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Treasurer, Greg Peyer  
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Past President, Don Stevens  
Merrill Area Public Schools

## **NEWS RELEASE**

Cornerstone Custom Builders, Inc. Named Wisconsin Rural School/Community Partner of the Year

Cornerstone Custom Builders, Inc. of Eagle River, Wisconsin was honored by the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA), a non-profit organization that is dedicated to helping address issues of rural school districts, at the annual Rural Schools Conference on November 15, 2012.

Cornerstone received the Wisconsin Rural School/Community Partner of the Year Award for their significant contributions to the Northland Pines School District Building Trades Program. For the past four years, the company has supplied the materials for building a home and assisted Tim Lehman, Building Trades Instructor, with the construction. The students participate throughout the entire construction of the house from project design, obtaining permits, safety training, framing and finishing. Cornerstone is then responsible for marketing and selling the home alleviating the costs and burden from the school district. Many local material suppliers and subcontractors are also involved in the project making it truly a community effort.

Dr. Mike Richie, District Administrator, considers this project an excellent example of what can be accomplished to ultimately benefit students when the school district and community works together. He stated, "This project ties together several core elements across the Technology Engineering Department's curriculum. It exemplifies rigor and relevance for any student who has the desire and drive to explore a future in design, engineering, project management, entrepreneurship or specialized trade within the construction field."

Other award winners honored by WiRSA at the Rural Schools Conference included Rick Eloranta, Owen-Withee School District, Rural Board of Education Member of the Year; LeAnn Chase, Tomorrow River School District, Rural Administrator of the Year; Al Dickman, Wild Rose School District, Rural Teacher of the Year and Don Stevens, Retired CESA #5 Administrator, received the Rural Advocacy Award.

The Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance was formed to help rural school districts address the unique issues that affect rural schools as they seek to achieve the highest quality education for every student. Members include a cross-section of educators, school board members, rural community members, business leaders, and other concerned individuals who want a strong voice for rural education.