Aggie student broadcasters continue winning tradition in SPJ competition

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Broadcast student Zachary Aedo conducts a traveling interview with Brent Carpenter, also known as ‘Bicycle Brent,’ whose friendly wave and honk has become a familiar sight in the street of Logan. The feature won Aedo a first-place award for Television Feature Reporting in the regional competition sponsored by the Society of Professional Journalists. This portion of the video was shot by broadcast associate professor Brian Champagne from a car window. “It was all Zach’s idea,” said Champagne.

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Utah State University’s Journalism and Communication broadcast students were recognized for their excellent reporting by the Society of Professional Journalists, continuing a tradition of award-winning work by student broadcasters in the Department of Journalism and Communication.

The national organization sponsors the annual Mark of Excellence Awards that draws in universities across the nation. USU competes in a region made up of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Competitors within Utah itself include the University of Utah and Brigham Young University. National awards will be announced later this spring.

Broadcast news and feature journalists’ work was especially strongly, sweeping the category of Television In-depth Reporting. The staff of Cache Rendezvous was top in Best All-Around Television News Magazine category, winning for the episode titled “The Last Spike.”

Among their proudest advocates is Brian Champagne, a JCOM associate professor of professional practice. “It’s great to see the students getting recognition for their hard work,” he said. The students, he added, undertook “hours of research, planning, shooting, and editing.”

Broadcast students also rely on Christopher Garff, a professional practice assistant professor who teaches video and broadcast news, as well as multi-media courses. He advises A-TV News, the student-run weekly news report.

The young broadcaster who took many of the awards was Zachary Aedo. He graduated in 2019 and is now a news anchor and reporter for Colorado Springs’ KRDO TV station.

Unfortunately, this year’s awards came in the form of printed certificates sent via the U.S. Postal Service, unlike the awards ceremonies of past years.

Aggie award winners in television broadcasting were:

Television In-Depth Reporting
Winner: “Railroad’s Impact on Agriculture,” Corryn La Rue and Christy Achen
Finalist: “Railroad’s Impact on Archaeology,” Zachary Aedo
Finalist: “Railroad’s Impact on Utah,” Zachary Aedo

Television Breaking News Reporting
Winner: “Campus Gas Leak,” Zachary Aedo

Television General News Reporting
Finalist: “ROTC-AF 24-Hour Veterans Day Vigil,” by Brandon Dean and Kendall Douglass
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**Television Feature Reporting**
Winner: “Bicycle Brent,” Zachary Aedo  
Finalist: “Choosing a Christmas Tree,” Austin Elder

**Best All-Around Television News Magazine**
Winner: “The Last Spike,” staff of Cache Rendezvous

**Broadcast News Videography**
Winner: “Bike Park Opens,” Brandon Dean  
Finalist: “Saving a Granary,” Shae Densley

**Broadcast Feature Videography**
Finalist: “Healing on Horseback,” Shae Densley

**Television Sports Reporting**
Winner: “Trash Car Racing,” Adam Larson  
Finalist: “Street Snowboarding,” McKay Jensen

**Magazine**
Finalist: “Putting Portugal Basketball on the Map,” by Sydney Kidd

See the award-winning video on Logan’s ‘Bicycle Brent.’

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