



**For Immediate Release**  
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**Media Contact: J.D. Hutton, Artist Services & Communications Manager: 1.800.341.4067; 402.595.2142; email: [jayne.hutton@nebraska.gov](mailto:jayne.hutton@nebraska.gov); Media contact for Poetry Out Loud: Anne Alston, Education and Communities Manager: email: [anne.alston@nebraska.gov](mailto:anne.alston@nebraska.gov)**

## **HEBRON STUDENT IS 2012 NEBRASKA POETRY OUT LOUD STATE CHAMPION**

(Omaha, NE) -- A high school senior from Hebron, Russell Heitmann, won the Nebraska Poetry Out Loud state championship on Saturday, March 10th at the Sheldon Museum of Art in Lincoln. Students from eleven high schools competed in the poetry recitation event after advancing from regional semi-final competitions held in Kearney, Norfolk and Omaha during February.

The Nebraska Arts Council coordinates Poetry Out Loud for the state. It is part of a national program, presented in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, that encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance, and competition.

Russell Heitmann, a junior at Thayer Central Community Schools in Hebron, won the state championship. His recitations of "Poem with One Fact" by Donald Hall, "Dover Beach" by Matthew Arnold and "Broken Promises" by David Kirby earned him the first place title this year.

Russell will receive a \$200 cash award, as well as an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C. There, he will compete in the national Poetry Out Loud competition to be held May 13-15, 2012 for prizes and awards totaling \$50,000. His school will also receive \$500 to be used toward the purchase of poetry books for its library. English teachers Karen Boatright and Anne Roesner Heitmann coordinate Poetry Out for Thayer Central Community Schools.

Carleigh Schuman, a junior at Parkview Christian School in Lincoln, placed second in the competition. She wins a \$100 cash award, as well as \$200 for her school's library to be used toward the purchase of poetry books. Carleigh's English teacher, Dottie Lamson, coordinates the program for her school.

Sophomore Grace Eliason from Skutt Catholic High School in Omaha placed third in the competition. Her school's program is coordinated by English teacher Sherri Hoye.

The top three contestants each received an original hand-blown glass trophy, and all eleven students received poetry books courtesy of the Backwaters Press and the University of Nebraska Press, as well as Barnes and Noble gift certificates courtesy of Nebraskans for the Arts.

Judges for the event include Jim Fritzier, Professor of Theatre at Hastings College, poet Twyla Hansen of Lincoln, Tricia Parker, Director of Language Arts for the Nebraska Department of Education in Lincoln and actor D. Kevin Williams of Omaha. Marjorie Maas, Director of Nebraskans for the Arts, served as accuracy judge. The event was emceed by poet Matt Mason of Omaha.

For more information on Nebraska's Poetry Out Loud program, contact Anne Alston, Education and Communities manager at the Nebraska Arts Council. Call 402/595-2122 or email [anne.alston@nebraska.gov](mailto:anne.alston@nebraska.gov).

*Masthead Image: From left to right: Grace Eliason, 3rd Place; Russel Heitmann, State Champion; and Carleigh Schuman, 2nd Place. Photo credit: Star City Photography*

*Digital images for many NAC announcements are available to the media. To obtain images, please contact Anne Alston. Contact information is listed at the top of this news release.*

**About the Nebraska Arts Council:**

The Nebraska Arts Council, a state agency, provides numerous grants, services and special initiatives that help sustain and promote the arts throughout Nebraska. The NAC is supported by the Nebraska Legislature, the National Endowment for the Arts and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment.

**Nebraska Arts Council**  
1004 Farnam Street | Omaha, NE 68102  
Contact us: [nebraskaartscouncil.org](http://nebraskaartscouncil.org)