



**best of the west[®]
media awards**

**Honoring Service to the Advertising Industry
and the Community**

AWARDS PHILOSOPHY

While the American Advertising Awards competition honors the best local creative work, and Press Clubs honor excellence in Journalism, the Best of the West Media Awards will honor overall service to the community and the advertising media industry.

Community service and the benefits to those the media serve comprise the major qualifications for Best of the West awards. Sub-categories for many awards will ensure that outlets in different sized markets will compete with those of similar sizes. Awards are presented to honor work and activities from October 1 of the previous year through September 30 of the current year.

Eligibility:

Company Awards will be designated to companies based within the boundaries listed. Companies located outside the boundaries are eligible only if they have a media outlet that focuses on an area within the boundaries (such as a local newspaper, radio station or website devoted to an area within the boundaries) or if they have a local bureau (in the case of radio or television) that exclusively covers an area within the boundaries.

Individual Awards will be designated to individuals who serve an area within the boundaries, regardless of where they are based, as long as that area is their primary responsibility and the distribution occurs within that area.

Student Awards are designated for those outlets or students that cover either their school or a broader area within the competition boundaries. Those outlets (such as school newspapers, radio stations, television stations --other than broadcast television--, internet sites, blogs) do not necessarily have to be sanctioned or approved by the school. Student Awards are intended for those who attend a college or university within the boundary area and the media outlet does not have paid employees (other than those who sell advertising). While advisors may be involved, the majority of day-to-day editorial decisions must be made by students and not advisors.

The term “media outlet” in this competition includes radio stations (online or broadcast) television stations (online, cable or broadcast), newspapers, outdoor companies, magazines, websites, blogs and podcasts. Websites for radio stations, television stations, newspapers or magazines should be entered as a website and are considered separate from the media outlet itself.

Nominating Process:

Nominations may be made by anyone via the AAF Western Region Website: www.WesternRegion.org. Self-nominations will be encouraged. Nominations will include three to five questions about the nominee. Certain categories may allow uploads as examples.

Judging:

Judges will be Radio, Television, Print and Internet Professionals in Markets located throughout the United States, outside of the Western Region. Judges will score each answer on a 1-5 scale. Judging will be completed on-line. After judging, scores will be added to determine finalists and winners.

AWARDS

NEW!

Western Region Summit Award

Overview

The Western Region Summit Award is the highest volunteer honor presented by the American Advertising Federation Western Region. It celebrates individuals whose long-term service, leadership, and dedication have left a lasting mark on the region’s clubs, members, and mission.

Recipients of this award embody the very essence of AAF’s spirit — a lifelong commitment to community, mentorship, and the advancement of the advertising industry through volunteerism.

Purpose

To recognize and honor an individual whose contributions over many years have strengthened the AAF Western Region through sustained leadership, innovation, and service.

Eligibility

Nominees must have:

- A demonstrated history of **volunteer service spanning at least 15 years** within AAF Western Region at the national, regional, district or local level.
- Served in **key leadership or mentorship roles** at the regional, district, or club level.
- Shown an enduring commitment to advancing the mission, values, and growth of AAF Western Region.

Selection Criteria

- **Longevity of Service:** Longevity of involvement in AAF activities and initiatives.
- **Leadership Impact:** Significant contributions to regional programs, governance, or mentorship.
- **Legacy & Influence:** Lasting, measurable impact on clubs or the regional structure.
- **Character & Spirit:** Embodying the collaborative, ethical, and service-driven ideals of AAF.
- Nomination must include responses to the form on aafwesternregion.org/summit-award along with one reference letter from someone other than the person nominating.

Best of the West Media Awards Given to a Company:

1. Television Broadcaster of the Year

The award given to the Western Region television station that provides outstanding service to the community and professionalism in their market area. Three awards will be given based on Nielsen Markets Rankings: Large Market - market designations 1-50; Mid-size Market - market designations 51 – 100 and Small Market – market designations 101+

Award Criteria:

1. Outlet has engaged its local audience to have a positive impact on its community
2. Provides innovation to help grow the advertising or television industry
3. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.

Subcategories:

- 1a. Large Market (Nielsen Markets Ranking 1-50)
- 1b. Mid-Size Market (Nielsen Markets Ranking 51 – 100)
- 1c. Small Market (Nielsen Markets Ranking 101 +)

2. Radio Broadcaster of the Year

The award given to the Western Region radio station that provides outstanding service to a local community and professionalism in their market area. Three awards will be given based on Nielsen Markets Rankings: Large Market - market designations 1-50; Mid-size Market - market designations 51 – 100 and Small Market – market designations 101+

Award Criteria:

- 1. Outlet engaged its local audience to have a positive impact on its community
- 2. Provides innovation to help grow the advertising or radio industry
- 3. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.

Subcategories:

- 2a. Large Market (Nielsen Markets Ranking 1-50)
- 2b. Mid-Size Market (Nielsen Markets Ranking 51 – 100)
- 2c. Small Market (Nielsen Markets Ranking 101 +)

3. Newspaper of the Year

The award given to a Western Region Newspaper that provides outstanding community service and professionalism to its market. Three awards will be given based on circulation: circulation over 200,000, circulation 50,000 to 200,000 and circulation under 50,000.

Award Criteria:

- 1. Provides outstanding coverage of local stories
- 2. Has a positive effect on its community.
- 3. Provides innovation to help grow the advertising or newspaper industry
- 4. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.

Subcategories:

- 3a. Print Circulation 200,000 or more
- 3b. Print Circulation 50,000 – 200,000
- 3c. Print Circulation Under 50,000

4. Outdoor Company of the Year

The award given to the Western Region outdoor company that provides outstanding service to the community and professionalism in their market area. Three awards will be given based on Nielsen Markets Rankings: Large Market - market designations 1-50; Mid-size Market - market designations 51 – 100 and Small Market – market designations 101+

Award Criteria:

- 1. Has a positive effect on its community
- 2. Provides innovation to help grow the advertising or outdoor industry
- 3. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.

Subcategories:

- 4a. Large Market (Nielsen Markets Ranking 1-50)
- 4b. Mid-Size Market (Nielsen Markets Ranking 51 – 100)
- 4c. Small Market (Nielsen Markets Ranking 101 +)

5. Magazine of the Year

The award given to a Western Region Magazine that provides outstanding community service and professionalism to its market.

Award Criteria:

- 1. Provides outstanding coverage of local stories
- 2. Has a positive effect on its market
- 3. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.
- 4. Provides innovation to help grow the advertising or magazine industry

6. Western Region Website of the Year

The award given to a web site which has a focus on a subject of interest to the Western Region and that provides outstanding service and professionalism to the Western Region area or its local market. When judging this category, content will be of a primary concern over design, which will be secondary.

Award Criteria:

- 1. Provides thorough and outstanding coverage to its subject matter.
- 2. Has a positive effect on the Western Region or its local market
- 3. Provides innovation to help grow the industry
- 4. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.

7. Blog/Podcast of the Year

The award given to a Blog or Podcast that is created in the Western Region area or covers issues within the Western Region and that provides outstanding service and professionalism to their market area.

Award Criteria:

- 1. Provides thorough and outstanding coverage to subject matter
- 2. Has a positive effect on the local community
- 3. Provides innovation to help grow the industry
- 4. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.

8. Advertising Agency of the Year

Western Region's Advertising Agency of the Year Award celebrates the agency that has stood out in the past year and risen above the rest in terms of service, creativity, corporate social responsibility, culture, and growth. The agency of the year will represent the best in advertising, marketing, digital marketing, public relations, creative, or all of the above. Three

awards will be given based on agency billing: over \$50 million, \$10 million to \$50 million and under \$10 million

Award Criteria:

1. Stand-out innovation, skill, and creativity
2. Leadership and commitment within the community
3. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.

Subcategories:

- 8a. Over \$50 million in billing
- 8b. \$10 million to \$50 million in billing
- 8c. Under \$10 million in billing

9. Media Agency of the Year

Western Region's Media Agency of the Year Award celebrates the agency that has stood out in the past year and risen above the rest in terms of service, creativity, corporate social responsibility, culture, and growth. Media agencies advise companies on how and where to advertise. Media agencies can include companies that focus on the transaction of media placement (media planning and buying agnostic of channel), as well as, providing unique media channel opportunities for advertisers such as cinema advertising, etc. Three awards will be given based on agency billing: over \$50 million, \$10 million to \$50 million and under \$10 million

Award Criteria:

1. Stand-out innovation, skill, and creativity
2. Leadership and commitment within the community
3. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.

Subcategories:

- 9a. Over \$50 million in billing
- 9b. \$10 million to \$50 million in billing
- 9c. Under \$10 million in billing

10. Governmental Media Outlet of the Year

The award given to a governmental media outlet such as a city cable television station, newsletter, radio station, website, social media, blog or other outlet intended to serve its constituency. Does not include media outlets operated by colleges. Two awards will be given. One for print outlets (print newsletter, magazine) and a second for Electronic (city operated radio/TV stations or internet)

Award Criteria:

1. Provides outstanding quality of coverage of issues, information and/or entertainment to its constituency.
2. Has a positive effect on constituency

Subcategories:

- 10a. Print
- 10b. Radio, TV, Internet

11. Locally produced radio or television show of the Year

The award is given to the producer of a local radio or television program that is either created in the Western Region or covers issues within a market within the Western Region and is broadcast in the Western Region and provides outstanding service and professionalism to the community.

Award Criteria:

1. Provides thorough and outstanding coverage to subject matter
2. Has a positive effect on the local community
3. Involved and benefiting civic and community service.

12. Public Service Campaign or Event of the Year

The award given to a media outlet which creates a public service campaign or event whose goal is to address and/or benefit all or part of a particular market within Western Region in an area of social concern. Agencies and non-profits are not eligible for this award.

Award Criteria:

1. Provides thorough and outstanding coverage to subject matter
2. Has a positive effect on the local community
3. Contributes to the greater understanding or solving of an area of social concern.

13. Best Coverage of a local news story of the Year

The award will be given to a media outlet for outstanding coverage of a local news story. The coverage may have been for a one time report or a series of reports for one story.

Award Criteria:

1. Provides thorough and outstanding coverage to subject matter.

Awards given to an Individual:

14. Media Professional of the Year

The award given to an individual from a Western Region media organization that provides outstanding service and professionalism to their market area, beyond the normal requirements of the position. Not open to on-air talent, reporters, columnists, bloggers, podcasters or photographers. Open to professionals from Media outside of the Western Region if the nominee covers the Western Region full time and is based in the market area.

Award Criteria:

1. Display integrity and character that is recognized throughout the industry
2. Provide service to professional organizations benefiting a market within Western Region
3. Maintain a high level of performance with a focus on outcomes that are recognizable benefits to the industry.
4. Works to benefit the community in ways not required for his/her position.

15. Media Talent of the Year

The award given to an on-air talent, reporter, columnist, blogger, podcaster or photographer from a Western Region media organization that provides outstanding service and professionalism to their market area, beyond the normal requirements of the position. Also open to talent from Media outside of Western Region if the nominee covers a market within the Western Region full time and is based within the Western Region.

Award Criteria:

1. Display integrity and character that is recognized throughout the industry
2. Provide service to professional organizations benefiting a market within Western Region
3. Maintain a high level of performance with a focus on outcomes that are recognizable benefits to the industry.
4. Works to benefit the community in ways not required for his/her position.

16. Agency Professional of the Year

The award given to an individual from the Western Region who works in advertising, marketing or public relations who provides outstanding service and professionalism to their market, beyond the normal requirements of the position.

Award Criteria:

1. Display integrity and character that is recognized throughout the industry
2. Provide service to professional organizations benefiting a market within the Western Region
3. Maintain a high level of performance with a focus on outcomes that are recognizable benefits to the industry
4. Works to benefit the community in ways not required for his/her position.

17. Young Achiever Award

The award given to an individual from a Western Region media outlet, agency or freelancer that

provides outstanding service and professionalism to their market beyond the normal requirements of the position.

Award Criteria:

1. Candidate must be between 18 and 32 years of age;
2. Candidate must have demonstrated outstanding success in their position.
3. Candidate must have also made a significant contribution in the form of service to the community.

Student Awards:

18. Best college Media Outlet of the Year (Radio, TV or Newspaper)

This award is presented to a college radio station, newspaper, television station (non-broadcast) or magazine that is run primarily by students who also make most day-to-day editorial decisions. Media outlets may or may not be sanctioned by the school and may either cover campus or off-campus stories.

Award Criteria:

1. Stand-out innovation, skill, and creativity
2. Leadership and commitment within the campus or for the audience

19. Best college Web Site/Blog of the Year

This award is presented to a college website, blog or podcast that is run primarily by students who also make most day-to-day editorial decisions. Media outlets may or may not be sanctioned by the school and may either cover campus or off-campus stories.

Award Criteria:

1. Stand-out innovation, skill, and creativity
2. Leadership and commitment within the campus or for the audience

20. Best Student Media Representative of the Year

This award is presented to a person who works on a college radio station, television station, magazine, website, blog or podcast that is run primarily by students who also make most day-to-day editorial decisions although the individual does not have to be a decision-maker. The award given to an individual who provides outstanding service to the school and community beyond the normal requirements of the position. Media outlets may or may not be sanctioned by the school and may either cover campus or off-campus stories.

Award Criteria:

1. Display integrity and character
2. Provide service to the school and/or community
3. Maintain a high level of performance with a focus on outcomes that are recognizable benefits to the media outlet

BOWMA Schedule:

Nominations Open: **April 6, 2026**

Nominations Deadline: **June 30, 2026**

Judging Period: **July 11-August 15, 2026**

Announcement of Winners: **September 26, 2026 at the AdWest Conference in LA**

Entry Fees:

Company & Individual Entry:

- Early Bird Price (through Oct. 15) **\$45**
- Regular Price **\$55**

Student Entry:

- Early Bird Price (through Oct. 15) **\$35**
- Regular Price **\$45**

Awards Boundaries:

The Award boundaries will mirror the American Advertising Federation Western Region boundaries which includes the states of Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming and the El Paso market area of Texas.