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**ASPEN INSTITUTE RECOGNIZES
NORTHEAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE IN NORFOLK, NEBRASKA AS ONE OF TOP
TEN FINALISTS IN NATIONAL PRIZE COMPETITION**

Today, Northeast Community College was recognized in an award ceremony in Washington, DC, as one of the top ten community colleges nationally in the bi-annual Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. During the ceremony at the Newseum, Northeast was recognized for:

- Achieving a 60% three-year graduation/transfer rate, well above the national average of 39%
- Students pursuing certificates or degrees achieving high completion rates, especially considering that 70% begin in developmental math and/or English
- Strong labor market outcomes: 1 year post-graduation, graduates are making 8% more than other new hires in the region, 5 years post-graduation, that's up to an 11% premium over all workers in the region

As noted in the Aspen Institute's extensive review, Northeast Community College has evolved from a strictly agricultural-focused vocational school to an ambitious institution providing opportunities ranging from short-term job training to study abroad and academic preparation for transfer to a four-year college. Northeast's greatest strength remains its exceptional workforce development programs in a variety of areas, from agriculture to utility line maintenance to construction. By using labor market statistics to inform new and existing programs, they're responding to the needs of the region and training students with the skills needed for well-paying, in-demand jobs. In response to student feedback, Northeast completely redesigned its academic advising program, including intensive faculty training and mandatory advising for the college's 6,900 students. The college's career and technical programs all require an internship, and frequent visits by faculty to students during their summer internships helps foster close relationships between faculty and employers. In a region where a large majority of people do not get a college degree, Northeast's strong partnerships with regional K-12 schools provide an early introduction to college, including a program called "Fridays at Northeast" which gives high school students an opportunity for in-depth, hands-on exploration of career and technical fields.

We thank Northeast Community College for participating in this year's Aspen Prize process, and for helping define excellence for community colleges nationwide.

For more information on Northeast Community College, go to: <http://as.pn/1kr>.

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The Aspen Prize is funded by the Joyce Foundation, The Kresge Foundation, the Siemens Foundation, and Pearson.

The Aspen College Excellence Program aims to advance higher education practices, policies, and leadership that significantly improve student outcomes. Through the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the Siemens Technical Scholars Program, and other initiatives, the College Excellence Program works to improve colleges' understanding and capacity to teach and graduate students, especially the growing population of low-income and minority students on American campuses. For more information, visit <http://highered.aspeninstitute.org/>.

The Aspen Institute is an educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, DC. Its mission is to foster leadership based on enduring values and to provide a nonpartisan venue for dealing with critical issues. The Institute is based in Washington, DC; Aspen, Colorado; and on the Wye River on Maryland's Eastern Shore. It also has offices in New York City and an international network of partners. For more information, visit www.aspeninstitute.org.