LOWER PLATTE NORTH
Natural Resources District

PRESS RELEASE

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High School Students Competed at Local Land Judging Competition Held by Lower Platte North NRD

Wahoo, Nebraska – With a crisp fall morning setting the stage for a successful event, high school students from FFA Chapters across the region competed in the 2026 East Central Region Land Judging Contest on October 7 near Bruno, Nebraska. The contest was hosted by the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District (NRD) in Wahoo, with support from local NRCS staff and the neighboring Lower Platte South NRD. NRCS Soil Scientists Casey Latta, Sean Coughlin and Tyler Durre helped judge the pits for the contest.

Nearly 300 students representing 17 schools participated in this year's contest, testing their knowledge of Nebraska's soil. Students rotated through 4 pits dug into the ground to evaluate the land capability, recognize environmental factors, and determine appropriate conservation and land management practices. Through hands-on evaluation, contestants gained a better understanding of how management practices are necessary for responsible stewardship.

Mead captured first place, with Elmwood-Murdock close in second. Rounding out the top five, Bishop Neumann (Wahoo), Central (Raymond), and Milford secured third, fourth, and fifth place respectively. The top five winning teams will head to the State Land Judging Contest on October 14 in Beatrice.

In the individual competition, the top 10 competitors were separated by a slim 34 points between first place and tenth place. Javier Portillo scored at the top of the list for Mead to earn a spot at the State Contest. He was followed by Elliott Stock of Elmwood-Murdock in second place, while a very close tie for third place went to Maci Lamprecht of Mead, and Mya Kavan of Elmwood-Murdock. The remaining top ten individuals headed to state are Abram Lee of Mead,

Benjamin Popken of Mead, Natalie Cantrall of Bishop Neumann, and – in a with a three-way tie – Preston Pevler of Elmwood-Murdock, Will Ellison of Mead, and Micah Brinkmeyer of Milford.

This event is just one of the numerous events held throughout the year for the Lower Platte North NRD. The district works with teachers, youth programs, producers, and landowners to bring hands-on environmental education to tomorrow's leaders. The Lower Platte North NRD, based in Wahoo, covers parts of seven counties in east-central Nebraska and is dedicated to the conservation, preservation, and wise use of our natural resources. Learn more at lpnnrd.org.

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Captions for photos

• **EC Land Judging 1:** Students from Bishop Neumann, Central, and Milford reviewing the area around the pit to determine the slope.

• **EC Land Judging 2:** Students from 17 schools test their knowledge of soil texture, land capability and other factors during the East Central Region Land Judging Contest.

• **EC Land Judging 3:** Local students walk into the pit dug into the ground to observe the soil profile.

• **EC Land Judging 4:** Nearly 300 students and FFA Instructors gather at the end of the contest to hear the official evaluations read by Jeff Schellpeper who assisted in judging the sites for the contest.