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N E W S R E L E A S E

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Teachers statewide chosen for 12th Capitol Forum

Twenty-seven high school teachers from schools across the state have been chosen to participate in the 12th annual Nebraska Capitol Forum on America's Future. Through Capitol Forum, social studies and government teachers and their students will engage in discussion of our nation's future in a changing international environment.

A program of the Choices for the 21st Century Project of Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies, Capitol Forum seeks to develop a foundation for long-term civic engagement by giving students a voice in public consideration of current issues. Students study and discuss various positions on global concerns to better understand options and their consequences. Global issues to be discussed include terrorism, nuclear weapon proliferation, immigration, trade and the global economy, and environmental concerns.

Selected teachers represent rural, urban, public and private schools. Schools and teachers chosen for the 12th Capitol Forum are: Ashland-Greenwood High School (Brian Petermann); West Holt High School, Atkinson (Chris Nemetz); Auburn High School (Bryce Roth); Bellevue West High School (Robin Kratina and Mike McLaughlin); Centura High School, Cairo (George Lytle); Crawford High School (Mary Gould-Traphagan); Dodge Public Schools (Mitch Hoffer); Falls City High School (Lori Rech); Twin River High School, Genoa (Ryan Sidwell); Grand Island Senior High School (Tamara Bailey); Hampton High School (Patrick Alexander); Cedar Catholic High School, Hartington (Audrey Freeman); Hastings High School (Robert Kerr); Hemingford High School (Dave Chatelain); Holdrege High School (Chad Bailey); Howells High School (Scott Polacek); Lincoln North Star High School (Jace Ahlberg); Pius X High School, Lincoln (Tom Seib); Millard West High School (Tim Royers); Norfolk Senior High School (Katherine Steinkamp); North Platte High School (N. Dennis Fornander); Duchesne Academy, Omaha (Heidi Reinhart); Rising City High School (Nonie Hrabik); Platteview High School, Springfield (Jon Comine); Sterling High School (Arlo Wusk); and Wilcox-Hildreth High School (Ken Meyers).

Eight of the teachers and four of the schools are new to the program this year. Robin Kratina of Bellevue West and Dennis Fornander of North Platte will participate as lead teachers. Together, they have 13 years of combined Capitol Forum experience.

On Aug. 3, the teachers gathered at the Strategic Air and Space Museum near Ashland to discuss Capitol Forum curriculum, teaching strategies, and approaches to teaching the history of genocide. Guest speaker Moshe Gershovich, professor of history at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, led a discussion on how to define genocide, categories of people involved, and reasons for studying and caring about the history of genocide.

When school begins this fall, students will study and discuss Capitol Forum issues in preparation for a March 29 visit to the State Capitol, where class representatives will report and deliberate on the international concerns of their classmates and have opportunities to question members of Nebraska's congressional delegation about global issues and foreign policy.

The Nebraska Humanities Council presents Capitol Forum in collaboration with the office of Secretary of State John Gale and with funding support from the Duncan Family Trust, "We the People" initiative of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and private donations.