FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 3, 2016

CONTACT:
Phyllis Kennedy, Program Coordinator
(505) 476-0520, (800) 879-4278 (statewide)

POETRY OUT LOUD NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST
NEW MEXICO STATE FINALS
March 6, 2016

Santa Fe – Join seven New Mexico high school students at the St. Francis Auditorium of the New Mexico Museum of Art on Sunday March 6, 2016 at 1 p.m., as they compete to become New Mexico’s state champion in the Poetry Out Loud National Recitation Contest. This year marks the 11th Annual New Mexico Poetry Out Loud event. Santa Fe radio DJ, Michelle Laflamme-Childs, who works for New Mexico Arts public art program, will serve as Master of Ceremonies. Local favorites from Santa Fe University of Art and Design, The Laser Cats, will perform. Admission to the event is free and open to the public.

“Poetry Out Loud is an amazing competition,” Governor Susana Martinez Said. “Reciting poetry is an art and a skill. And it should be noted that Poetry Out Loud fulfills nine of the 12 Language Arts Standards set by the National Council of Teachers of English, as well as meeting Common Core Anchor Standards for Reading and Language.”

Since Poetry Out Loud began 11 years ago, more than 9,300 New Mexico high school students have participated in this exciting program. The New Mexico competition was held statewide and seven schools are sending students to the state finals this year. Schools winners participating in the state final include Adam Stewart, age 14, Bosque School, Albuquerque; Michelle Zhou, age 16, La Cueva High School, Albuquerque; Oceana Vasquez, age 16, Public Academy for Performing Arts, Albuquerque; Luc Perrault, age 17, Deming High School, Deming; Verona Gomez, age 17, Oñate High School, Las Cruces; Selena Solis, age 17, Rio Grande Preparatory Institute, Las Cruces; and Samantha Baca, age 15, Pojoaque Valley High School, Pojoaque. This year’s judges include New Mexico Arts Commissioner Tom Maguire of Santa Fe; Hakim Bellamy, the inaugural poet laureate of Albuquerque; poet Debbi Brody of Santa Fe; and University of New Mexico professor and poet Lisa D. Chavez.

“Poetry Out Loud is one of many examples of high-quality, partnership-based programs that the NEA offers to schools and communities across the country,” said National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) Chairman Jane Chu. “By helping students foster creative thinking skills and inspire self-expression, we are laying a foundation for lifelong learning in the arts.”

The state winner will receive $200, plus $500 for their school library for the purchase of poetry books.
In addition, the state champion will receive an all-expense-paid trip, with an adult chaperone, to Washington, DC, to compete at the National Finals in May. The National Champion receives $20,000 in prizes.

Poetry Out Loud is a partnership of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Poetry Foundation and state arts agencies. The New Mexico portion of the national poetry recitation contest is sponsored by New Mexico Arts, a division of the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs.

“When a person is exposed to a love of poetry at an early age, he/she will most likely be a life-long reader of poetry,” said Henry Bienen, interim president of the Poetry Foundation. “After ten years and almost three million students later, Poetry Out Loud has created a new generation of poetry readers and lovers who are proof that poetry is a lively and important presence in the classroom and in the culture.”

Poetry Out Loud encourages the nation’s youth to learn about great poetry through exploration, memorization, and performance. The inspiration for this program is to promote poetry in both the classroom and the community. Performers are judged on physical presence, voice and articulation, appropriateness of dramatization, evidence of understanding, and accuracy.

The New Mexico Museum of Art is located at 107 W. Palace Ave. in downtown Santa Fe. For more information, contact Phyllis Kennedy, New Mexico Arts, at (505) 476-0520 or (800) 879-4278 (statewide), or email phyllis.kennedy@state.nm.us.

###

New Mexico Arts, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs, is the state arts agency. New Mexico Arts administers the state’s One Percent for Public Art program, awards grants to nonprofit organizations for arts and cultural programs in their communities across the state, and provides technical assistance and educational opportunities for organizations, artists, and arts educators throughout New Mexico.

The National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts – both new and established – bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Endowment is the nation’s largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities and military bases.

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of Poetry magazine, is an independent literary organization committed to a vigorous presence for poetry in our culture. It has embarked on an ambitious plan to bring the best poetry before the largest possible audience.