



*For Immediate Release*

## **Local High School Advances to “Final 4” in Global Debate Tournament; Wins All-Expenses-Paid Trip to New York**

*Students to compete on the New York University campus for \$10,000 grand prize*

**Dallas, Texas... March 26, 2009** – Three rounds of written debate competition and five months of hard work have paid off for the Plano Senior High School debate team. The group is headed to New York City for the “Final Four” of a global debate competition: the Bickel & Brewer / New York University National Public Policy Forum (NPPF). Plano has advanced from a field of more than 180 schools to earn an all-expenses-paid trip to New York University to compete in the NPPF Finals Weekend, April 17 – 19.

“The Plano Senior High debate team has emerged as among the best debate teams in this international competition,” says William A. Brewer III, partner at Bickel & Brewer and founder of the NPPF. “The students now advance to the finals, where they will have the opportunity to participate in a finals format that is both challenging and rewarding.”

The NPPF is the only contest that gives high school students the opportunity to participate in written and oral debates on issues of public policy. The 2008 – 09 competition began in October when public and private high schools – representing 32 states and 14 foreign countries – submitted essays on the topic, “*Resolved: The United States federal government should substantially increase alternative energy incentives in the United States.*” The competition annually involves more than 700 students.

Based on a review of the qualifying round essays, 32 schools advanced to a single-elimination written debate tournament. In each round, the competitors volleyed arguments back and forth via e-mail on the public policy topic. A panel of judges reviewed the written arguments in the order they were presented and voted for the winning school. This process continued for several rounds, as Plano advanced past La Salle College High School in Pennsylvania, The Anglo-Chinese School in Singapore, and Dowling Catholic in Iowa to earn its trip to New York.

The upcoming finals competition now focuses on oral advocacy. Students will supplement their past written scholarship with oral debates. They will present their arguments before a panel of judges that includes some of the world’s foremost experts in law, business, debate and politics.

Along with Brewer, judges for the finals weekend include John Sexton, president of New York University; Scott Wunn, secretary, National Forensic League; Melissa Maxcy-Wade, director of forensics, Emory University; Scott Deatherage, executive director, National Association for Urban Debate Leagues; Elaine McArdle, journalist; and Mark Oppenheimer, editor, *The New Haven Review*.

The debates will be televised live via the Internet – and viewed by debaters worldwide via the NPPF Web site, [www.nppf.net](http://www.nppf.net).

During their stay in New York, students from the final four schools will be honored at a special banquet and awards ceremony, where the winning school will receive \$10,000 and the “Bickel & Brewer Cup,” a traveling trophy that resides annually with the NPPF champion.

The keynote speaker for the banquet ceremony is former American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) President Nadine Strossen, who was the first woman to serve as president of the nation's largest and oldest civil liberties organization.

The NPPF was founded by the Bickel & Brewer Foundation in 2001, and is now jointly administered with New York University. The program is available for free to all high schools. Since its inception, the Bickel & Brewer Foundation has awarded more than \$800,000 in support of forensic activities at the secondary school and collegiate levels. The NPPF is endorsed by leading forensic agencies such as the National Forensic League, National Association for Urban Debate Leagues, and the International Debate Education Association.

The Bickel & Brewer Foundation is a private, non-profit organization funded by companies, individuals and the national litigation firm of Bickel & Brewer. With offices in Dallas and New York, the Foundation has achieved widespread recognition for its efforts to create, fund and manage a variety of educational outreach programs. Visit the NPPF at [www.nppf.net](http://www.nppf.net).

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