USHWA seeks entries for media awards

Nov. 23, 2026: The best of harness racing journalism in 2026 will be honored by the U.S. Harness Writers Association with the John Hervey Awards for writing, Sam McKee Award for broadcasting, and George Smallsreed Awards for photography. The deadline for entries in all categories is 5 p.m. (EST) Friday, Dec. 11.

Entries will be accepted for news/commentary writing, feature writing, broadcasting, race photography and feature photography. Entries published or broadcast between Dec. 1, 2025, and Nov. 30, 2026, are eligible. All entries must be in English.

Judges in each category will select a winner and, where appropriate, up to two honorable mentions. There are no entry fees or cash prizes. Winners will be announced in January and recognized at the U.S. Harness Writers Association's annual Dan Patch Awards banquet, presented by Caesars Entertainment, Feb. 21, 2027, at Rosen Shingle Creek in Orlando, Fla.

Photo and written submissions must have appeared in a paid-circulation publication or on the website that is the same-name affiliate of a paid-circulation publication, recognized broadcast news organization, or established industry/news website. Content that appeared on personal websites, message boards or lists, and similar entities is not valid for inclusion in the competition. The final decision on eligibility is in the hands of the Media Awards Committee.

Broadcast entries will be accepted for a feature or live racing segment no longer than 10 minutes. The entry must have appeared on a network television or cable station, recognized news and/or industry website, or have been included in a racetrack's simulcasting presentation. Documentaries or other longform productions are not eligible although one segment, edited only to fit the length limitations of no more than 10 minutes, may be submitted for consideration.

The awards are not open to entries that are fiction, in the form of Q&As, or were prepared for commercial purposes (for advertisements/promo/publicity purposes).

There is a limit of one submission per person per category. A person may enter more than one category, but not with the same submission. An entry may only be submitted in one category and the category must be indicated clearly. The Media Awards Committee, at its discretion, may disqualify an entry at any time in the process, and reserves the right not to bestow an award in a particular category based on the quality and quantity of entries.

All entries must originate with the author/photographer/producer and must include a signed cover letter expressing the wish to enter materials in the contest and granting permission for the materials to be used for promoting the awards in press releases. The letter must also include the following contact information for the writer/photographer/producer: Name, full address, telephone number, and email address. The letter must also include the date that the media organization published/aired the submission and specify the category for which the entry is being submitted. Editors may submit entries provided the cover letter includes contact information for the writer/photographer/producer as well as for the person submitting the entry. All other third-party entries will be rejected.

Written entries must specify the category — news or feature — for consideration. All print entries must include a PDF version or screenshot of the entry as it appeared in print plus a plain text version with no identifying information (bylines, publication name, graphs, photos or other graphic elements).

Broadcast entries must not exceed 10 minutes and must not contain commercials. Each submission – one per person or organization – should have a cover letter. Submissions should be provided via a file-sharing service or link to the entry online.

Photography entries must specify the category for the photo – race or feature – and a PDF version or screenshot of the entry as it appeared in publication or online. Photographs should not be digitally enhanced. Failure to follow these rules will result in disqualification. Photographs should be sent via email.

Entries in all categories should be emailed to ken.weingartner@ustrotting.com.

The decisions of the Media Awards Committee and the judges are final. Questions can be directed to Ken Weingartner, Media Awards Committee chair, at the above email address.