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Rick Rolfsmeyer, Executive Director

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Contact: Rick Rolfsmeyer, 608-967-2322 or [ricky@wirural.org](mailto:ricky@wirural.org)

Suggested heading: Nominate a Top Rural Development Initiative Today

Wisconsin Rural Partners Inc. is now accepting nominations to recognize 2017 Top Rural Development Initiatives.

Any project, activity, or even a whole community in rural Wisconsin is eligible. Initiatives do not have to be community-based: WRP may recognize any state, federal, tribal, non-profit or for-profit business initiative, regional or statewide, as long as it meets program criteria. Initiatives can be in agriculture, economic or community development, business, education, health, energy, environment, philanthropy, tourism, the arts or any other field.

The Top Rural Development Initiative Program began in 1998, to help uncover and share the great things happening throughout rural Wisconsin and serve as a capacity-building tool from which all rural Wisconsin communities stand to benefit.

WRP looks for nominations that cite positive community impacts, regional success stories, or demonstrated innovative ideas. The panel of judges will be from various professions and backgrounds and will look at a few simple things:

- Whether the project demonstrates the spirit of partnership or collaboration in making its success happen;
- How widespread and long term the positive impact is;
- How innovative the project is; and
- How the initiative stacks up as a model for other communities in Wisconsin to follow.

We encourage the nomination of initiatives that have moved through the planning phase and into the implementation phase to better enable you to highlight the positive impact of the project. Those initiatives receiving previous Top RDI designation are not eligible.

Anyone living in or serving rural Wisconsin can nominate an initiative. Guidelines and the submission form are available at: <http://wirural.org/programs/toprdi/nominate/>

Award winners will be recognized at the Wisconsin Rural Summit, to be held April 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Heidel House Resort and Spa in Green Lake, Wisconsin.

Nominations are due by close of business on Friday, February 3, 2017. For more information contact Rick Rolfsmeyer, WRP executive director, at 608-967-2322 or [ricky@wirural.org](mailto:ricky@wirural.org).