RMAIR Best Paper/Presentation
Proposal adopted May 2, 2013

RMAIR has a best paper award that includes an award of $500 to assist in funding registration costs and attendance at the AIR annual conference (the Forum) session for Best Paper Award from RMAIR. The RMAIR Executive Board is providing two awards of $250, one for Best Paper and one for Best Presentation. The best paper should be awarded to an actual paper that has been prepared by the author(s) to present to the membership and that could be, in theory, published at a later date. If there are no papers to choose from, a Best Presentation can be substituted for Best Paper Award and the full amount of $500 will be sent to the winning presenter’s organization to be used in subsidizing the costs associated with presenting at the AIR Forum. The evaluation for best paper and best presentation should be made within 30 days of the end of the RMAIR annual conference

Best Paper Award

Papers are intended to promote scholarship and advance research into different areas that benefit not only the regional organization but also the entire field of institutional research. Any type of scholarly research methodology (e.g., quantitative, qualitative, or normative) appropriate to the research question can be used in papers that are presented. Top level research should be represented at the annual AIR Forum to show the best that RMAIR has to offer and to provide the author(s) an opportunity to be published in the conference forum journal as well as an opportunity to win Best Paper at AIR. To be considered for Best Paper, the authors should submit their papers electronically to the Program Chair for the RMAIR conference after the
proposal has been accepted and before the conference ends. The responsibility is upon the presenters to provide an electronic copy of their papers in a format that can be opened by the reviewer. If the presenters fail to do this, they will not be considered for the award.

As a guide for the Best Paper Award, the Charles F. Elton Best Paper Rating Rubric currently used by the Association for Institutional Research can be referenced and used at the discretion by Best Paper evaluators and the Program Chair. The Program Chair and evaluators should develop agree on alternative standards for the evaluation of papers rooted in scholarly disciplines for which the rubric is not appropriate (e.g., philosophy, digital humanities, business). The Program Chair should recruit two volunteers who have experience reviewing papers and have not submitted a paper for the award. The Program Chair and the two volunteers will critique each paper submitted on the following criteria:

1) **Originality and Innovation** – Does the research add knowledge to the field of Institutional Research or Strategic Planning?

2) **Methodology** – Is the author’s methodology sound and appropriate to the research aims? Are there innovative areas or weaknesses in the methodology? Both quantitative and qualitative research papers should be considered equally.

3) **Flow** - Is the paper well written? Does the paper read well? Is the paper too lengthy or too short?

4) **Completeness** – Did the paper address the basic research question? Does the paper have an introduction, literature review (not always required), methodology, results and conclusion sections? Alternatively, is the paper in keeping with the character of scholarly
research in the discipline(s) in which it is rooted? Should there be another section in the paper? Was the paper confusing and not informative?

5) Is this the best paper that RMAIR has to offer for this current year?

**Best Presentation Award**

To be eligible for the Best Presentation Award, the presenters must submit their presentations electronically to the Program Chair before the end of the conference. Even for live demonstrations, an electronic version of the presentation should be submitted for consideration to the Program Chair. Program Chair should use the electronic submissions as well as the session evaluation forms to determine a Best Presentation Award. The responsibility is upon the presenters to provide an electronic copy of their presentation in a format that can be opened by the reviewer. If presenters fail to do this, they will not be considered for the award.

The Program Chair along with two volunteers (chosen by the Program Chair) will critique each presentation submitted on the following criteria:

1) **Originality and Innovation** – Does the research add knowledge to the field of Institutional Research or Strategic Planning?

2) **Type of presentation or demonstration** – Was the type of presentation effective and appropriate in conveying what the presentation was supposed to cover?

3) **Application** – Can this presentation be used anywhere else in the field of Institutional Research or Strategic Planning?

4) **Presentation Style** – Did the presenters communicate effectively with the audience? Were the questions answered that were asked by the audience?
5) **Audio-Visual** – Was the presentation easy to understand? Did the electronic media present the information in a usable fashion?

6) **Effective Use of Time** – Did the presentation utilize the time effectively? Did the presentation run too long or too short?

If the presenter for the Best Presentation Award is unable to attend the AIR conference, then the Best Paper Award will receive the entire $500. If neither award winner will be able to attend then the runner up contender in each category can be awarded the monetary amounts at the discretion of the Program Chair.

The Best Paper Award is where all of the other members of AIR see what type of professionalism that RMAIR has to offer. This should be reflected when a presenter for Best Paper Award attends the conference.

These guidelines will be reviewed at the same time as the Rocky Mountain Association for Institutional Research (RMAIR) Bylaws by the Executive Committee.