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N E W S R E L E A S E

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NET Radio and TV wins 2008 Sower Award

LINCOLN—The Nebraska Humanities Council (NHC) announced today that Nebraska Educational Telecommunications (NET) will receive its 2008 Sower Award in the Humanities.

NET will be honored Sept. 18 at the Lied Center for Performing Arts in Lincoln, in conjunction with the 13th Annual Governor's Lecture in the Humanities. David Gergen, editor-at-large at U.S. News & World Report, a popular political commentator, professor of public service at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and director of its Center for Public Leadership, will deliver the lecture, entitled "Eyewitness to Power: The Essence of Leadership."

"NET has been a strong friend of the Nebraska Humanities Council and of humanities education in general," Keith Blackledge wrote in nominating the statewide public radio and TV network. "It is committed to cultivating an understanding of our history and culture by reaching into people's homes and cars, kitchens and barns with stories that help listeners and viewers consider what it means to be a Nebraskan and to connect them with our national cultural heritage."

NET Radio maintains a "Humanities Desk," which regularly produces humanities features that air throughout the week. Previously, NET produced an hour-long humanities series called "Connections," which brought NHC programs to a statewide listening audience. NET also maintains an online archive of humanities programs.

The popular weekly series, "Friday Live" often includes humanities content from broadcast sites as diverse as the Neihardt Center in Bancroft, the Stuhr Museum in Grand Island, the Joslyn Art Museum in Omaha, a Chautauqua tent in Alliance and the program's original headquarters in a coffee shop in Lincoln's Haymarket District.

"From its earliest days, NET Television (previously Nebraska ETV) has made significant contributions to the humanities both in Nebraska and nationally," Blackledge wrote. Recent programs that received NHC support include "Afghan Journey," "Hard Times Swing," and nationally aired programs such as "Willa Cather: The Road is All," which received major support from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In earlier decades NET produced hundreds of hours of educational programming for students of all ages. Now, NET's interactive Nebraska Studies website attracts several hundred thousand users a year and is a unique resource that allows users to view authentic images and videos that bring Nebraska's history to life.

The Nebraska Humanities Council annually honors individuals, institutions, businesses and communities with Sower Awards for contributions to public understanding of the humanities in Nebraska, based on nominations and letters of support from the citizens of Nebraska. The Sower Award is an original bronze sculpture by Nebraska-born artist Sandra Dunn Mahoney.

Presented by the Nebraska Humanities Council, the E.N. Thompson Forum on World Issues and the University of Nebraska, the Sept. 18 evening lecture is free and open to the public.

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