

News Release

For Immediate Release

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Nebraska's College Savings Plans Earn National Recognition

Two NEST Plans Receive savingforcollege.com's Highest Rating

Lincoln, Neb. (May 30, 2012) – State Treasurer Don Stenberg and First National Bank of Omaha announced today that the Nebraska Educational Savings Trust (NEST), Nebraska's 529 college savings program, has received the highest rating for its NEST Direct College Savings Plan and its NEST Advisor College Savings Plan from the nationally recognized website, savingforcollege.com.

The website's highest "5-Cap" rating was given for both resident and non-resident accounts in the two NEST plans. Of the 105 plans that were rated, only six other plans in the country, including all direct and advisor-sold plans, have achieved this distinction. The NEST Advisor College Savings Plan is the only advisor-sold plan in the country to be rated 5 caps for both resident and non-resident accounts.

Nebraska's two other 529 plans also received high ratings. The TD Ameritrade College Savings Plan received 4.5 caps for resident accounts and 4 caps for non-resident accounts. The State Farm College Savings Plan received 4 caps for both resident and non-resident accounts. The icon used for the ratings is a graduation mortarboard, thus use of the term, cap.

"We are very proud of our NEST college savings plans and the value they provide for families looking for responsible and effective ways to save for college. I have been confident that our plans were among the best in the country and am pleased that savingforcollege.com has now officially confirmed the high quality of our college savings plans. I anticipate that this recognition will encourage more families, both in Nebraska and across the United States, to take a look at our plans and choose one of them for their long-term college planning," State Treasurer Don Stenberg said.

"Savingforcollege.com is a significant influence in the college savings plan industry and is one of the most sought-after resources for information on state-sponsored 529 college savings plans," explained Deborah Goodkin, managing director of First National Bank of Omaha, the program manager for the Nebraska Educational Savings Trust.

“These ratings truly put NEST at the top of the industry as ranked by savingforcollege.com,” Goodkin said. “I am proud of the work of the team and our partnership with the State of Nebraska to make this happen.”

In announcing its ratings, savingforcollege.com offered the following explanation for the highest rating of 5 caps: “This is a program that offers outstanding flexibility, attractive investments, and additional economic benefits (such as generous state tax incentives) that for some people, at least, will provide a substantial boost to their savings. There are few, if any, weaknesses noted in the program.”

Savingforcollege.com assigned a rating to each state-sponsored 529 college savings program ranging from 1 cap for least attractive plans to 5 caps for most attractive. Factors used in assigning the ratings were grouped into four categories: performance, costs, features, and reliability.

The variety of options available through the Nebraska program was recognized nationally in December 2011 when *Kiplinger’s Personal Finance* magazine named NEST the “Best College Savings Plan” for Fund Selection. It was the fourth time *Kiplinger’s* had included Nebraska’s 529 plan in its “Best College Savings Plan” listing in various categories.

A 529 plan, which takes its name from Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code, is a tax-advantaged investment plan designed to encourage saving for the future higher education expenses of a designated beneficiary. Withdrawals from 529 plans for qualified education expenses, including tuition, books and some board and room expenses, are free from federal income tax. In Nebraska, account holders who are Nebraska taxpayers are eligible for up to \$5,000 in state tax deductions each year.

The Nebraska Educational Savings Trust (NEST) is made up of four savings plans – the NEST Direct College Savings Plan, the NEST Advisor College Savings Plan, the TD Ameritrade 529 College Savings Plan, and the State Farm College Savings Plan. First National Bank of Omaha is the program manager, and the State Treasurer is the program trustee. All investments are approved by the Nebraska Investment Council. More than 52,000 families in Nebraska and more than 180,000 nationwide are saving for their children’s higher education through NEST.

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Investments Are Not FDIC Insured* • No Bank, State or Federal Guarantee • May Lose Value

*Except the Bank Savings Individual Investment Option