

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 5, 2014
Contact: Jeff Morgan, 515-281-3858

67 Iowa students win top honors at state history competition

Students advance to National History Day National Finals next month in Maryland

(Note to Media: This year's [list of state winners and photos](#) of national qualifiers and alternates with Gov. Terry E. Branstad.)

DES MOINES – Sixty-seven Iowa students took top honors in the State Historical Society of Iowa's (SHSI) National History Day (NHD) in Iowa State Contest Monday and advanced to the 2015 Kenneth E. Behring National History Day Contest National Finals in Maryland next month. SHSI is a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

National History Day is an academic enrichment program that helps students learn about historical issues, ideas, people and events. Comparable to a massive statewide science fair, the year-long academic adventure fosters students' enthusiasm for learning and encourages them to use primary, secondary, community and statewide resources on a subject of their choice related to an annual theme. The theme for 2015 is "Leadership and Legacy in History."

"The National History Day in Iowa program is a critical asset teachers use to engage students in learning opportunities that extend beyond the classroom," SHSI Administrator Susan Kloewer. "Not only does the program allow students to research and explore the past, it develops and refines skills that are essential for success throughout their entire learning careers. We congratulate all of the students for their participation and their teachers and parents for their support."

Each year, about 3,500 students compete in NHD in Iowa competitions at school and district levels to advance to the state contest. This year's 67 state winners emerged from a field of more than 700 state competitors representing 110 schools in the NHD in Iowa Junior Division (grades 6-8) and Senior Division (grades 9-12). Students in grades 4-5 participated in a non-competitive Youth Division.

State winners from the Junior and Senior divisions will next compete at the NHD National Finals at the University of Maryland June 14-18, 2015, against nearly 3,000 students from across the United States, Guam, American Samoa, Department of Defense Schools in Europe, and international schools in China, Korea and South Asia for \$50,000 in scholarships and prizes.

The NHD program serves as a vehicle to teach students important literacy skills and to engage them in the use and understanding of museum and library resources. Students work individually or collaboratively in groups of two to five to compete in a variety of categories, including historical papers, and individual and group exhibits, documentaries, performances and websites. NHD helps students develop the following attributes that are critical for future success:

- critical thinking and problem-solving skills
- research and reading skills
- oral and written communication and presentation skills
- self-esteem and confidence
- a sense of responsibility for and involvement in the democratic process

This summer, SHSI will offer teachers and students more opportunities to learn about the National History Day in Iowa program:

- The NHD in Iowa Summer Teacher Institute will be July 22-24, 2015, and will give teachers an opportunity to learn about the 2016 theme, explore categories, learn research strategies and more. Teachers will create their own History Day project that will be presented at the NHD Kick-Off in the fall. A \$300 stipend to defray travel and lodging costs will allow teachers from all over the state to participate, and teachers will be able to collaborate with their peers and share their knowledge. Visit <http://ia.nhd.org/teachers.htm> for more information.
- The Young Writers' Workshop will be July 27-31, 2015, with acclaimed author Stephanie Hill leading the week-long writing workshop for students in grades 8-12. The workshop will explore the craft of writing using inspiration from historical artifacts, documents and photographs. Each day, students will video chat with a different professional author for a Q&A session. Limited need-based scholarships are available. Apply by July 6, 2015. Visit www.iowahistory.org/education for more information.

The NHD program in Iowa has been coordinated by the State Historical Society of Iowa, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, since 1994 and is sponsored by the State Historical Society, Inc., and the History Channel. [More information](#) about NHD in Iowa is available at www.iowahistory.org or by contacting Katie Craven at 515-725-0506 or katie.craven@iowa.gov.

###

The Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs and its three divisions – the Iowa Arts Council, Produce Iowa-State Office of Media Production and the State Historical Society of Iowa – empower Iowa to build and sustain culturally vibrant communities by connecting Iowans to the people, places and points of pride that define our state. The department's work enables Iowa to be recognized as a state that fosters creativity and serves as a catalyst for innovation where the stories of Iowa are preserved and communicated to connect past, present and future generations. www.culturalaffairs.org.