

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CITIZENS' INSTITUTE ON RURAL DESIGN™ ANNOUNCES 2014 AWARDS

Communities from Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, and New Hampshire to Host Rural Design Workshops

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Washington, DC — The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design™ (CIRD) announced today the four organizations selected to host this year's rural design technical assistance workshops. CIRD workshops bring together local leaders, non-profits, community organizations, and citizens and a team of specialists in design, planning, community and economic development, and creative placemaking to address design challenges identified by the host community.

Selected from a pool of 48 applicants by an advisory panel, the four 2014 workshop hosts are:

- Carl Small Town Center: Houston Community, Mississippi
- Oregon County Food Producers and Artisans Co-Op: Oregon County, Missouri
- Lincoln and Lancaster County Planning Department: Lancaster County, Nebraska
- University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension (UNHCE): Franklin, New Hampshire

The community of **Houston, Mississippi** (pop. 3,562) will work with the Carl Small Town Center to generate a design for a cycling/pedestrian connection leading from their newest attraction - the Tanglefoot Trail - to the Natchez Trace Parkway, a 444-mile scenic drive and major destination for cyclists, to downtown Houston located seven miles away. The workshop in **Oregon County, Missouri** (pop. 10,997) will guide the renovation of one (in a series of) vacant buildings located on the town square into a multi-destination market and community center to serve as an economic incubator for artists and food producers in the county. **Lancaster County, Nebraska** will host a region-wide workshop gathering residents and leaders together from 12 rural villages (total pop. 7,967) to create a toolbox of design techniques and resources to help recapture their sense of place. **Franklin, New Hampshire's** (pop. 8,456) workshop will address how to revitalize the downtown in keeping with the goals of ensuring affordable housing options and age-friendly design for senior citizens statewide.

Each of the selected organizations applied with multiple local partners. "We were extremely impressed by the volume and high quality of the applications we received. The selected communities demonstrate rich potential for leveraging partnerships to take action on a wide range of rural design issues," said Cynthia Nikitin, CIRD Program Director and Senior Vice President of Project for Public Spaces, Inc. "Rural design is a valuable tool for citizens to use to build on existing assets and improve their community's quality of life and long-term viability."



Citizens' Institute on Rural Design

CIRD offers annual competitive funding to as many as four small towns and rural communities to host a two-and-a-half day rural design technical workshop. CIRD awardees receive \$7,000 to support the workshop, in-kind design expertise and technical assistance valued at \$35,000, and additional training through webinars, conference calls, and web-based resources.

CommunityMatters® and CIRD will be offering **capacity building events**. These quarterly calls and webinars, open to the public, are geared towards people working on issues related to rural design or planning. These instructional calls will help participants develop the skills they need to succeed, as well as provide inspiration to help them get started. More calls and registration information will be provided on the CIRD web site later this summer. www.rural-design.org

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The Citizens' Institute on Rural Design™ (CIRD) is a National Endowment for the Arts leadership initiative in partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Project for Public Spaces, Inc., along with the Orton Family Foundation and the CommunityMatters® Partnership. Established in 1991, CIRD has convened more than 60 rural design workshops in all regions of the country, empowering residents to leverage local assets in order to build better places to live, work, and play. For more information visit www.rural-design.org.

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CommunityMatters® is a national partnership of seven organizations with the common goal of building strong communities through the improvement of local civic infrastructure. The CommunityMatters partners aim to equip community members to strengthen their places and inspire change. The partners are: Deliberative Democracy Consortium; Grassroots Grantmakers; National Coalition for Dialogue & Deliberation; New America Foundation; Orton Family Foundation; Project for Public Spaces; and Strong Towns. **CommunityMatters** is a program of the **Orton Family Foundation**.

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