

Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship

Connecting People, Place and Possibility

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Nancy Warner, Coordinator
Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship
509-881-1812 or nwarner@applecapital.net



Public Invited to Okanogan - Small Town, Strong Community on November 20: **IRIS to Host 5th Annual North Central Washington Community Success Summit — A Celebration of Success**

WENATCHEE, WA, October 29, 2013 —The Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship (IRIS) plans to showcase a variety of success stories when it teams up with the City of Okanogan, Wenatchee Valley College, The Wenatchee World and other partners to convene the 5th annual NCW Community Success Summit in Okanogan on November 20, 2013. “Okanogan - Small Town, Strong Community” is scheduled for 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Okanogan Middle School, 244 Fifth Ave. N, Okanogan, WA. Visit the IRIS website irisncw.org to view the agenda and to obtain registration information.

“We’re thrilled to work with the City of Okanogan to host the Summit this year,” said Nancy Warner, IRIS Coordinator. She noted that the non-profit organization plans to hold the summit in a different rural community each year. “Over time we want to showcase and pass on a collection of success stories that can help the next generation thrive,” she said. Event planners anticipate that more than 150 people from Okanogan and across the region will participate in the summit this year. An annual celebration of success, the summit also serves as a fundraising event that will enable IRIS to continue the cycle of highlighting success over the next decade.

Some of the topics speakers will highlight at the Summit include success stories about increasing the health and connectivity of our lands and waters; using cross-generational relationships to foster a sense of belonging, learning and jobs; and using art, technology and meeting places to bridge cultures and strengthen our communities.



This year's Summit is also part of a statewide celebration of Global Entrepreneurship Week. See <http://startup.choosewashingtonstate.com/global-entrepreneurship-week/gew-events-by-county/>

To build on last year's summit in Entiat, Warner said IRIS is working again this year with the local school district in Okanogan to engage a team of faculty and students in all aspects of the summit. The Okanogan Middle School students will be presenting a brief video about the unique and successful aspects of their community. They will also participate in the presentations and discussions about successes from Okanogan and the greater region.

IRIS is also working with an advisory committee and sponsors to plan other elements of the summit that will include: updates on successes featured at previous summits, a lunch of locally-produced foods prepared by Slow Food Okanogan; the Success Summit printed supplement; and roundtable discussions where participants will be invited to share their best practices on key needs in rural communities such as recruiting volunteers and nurturing leaders.

IRIS is proud to acknowledge the following partners and sponsors for this year's event including the City of Okanogan, Wenatchee Valley College, Okanogan School District, The Wenatchee World, Okanogan Conservation District, Okanogan Land Trust, North Cascades Broadcasting, Omak Chronicle, Okanogan Economic Alliance, Okanogan Highlands Alliance, Slow Food Okanogan, The Nature Conservancy of Washington, Port of Douglas County, NCW Business Loan Fund, Cascadia Conservation District, Washington Tractor, Spyhop Institute for Teachers, RSVP of NCW, and Wenatchee Valley College Omak Foundation.

The \$25 registration fee includes lunch, materials and annual IRIS membership. Bus transportation is available for a limited number of Summit participants traveling from Wenatchee to Okanogan thanks to a donation from Wenatchee Valley College. Contact Nancy Warner, IRIS Coordinator at 509-881-1812, nwarner@applecapital.net for more information.

The Initiative for Rural Innovation & Stewardship (IRIS) fosters sustainable rural communities in North Central Washington by gathering and sharing success stories that enhance a sense of belonging, inspire action, and build community. We believe that thriving communities in a healthy environment create success. On the web at www.irisncw.org.

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