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## **Our Valley Our Future and NCW Libraries holding online forums to help craft the future of communities in Chelan and Douglas counties**

WENATCHEE — Our Valley Our Future and NCW Libraries have partnered on an upcoming series of online forums delving into what people see as their greatest needs and those of their communities, and what ideas they have to make life better for all.

Information gleaned from the forums will help shape Our Valley Our Future's new five-year community plan, which is designed to improve the quality of life in Chelan and Douglas counties through value-added projects and programs crafted by residents and led by partnering organizations.

The public is encouraged to participate in these futuristic discussions. The one-hour, online forums are free, and each will be focused on a different community in the two-county area.

"The forums will explore all the challenges people are experiencing, including those related to the pandemic; ways for these communities to recover from the pandemic and rebuild in the years ahead; and what aspects of community life are valued and are worth enhancing in the future," said Steve Maher, coordinator of the Our Valley Our Future (OVOF) nonprofit organization.

"We are very excited to be co-hosting these forums," said Bill Carroll, Director of Branch Operations for NCW Libraries. "Our libraries are community hubs where we all can come together to discuss what makes our communities great and also recognize the challenges we all face. Our branches are instrumental in bringing community members together, and us co-hosting these forums gives NCW Libraries the opportunity to partner with a great organization, and further connect members of the community."

Each of the community forums will be conducted via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87506029990?pwd=Z0N4NEt1UTg0ZzZ4QWtvYVh5YTlyUT09>. The programs will include a presentation and Q&A on OVOF's community planning project; an opportunity for participants to talk about their own needs and those of their communities; and a brainstorming session on potential ways for each community to ultimately thrive wholistically.

OVOF will moderate the discussions, with NCW Libraries providing technical support. NCW Libraries also will update everyone on its own upcoming programs and events. A Spanish-language interpreter will be on hand as well.

Here is the schedule:

- Tuesday, May 4, 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., for Greater Wenatchee Area residents (Wenatchee, East Wenatchee, Rock Island, Malaga, Sunnyslope, Monitor)
- Tuesday, May 11, 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., for Upper Wenatchee Valley residents (Leavenworth, Peshastin, Dryden, Cashmere)
- Tuesday, May 18, 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., for Lake Chelan residents (Chelan, Manson and Chelan Falls)
- Tuesday, May 25, 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., for Entiat Valley residents (Entiat and Ardenvoir)
- Tuesday, June 1, 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., for Douglas County residents outside of the East Wenatchee area (Orondo, Waterville, Bridgeport, Mansfield)

Earlier this month, OVOF launched what it is calling its “Our Valley, Stronger” regional outreach, visioning and planning project. At the end of the year, OVOF will release a new five-year Action Plan of projects and programs led by partnering organizations for the years 2022-26. The first OVOF Action Plan (for the years 2017-21) expires at the end of this year.

For more on the “Our Valley, Stronger” community planning project, visit the OVOF website at <http://www.ourvalleyourfuture.org>.

Our Valley Our Future, founded in 2015, is a nonprofit organization that brings together residents and organizations to improve the region’s quality of life. Its guiding document is its Action Plan, which includes value-added projects and programs led by partnering organizations. OVOF serves as convener, facilitator, data-collector, planner and communicator in furthering the community’s vision.

NCW Libraries, formerly known as North Central Regional Library, operates 30 community libraries in Chelan, Douglas, Ferry, Grant, and Okanogan counties and provides services to rural residents through a mail order library and bookmobiles. The library system’s website provides library cardholders with free access to eBooks and digital audiobooks as well as a large number of online resources. For more information, please visit the NCW Libraries website at: <https://www.ncwlibraries.org>.

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