



PRESS RELEASE—May 14, 2025, at 9 p.m. Eastern Daylight Savings Time

For more information contact:

Teri Ehresman, NFPW contest director, islandpark723@gmail.com

Michael Westbrook, Bryant High School, mwestbrook@bryantschools.org

Arkansas students win top national award

PURCELLVILLE, VA – Students from Bryant High School in Bryant, Arkansas won top honors in the 2025 National Federation of Press Women's annual high school communications contest.

The school's Hornet Media Staff's Hornet News Now Episode 3, which aired Nov. 20, 2024, has been named the Julie Hoffman Memorial Best of the Best award winner, the top award given in the national high school communications contest.

Hornet News Now is one of two news shows produced by the Hornet Media students at Bryant High School. The show provides a variety of storytelling opportunities for students by including news packages, features, sports updates and weather reports just like you would see in a local television market. The show is produced by 20 students in the advanced television production program. This is the fourth season of HNN since the inspection of the Hornet Media program during the 2021-2022 school year.

Advisor for the program, Michael Westbrook, said "The Hornet Media students understand that to contribute to this program they have a responsibility to tell the stories of others on our campus. That one simple fact has always been our priority and they have done a phenomenal job this year to achieve that goal. I'm proud of the work ethic, dedication to excellence and great attitudes this group of students came to school with every day to produce a newscast worthy of recognition on a national level."

Mady Calhoun, Bryant High School junior and one of the program producers, says, "We are honored to be recognized as the best of the best from the National Federation of Press Women. Our group has worked hard this year to be accurate in our storytelling and technical aspects of producing shows. On behalf of our Hornet Media staff thank you for this recognition." The program has also been recognized within Arkansas where

Hornet Media students won three of the prestigious Arkansas Scholastic Press Association Of the Year entries. Calhoun was named Producer of the Year, Senior Chelsea Jensen won Journalist of the Year and Senior Riley Forte earned On-Air Talent of the Year.

The entry competed against nearly 2,000 student entries in this national contest sponsored by the NFPW Education Fund. Student entries first competed in a state-wide communication contest. First-place winners were selected to advance to the national round of competition. In states where a contest was not offered, NFPW hosted an at-large contest with the first-place winners also advancing to the national competition. The first-place winning entries all 23 categories in the contest then are judged by new judges who selected the Bryant High School entry as the “Best of the Best” entry.

This is the second time an Arkansas school has won the Best of the Best award. In 2022, Claire Hudnell, Lakeside High School, Hot Springs, Arkansas, won the award for a video feature story she wrote and produced “Vision Interrupted” about a student with vision issues.

National first place winning entries receive a \$100 prize, and the Best of the Best award prize is \$500.