

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Cara Neil

Email: caran@pa-news.org

Phone: (717) 703-3071

**Kyleigh Balint of Sullivan County High School Wins
PNA, AT&T It Can Wait Editorial Contest**

HARRISBURG, Pa., March 7, 2016 – Kyleigh Balint, a sophomore at Sullivan County High School, Laporte, is the 2016 winner of the Pennsylvania NewsMedia Association Foundation’s It Can Wait editorial contest.

Balint receives a \$500 cash prize to be awarded on April 6, in conjunction with the PNA Foundation’s Student Keystone Press Awards luncheon during the America East Media Business and Technology Conference in Hershey, Pa.

Since 2015, the PNA Foundation, along with PNA and PNA member newspapers, has partnered with AT&T to host an “It Can Wait” editorial contest to raise awareness about the dangers of distracted driving. This year, high school students were asked to write a column or editorial that best answers the question, "Why is it important to take the It Can Wait pledge to keep your eyes on the road, not on your phone?"

Beginning last fall, PNA member newspapers hosted local contests and encouraged high school students to help to make our roadways safer for Pennsylvanians. A winner was recognized in each community and entered into the statewide contest. Kyleigh Balint was recognized by *The Sullivan Review*, Dushore.

In selecting Balint as the Pennsylvania winner, judges commented that, “Kyleigh’s essay grabbed the reader right from the start, with her powerful descriptions of an accident scene caused by a careless text. She brought home the life-altering consequences of distracted driving in a way that makes you want to share her essay with others (not just teens) and definitely take the pledge.”

Distracted driving is involved in more than 200,000 vehicle crashes each year, often involving injuries and death. Despite knowing the risks, seven in 10 drivers engage in smart phone activity while driving, and four in 10 teens admit to social networking while driving.

“It Can Wait” is a national movement urging drivers to visit www.ItCanWait.com, where they can pledge to keep their eyes on the road, not on their phone, and share their pledges via Twitter (#ItCanWait) and Facebook. Since its launch in 2010, the campaign has helped increase awareness of the dangers of texting while driving to about 90 percent for all audiences surveyed and inspired more than 7.2 million pledges not to text and drive.

The PNA, founded in 1925, is the nonprofit trade association for print and digital media in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Its mission is to advance the business interests of Pennsylvania news media companies and to promote a free and independent press. It has more than 300 newspaper and media members, including daily, weekly, and college newspapers and online publications.

###