



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 24, 2017

**UW Colleges & UW-Extension Host Preserving Pathways: A Neighborhood Conversation Series**

MADISON, Wis. - Over the past 50 years, much of the country's population—and especially the Midwest—has been shifting further away from rural areas, opting for urban and suburban settings instead. This trend causes a negative ripple effect across communities and industries. As the population declines, local businesses face a reduced available workforce, funding for school districts decreases, fewer classes are offered to students, and access to quality healthcare grows restrictive.

To address these critical issues and help provide innovative solutions, UW Colleges and UW-Extension are partnering with Northern Wisconsin communities, organizations and government agencies to host Preserving Pathways: A Neighborhood Conversation Series. The series of three roundtables—held May 30 in Rice Lake, May 31 in Marshfield and June 1 in Marinette—will focus on the topics of education, healthcare and the economy. UW Colleges and UW-Extension Chancellor Cathy Sandeen will facilitate the discussions.

Education is the first topic in the series of conversations, as rural schools face many unique challenges including declining enrollment, growing poverty, staff shortages, insufficient broadband service, higher transportation costs and an increased number of English Language Learners. Panelists include:

- **Senator Janet Bewley**, Senate District 25
- **Jeff French**, Barron County Administrator
- **Representative Romaine Quinn**, Assembly District 75
- **Meredith Arcand**, 4-H Youth Development Educator & Assistant Professor of Youth Development, UW-Extension
- **Malcolm Brett**, Director of Broadcasting and Media Innovations, UW-Extension
- **Doug Edwardsen**, Regional Director of UW Colleges Continuing Education
- **Greg Lampe**, Provost and Vice Chancellor of UW Colleges

**The discussion on education starts at 1:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 30, at UW-Barron County** at 1800 College Drive in Rice Lake. The event is open to the public. Reserve your seat at this free event by visiting <https://uwcxroundtables.com/education/>.

Access to quality healthcare is the next topic in the series. This is a critical factor in job creation. It's also an important topic for young families deciding where they will make their home and for senior citizens deciding where to spend their retirement. The rural healthcare workforce needs to expand, considering only 13% of the state's primary care physicians practice in rural Wisconsin, resulting in roughly one physician per 2,263 residents. Panelists for this discussion include:

- **Matthew J. Jansen**, M.D., Division of Education Medical Director, Marshfield Clinic
- **Susan Schueler-Sheveland**, Wood County Human Services Outpatient Clinic Manager
- **Amber Canto**, FoodWise State Coordinator, UW-Extension
- **Judee Richardson**, Director of Curricular and Academic Development for UW Flexible Option, UW-Extension
- **Patti Thwaites**, wisPACT Coordinator, UW-Marathon County

**The discussion on healthcare starts at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, May 31, at Marshfield Clinic’s Laird Center for Medical Research** in the Froehlke Auditorium at 1000 N. Oak Avenue in Marshfield. The event is free and open to the public. Reserve your seat at <https://uwcxroundtables.com/healthcare/>.

The economy is the final topic in the series of conversations. Rural Wisconsin is home to an excellent workforce, but demographic trends demonstrate many people raised in rural areas are leaving to seek opportunity elsewhere. This ultimately discourages new providers of family-supporting jobs from locating outside of urban or suburban areas, and restricts opportunities for those who remain. Furthermore, the skills gap has become increasingly challenging in rural communities. Panelists include:

- **Jerry Murphy**, Executive Director, New North
- **Cindy Bailey**, Regional Associate Dean of Student Affairs & Enrollment Management, UW-Marinette
- **David Brukardt**, Associate Vice President for Economic Development, UW System
- **Mary Kluz**, Community Resource Development Agent, UW-Extension
- **Mark Lange**, Executive Director, Division of Business and Entrepreneurship, UW-Extension
- **Patrick Robinson**, Interim Program Director, Community, Natural Resource and Economic Development, UW-Extension

**The discussion on the economy starts at 9 a.m. on Thursday, June 1, at the UW-Marinette** at 750 W. Bay Shore Street in Marinette. The event is free and open to the public. Reserve your seat by visiting <https://uwcxroundtables.com/economy/>.

You can find more information on the Preserving Pathways series at <https://uwcxroundtables.com/>. Have questions or need more information? Contact Emily Campbell, Public Information Officer, at [emily.campbell@uwex.uwc.edu](mailto:emily.campbell@uwex.uwc.edu) or 608-262-2282.

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