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## Oregon Arts Commission Announces Third Annual *Poetry Out Loud* National Recitation Contest *Applications from High Schools Due November 2, 2007*

The Oregon Arts Commission, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Poetry Foundation, invites high schools in Oregon to participate in *Poetry Out Loud*, a national initiative that encourages high school students to learn about great poetry through memorization, performance and competition.

Participating high schools will organize *Poetry Out Loud* recitation contests late this fall and winter. Winners from each high school will be eligible to participate in a statewide competition on March 15, 2008 in Salem. The winner of Oregon's statewide competition will receive \$200 and an all-expense paid trip to Washington, DC for the National Finals. The state winner's school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books for the school library. A runner-up in each state will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library.

The National Endowment for the Arts will award a total of \$50,000 in scholarships and school stipends at the National Finals, with a \$20,000 college scholarship for the *Poetry Out Loud* Champion.

During the 2006-2007 program, students from 14 high schools participated in the program, with 8 competing for the statewide championship. Ian Jones, a senior at The Center for Advanced Learning in Gresham, was Oregon's 2007 *Poetry Out Loud* Champion, representing the state in the National Finals in Washington, D.C.

High schools in Oregon will be selected to participate in the *Poetry Out Loud* program by submitting a brief application to the Oregon Arts Commission. Applications may be downloaded from the Oregon Arts Commission website: [www.oregonartscommission.org](http://www.oregonartscommission.org) or

requested from the Commission office, (503) 986-0082, [Oregon.artscomm@state.or.us](mailto:Oregon.artscomm@state.or.us).  
Completed applications must be received by 5:00 p.m., November 2, 2007.

*Poetry Out Loud* builds on the resurgence of poetry as an oral art form, demonstrated by the slam poetry movement and the immense popularity of rap music among American youth. The program encourages Oregon's young people to learn about great poetry through memorization and performance, which help students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and internalize our rich literary heritage.

"Hearing the spoken words of the ancient poets we learn that we are not alone," said John Barr, President of The Poetry Foundation, a co-sponsor of *Poetry Out Loud*, "that men and women always have felt as we feel, that the human spirit has been the one constant in the history of our kind. Hearing the voices of our contemporary poets we learn again that we are not alone, that in our individuality we are a community. In this way the recitation of poetry brings history to life; in this way it creates community."

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The Oregon Arts Commission believes that the arts and culture are touchstones of community and civic life and that it is essential to preserve, stabilize and develop their central role in Oregon. The Commission provides leadership, funding and arts programs through its grants, special initiatives and services. Nine Commissioners, appointed by the Governor, determine arts needs and establish policies for public support of the arts. The Arts Commission became part of the Economic and Community Development Department in 1993 in recognition of the expanding role the arts play in the broader social, economic and educational arenas of Oregon communities. In 2003, the Oregon Legislature moved the operations of the Oregon Cultural Trust to the Arts Commission, streamlining operations and making use of the Commission's expertise in grantmaking, arts and cultural information and community cultural development. More information about the Oregon Arts Commission is available at [www.oregonartscommission.org](http://www.oregonartscommission.org).

The Arts Commission is supported with General Funds appropriated by the Oregon Legislature, federal funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and funds from the Oregon Cultural Trust.