



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 22, 2008

Contact:

George R. Nethercutt, Jr.
The George Nethercutt Foundation
400 N. Capitol Street, N.W. Suite 475
Washington, DC 20001
Phone: (202) 589-0015
Email: gnethercutt@bwstrategies.com

GEORGE NETHERCUTT LAUNCHES NATIONAL FOUNDATION TO INSPIRE CIVIC LEADERSHIP

Fellowship program will provide students with field experience in Washington D.C.

Spokane, Wash. – Former Congressman George Nethercutt today announced an innovative non-profit foundation to support students with an interest in economics, history, politics and civic leadership. *The George Nethercutt Foundation* will provide fellowships for students to travel to Washington D.C. and experience first-hand the federal public policy process.

Citing two recent studies that revealed students are failing when it comes to civic literacy, Nethercutt believes that providing a civics education is valuable in making students better citizens and leaders.

“It is the job of each of us, regardless of the occupation or profession we seek or serve, to insist that greater emphasis be placed on knowing our country and its history, and how and why our economic system is the world's best,” said Nethercutt.

-more-

“*The George Nethercutt Foundation*, along with our area’s outstanding college institutions, will provide new opportunities for college students to learn first-hand about the inner workings of the legislative and regulatory process,” he said.

Higher education and business leaders in the Spokane community, including area university presidents and the president of Greater Spokane Incorporated, joined Nethercutt in announcing the charitable, nonprofit, nonpartisan foundation. An advisory board consisting of community leaders has been developed to assist in advancing the Foundation and its objectives.

Four students will be chosen via application, based on interest and academic recommendation. The students will prepare for their trip to the nation’s capital with briefings and lectures on government and other pertinent topics. During their trip to

Washington, D.C., they will meet with government officials, attend Congressional meetings and hearings, visit federal agencies, meet with representatives of major corporations and interest groups, and observe the operations of government.

Studies on Civic Literacy

■ **Intercollegiate Studies Institute's National Civic Literacy Board** (2005 and 2006) tested 14,000 freshmen and seniors at 50 U.S. colleges and universities on 60 multiple-choice civics questions (take the quiz at americancivilliteracy.org). The average 2005 score was 53.2 percent – a failing grade. In 2006, the college seniors again failed all civics subjects.

■ **The National Assessment of Educational Progress** has been evaluating the condition of American education since 1969. The 2007 civics report card showed that American school systems are failing in the area of civics education, and young people are not becoming informed, engaged citizens of our country. Students who obtain a working knowledge of civics during college are more likely to vote and be part of civic dialogue than students who do not learn about the founding of America, the economic system which governs and sustains us, and the institutions that drive public policy.

■ On Nov. 19, 2007, the **National Endowment for the Arts** released the results of a comprehensive study showing that Americans are reading less, are reading less well, and that these declines in reading have civic, social and economic implications. Declines in reading and test scores go hand in hand and have serious consequences for our society, the report claimed.

The fellowships provide housing and daily living expenses on a campus located in Washington, D.C. After their visits, students will complete a paper on lessons learned and will return home to apply what they've learned in a local non-profit organization or a private sector internship.

The inaugural program will begin this spring at Spokane Falls Community College, with a goal of expanding the program to students at Eastern Washington University, Washington State University, Gonzaga University and Whitworth University.

“As president of Spokane Falls Community College, I am very proud that students from our institution will be the first participants in *The George Nethercutt Foundation* fellowship program,” said Dr. Mark Palek. “This unique opportunity will give the fellows a vantage point from which they will see how our government works from the ‘inside.’ Mr. Nethercutt’s experience and knowledge will provide the students with insights that will hopefully inspire them to participate in other leadership opportunities throughout their lives.”

Nethercutt’s decade as a congressman demonstrated to him the value of the Washington D.C. experience to student interns and pages, most of whom arrived without understanding of the workings of government. By the time they returned home, they gained remarkable confidence and knowledge of the U.S. democratic process and the world at large, and developed an extraordinary commitment to make both better.

This experience, coupled with the thousands of constituents who visited while he was in office, showed the former congressman that while there may be a lack of knowledge, there is certainly no lack of enthusiasm or interest in our complex political process.

-more-

“I’m convinced that when students have the interest, we *must* provide the knowledge and opportunity--for it is they who will lead this great nation by honoring and understanding our rich heritage and inspiring future generations to keep the torch of patriotism burning bright,” said Nethercutt.

Students at Spokane Falls Community College who wish to find out more about the scholarship program, may access the foundation website at www.nethercuttfoundation.org.

-30-

About Congressman Nethercutt

George Nethercutt represented Washington’s 5th Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives from 1995 to 2005, serving on the House Appropriations Committee and the House Science Committee. He is an attorney with Paine Hamblen LLP and heads a federal consulting firm in Washington, DC. Prior to his service in Congress, he practiced law for 18 years in the areas of Adoption, Estate Planning and Tax.

Nethercutt is active in a number of community service organizations, serving on the board of directors for Hecla Mining Company, ARCADIS NV, a Dutch multinational corporation, the Washington Policy Center and the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International. He also co-founded the Vanessa Behan Crisis Nursery in Spokane, WA, a private, not-for-profit institution that helps prevent child abuse.

Born in Spokane, Washington, and a graduate of North Central High School, Nethercutt earned a B.A. in English from Washington State University and a law degree from Gonzaga University.