



News from Nebraska State Treasurer Don Stenberg - June 2016

Recognizing NEST Writers in the Rain at Werner Ball Park

Despite rain that postponed the Omaha Storm Chasers' May 1 game, State Treasurer Don Stenberg recognized eight winners in the 2016 NEST "Why I Want to Go to College" writing contest on the concourse of Werner Park in Papillion.

The 14th annual contest is sponsored by the Storm Chasers and the Nebraska Educational Savings Trust, Nebraska's 529 state-sponsored college savings program.

Nebraska winners recognized include the following:

First place, \$2,000 NEST scholarship each: Amelia Knosp, Fremont; Eddie Schweikert, Omaha; Emmalee Harder, Belden. **Second place**, \$1,000 NEST scholarship each: Gloria Ovwigho, Palmyra; Ruth Isaacson, Gretna; Weston Reineke, Taylor. **Third place**, \$500 NEST scholarship each, Joe Boesen, Malcom; Jayleasha Cooper, Omaha; Sheridan Wilson, Lemoyne.

Read more at

<https://treasurer.nebraska.gov/csp/scholarships/essay/college/2016/winners-recognized/>



Nebraska 'Thrilled' to Be ABLE Pioneer

Enable Savings Plan for People with Disabilities to Launch June 30



The Enable Savings Plan, which provides individuals with disabilities an affordable, simple, and straightforward opportunity for financial independence, will launch June 30 nationwide.

"We're thrilled to be a pioneer of the ABLE program," said State Treasurer Don Stenberg. Enable, as the Nebraska plan is called, is a program of the State Treasurer's Office. Treasurer Stenberg is Trustee. It comes about as a result of the federal Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act passed by Congress in 2014. The Nebraska Legislature passed the state law in 2015.

Account owners will be able to pay for everyday expenses and save for their future in tax-free savings accounts through Enable. The Enable Savings Plan will be available to individuals with disabilities living in any state in the United States. Learn more at <https://treasurer.nebraska.gov/news/2016/0503/>



Treasurer Stenberg with, from left, Sonny Wimmer, Taylor Heindricks, and teacher Lindsay Tillinghast of Lincoln Southeast High School.



In the Capitol Vestibule, Treasurer Stenberg with teams and teachers from Omaha Northwest High School on left and Alliance High School on right.

Nebraska Teams Face Finance Challenge, Win NEST Scholarships

The top three high school teams in the 2016 Personal Finance Challenge were recognized May 4 in the Capitol by State Treasurer Don Stenberg.

Students from Alliance High School, which placed first in the state, and students from Omaha Northwest Magnet High School, which placed third, were recognized in an afternoon event. With them were their teachers, Luke Shroyer from Alliance and Susan Dimmitt from Omaha Northwest.

In the morning, students from Lincoln Southeast High School, who placed second, and their teacher, Lindsay Tillinghast, also met with Treasurer Stenberg.

The competition, sponsored by the Nebraska Council on Economic Education, took place April 16 in Omaha, Lincoln, and Curtis. Members of the first-place team each received a \$2,000 NEST scholarship; members of the second-place team each received a \$1,000 NEST scholarship, and members of the third-place team each received a \$500 NEST scholarship.

Story and photos at

<https://treasurer.nebraska.gov/csp/scholarships/personal-finance-challenge/2016/winners-recognized/>

Improved Website, Fee Changes at Nebraska Child Support Payment Center

Improvements to the website of the Nebraska Child Support Payment Center and changes in the fee structure for parents making payments by credit and debit cards went into effect March 31.

Parents making child support payments by credit card are no longer charged a \$15 convenience fee for each payment, but instead pay a percent surcharge based on the payment amount, resulting in lower charges for many users.

The new surcharge is 2.49 percent of the payment amount. Parents paying child support by debit card no longer pay the \$15 convenience fee, nor do their payments include a surcharge.

An estimated 1,150 non-custodial parents pay child support by credit or debit card out of the total 97,703 non-custodial parents obligated to make monthly child support payments in Nebraska. Eighty-five percent of child support payments in the state are remitted by employers on behalf of their employees through income withholding practices. Read more at <https://treasurer.nebraska.gov/news/2016/0317/>



Treasurer Stenberg with the Unclaimed Property staff, from left, front, Mary Jones, Maria Donis, Meaghan Aguirre, Marilyn Marino, Celeste Hall, Kim Ackerman. In back, Ryan Hrdlicka, Ginny Smith.

Fast Facts from Unclaimed Property

Returned Year to Date: \$6.5 million

Claims Paid Year to Date: 8,974

Largest Claim Paid to Date in 2015-16: \$449,154

Most Popular Source of Claims: Annual tabloid that appeared in March and April in 16 daily newspapers in Nebraska.

Global Reach: In the last year, claims have been paid to owners outside the U.S. including Japan, Mexico, Ukraine, Poland, and the UK.

Search online at <https://treasurer.nebraska.gov>

Making the Grade

Nebraska's state transparency website, www.StateSpending.Nebraska.gov, received an A- rating in the latest report issued March 17 by the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG). The website, by law, is maintained by the State Treasurer's Office.

The Nebraska website received a score of 90 out of a possible 100 points, placing it in the top "Leading States" category. Nebraska tied with South Dakota for 17th place out of the 50 states. The latest grade, up from a B+ last year, is a significant improvement from the website's D rating in 2011 when Treasurer Stenberg took office.

In its report, U.S. PIRG specifically cited Nebraska as one of five states "that now prominently feature data on quasi-public entities with web pages dedicated solely to these agencies, boards, authorities and commissions."

LB851, passed by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Pete Ricketts this year, broadened Nebraska's Taxpayer Transparency Act to include checkbook-level financial information from quasi-public entities including the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority and the Nebraska State Fair Board.

Read more at

<https://treasurer.nebraska.gov/news/2016/0415/>

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