

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TO: Local Media Contacts
FROM: Sunrise County Economic Council
DATE: January 7, 2011
RE: Leadership Institute Enters 15th Year

MACHIAS – The Washington County Leadership Institute (WCLI) will begin its fifteenth year of local leadership training January 21. The Institute, founded in 1996 by the University of Maine at Machias (UMM) and the Sunrise County Economic Council (SCEC), helps local people develop their leadership skills so that they can more effectively work towards a better Washington County. SCEC was honored by the Maine Community Foundation with the 2009 Elizabeth C. Noyce Award for Nonprofit Excellence for its work in leadership development.

Realizing that Washington County needs citizens who appreciate the diversity of the people, businesses, and communities that make the area unique, participants will examine challenges and opportunities from a countywide perspective. They will learn how an investment in one area impacts the entire county.

WCLI's Omicron class will spend over 70 hours in leadership sessions, group activities, and team building exercises. In addition, they will explore different parts of Washington County they may not have seen before, and will discover how they can, collaboratively, make Downeast Maine a better place to live, work and play in. The Institute includes nine day-long sessions from Steuben to Princeton, and all points in between.

Axiom CEO Susan Corbett, who participated in the 2007 (Lambda) Class, characterized her experience in the course as transformational.

“The Washington County Leadership Institute experience opened my eyes to the community, its people and its resources,” Corbett said. “I was able to meet people I would not otherwise have met, see parts of Washington County that I had never visited, and learn about the industry sectors that contribute to Washington County’s economy. WCLI is a “must” for professional growth and development.... and fun too!”

WCLI participants come from all walks of life; bankers, educators, clergy, stay at home parents, volunteers, nonprofit workers, engineers, journalists, public policymakers, and small businesspeople have received certificates for their participation. This blend of perspectives is a big part of what makes the program work.

“These past fourteen years of WCLI have been incredibly valuable to Washington County,” said program facilitator Linda Cross-Godfrey. “The nearly 225 folks that have gone through the Leadership Institute, and who are sprinkled throughout Washington County businesses, organizations and governments, make up a network that benefits each individual as well as the entire region. This year’s class will make that network even stronger.”

SCEC Assistant Director Jennifer Peters added that the \$575 tuition should not be seen as a barrier to participation. Scholarship funds are being sought to help individuals who wish to attend.

“With the economy the way it is, we can’t make any promises,” Peters said, “But don’t let financial constraints be a reason not to apply.” Peters added that area sponsors – including businesses and nonprofits – help to keep the cost down to the participant.

“Our sponsors have been great,” she said, “they introduce the class to their own organization and talk about how their business or organization looks at different leadership skills and why these skills are so important. They give real world examples. It’s a different spin on ‘leadership’ and what it means to be a leader.” Last year’s

sponsors included Bar Harbor Banking & Trust, Camden National Bank, First Wind, Machias Savings Bank, Maine Development Foundation—Leadership Maine, RHR Smith & Co., University of Maine at Machias, Washington County Community College, and the Washington County Council of Governments

WCLI's 2011 (Omicron) class begins January 21, 2011. Applications for the class are available at SCEC's offices at the Machias Telebusiness Center on Stackpole Road, and online at www.washingtoncountyleadership.org. For more information, or to inquire about sponsorship opportunities contact Jennifer Peters at 255-0983 or scec@sunrisecounty.org.