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Documentary will include views of central Nebraskans

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The opinions of more than 100 central Nebraskans will be part of a national conversation and survey this weekend on America's role in the world.

The Citizen Deliberation event Saturday at the University of Nebraska at Kearney is one of 10 to occur simultaneously across the country.

Excerpts from the Nebraska meeting and others will be the subject of an hourlong MacNeil/Lehrer Productions "By the People" documentary scheduled to air Jan. 29 on Nebraska Educational Television.

"We expect this to be a very lively conversation among citizens who really care about the future of their country and its role in the world," said NETV Executive Producer Bill Kelly.

Discussion among the Nebraskans will focus on international security issues such as peacekeeping, nation building and fighting terrorism; and on the country's economic role in the world, including free-trade issues and the impact of diseases such as mad cow, AIDS and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

The 10 sites constitute a national experiment in citizen deliberation, Kelly said.

At Kearney, participants will hold small-group discussions and question a panel of experts. Members of the panel are Nebraska Reps. Doug Bereuter and Tom Osborne; Lisa Dominisse, state director of rural development; Tom Gouttierre, University of Nebraska at Omaha dean of international studies; UNK Chancellor Doug Kristensen; and Patrice McMahon, University of Nebraska-Lincoln political science professor.

The citizen panel is made up of people from Alda, Ayr, Cairo, Clay Center, Doniphan, Elm Creek, Elwood, Gothenburg, Grand Island, Harvard, Hastings, Holdrege, Kearney, Kenesaw, Lexington, Loomis, Miller, Minden, North Platte, Overton, Ravenna, Riverdale, Sargent, Shelton, St. Paul, Sumner, Wolbach and Wood River.

The participants will be scientifically surveyed on their vision of America's role in the world before the deliberations. They will be surveyed again afterward to determine whether their views changed.

The participants' views will be compared with those from a control group not taking part in the deliberation.

The randomly selected sample of the area population will convene at 9 a.m. Saturday on the UNK campus for the event. The "By the People" documentary will air at 8 p.m. CST Jan. 29 on NETV.

Contact the Omaha World-Herald [newsroom](#)