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SIOUX FALLS SENIOR WINS POL, ON TO NATIONALS

PIERRE, S.D. – Maddie Lukomski, a senior at Lincoln High School, won the state Poetry Out Loud (POL) competition, March 21, in Sioux Falls. Lukomski will travel to Washington, D.C., to represent South Dakota at the Poetry Out Loud National Finals May 2-4, where she will compete for a \$20,000 top-prize.

In addition to the trip to the National Finals, Lukomski also won a \$200 cash award, a \$250 Barnes & Noble gift card, a poetry anthology; and her school will receive \$500 to be used for poetry books.

Eight students from high schools across South Dakota competed for the title. Second place in the competition went to Miliyna Megosha, Washington High School, Sioux Falls. Megosha was awarded \$100 cash, a \$150 Barnes & Noble gift card, a poetry anthology, and her school will receive \$300 for the purchase of poetry books. The following students received poetry anthologies for qualifying as state finalists, but the remaining scores were not ranked: Marie McLaughlin, Greater Sioux Falls Homeschool Association; Gabe Pulliam-Sanchez, Little Wound High School, Kyle; Brianna Anderson, Rosholt High School; Mary Albright, Sisseton High School; Natalie Swanson, Vermillion High School; and Brett Ries, Watertown High School.

Anna Koeppel, Rosholt; Libby Murphy, Sioux Falls Lincoln, and Meredith Erickson, Watertown, were awarded for their original poems in a separate component of the competition. Each received \$100.

Two teachers were also awarded for their efforts in and out of the classroom as Poetry Out Loud coaches. Kim Davidson, Rosholt High School, and Daniel Snethen, Little Wound High School, each received \$200 awards.

Poetry Out Loud is a recitation program and competition that urges the teaching of poetry as an oral art form in high schools. Schools that participate in Poetry Out Loud enter students into a preliminary round, from which the state finalists are chosen. Poetry Out Loud was created in partnership by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Poetry Foundation, with the collaboration of State Arts Agencies. Through Poetry Out Loud, students master public-speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.

In South Dakota, POL is a program administered by the South Dakota Arts Council, an office of the state Department of Tourism, in partnership with Arts South Dakota and South Dakota Public Broadcasting.