



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **Spearfish High School wins the 2011 South Dakota State *We the People* Competition**

MITCHELL, SD – On December 16, students from across the state joined together for the 2011 South Dakota state *We the People* competition that was held at Dakota Wesleyan University in Mitchell.

The three participating schools in this annual event were: St. Thomas More High School of Rapid City, Spearfish High School, and West Central High School in Hartford. Spearfish High School took top honors this year with West Central taking a close second place.

The competition consists of simulated congressional hearings in which students answer questions about the interpretation of the Constitution divided into six units. Sixteen judges from across the state participated, including representatives from the three Congressional Offices, SD Secretary of State Office, and SD Attorney General's Office.

From the six units – each school won an outstanding unit award, winners include: Unit winner for Spearfish High School was Unit 1, consisting of Taran Bradley, Kaci Engesser, Ian Umphery, and Lauren Walter. Unit winner for St. Thomas More High School was Unit 4, consisting of Lauran Feist, Eric Hensch, and Jordan Miller. Unit winner for West Central was Unit 2, consisting of Dan Kapperman, Eric Mehlhaff, Michael Becker, and Justin Erichsen.

During the competition one student is recognized as the outstanding speaker and is awarded the Lennis Larson Citizen Award. This year the honor went to Joe Schartz from West Central High School.

South Dakota's *We the People* program is a school curriculum created by the Center for Civic Education and is based out of Chiesman Center for Democracy, Inc. in Rapid City. The curriculum utilizes a text for elementary, middle school, and high school students, teaching them about the United States Constitution. The culminating activity for students is to participate in a simulated congressional hearing in the classroom.

Spearfish students will compete at the National Finals April 27 – 30, 2012 at the George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia. For more information on the program and Professional Development opportunities for teachers, please call the Chiesman Center for Democracy at 605-341-4311 or email [randrew@chiesman.org](mailto:randrew@chiesman.org).

*The Chiesman Center for Democracy is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that serves as a forum to provide greater awareness of the meaning of democracy and the importance of active citizen participation in the democratic process. The Center promotes and supports greater awareness of*

*democratic ideals by citizens and organizations by providing programming for civic participation, education and research.*

Photo Caption: Spearfish High School team, led by their coach Patrick Gainey, takes first place at the 2011 *We the People* state competition in Mitchell on December 16.

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For more information on the event or about contact:

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