdown contagion," provided a well-written, insightful overview while "Who can't get a mortgage now" offered analysis to consumer lenders on how their financial position could be affected by the sub-prime crisis. "Credit turmoil throws deals in jeopardy" by CNN's London bureau gave the package a global feel and offered an interesting angle that would draw hard-core finance insiders. The judges felt the story was greatly enhanced by the accompanying graphic, "Buyouts to watch."

ONLINE CONTEST CREATIVE USE OF ONLINE

LARGE WEBSITES

Business Week

"Narrated slideshows" by Roben Farzad

Farzad's comfortably narrated slideshows on emerging economies in Colombia, Mozambique, Nigeria and Botswana and Zambia explored themes in each location that painted a clear picture of struggles and successes, with excellent pacing and deft comments such as "He looks like a South African Rugby playboy," about a microlender, and "This place is very much trying to get its market legs," about the tiny Colombian stock market, which closes at 1 p.m. The pieces included video captions of local residents.

MarketWatch

"The heat is on" by Staff

MarketWatch brought its full staff together for a five-part series, "The heat is on," an investor guide to global warming. Meticulously organized, the series went far beyond all the happy talk about the emerging sector aimed at mitigating global warming. Each day, with a separate theme such as "The consumer realm," brought a video, a personal finance piece with stock picks and warnings, outside commentary and separate articles describing the players and challenges in the industry. Overall, the project combined visual dynamics, advice and storytelling in a way that held together around well-labeled themes.

CNNMoney.com

"2007 best places to live" by Staff

This project, ubiquitously cited in the media on the day of its release, lends itself to a cavalcade of

interactive features – and the editors at CNNMoney didn't disappoint. Lots of "chunky bits" on the screen, each with an offer of information on its face and, usually, a search function of some kind underneath. If you think it's nuts that North Haven made the list but not Narberth, compare your favorite burg to the winners, with economic and demographic stats. If you don't like the criteria for the winners, plug in your own and generate your own list. The functions run smoothly and the tone is in the spirit of a subjective listing, designed more for debate than authoritative statement.

ONLINE CONTEST PROJECTS

SMALL WEBSITES

Certificate of Merit

The (Colorado Springs) Gazette

"Academy Boulevard at a crossroads" by Rich Laden, Nichole Montañez, Mark Reis, Christian Murdock, David Bitton and Joanna Bean

The Gazette has created a commendable project utilizing numerous online technologies: maps, charts, still photos, slide shows and videos. The paper looked at an issue that faces many communities, the abandonment of commercial properties by big box stores that often reopen just a short distance away. Interviews with nearby residents, the mayor and business owners convey the impact such decisions have on a community. The package could have benefited from some analysis of why certain stretches of a commercial strip fade while others thrive. The impact of race and income is implied in the graphics, but a harder, edgier look at those economic influences would have enhanced the mayor's public relations spin. That said, the Gazette is making a mighty effort to use the new technologies to reach its communities.

MID-SIZED WEBSITES

The Charlotte Observer

"Sold a nightmare" by Ted Mellnik, Bill Pitzer, Phillip Hoffman and David Enna

This was the complete journalistic package: good writing, good presentation, compelling subject, real impact, and interactive effects that bolstered their reporting rather than simply appearing as a flashy after-thought. By focusing on how the mortgage meltdown hit one small part of the country, the reporters and editors told a story important to people not just in the U.S., but around the world, with dramatic effect. And what was good in print was even better online. Some highlights:

- The interactive map, enabling a user to get an overview of how many houses in the development were in trouble and the ability to click on individual properties and get the story behind each one was both insightful and easy to navigate. The map alone made the package stand out from the others. It wasn't just cool. It was useful. It told the story in a way words, tables of numbers or print graphics can't.

- The accompanying videos, allowing the homeowners to tell the story in their own words, were a wonderful and humanizing counterpoint to the mass of data in the package.

- A special favorite of the judges: using Beazer's annual report from 1997 to get the company on the record even though they were unwilling to cooperate with reporters. We also liked the use of the "welcome letter" and the "Beazer brochure." This was a simple, but compelling, use of the Web.

One minor quibble: it would have been nice to see one of the "fudged" mortgage applications that were mentioned in both the text and videos, since those documents were available to reporters. Each of us appreciates the ability to have judged this contest.

LARGE WEBSITES

The New York Times

"Choking on growth: China's environmental crisis" by David Barboza, Keith Bradsher, Howard French, Joseph Kahn and Jim Yardley

Digging into the dirt of a country without open records or a free press, The New York Times produced a remarkable series on the global consequences, and economic incentives, of China's industrial explosion. The stories were backed by equally provocative, and lush, online graphics, maps, videos, photography, creating one of the premiere multimedia project of the year. With global warming and the 2008 Olympics as backdrops, "Choking on growth" was an unparalleled examination of the high stakes of environmental economics.

MSN Money

"Keeping up with the Wangs" by Art Lenehan, Anh Ly, Suzanne McGee and Chris Oster

A compelling and thorough examination, the project's multi-faceted approach shows dedication and ingenuity in utilizing technology to transport readers into the lifestyle of China's middle class. The package highlights the significance of the country's growth and trends, from its Wal-Mart Stores to its beverage industry, as they apply to the MSN Money reader. It is a picture of excellence in reporting, as the team navigates the Chinese culture, and a triumph in multimedia by drawing the reader in with out-of-the-box graphics. It is the rare business story where you are engaged by a topic, enthralled by quality story telling and able to activate your own online juke box loaded with music popular with Chinese teens.

MarketWatch

"Subprime shakedown: Will 'lemming loans' drive economy off cliff?" by Rex Nutting, Amy Hoak and Alistair Barr

For the past few years we in the financial media knew that at some point the housing bubble would burst. No one knew when and very few were publicly imagining the fallout from that explosion. But one year ago last March - months before the headlines of a financial emergency became every day reading - MarketWatch reporters and editors had published a series that eerily foretold what the future would bring. Those who saw the series - and believed its dire warnings - were able to protect their assets by dumping bank, mortgage company and real estate stocks and getting out of variable mortgages. While the series lacked the electronic bells and whistles of some of the other entries, it was journalistically such a powerful package that it cried out to be included as one of the three winners.

ONLINE CONTEST BLOGS

MID-SIZED WEBSITES

Orange County Register

"Lansner on real estate" by Jonathan Lansner

Lansner takes advantage of the Web to deliver complex material to readers that can help them make important decisions about their business and personal lives. His blog creates a discussion and an environment where people can engage. And that's what a blog is.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

"Todd Bishop's Microsoft Blog" by Todd Bishop

There were interesting tidbits in there that would appeal to the Microsoft employees. It seemed like he had some fun with some of his items, such as the "Fog Index." His blog demonstrated a good example of taking beat journalism to a higher level by giving readers a window into his reporting process.

Fort Worth Star Telegram

"Barnett Shale: Drilling for answers about the natural gas boom in North Texas" by Bill Bowen, Jim Fuquay, Dianna Hunt, Mike Lee, Richard Stubbe and Scott Nishimura

This blog offered a good example of using the Web for ultra-local reporting and how the media can deliver information to a subset of readers who care deeply about a specific topic in their neighborhoods. The blog is incredibly detailed, almost overwhelming. But there is a lot of money being made, and the people who live there are going to want that kind of information.

LARGE WEBSITES

The New York Times

"Bits" by Staff

The Times' staff technology blog succeeds in a difficult balancing act by offering instant information useful to hardcore readers, while avoiding the feel of a trade journal, which plagues some blogs. Graphics, photos, an archive, profiles of writers (with pictures!) and other features all flow together smoothly. Although the blog is the work of many contributors, it holds together well in a stylish, unified tone, with the sort of outstanding analysis we expect from the Times. In one example, Louise Story used material from Moveon.org to give a step-by-step look at exactly how Facebook's controversial Beacon system -- even a feature introduced that day -- failed to protect users. Sharply critical without a hint of shrill voice, it reflected the Bits blog overall.

The Wall Street Journal

"Deal Journal" by Staff

Most of us are long accustomed to the Wall Street Journal beating us on our home turf when it comes to breaking M&A news. The Journal's "Deal Journal" blog picks up on that authority and carries it beyond, with inside perspective that matters, or is funny, or provokes thought. The posts are many and crisp, every day, usually with a balance of hard news and detached viewpoint. Far from strutting the newspaper's own considerable connections, Deal Journal gives due credit liberally. On one day, April 19, the blog credited the Dallas Morning News, Venture News, Financial News, Dow Jones Newswires, MarketBeat and the Minneapolis Star Tribune, along with three exclusives including a hilarious but respectful interview with a cosmetology school consolidator who's just pulled off a big deal. Whether the catalyst is their own reporting or someone else's, in every case the DJ writers add the sort of how-do-they-do-it spark of knowledge that can't be faked with voice alone.

Houston Chronicle

"Techblog" by Dwight Silverman

Silverman's Techblog relies on short, fresh posts, well tailored to the blogging medium. His singular, strong voice and multiple links to other writers give the reader a sense of place rather than a sense of being lost in a daily industry wrap-up. Silverman's 15 Top Geek Movies and his Fake Steve Jobs report offer levity, the former eliciting 264 comments.

ONLINE CONTEST AUDIO-VISUAL REPORTS

MID-SIZED WEBSITES

SmartMoney.com

"Smart Advice Video: Avoiding Foreclosure" by Stephanie AuWerter and Stacey Bradford
Very clean, very straightforward. This is the kind of thing a video can convey quickly and easily. Strong enough production values for broadcast TV, and with a hard -news edge.

Ad Age

"3 Minute Ad Age" by Hoag Levins

A good mix of pieces, and a creative way to take their top stories and tailor them for their audience. The challenge to attract online readers to video is to keep it short and compelling. The "3 Minute Ad Age" achieves this.

LARGE WEBSITES

The New York Times

"The iPhone Challenge: Keep It Quiet" by David Pogue

In the hands of a less accomplished and confident journalist, this send-up of the secrecy surrounding iPhone's release would seem purely campy, a parody without a point. It's campy, for sure, but Pogue manages to capture the spirit of the culture while handing viewers plenty of information to digest. Fighting off the hordes, he exclaims, "It's AT&T only!...The battery is sealed inside!...There's no memory-card slot!..." Pogue even pays homage to Mossberg, a touch of class epitomizes the whole production: intelligence shrouded in a hilarious layer of spoof.

Financial Times

"Short view" by John Authers

In Short View, John Authers offers authoritative insights into financial markets with pointed questions and answers on broad topics. The segment "Black Monday Remembered" asks the question -- could it happen again? -- with an answer -- no, not really -- that not only leaves room for thought, but puts the viewer close to the mindset of at least one trader who was there. Authers maps graphics in real time on the screen as he's explaining points that can seem arcane but which take on significance through his perspective and expertise.

Houston Chronicle

"Olive oil" by Jenalia Moreno and Brett Coomer

The video story of an olive oil factory near Cordova, Spain is an example of a global business connecting with local readers, in this case in Texas. It is short (1:02), elegantly produced and informative without falling back on a rote "how-to" approach. Although it accompanied a print story, it stood on its own as a lively piece about a commercial bond between two places, a product of interest to almost everyone.

MAGAZINE CONTEST COVER STORY

SMALL MAGAZINES

Bloomberg Markets

"Toxic debt" by David Evans, Richard Tomlinson, Seth Lubove and Daniel Taub

Long before most people woke up to the problems with subprime debt and other risky financial instruments, Bloomberg Markets presented comprehensive and colorful accounts of what went wrong with mortgage brokers, credit raters and pensions trying to goose their returns with such investments. The package explained the issues authoritatively yet accessibly, without being simplistic. Extremely well-researched.

LARGE MAGAZINES

Business Week

"The Poverty business" by Brian Grow and Keith Epstein

Amid the furor over subprime mortgages, Business Week dove into the proliferation of subprime credit—the business of extending auto loans, credit cards and other financing to low-income borrowers. A provocative, comprehensive piece.

Fast Company

"Al Gore's \$100 Million Makeover" by Ellen McGirt

Sparkling writing delivers deep reporting on Al Gore's business ascendancy, drilling into a little-known side of Gore that illuminates both his personality and the connections between activism, new media, and investing. Richly detailed storytelling with smart analysis embodies the hallmarks of great magazine writing.

NEWS CONTEST ENTERPRISE

WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

San Francisco Business Times

"The fight of his life: Bay Area tech execs and VCs rally to aid one of their own battling a rare disease" by Ron Leuty

This could have been one of those so-familiar stories: The quick feature about a person fighting a debilitating disease where the principal rationale for publication is that the victim is a prominent (choose one), athlete, politician or businessperson. But this story goes well beyond the usual, showing how the high-tech community mobilized for a well-known executive and raised \$6 million to research new treatments for Creutzfeld-Jakob Disease. The story uses the executive's predicament to explain the rare disease and the current state of research and fund-raising. The writer also reveals, in a sidebar, a personal interest: His mother died of Creutzfeld-Jakob disease.

Street & Smith's SportBusiness Journal

"American invasion: What's driving the gold rush to English soccer?" by Daniel Kaplan and Mark Mensheha

This is an in-depth look at wealthy American businessmen buying up professional English soccer teams. It's an eminently readable look at the surprisingly large amounts of money at stake and the uneasy feelings of Brits who feel clumsy feet trampling one of their most beloved cultural institutions. The presentation is bolstered by numerous graphics and sidebars.

Business Courier of Cincinnati

"Dark side of progress: The transformation of UC has taken more of a financial toll than many in the campus community realize" by Dan Monk and Tom Demeropolous

This is a great example of public service. The story shows that while many are impressed by the \$350 million in improvements made to the University of Cincinnati campus, mismanagement and poor decision-making have crippled the university's finances. The story has full details to support its conclusions.

REAL TIME PUBLICATIONS

MSNBC

"Mortgage mess" by John Schoen

With thorough reporting and clear writing, John Schoen produced an authoritative and comprehensive early warning about what is now known as the mortgage-lending crisis. Schoen used appropriate anecdotes throughout his story to support the longer tale of a financial disaster in the making. Schoen's work demonstrates that deep reporting, coupled with knowledge of the topic, remains the key to producing quality journalism.

Bloomberg News

"Fall of Detroit" by John Lippert

Veteran journalist, and former autoworker, John Lippert produced a fine tale about the decline of the American automobile manufacturer. Lippert stepped back and offered an honest assessment of his own auto plant experiences. His first-person perspective reminded older, and told younger, readers how U.S. carmakers and their workers contributed to the industry's decline. You walk away from the story knowing there were no winners during the waning days of America's industrial age.

TheStreet.com

"Shattered hopes" by Melissa Davis

Melissa Davis uses the compelling story of Randi Reichle-Guyton to illustrate how hundreds of recipients of artificial spinal discs are now suffering with pain and battling the manufacturers for financial relief. In telling the story of Reichle-Guyton, Davis avoids medical jargon. The story works because it is straightforward, compact and easy to read.

SMALL PUBLICATIONS

Arizona Daily Star

"First Magnus: Boom to bust in three weeks" by Becky Pallack

In a year full of impressive coverage of the mortgage crisis, Becky Pallack's story stood out for its clarity and timing. Pallack carefully and compellingly explains the complex issues underlying the crisis long before most readers would have heard of "securitization" and "Alt-A loans," while making clear the issue's importance both locally and nationally. The package was particularly impressive for its being written in just two days.

Corpus Christi Caller-Times

"Is the city growing or stretching?" by Dan Kelley

Using a combination of well-chosen data and strong anecdotes, Dan Kelley challenges the perception that if new homes are being built and bought that the city must be growing. His opening anecdote, about a church that's following its worshipers south, dramatically paints the picture, and Kelley follows up with lucid examples of how the changing city affects residents. Several maps help tell the story without getting bogged down in numbers.

Press-Register

"Several factors are key to deal" by George Talbot

When a major steel-maker announced that Mobile County, Ala., was one of two finalists to be the site of a major new manufacturing plant, George Talbot went beyond the usual guessing game to learn the factors that would truly drive the decision. Talbot draws on recent history and an impressive range of sources to tell the story in a way that remains locally rooted without cheering for the home team. No matter the ultimate outcome, the Press-Register's readers were well equipped to understand the decision and the role their local leaders played in shaping it.

MID-SIZED PUBLICATIONS

The Charlotte Observer

"Is this a conflict?" by Rick Rothacker and David Ingram

With meticulous reporting and analysis, The Observer presented the questions raised by a system that allows the state's treasurer to collect campaign contributions from the very investment firms he will choose between when awarding the state's business. In doing so, the paper raised an important issue for public policymakers and offered citizens relevant insights into a man who is likely to run for governor.

Detroit News

"Inside story" by Sharon Terlep and Bill Vlasic

In Detroit, few business stories last year were more important than the UAW contract negotiations. After agreements were reached with the Big Three auto companies, The News took the initiative to find out what had really happened behind the scenes. The reconstruction of events was told crisply and presented attractively.

New Orleans Times-Picayune

"Same house. Same repairs. Same insurer. Why different prices?" by Rebecca Mowbray

It's hard to find a fresh angle in post-Katrina coverage, but the Times-Picayune did so with this story about differing reimbursement levels for wind and flood damage. The reporting was thorough and the writing made insurance interesting!

LARGE PUBLICATIONS

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

"Bet the farm" by Jeffrey Tomich

A very topical take-out on how the world-wide biofuel boom is playing out in the heartland. The story had lovely details such as farmers pocketing tens of thousands of dollars by investing in ethanol plants and on-the-scene color. Solid graphics and good pictures helped tell the story. And it provided balance by highlighting the downsides of the boom.

San Jose Mercury News

"Harsh side of the boom" by Pete Carey

This story was ahead of the curve in detailing how fraud had permeated the overheated mortgage industry and foretold how the subprime mess would spread around the country. It put real faces on the issue, had the nitty-gritty details that make a story sing and explained the mechanics of the fraudulent lending schemes very well. And it focused on a group of people who often fall below the radar screen - Latinos were lured into mortgages they couldn't afford through abusive "affinity" lending. The deep reporting came with pictures, creative graphics such as actual copies of mortgage contracts and a wonderful tip box for home owners finding themselves in a similar pickle. And the story had impact. The mortgage broker behind the scheme went out of business and consumers flooded help lines listed in the article with calls. A real winner!

The Seattle Times

"China's eco-city" by Kristi Heim

The story was exemplary in using a local angle to tackle a global phenomenon: It highlighted the global environmental fall-out of China's industrial boom as it followed Seattle capital venture capitalist, architects and city planners into the workshop of the world. Good use of graphics with a map pinpointing the country's most polluted cities and charts comparing China's pollution with other major economies. The spread of pictures was excellent, with a shot of two Seattle venture capitalists with a smokestack in the background showing that business pictures do not have to be boring.

GIANT PUBLICATIONS

The New York Times

"A Chinese reformer betrays his cause, and pays" by David Barboza

Barboza took a corruption case--the prosecution and subsequent execution of China's top food and drug official--and produced a narrative that was impossible to put down. The story was timely, coming out amid a flurry of news reports about product safety in China and just three days after the official's execution. Barboza's work is especially enterprising given the many challenges associated with reporting in China. We were also impressed by the touching photographs and sidebar, "For 2 children, ban of a drug came too late," which humanized the local problem of illegal drug production in China.

The New York Times

"Crisis looms in mortgages" by Gretchen Morgenson

This entry was, in the words of one judge, "extraordinarily prescient." Morgenson's clear and confident writing was one of the earliest warnings about the subprime mortgage debacle to come. Though several mortgage lenders had closed by the time Morgenson's column appeared, it took quite a bit of enterprise to connect the dots to Wall Street, the housing market and the entire U.S. economy.

The Wall Street Journal

"Bear CEO's handling of crisis raises issues" by Kate Kelly

This scoop-filled profile of Bear Stearns CEO James Cayne was not only the talk of Wall Street for days after it appeared, but it may also ultimately have cost Cayne his job. The story, put together in a few months, painted a vivid picture of a firm in crisis and the disengaged CEO who may have overstayed his tenure in the top job.

NEWS CONTEST BREAKING NEWS

REAL TIME PUBLICATIONS

Bloomberg News

"Bernanke's world unravels" by Scott Lanman, Brendan Murray, Matthew Brockett, Caroline Salas, Anthony Massucci, Lynn Thomasson and Shannon Harrington
Scott Lanman and Bloomberg reacted first to the news then branched out with regular updates on its impacts and the context, particularly with the "Poole skipped Fed's conference call," and the "Retracted memos, canceled vacations; Fed cut surprises traders," a nice touch to a fairly dry topic that went far beyond the numbers and added a human element. Bloomberg showed its depth with a prescient story the night before the morning of the Fed's surprise rate cut, then orchestrated a crescendo of coverage that put readers inside the story and prepared them for what would follow.

Dow Jones News Service

"DaimlerChrysler stock moves into high gear" by John D. Stoll and Stephen Wisniewski
Dow Jones' report of Chrysler's time on the selling block was a great example of breaking news online: John Stoll was first to report Kerkorian's \$4.5 billion bid; a press release 40 minutes later came for other news outlets. The story was regularly updated with layers of new information, new sources, and lots of detail drilled all the way down to its potential impact on employees. The efforts of Stoll to cultivate a source close to Kerkorian served readers well. He provides proof that shoe leather and persistence pay off when the big story breaks.

WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

Crain's Detroit Business

"Icahn on Lear: company positioned well in industry" by Brent Snively
The reporter showed enterprise in nabbing Icahn for an interview and delivered a well-written story on a tight deadline.

Financial Week

"Credit crunch" by Andrew Osterland, Marine Cole, Matthew Quinn, Nicholas Rummell and Frank Byrt
The package of stories was forward-looking and did a good job explaining a complicated topic.

SMALL PUBLICATIONS

Arizona Daily Star

"First Magnus meltdown" by Jack Gillum, Christie Smythe and David Wichner
Strong package that explained the far-reaching impact caused by the sudden shutdown of a major employer. The stories provided nice detail and background and quoted a broad range of stakeholders and community experts. Good use of info boxes. Excellent front-page treatment breaking down the impact for all the different stakeholders. Good use of wire to illustrate the broader industry context and causes for the mortgage industry meltdown.

Press-Register (Mobile, Ala.)

"Towering triumphs" by Kathy Jumper, George Talbot, Russ Henderson, Sebastian Kitchen, Dan Murtaugh, Kaija Wilkinson and Jeff Amy

Broad far-reaching package on a breaking news topic. Good combination of news and sidebars. The information on the economic incentives provided to the company and the chart comparing them to incentives given to other companies was a wonderful "peeling back the onion" type of story that you don't often see. Smart use of wire to round out the package and illustrate the impact on the community that was not chosen.

The Press Democrat (Santa Rosa, Calif.)

"Hospital closure" by Carol Benfell

An excellent example of aggressive investigative reporting on a story with significant community impact. Strong use of multiple entry points including Q&As, timelines and maps. The story not only breaks important news, it provides broad context explaining the impact of the closure.

MID-SIZED PUBLICATIONS

The Charlotte Observer

"Philip Morris quits North Carolina" by Stella M. Hopkins, Adam Bell, Gail Smith-Arrants, Sharif Durhams, Christopher D. Kirkpatrick, Tommy Tomlinson, Kat Greene, Marion Paynter, Mark Johnson and David Ingram

It's hard to imagine bigger business news than a hometown industry moving overseas - especially when it's a tobacco company in the Carolinas. Philip Morris' decision was a closely guarded secret, so the paper had to marshal resources quickly. And it delivered a clear, comprehensive report, complete with a comparison to the departure of the state's textile and furniture industries years earlier, and the likelihood of the company spinning off its international division.

Commercial Appeal

"Toyota's decision" by Amos Maki

The true test of a breaking news story is whether it beat the competition, and the Commercial Appeal was the only entry in this category to do so. Instead of waiting for Toyota to announce the news, the paper used its sources in the losing cities to find out that the automaker was going to build its new plant in Tupelo, Miss. The judges did find the story a bit hard to dissect, with a roll call of officials who had no information or no comment and a quote from another journalist that didn't explain how he knew what he knew. But a good scoop is a good scoop.

Detroit News

"UAW strike" by Sharon Terlep, Bruce G. Hoffman, Eric Morath, Christine Tierney, Daniel Howes, Louis Aguilar, Nathan Hurst, Brian J. O'Connor, Josee Valcourt and Bill Vlasic

The News could have won three prizes in this contest. (The biz staff had a busy year, with the strike, the sale of Chrysler and the departure of Pfizer.) This one stood out for sheer effort. The paper obviously had a strike plan in place, and it delivered - with a main story, a column, six sidebars, a timeline and some great photography. The report was well-sourced and balanced and demonstrated decades of experience on the beat.

LARGE PUBLICATIONS

Detroit Free Press

"GM/UAW settlement" by Staff

Comprehensive, well organized and pulls no punches. This is high-impact coverage of a story with huge implications for a major company, labor and U.S. manufacturing. The key issue, health care, is explained in strong detail. The story also takes time to address the impact on individual workers, and

the personal stories detailing their doubts, optimism and anxiety make readers feel as if they are at the plant gate, listening to workers as they head in.

Detroit Free Press

"Pfizer breaking news" by Staff

Authoritative coverage in every way. The story excelled in following the potential ripple effects of the news down every conceivable direction, from the governor's office to the shops in Ann Arbor to Pfizer's worldwide reach. After reading the package, you understand the company's motivations, the governor's guilt and the area's angst.

Rocky Mountain News

"Coors-Miller merger" by Roger Fillion, Chris Walsh, David Milstead, Charles Chamberlin, Joyzelle Davis, Rob Reuteman and Jane Hoback

This package hops through all angles of the major beer merger clearly and cleanly. Another major selling point is the effort to spin ahead -- what might the deal mean to everything from jobs, to the brewing process, to Pete Coors, to the impact on major competitor Anheuser-Busch. The two columns add nice perspective, as did the story about the Coors family. The graphic presentation also is a nice plus.

GIANT PUBLICATIONS

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

"Nardelli's departure from Home Depot" by Patti Bond, Robert Luke, Tom Walker, Maria Saporta, Matt Kempner, Marilyn Geewax, Duane D. Stanford

This comprehensive package shows how a metro daily can cover all the national and local angles of a high-profile executive departure. A strong main story and sidebar gave both detail and perspective on the surprise resignation and huge severance package. Other sidebars rounded out the package with a strong profile of new CEO Frank Blake; perspective on the company's lagging stock price; reaction from executive pay critics in Washington; the impact on customers in Home Depot stores; reaction from civic leaders; and quotes from Home Depot founders Bernie Marcus and Arthur Blank. There was something here for every type of reader: investors, shoppers, local residents, business leaders and news junkies.

The Financial Times

"Federal Reserve" by Krishna Guha

Decisions by the Federal Reserve to lower interest rates were front-page news last year as financial markets turned to turmoil amid the subprime meltdown. But the Financial Times' coverage of the Dec. 11 FOMC decision stands out because reporter Krishna Guha both captured the market's reaction and broke significant news that even more extraordinary measures to stem the credit crisis were imminent. He added a companion story explaining the role of the Federal Home Loan Bank system. Both stories stand out for their ability to make complex financial issues understandable to any reader and for going many levels beyond the immediate breaking news.

The Wall Street Journal

"The fall of a Citigroup Prince" by Robin Sidel, Aaron Lucchetti, Monica Langley, Carrick Mollenkamp, David Reilly and David Enrich

Charles Prince's departure from Citigroup provided a great deadline news story. But The Wall Street Journal, after confirming on a Friday evening that he would resign over the weekend, elevated it into a spellbinding saga for Monday morning's paper. Details of his fall from grace and background about the bank's troubles were a perfect blend of analysis and good storytelling. The unique corporate culture of Citigroup and its special place in world finance made this story compelling, necessary and full of immediate impact. It wasn't hard to make this one a winner for Breaking News.

NEWS CONTEST PROJECTS

WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

The Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal

"Operation Reintegration" by Bryant Ruiz Switzky, Katharine Grayson, Nancy Kuehn, Eric Johnson and Dirk DeYoung

If you accept the premise that the purpose of local business papers is to serve local readers, The Minneapolis St. Paul Business Journal accomplished that in spades with its series, Operation Reintegration. The entire country has watched the struggles of Iraq War veterans, but in this series, the paper brought that issue to the Twin Cities, spinning a compelling narrative around the impact the war is having on local businesses and the struggles veterans encountered in returning to their former occupations.

Puget Sound Business Journal

"Industrial land" by Jeanne Lang Jones and Steve Wilhelm

The Puget Sound Business Journal and Steve Wilhelm did exceptional work in their series on Industrial Land. This series took a local industrial land use trend and weaved it into the national storyline on immigration. The reporting hit on all marks as the information was surprising, fresh, had national implications and most of all, was well written.

The St. Louis Business Journal

"Fig" by Christopher Tritto

The St. Louis Business Journal exposed Fig, a local company that had seen incredible growth thanks to its Lipodissolve product, as a dangerous company and investment in 2007. Too often, local papers will turn a blind eye to the warts on local success stories and serve as cheerleaders for those companies. These reports took a problem company to task, and did it effectively. This series served investors, the community and earned the St. Louis Business Journal a SABEW Best in Business award.

REAL TIME PUBLICATIONS

Bloomberg News

"The insurance hoax" by David Dietz, Gary Cohn and Darrell Preston

This was outstanding journalism that stood out through and through. The reporters weaved great anecdotes and in-depth research into a series of well-written articles. This was true "gotcha" journalism that provided a tremendous public service. It was A+ material.

SMALL PUBLICATIONS

The Register-Guard (Eugene, Ore.)

"Big fish in a big pond" by Winston Ross

A fascinating story about the little-known sultan of seafood in the Pacific Northwest. The story introduces us to Frank Dulcich, a man with outsized influence over the prices fishermen get for their catch, the amount and type of fish available in the market, and the cost of fish at the grocery store. The reporter draws on a range of sources to show how Dulcich elbowed aside rivals, business partners and even family members to build an empire spanning fishing boats, processing and distribution. Clear writing, rich anecdotes and deep reporting set the story apart.

Fort Myers News-Press

"Southwest Florida real estate sellers beware" by Richard M. Hogan

An interesting, unique angle on the mortgage meltdown story papers across the country have been covering so aggressively. The story reveals the role of swindlers and con artists in the collapse of real estate prices and rise in foreclosures in southwest Florida. Combining compelling anecdotes and telling data, it shows both the human and economic impact of the crisis sweeping the region and the country. Crisp writing and good pacing keep the reader engaged through a thorough examination of the causes and consequences of events that affect everyone.

Erie Times-News

"Made in Mexico" by James L. Martin

In a major effort, Martin literally follows the outsourcing story to its ultimate destination, the Mexican city where a Scranton company moved its factory. The reporter traveled to Mexico, where he discovered new aspects of the story and deflated some myths of outsourcing. Rather than uneducated peasants working repetitive assembly-line jobs, the reader meets well-trained engineers performing work every bit as sophisticated as their American counterparts. Interviews with those workers and executives of the Scranton company give readers a better understanding of why jobs are leaving town, how the migration of companies affects both the United States and Mexico, and how a city like Scranton can stay competitive in a global economy.

MID-SIZED PUBLICATIONS

The Charlotte Observer

"Sold a Nightmare" by Binyamin Appelbaum, Lisa Hammersly, Ted Mellnik, Peter St. Onge, Stella M. Hopkins, Liz Chandler, Mike Drummond, Pam Kelley, Gary Schwab and Patrick Scott

A terrific series that very early on identified and explored a central part of the lending crisis that we're now involved in. The newspaper's work led to several official investigations. The series, for which reporters knocked on every door in a 400-plus house subdivision built by Beazer Homes, resulted from sound reporting. While the judges would have preferred to see a little more explanation from Beazer Homes and interviews with Beazer mortgage lenders, the series was carried by the power of the central argument – that Beazer built shoddy homes and apparently manipulated applications so that unqualified buyers got stuck with them.

Des Moines Register

"Fueling Iowa's Future" by Lee Rood, Lynn Hicks, Philip Brasher, Paula Lavigne, Jerry Perkins, Perry Beeman, Jon Benedict, Jeff Bruner, Suzanne Behnke and Don Tormey

This series is a comprehensive examination of all angles of the biofuels industry and how it may affect Iowa, good or bad. It is a terrific example of a newspaper that dug in its backyard with a determination and a passion that no one else could. The series had unusual depth, and it described the impact of its findings in a way that anyone could understand. The newspaper should be commended for its engaging presentation, too, as well as the graceful way it incorporated the series into its Web site. For example, the series included an interactive database that provided all the public information available about every biofuels plant in Iowa.

Detroit News

"Death of a Merger" by Christine Tierney and Bill Vlasic

This is a very well written, insider account of how the Daimler-Chrysler merger came undone. It goes on to describe how the dark horse, Cerberus, ended up as the victor for the automaker. The story demonstrated great sourcing and a true sense of storytelling. What's more, the story was published less than a month after the merger. Any newspaper would be proud to publish this story, but it was a story best told by a Detroit newspaper.

LARGE PUBLICATIONS

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

"Chemical fallout" by Susanne Rust, Meg Kissinger and Cary Spivak

This investigative series lifted the curtain on the U.S. government's failure to follow through on a decade-old requirement to screen thousands of potentially harmful chemicals found in everyday products that manufacturers aggressively peddle to consumers. By identifying the growing concern among scientists; the lack of effective labeling standards in the United States; and the tendency of government advisors to lean toward assessments provided by industry researchers, the series also performed an important service for a public unaware of the gravity of the situation. It was written in a highly accessible, illustrative manner that peeled away the complexity of the issue, and resulted in a fresh review by the National Toxicology Program.

Kansas City Star

"Fatal failures" by Mike Casey and Rick Montgomery

In "Fatal Failures," a team of experienced reporters and editors detailed the far-too-frequent failure of airbags to inflate during serious accidents – an important issue that's been largely overlooked. The stories are thoroughly reported and compellingly and judiciously written.

Rocky Mountain News

"Ethanol boom: Kernel to car" by Gargi Chakrabarty

This was a fascinating look at the production of ethanol, from bushels of corn grown on a farm in northeastern Colorado to gallons of ethanol ready for cars at a Denver pump. With greater consumer interest in ethanol and other alternative energy sources, this series of stories did an excellent job of explaining the ethanol boom and its bright prospects for the future as well as laying out the downside risks that could lead to a dot-corn bust.

GIANT PUBLICATIONS

Chicago Tribune

"Hidden hazards" by Patricia Callahan, Maurice Possley, Michael Oneal, Evan Osnos, Ted Gregory and Sam Roe

This series showed strong investigative reporting in the public interest, documenting how children are at risk from unsafe toys and other products all while the federal bureaucracy stands by and does nothing, despite pleas from parents and compelling evidence. The project had four different installments during the year, including looking at the ability of lead-tainted Chinese toys to get into this country despite recalls. It showed true persistence, strong reporting and writing and stayed true to its theme from beginning to end. It is a classic example of a big newspaper using its resources to both be a watchdog and to effect positive change.

The New York Times

"Golden opportunities" by Charles Duhigg

Duhigg produced a compelling series of stories on the exploitation of senior citizens in America that has sparked multiple government investigations and congressional inquiries. His wide-ranging series of stories documented how private companies were buying up nursing homes and turning them into profit centers at the expense of care, how some long-term care insurance has become impossible for policyholders to use, and how companies selling to Medicare charge two or three times more than they do individuals. His work represents relentless digging, review of tens of thousands of records, and excellent storytelling.

The New York Times

"Toxic pipeline" by Walt Bogdanich

Bogdanich's work took him to far corners of the Earth to track down the trail of diethylene glycol, a cheaper and toxic substitute for glycerin used in medicine, which killed more than 100 people in Panama and numerous others around the world. This was highly sophisticated investigative reporting done at home and abroad, filled with jaw-dropping work as he tracked the poison through China, into cough medicine and overseas from there. His reporting led to China banning the product as well as to congressional investigations at home. Bogdanich also tracked fake drugs through Internet pharmacies into the United States. His work, in a three-part series and subsequent stories, is appropriately touted as investigative reporting in the global economy.

NEWS CONTEST COLUMNS

WEEKLY PUBLICATIONS

Kansas City Business Journal

Brian Kaberline

They don't give Brian Kaberline a lot of room for his column, but he makes the most of it with trenchant observations of business and political life in Missouri. The topics range from the serious - the 111-item survey that the Missouri governor puts to Supreme Court nominees - to the even more serious, at least in Kansas City: the recruiting of a Minnesota barbecue restaurant to anchor a downtown revitalization project.

Crain's New York Business

Greg David

Greg David doesn't mince words when going after slipshod journalism, CEOs done in by their own hubris, or crooked politicians and the business executives who look the other way "because they are embarrassed by their own role in the unseemly dealings..."

San Francisco Business Times

Steve Symanovich

Steve Symanovich doesn't use his column to weigh in on the pressing business issues of the Bay Area. He wants you to laugh at the absurdity of work and life, and he succeeds with a skillfully light and economical writing touch.

REAL TIME PUBLICATIONS

MSN Money

Jon Markman

Markman tackles complex topics with clear language and lively writing. He provides reasons why conventional thinking about a cyclical rebound may be a naïve expectation right now. Well written, well researched and well argued, his column is everything a column should be while consistently taking advantage of the interactive nature of the Web. His reporting on how borrowed money was used to borrow more, creating a "liquidity factory," was fascinating - and scary. The judges finished the columns with a new understanding of key issues.

Reuters

James Saft

Ahead of the curve on monetary issues as the subprime crisis morphed into the credit crunch, his column was great beat reporting to show big-picture impact on economy. He is able to bring clarity to some potentially dense issues, such as the implications of banks' reluctance to lend to each other money for any length of time, or the threat of stagflation - which he wrote about in November.

TheStreet.com

Brett Arends

Specializing in mutual funds, Arends does an excellent job of mining regulatory filings to hold fund managers and insiders accountable. He takes on the big guys - Countrywide's leaders and even Warren Buffett - with persuasive, well-reported columns that took a watchdog approach to mutual funds.

SMALL PUBLICATIONS

The Morning Call (Allentown, Penn.)

Gregory Karp

Greg Karp puts a new twist on following the money. Karp cares about saving his readers much-needed cash, and he's showing them how to do it in a well-written column that never strays from its mission. The strong organization, along with bullets and boldface, also make for an attractive presentation. Greg succeeds in part because he avoids a bombastic tone - the major pitfall of columnizing. His readers must know he's out to help them, and that he thinks the way they think about trying to get the most bang for their bucks. In a tough economy, a column like Greg's becomes even more valuable to readers.

The News-Tribune (Tacoma, Wash.)

Dan Voelpel

Dan Voelpel's columns grab you from the first sentence. His voice is intensely local, yet he also remembers to step back and examine the bigger picture. Dan's columns show a zeal for old-style fact-finding, as opposed to relying on generalities (an occupational hazard for columnists). It's also evident that he cares about the economic and social health of the community he's writing about and for. He writes like a stakeholder, not like a marginally interested observer.

Ledger-Enquirer (Columbus, Ga.)

Susan Miller

Susan Miller livens up her excellent small business column with humor. She offers solid and useful advice in a well-written and entertaining package. Susan provides great practical advice for her intended small-business audience. Her writing style is very accessible and she puts a lot of effort into finding appropriate sources, and examples, to illustrate the topics she chooses. When you read Susan, you have no doubt that she understands the challenges small businesses face and that she's there to help.

MID-SIZED PUBLICATIONS

Fort Worth Star-Telegram

Mitchell Schnurman

Tight writing and muckraking skills are an all too rare combination, but Mitchell Schnurman gives readers of the Fort Worth Star Telegram a healthy dose of both. Shovel by shovel he digs up his artifacts carefully and delivers them simply, with enough stink to anger readers, and enough wry wit to please almost any editor. He gave Radio Shack a wonderful beating, and carefully extracted his nuggets on

the insider gas-leasing deals. One extraordinary skill: Criticizing a Bass family member's civic bungling without blowing up his own future. This is a writer who would get hired in an instant, even in a recession. Tremendous insights. Very valuable to the readers and the business community.

Hartford Courant

George Gombossy

Whether it's getting the right discount from BestBuy, or correcting the bills at the local utility, George Gombossy's column alone justifies the price of a subscription to the Hartford Courant. He's a tenacious bulldog performing a valuable public service. And his "Watchdog" columns have quickly lived up to their promise of holding organizations accountable and taking care of those who have been "ripped off, frustrated or caught in the run-around of bureaucratic denial." In an age of transience, he shows us why newspapers profit when they hang onto their most experienced talents.

Las Vegas Sun

Liz Benston

Liz Benston brings wider audiences to the gaming world with her deep reporting and sparkling prose. Saving Harrah's from the wrecking ball. Indian casinos. Cathouse cocktail waitresses. A gaming board seat that "went to the man who was the most experienced person for the job but was also the least political of those running." Even a routine job-promotion press release turns to gold in Bentson's hands. A rare talent brought to what could be a rather mundane news notes blotter on a narrow industry. She really knows Vegas business.

LARGE PUBLICATIONS

The Baltimore Sun

Eileen Ambrose

Ambrose's columns are very reader friendly. For example, she tackles complex tax issues in one entry and breaks them down so they are easy for readers to understand why they are important. She doesn't bog down the reader with too much detail – she uses just enough to tell the story. Effective use of anecdotal leads. While others were still writing about subprime loans, Ambrose found another area that should be of concern: the pitfalls of pay-day loans.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Mary Jo Feldstein

Healthcare writing for the consumer as it should be. Feldstein grabs your interest with the human angle to her stories. Her column about the waitress with cancer who fell victim to a flawed healthcare system was chilling. In another column, she detailed very descriptively the potential conflicts in the medical device business. When she began writing the column last year, she said her mandate was to help readers navigate through the muddled maze of the healthcare system. She has stayed the course.

The Denver Post

Al Lewis

Lewis shows that business writing can be fun and interesting as well as informative. His columns highlight the skill of a great storyteller. They are compelling, entertaining and spicy. Lewis draws the reader into his columns, reserving a seat in the front row for each performance. The writing is clever, witty and visual. He has the tempo and timing of a good comedian. The columns are all tightly written. For better or worse, you get the feeling you really know the people he is writing about.

GIANT PUBLICATIONS

The New York Times

David Leonhardt

The judges appreciated the way David Leonhardt combined intellectual rigor with measured, yet ultimately deeply held, opinions in his columns. He regularly connects the economic dots for readers who don't have the time to do so on their own. And he follows the facts to reach conclusions rather than pushing an agenda with selective use of numbers. Never was the difference on display as much as in his piece on Lou Dobbs. These days, particularly, Leonhardt's approach is refreshing.

The New York Times

Joseph Nocera

You will find no sacred cows grazing in Joseph Nocera's columns. He routinely takes on the giants of American business, and exposes corporate hypocrisy at every step along the way. Last year, for example, he peeled the onion on Apple CEO Steve Jobs' options backdating issues, and Starbucks Chairman Howard Schultz's Hamlet-like conflict between Starbucks' pursuit of global coffee domination and preserving the "soul" of the company. He also plumbed the depths of Bancroft family dysfunction that led to the sale of the venerable Dow Jones & Co. Each was classic Nocera, putting the flesh and blood of human drama on the bones of business coverage.

The Washington Post

Michelle Singletary

Michelle Singletary's work illustrates a range of writing that's both approachable and explanatory. One column that helped a young person sort through choices and what that means to a budget gets close and offers useful information for anyone. Her careful, dogged pursuit of truth is on stage as well. She showed how one man's claims of security and great returns for customers were ether. When she figured out his scheme, she told the tale with a tone of accountability that reminds readers of our public service role. Her coverage of Financial Independence, an unlicensed mortgage firm operating in Maryland, spurred state and federal investigations of the company's founder.

GENERAL EXCELLENCE MAGAZINE

SMALL MAGAZINES

Bloomberg Markets

Bloomberg Markets has all the ingredients: ambitious story selection, global scope, high quality photography and enveloping design. Incisive pieces demonstrated the magazine's range: a smart package on the subprime meltdown was well ahead of the competition on the credit catastrophe, and a story about insurance company ripoffs of consumers, traced to a McKinsey study commissioned by State Farm, showed off its investigative chops.

LARGE MAGAZINES

Fast Company

The measure of a truly compelling magazine is the freshness and originality of its story ideas, and Fast Company is the very essence of those qualities. Its broad, intriguing lineup goes beyond the routine economic cycles of business or investing. Fast Company covers business subjects no one else thought of or had the nerve to do.

GENERAL EXCELLENCE ONLINE

SMALL WEBSITES

Wired.com

At first look, Wired.com is a clean, easy-to-navigate site that gives readers an opportunity to experience their depth of coverage in every topic. The outstanding part of their site is the care and expertise of their copy. Each story is meticulously reported and executed.

Certificate of Merit

Crain's Chicago Business

For its depth in interactive tools, Crain's Chicago Business makes large portions of dense content accessible to everyday Chicago readers. From foreclosure maps to a look at campaign finances, Crain's delivers an in-depth look at Chicago business with a smart and finessed approach.

MID-SIZED WEBSITES

AdAge.com

AdAge.com has a clear understanding of their audience and delivers the content that they would be most interested in. Their multimedia and video highlight the best that their site has to offer without getting distracted by the bells and whistles. Blogs, specifically Campaign Trail, are well written, informative and a must read for anyone in the industry.

Certificate of Merit

Azstarbiz.com, Arizona Daily Star

For their multimedia presentations, specifically the video on gang members getting a second chance, and an audio slideshow on where casino money was going, the Arizona Daily Star does a nice job of bringing their business section to life.

LARGE WEBSITES

MarketWatch

Newsy, with fresh updates on daily stories. The headlines are appealing and informative, and the design is organized and easy to scan, with a clear sense of hierarchy based on news value. Just as important, the site takes full advantage of all Web tools.

The New York Times

A well-organized page that's clean and inviting with good – very good – investor tools. Everything's here: news, tools and commentary/analysis. The channels of content are clear and easy to use. News by industry is a nice feature.

The Wall Street Journal

Borrowing from The Journal's "What's News" format, it's easy to scan, with in-depth markets data and lots of timely posts. It's good to see the most popular posts listed and linked.

GENERAL EXCELLENCE DAILY NEWSPAPERS

BUSINESS WEEKLIES

Advertising Age

The award recognizes this weekly for consistently finding compelling ways into stories about the ads we see every day. It's a must read inside its industry and a lively, fun read even for those outside it. It has all the news on marketing and media, much of it served up in short, easy to read bites. It breaks stories, examines issues other publications overlook and engages throughout with strong writing and an appealing mix of stories and topics. The issues submitted for review included strong pieces on the decline of teen girls' magazines, a critical look at USA Today's vaunted Ad Meter and talent agency William Morris' foray into eco marketing. Columnists and explainers for those in the industry round out the inside pages for an absorbing read cover to cover.

Boston Business Journal

We were impressed by this paper's good mix of lively takes on the week's news and its more ambitious examinations of serious issues, including: "Boston's blue-collar blues," an engaging story in one of the mandatory issues that looked at Boston's changing workforce; a special issue on CEOs that included a piece on why execs at the top are hanging up their hats; a story on hedge fund managers' new focus on mutual funds and a look at the big bust of companies focused on tiny nanotech. One editor's-choice issue highlighted a host of strong pieces: how a doctor shortage could stymie Massachusetts' attempts at health care reform, a feature about the end of TV and radio repair and an interesting and playful way into this year's standard story on local companies' compliance with new proxy rules. That piece included subheads such as "We're not worthy" about local execs who declined parts of their compensation packages and "And if that wasn't enough," detailing seemingly over-the-top perks.

Crain's New York Business

The judges were impressed by the quality of the writing and the depth of the reporting throughout each issue of Crain's New York. Engaging topics and impressive enterprise also distinguished the publication. Snappy, well-written cover stories on a range of subjects were fresh and hard-hitting: a commercial banker shortage; new outsourcing to Bangladesh; a terrific enterprise piece on Richmond Global, a boiler-room operation that bilked would-be investors in foreign exchange futures of more than \$1 million. The design is good, the charts and photos are attractive and simple to understand.

Financial Week

This weekly was chosen for its solid and thorough coverage of the complex corporate finance market and its major players. The publication is an interesting and easy read even for non-financial experts thanks to strong writing, good reporting and solid research, backed up by inviting graphics. Mandatory issues showed the weekly's strengths, with stories on a tax loophole for CFO pay that could send the execs' pay soaring – or invite new legislation to tamp down leaders' compensation; a hard-hitting piece on Citigroup cutting compliance staff just as it expands risky overseas ventures; and a story on the waning golden parachutes. The weekly told of the deterioration in auction-rate securities as the muni bond niche was starting to unravel, well before the virtual collapse that later caught bigger publications' attention.

Triangle Business Journal (Raleigh-Durham, N.C.)

This North Carolina weekly presented a series of strong issues, including one mandatory issue's stories on how proposed changes for Medicare reimbursements could mean millions in lost revenue for local hospitals and an investigation into a seminary student alleged to have bilked investors out of \$12 million. One of the weekly's big projects was particularly impressive in both concept and execution:

"Triangle: 2012," a five-year forecast of how growth could affect the community, including creation of higher-paying jobs, the influx of new residents, increased stress on aging infrastructure and pressure on the school districts.

Certificate of Merit

Mass High Tech

Mass High Tech exemplifies strong coverage of a niche industry that's important to the local economy--technology in New England. It features lively, newsy writing that quickly engages the reader with the point and importance of the stories. Insightful enterprise and analysis pieces focus on the concerns of the target audience and seem to advance the debate over key issues and events. Good design, layout and packaging.

SMALL NEWSPAPERS

Arizona Daily Star

For providing impressive story heft. This paper brought a lot to the table -- it was like the sports team that was the underdog but came out on top. The layout was crisp, clean and lively. It really came through in the coverage that the reporters and editors love what they do. The writing was tight and lively. Also had savvy use of wire copy. Standout coverage included the special section on big employers in the region and the housing market crisis.

The News Tribune (Tacoma WA)

For their innovations in the section and strong coverage of local issues. From their use of blogs on the front page, to the daily Highlights of the Day, this paper is being recognized for its creativity. The quick hit briefs in Highlights were effectively packaged and the real estate section was terrific. The paper showed it puts a premium on business news, with strong enterprise work on stories like the Dec. 23 piece on Russell Investment Group and the Dec. 16 piece on the Wii. The paper also paid a lot of attention to coverage inside the business pages.

The Press Democrat (Santa Rosa, CA)

For exceptional enterprise coverage of the housing market. Their reporting of the real estate debacle in their local area was one of the best we've seen. They provided good context and explanation on why this matters. The judges understood everything they read, even though none of them live on the West Coast. The paper had a good blend of news and features components on how to survive the housing wreck. You can tell they practiced good journalism -- they hit the streets, were well sourced and got the interviews done right. The writing really stood out overall.

Certificates of Merit

The Patriot Ledger (Quincy, MA)

For a strong mix of national and local coverage, and the staff's efforts at enterprise reporting. The writing was super and one of the highlights was the Dec. 15 story on the Boston Celtics.

The Post & Courier (Charleston, SC)

For strong enterprise work. Their story on Charleston RiverDogs co-owner Mike Veeck was one of the standouts. The Monday business tabs also worked well for this paper.

MID-SIZED NEWSPAPERS

The Charlotte Observer

These sections remind us of what Business sections used to be -- before the newspaper industry downturn. For enterprising, hard-hitting coverage and deep perspective on complex issues, most notably foreclosures, CEO compensation and the merger of US Airways and America West Airlines. Overall coverage is wide-ranging, providing thoughtful, sophisticated, credible and well-written reports that consistently offer context, excellent informational graphics and varied storytelling approaches. Great idea to steal: We like The Observer's regular, two-page takeout on a commercial development called "The Next Big Thing."

The Des Moines Register

In a struggling economy, The Register focused strongly, almost obsessively, on jobs -- and this illustrates how it hones in on such a key part of the lives of its readership area. It provided thoughtful, strong enterprise that addressed key concerns of residents ranging from biofuels to a major plant closure to impact on Iowans if a recession hit home. The "Fueling Iowa's Future" series was excellent, including a look at where all the presidential candidates stand on biofuels. Design on this project, and pretty much throughout the entries, shows how important this element is to the editors -- to the great benefit of readers. The Register's assessment of the state's manufacturing climate before a major Maytag plant shut down was smart; so was its profile of several Maytag workers who are rebuilding their lives. Business section offered good mix of local and major wire stories, along with personal finance. Design throughout (and on the biofuels project in particular) showed admirable creativity and effort.

The Detroit News

Providing an excellent business report and consistently authoritative and wide-ranging coverage of key issues in Detroit, The News is an example of a major-city business section doing its best. In the traditional home of the auto industry, it explained that and economic development, both vital topics to its readers. Stories were thorough and well-written, with useful informational graphics, photos, headlines and page design that help readers grasp important, and at times, complex issues. Deep sourcing within the auto industry and other businesses helped reporters break several stories, and blanket coverage of major issues such as the GM-UAW contract reflects excellent advance planning and smart thinking. On the downside, though, was the heavy reliance on anonymous sources. In one day's entry, all four business front stories hung on such.

Grand Rapids Press

One of the smaller newspapers in its circulation category (if not the smallest), The Press provides sound business coverage through an intensely local, freestanding business section. It clearly has made business news a priority and offers smart news and features coverage for the section and A1, including ambitious stories such as "The Battle of Denison Dunes," which addresses a billionaire's proposal to develop a pristine section of Lake Michigan's shoreline. All in all, The Press does not let its size stand in the way of serving its readers.

Seattle Post-Intelligencer

The P-I probably provides the most enterprise among the contest entrants. It offers solid, aggressive local business coverage that's insightful, chatty, useful and, at times, watchdog. Reporters have clearly developed very good sources inside major players such as Boeing, and they're aggressive. Especially noteworthy: the staff's story addressing the ex-port boss' sweetheart deal when he resigned; severe security problems within Boeing's computer systems; and a behind-the-scenes look at how Boeing's 787 Dreamliner was created. Lots of useful graphics, inviting layout and smart stock market report round out the strong coverage.

Certificates of Merit

St. Paul Pioneer Press

The three-part series on a developer's plans for the Ramsey Town Center was excellent, clearly standing above the rest of the Pioneer Press entries. In fact, this story was among the best of all the entries, and it shows how complex but vital stories can be presented in manageable form (and in ever-shrinking newshole) by breaking into parts.

Salt Lake Tribune

The engaging, entertaining -- and serious -- report on the Mystery of Val E. Southwick, who promised 16 percent returns (among other things) to investors and who now is the subject of a multi-agency and multi-state fraud probe, reminds us how strong the investigative capabilities of a business section can (and should) be. We hope The Tribune and other papers take this role very seriously.

LARGE NEWSPAPERS

The Miami Herald

A sense of excitement, delight and surprise must reward the readers of the Miami Herald, which judges deemed far and away the best of the bunch. Its sections showed crisp, design, inviting, consumer-friendly coverage and real intelligence in editing. In an age of cutbacks, Miami clearly still values business news, with eight-page business sections and two pages on the markets. A page of international news was smartly edited to give readers news important to their region from around the world. While tackling serious issues, the section also had a sense of fun and surprise that surely keeps readers coming back for more.

Rocky Mountain News

The Rocky staff gives readers a good selection of local and national news, top-notch graphics and inviting packaging. Standout coverage on the insider trading trial of former Qwest CEO Joe Nacchio and the Whole Foods-Wild Oats merger (Feb. 22) impressed us for approaching the stories creatively and from many angles. Judges liked the Opinion page -- a page of essays, letters to the editor and business theme cartoon.

The Seattle Times

The Seattle Times staff helps readers understand what makes their region tick, though very clear, focused business coverage. Elegantly explained, readable packages on wages in the aerospace industry, home prices and the region's hot jobs impressed us for their thoroughness. The staff focuses on key industries for breaking news and digs deep on the big issues, examining government and economic data for a comprehensive analysis of issues. While focusing on key issues in the region, the section doesn't ignore what's happening in the wider world.

Certificates of Merit

The Indianapolis Star

For its April 15, 2007, "Open for Fraud" examination of mortgage fraud. The staff sorted through a complicated web of mortgage fraud to simply explain to readers how it happened, who the players were and the fallout for investors and homeowners. A sidebar on efforts by the Legislature to combat mortgage fraud gave readers some hope for a way out of this rampant crime.

The Orange County Register

For its early recognition of the problem of sub-prime lending. Its April 16, 2007, "Subprime Shakeup:

What Sank New Century" compellingly examined the rise and tumultuous failure of this sub-prime lender. An Aug. 12, 2007 investigation "Subprime's Ground Zero" showed how the subprime collapse had devastated one largely Hispanic Santa Ana neighborhood." The article presented house-by-house information about prices and mortgage loans, with a particularly effective visual presentation that drove home the points.

Detroit Free Press

For its Sept. 27, 2007 eight-page special section, "A New U.S Auto Industry: Historic Deal keys UAW, GM Survival." We loved a blow-out special section on breaking news.

GIANT NEWSPAPERS

Arizona Republic

The Arizona Republic shows that you don't have to be in one of the country's top metropolitan areas to produce great business journalism. The paper makes effective use of its staff to produce in-depth local and national coverage. Its approach to story selection conveys a strong sense of its social mission: to uncover inequities and expose weak public policymaking.

Los Angeles Times

One of the few papers whose mix of stories revealed a strong commitment to investigative journalism. Its news and feature pieces were consistently well-written and packaged, but its enterprise work was what gave its coverage distinction.

The New York Times

The paper consistently rises above others with its comprehensive coverage of the business world writ large. It offers its readers a steady diet of penetrating stories about the sweeping forces affecting business today, from technological change, to globalization, to an increasingly complex but fragile financial system.

USA Today

The paper makes good use of its tradition of concise but information-laden storytelling to focus on broad socio-economic and demographic trends. It also takes well-calculated risks to highlight offbeat topics that can reveal changes at the margins of our society.

Certificates of Merit

Boston Globe

For its innovative approach to its annual ranking of the state's top public companies, the Globe 100. The paper's decision to transform its annual broadsheet list into a handsomely designed glossy magazine resulted in an appealing and informative reference tool.

The Plain Dealer

For its special tax section, a smart, well-conceptualized approach to an evergreen topic. This year's section was filled with a strong selection of consumer-friendly stories and was engagingly written and presented. Service journalism at its best.



S·A·B·E·W