



STATE OF WASHINGTON

## GOVERNOR'S COMMITTEE ON DISABILITY ISSUES AND EMPLOYMENT

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### Final Report Omak – Okanogan Outreach May 2016

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Community Outreach Subcommittee of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment (GCDE) held two meetings in Omak, Washington on May 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. The meetings were hosted by the 12 Tribes Resort and Casino located at 28968 Highway 97 in Omak.

We want to recognize John MacClain, Chief Operating Officer, for his generosity in providing our meeting rooms, refreshments and a continental breakfast. We also want to extend our thanks to Marie "Lovee" Eldridge, Group Sales Coordinator and her staff for their excellent hospitality which allowed us to focus on the meeting proceedings.

Lastly, we need to acknowledge Laurae MacClain, Program Manager for the Colville Confederated Tribes Vocational Rehabilitation Program, for her direction and her leadership in guiding our advance team and becoming our local liaison. Laurae was instrumental in making our introductions to leaders in the disability community, to Tribal members and to local elected officials. Much of our success is based on the community connections she facilitated.

The following report represents a summary of the issues discussed. Suggested actions and resources are provided. A list of meeting attendees who provided their contact information is also provided.

## **Meeting Summary**

As of the 2010 census, Okanogan County's population was 41,120. The county seat is Okanogan, while the largest city is Omak. Geographically, it is the largest county in our state.

During the course of our meetings participants were open to possibilities and excited about making new connections. Action items were identified and commitments were made to continue the discussion on how to improve programs and services for individuals with disability.

Meeting participants represented a diverse cross section of the community including people with disabilities, family members, service providers, law enforcement and elected officials. We had a large audience; nearly 60 people attended the Town Hall forum, and 38 attended the Leadership Breakfast. Discussion topics were broad, there was an emphasis on respite care; transportation service; affordable and accessible housing; employment, and connecting people to programs and services.

Whether you address housing, education, employment or respite services, two common threads emerge: 1) if services are available, there is not enough funding to serve everyone who is in need and 2) many services are not available in the local area or in nearby communities, so people need to travel to Wenatchee, Spokane or Yakima to access services.

## **Accessible Community Act**

Through the Accessible Communities Act (Chapter 215, Laws of 2012), a county can promote greater awareness and accessibility. The Act offers support for effective solutions and partnerships to engage the disability community, local government, businesses and organizations.

The Act aims to encourage counties to establish an Accessible Community Advisory Committee (ACAC) and provides several options for counties to implement an ACAC.

If a county establishes an Accessible Community Advisory Committee, an ACAC, it is eligible for:

- Reimbursement for travel, per diem, sign language interpreters and other meeting accommodations.
- A grant program to fund small, local projects to improve awareness, acceptance, inclusion and access for people with disabilities.
- Technical assistance and training.

In order to be eligible for the grant program or for reimbursement for expenses related to Accessible Community Act activities, a county must send a letter of assurance to the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment, establishing the county has an active cross-disability Accessible Community Advisory Committee (ACAC).

For more information on the Accessible Communities Act, contact Debbie Himes at 360.902.9362 or email her at [dhimes@esd.wa.gov](mailto:dhimes@esd.wa.gov).

Marlene White with the Secretary of State's Office added that every county is required to have a voter disability advisory committee through the county elections division. An ACAC can be formed by expanding the role of the existing disability advisory committee. The person to talk to is your County Auditor, Laurie Thomas, her phone number is 509.422.7240.

ACACs are active in Spokane, Jefferson, Pierce and Wahkiakum Counties. Spokane is working on making the community more welcoming to individuals with disabilities through community surveys and educational forums. Jefferson is updating their disability resource materials and they purchased an accessible beach wheelchair to improve accessibility to the Port Ludlow beaches. Wahkiakum is working on a capital project to make their community center accessible and Pierce is still working on identifying a community project.

The funding for the ACAC program is generated from fines individuals pay for illegally parking in disabled stalls. A hundred dollars of each fine goes to the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment for the ACAC program. Once a county establishes an ACAC, funds are available to pay for any expenses involved in hosting their ACAC meetings. For example, sign language interpreters, mileage, bus and taxi fares, per diem, room rentals, sound systems and language interpreters can be billed to GCDE.

## **Adult Day Programs and Community Access**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

**Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare** offers an Adult Day Program for individuals who are enrolled in services and have dual diagnosed disability. They provide a skills building group in the morning, participants make lunches for the group and staff. In the afternoon participants work on craft projects and other activities. Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare is located at 1007 Koala Drive in Omak. For more information call their toll-free number 1-866.826.6191 or 509.826.6191.

A participant added that her son works a few hours a week and the rest of the time he is home doing nothing. She asked his provider if he could be enrolled in the Community Access program and was told no he is on the work waiver. She would prefer enrolling her son in the Community Access program because he would be active and able to socialize and be with his friends. She would like the rules to be changed so individuals could work and participate in Community Access.

## **Employment**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

**Career Path Services**, an employment provider, recently closed in Omak. Jodi, the past director of vocational rehabilitation for Career Path Services, explained the decision to close was a difficult one. Financially, it is hard to continue to provide employment services at the same hourly reimbursement rate established over 5 years ago. The other contributing factor is the funding available for employment services has continued to shrink. Jodi raised concerns about the large number of students with disabilities graduating from high school and whether the county or the state will provide enough funds for their employment services.

**Northwest Center**, a new employment vendor, recently opened and is serving all of the Career Path customers who wanted to continue to receive employment services. The Northwest Center is housed in the old Career Path location, 307 S. Main St. #5, Omak, WA 98841 and their phone number is 509.429.2828.

Rashell McLain explained that for the last two years, Ambitions has provided ongoing support, training, and paid jobs at various work sites. Services include individual supported employment, group employment, and prevocational services. Ambitions is located at 320 Omak Avenue, Omak, Washington 98841 and their phone number is 509.826.5286. Here are two links to their email and website: [jobs@wa.ambitions.org](mailto:jobs@wa.ambitions.org) and [www.ambitions.org](http://www.ambitions.org).

Duane Johnson, a supervisor with the **Department of Vocational Rehabilitation** mentioned their office is inside the WorkSource Okanogan County, which is located at 126 S. Main, Omak WA 98841 and their phone number is 509.826.7568 or 800.887.8057. DVR offers services to individuals including veterans who have disabilities and barriers to employment. Duane is working behind the scenes with customers of Career Path Services to expedite DVR enrollments and to keep continuity of services. He also announced that there is going to be another employment vendor in Omak opening its doors in July.

The Colville Confederated Tribes also has a vocational program, Laure McClain would be the contact there. DVR has been co-enrolling as many customers as possible to leverage resources and provide wrap around support. It is awesome to have this collaboration. DVR is increasing services to youth in transition and would like to expand their working relationship to the tribal transition programs. Laurae MacClain, VR Program Manager contact information is: Colville Confederated Tribes Vocational Rehabilitation, PO Box 150, Nespelem, WA 99155. Laurae's phone number is 509.634.2297 and her email address is [Laurae.MacClain@colvilletribes.com](mailto:Laurae.MacClain@colvilletribes.com).

Lee Root with the Northwest Center explained that job opportunities for workers with disabilities are not limited to Wal-Mart. He has placed workers with disabilities at the local hospital, several of the box stores, and found jobs in Twisp and Tonasket with salaries ranging from minimum wage to \$14.00 an hour.

Yvonne Bussler-White, Lead Counselor with DVR had her best placement year last year with a total of 55 individuals with disabilities placed into jobs. She placed nurses, two physicians' assistants, mental health counselors and many more. When employers think about disabilities they tend to think about individuals with cognitive disabilities. She added that when she places workers at McDonalds or Wal-Mart the customers are requesting the placements because these jobs are their dream jobs.

John MacClain with the 12 Tribes Resort stated that the casino is one of the largest employers in the area. Also the Okanogan County unemployment rate is very low and employers are competing for the same hiring pool. The casino operates 24/7, 365 days a year. They have three shifts and are always looking for employees. They have part-time positions and good workers have advancement opportunities. They provide training for their positions, one example is a dealer training school. John encouraged people who are looking for job opportunities to checkout their openings. They also have a van that transports workers three times a day to their casinos in Chelan and Coulee Dam.

Becky Day thanked John for hiring one of her customers. He lives in Omak and rides the shuttle to Manson and back and he really loves his job. Transportation made the job possible but John's willingness to be flexible and by offering him a part-time job was the key to his success.

**Note: The Governor's Employer Awards Program** is an annual event which honors public and private employers statewide for their exemplary work to recruit, hire, retain and advance workers with disabilities. This year a new category is being added, the **Employment Support Award** for an individual who has made significant achievements in the successful employment of persons with disabilities. The nomination deadline is August 19, 2016. To request a nomination form contact Melinda Johnson at 509.482.3854 or email her at [msjohnson@esd.wa.gov](mailto:msjohnson@esd.wa.gov).

## **Guardianship**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

Christy tried to get guardianship established and could not find a local attorney to assist with the process and ended up using a Spokane Attorney. She suggested that the Okanogan County Court House have the required paperwork accessible online. She also would like to see the county designate a staff person to be responsible for guardianship proceedings.

### **Notes:**

David Lord with Disability Rights Washington (DRW) is a good contact to talk to about guardianship. DRW is located in Seattle; their address is 315 Fifth Avenue South, Suite # 850 and their toll-free number is .800.542.0866. The website link is [www.disabilityrightswa.org](http://www.disabilityrightswa.org).

Office of Public Guardianship – their mission is to promote the availability of guardianship services for individuals who need them and for whom the services may not otherwise be available. For more information contact the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts, Office of Public Guardianship, Shirley Bondon, Manager, 1112 Quince St. SE, PO Box 41170, Olympia, WA 98504-1170, phone 360.705.5302 or [shirley.bondon@courts.wa.gov](mailto:shirley.bondon@courts.wa.gov). You can also visit their website at [www.courts.wa.gov](http://www.courts.wa.gov).

## **Housing**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

Mike with the Colville Indian Housing Authority is interested in finding additional funds to assist with the elder minor repair program. He is responsible for building ramps, retrofitting bathrooms and widening doors to improve accessibility. The Colville Indian Housing Authority annual budget is roughly \$90,000 and Mike typically works with 6 to 7 individuals each year. There are many people who need these services than available funding can support.

Nancy Nash, Executive Director with the Housing Authority of Okanogan County said they struggle to find affordable housing that meets their criteria for their voucher program. Low-income housing is a big

need throughout the county. The elderly, disabled and families with children are given priority for any openings in their Section 8 program. The Housing Authority is authorized for 165 vouchers annually and they are at capacity. The only way an opening occurs is if someone no longer qualifies, dies, is incarcerated or if a person moves away and doesn't take their voucher with them.

Ambitions provides residential services for people with developmental disabilities. Rashell added that they do not provide respite services but offer crisis diversion services. The only respite services she is aware of are in Spokane and Yakima

Yvonne Bussler-White, the Board Chair for the Okanogan County Housing Authority shared that a new apartment complex is being developed in north Omak. There is a Habitat for Humanity program in Omak. The monthly board meeting is set for Tuesday, July 12 at 7:00 PM at Pierre house, 323 Edmonds Street, Omak. Shirley Devereaux is the Volunteer Recruiter her email address is [sdevereaux@ncidata.com](mailto:sdevereaux@ncidata.com).

### **Local Resource information:**

For housing, rental and energy assistance and home modification programs contact the following agencies.

Okanogan County Housing Authority  
110 Oak St.  
Omak, WA 98840  
509.422.3721

Aging & Adult Care-Center WA  
739 Haussler RD, Suite A &B  
Omak, WA 98841  
509.826.7452

Area Agency on Aging  
511 Benton St.  
Omak, WA 98841  
509.422.7749

Okanogan Community Action Council  
424 South 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave  
Okanogan, WA 98840  
509.422.4041

Colville Indian Housing Authority  
PO Box 528  
Nespelem, WA 99155  
509.634.467

**Note:** As a result of the discussion at the town hall meeting about needing additional funding for modifying houses to make them more accessible, Lisa Rosier shared information on a couple of programs that may be able to be replicated in Okanogan County.

**Rampathon** is a volunteer directed program with the Master Builders Association. Since 1993 their members have contributed more than 370 ramps to members of our King and Snohomish County communities. Their ramps provide safety and peace of mind knowing that emergency aid crews can get in and out with those in need if a medical emergency presents itself. For more information contact Michell Filleau-Maas at 425.460.8232 or by email at [mfilleau-maas@mbaks.com](mailto:mfilleau-maas@mbaks.com).

**Painting a Better Tomorrow** is an annual fall event, where members and friends of the Master Builders Association commit one Saturday to paint and make minor cosmetic repairs to homeless shelters and nonprofit agencies throughout their community. Since its inception in October 2004, more than 1,000 volunteers have painted and made improvements to more than 42 agencies. For more information call 425.451.7920 or email at [mba@mbaks.com](mailto:mba@mbaks.com).

Mayor Culp shared that last summer The Community Action Program worked with a Christian youth group and they built ramps and painted buildings. The work was done with all of the necessary permits. He added that staff with the Community Action Program met with building inspectors to make sure they understood the code issues and this made the building process really smooth and everything worked out really well.

Wayne Barrett with Omak High School said he has some pretty good welding students, and they could possibly build some portable aluminum ramps and they also have a construction program so they could build wood ramps as well. The only issue he would have is to figure out a funding process.

Mike with the Colville Indian Housing Authority commented that with volunteer work, required permitting must be obtained and building codes must be followed. Oversight is probably the biggest challenge with the high school students. He offered to volunteer his time to help because that is what he does for a living and he lives in Omak. Mike also offered to check with the Master Builders Association to learn more about their programs.

Becky Day with the Northwest Center shared that Home Depot will donate materials for ramps and other community projects.

A meeting participant added that in Methow, Brewster and Tonasket there are a couple of service organizations working on similar projects and the larger community is unaware of their efforts. He suggested that this information should be kept on a centralized information and referral center that everyone could access.

## **Information and Referral Services**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

Mayor Culp shared that residents in Spokane you can call the ARC or other disability organizations and if they can't provide the service in question, they can direct to the appropriate resource. Most parents of children with a disability in Okanogan and probably most other rural locations in the State, know services are limited. What is most concerning is finding resources that are siloed, only knowing about their program, and are unable to refer to other providers.

Kelly added that when she moved to Omak a couple of years ago it was difficult to find information on local programs and services in the Omak community. There isn't a little phone book or a directory of services. Everyone struggles to find the services they need. Having a community resource center or an online resource directory would be very helpful.

Mayor Culp added that it would be very advantageous for all of us and our families to have a centralized place like a community center or resource center where people could go and learn about what services are available in this community and what is not. Perhaps citizens in Okanogan County could look into developing an Accessible Advisory Committee and fund the resource center through one of the ACAC grants. Certainly there's passion in this community to put together a collective effort to develop a resource center.

Shannon added that the Head Start program is currently working on creating a Community Resource Guide. The local schools have some information for their students but everything seems fragmented. She suggested that the Okanogan community work collectively to make their websites more inclusive and provide links to key services and resources throughout the county.

Last fall a group of service providers offered the First Annual Disability Awareness and Resource Fair. It was well attended and people were able to learn about the available resources. This would be a good program to continue and perhaps the resource center could become the lead organizer for the event.

Jesus Hernández with the Family Health Center announced that Lori Jones with the Coalition for Health Improvement is in the process of developing a WIN 211 (Washington Information Network 211) in Okanogan County. 2-1-1 is an easy-to-remember phone number for people to call for health and human service information and to get referral to meet their needs. The network has a web presence and one can search their online directory of health and human service programs to find resources like food banks (food pantries), emergency shelters, transportation, health clinics, rent or utilities assistance, legal help, and many more. A staff person has been hired to meet with Okanogan County agencies and organizations to make sure everyone is included in the database. The Coalition for Health Improvement meets on a regular basis and everyone is welcomed to attend. Skip Rosenthal, CEO Okanogan Behavioral HealthCare is the contact person his phone number is 509 826.6191 or email at [srosenthal@okbhc.org](mailto:srosenthal@okbhc.org).

Stella suggested that community resources need to be included in all of the county websites, on Facebook and in other social media. The county and community agencies could include links to community agencies. If the community is successful in getting a resource center maybe it could be staffed and that person would be responsible for developing a countywide site of resources.

Commissioner Kennedy added that she would like to continue the local discussion and will be talking with her seat mates to see how the county can work together to establish an ACAC. She also plans to talk with her staff in central services which oversees the county website to work on becoming a local information center. The Commissioners are looking at their surplus buildings and perhaps the county could offer a facility for a resource center or an adult day program.

Duane suggested that the Okanogan Council of Government (OCG) be invited to participate in the planning process for the ACAC. OCG membership includes the mayors and city council members of all of the communities in the county. They meet regularly and could provide additional support to establishing a local ACAC.



## **Membership Applications for the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment**

The Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment is in the process of recruiting new members for 2017. The Committee is made up of 27 members appointed by the Governor. This year the Committee will have several vacancies and wants to fill those positions with people who have a passion about disability issues and the ability to volunteer. Currently, the Committee holds annual meetings of the full Committee 3 times per year. Subcommittees generally meet by conference call with a few in-person meetings. All costs to attend meetings or to participate in GCDE activities are reimbursed by the Committee. To be considered for an appointment to the board, apply by Aug. 31, 2016. To find out more about becoming a member contact Debbie Himes at 360-902-9362 or by email at [Dhimes@esd.wa.gov](mailto:Dhimes@esd.wa.gov).

### **Parent to Parent**

#### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

**Note:** Representative Maureen Walsh from Walla Walla introduced a bill last session, it passed and was signed by Governor Inslee in March. It authorizes the re-establishment of Parent to Parent in all counties of the state. There are 9 counties that do not have a Parent to Parent organization. A Request for Proposal was distributed requiring all interested parties to apply for funding by **Friday, June 3, 2016**.

Christy shared that Okanogan County had a wonderful Parent to Parent program a few years ago. It provided support for families and activities for their loved ones.

Doreen, a parent, was very pleased with the support the Parent to Parent program provided. She appreciated the educational opportunities and the individual assistance she received. Without their support, she would not have a young man graduating from high school this year.

Diane Ewer with Developmental Disabilities Administration said the previous Parent to Parent program sent out monthly newsletters letting families know about the upcoming activities and educational opportunities. They held their meetings at the Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare office. She hopes the newsletters and meeting location will be included in the new program

Shannon Mendoza, with Okanogan Behavioral Healthcare offered to look into the process for getting the funding for the Parent to Parent program.

## **Post-Secondary Education**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

Stella with the Wenatchee Valley College (WVC) shared that WVC received a federal grant for a TRiO Program. TRiO provides low-income, first-generation college students and students with disabilities extra support in assisting students to achieve their goals. TRiO provides comprehensive individual support such as extra tutoring, assisting with funding searches and helping to apply for Pell grants and much more. The program serves between 25 and 30 individuals. To qualify you need to be enrolled in WVC and plan to transfer to a four-year degree program. If you are a Tribal member, there may be some additional funding available through the tribe, for tuition and housing assistance. For more information, call 509.422.7800 or email at [trio@wvc.edu](mailto:trio@wvc.edu).

### **Note: TRiO Eligibility**

To be eligible, all students must meet **at least one** of the following criteria:

- Be a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident; and
- Have a high school diploma or GED certificate; and
- Be accepted for enrollment or currently enrolled at Wenatchee Valley College in a college-level program; and
- Intend to transfer to a four-year college to pursue a bachelor's degree; and
- Not already have a degree from a four-year college or university; and
- Be a first-generation college student (neither parent nor guardian has graduated from a four-year college or university)
- Be low income (Refer to the Federal Low Income Guidelines Table on the WVC TRiO SSS Participant Application)
- Have a documented disability and registered with Access Services.

Stella explained that the Wenatchee Valley College offers a two-year degree program, a basic AA Degree (Associate in Arts). WVC is working to offer their degree totally online. There are several resources for accredited online computer science degrees and several major universities that now offer online degree programs. She suggested to research a field of interest to find many colleges and universities with accredited programs.

## **Professional Contractors**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

Brenda who works for Washington State Developmental Disability Administration (DDA) explained that the county needs more professionals such as speech therapists, physical therapist and builders. In order to work under a state contract with DDA the contractors need to be approved and certified. It is a lengthy process, since everyone who works for the contractor needs to go through a background check.

Kevin Risdon with the North Central Education Service District (NCESD) in Wenatchee commented that he works with speech pathologists and other therapy specialists who provide services to students in Okanogan County. The NCESD recently started a master's program in speech pathology and is partnering with a university out of Florida. They have 20 graduate students working in Wenatchee,

Ephrata, Sunnyside and Wapato. This may be an opportunity for a community who has eligible students needing services. One example is a grant program established at the ESD in Vancouver, Washington where schools and other organizations contribute into a fund that helps pay the student's educational expenses, approximately 20% per year. In return, the student agrees to work in the community or in a school district for a 5-year period.

Kevin Risdon with NCESD added that Central Washington University is considering offering an educational degree program in either Okanogan, Wenatchee or somewhere in the basin. The education would be a hybrid program with a mix of online course work and some in person instruction. Para professionals who want to become teachers and individuals who already have a bachelor's degree who want to add an educational certificate are the primary focus. Information is going out through the local school districts and through the WorkSource in Omak. The most important criteria to move this project forward is finding 20 interested individuals who would be willing to enroll. More information can be obtained by emailing [kevinr@ncesd.org](mailto:kevinr@ncesd.org).

## **School to Work Transition Services**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

Charlanne Quinto with the Colville Confederated Tribes explained that the tribe has several youth programs such as a Boys and Girls Club and summer employment programs. The tribe struggles for adequate funding, and Charlanne is interested in developing programs that can serve both communities, tribal members and non-tribal members alike. Charlanne expressed her appreciation in being included in these meeting and has learned about local resources and new ways to connect.

Irene Jordan with WorkSource Omak explained that they received two grants to assist transitioning youth. One job training program is targeted to all youths and the other is a pilot program specifically for youth with disabilities called (PETS) Pre-employment Transition Services. WorkSource Omak is partnering with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and local school districts to provide employment related services such as job exploration, counseling and workplace readiness training. To be eligible for the program one needs to have an Individual Education Plan or a 504 plan in place and must be under the age of twenty-one. Some schools have invited DVR to teach workshops on soft skills to eligible students and to meet with parents to discuss the transition process and post high school services.

**Note:** For more information on DVR and School Transition services, review the School transition section on the DVR Website at [www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/dvr/school-transition](http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ra/dvr/school-transition). It provides detailed information for students, parents, and teachers to help go through the process.

The NCESD is participating with the Center for Change in Transition Services in Seattle in their transition pilot program. Pilot schools receive a tremendous amount of training at no cost to the district. Teachers participate in a ½ day training each month and the grant pays for the substitute teachers and any transportation costs. Schools have been selected for 2016 – 2017 school year and the Okanogan

County Districts did not apply. NCESD is considering including Okanogan County schools in their grant to offer family transition nights and career fairs where students can meet with local service providers, practice using soft skills and meet with employers.

## **Transportation Services**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

Kelly Scalf, General Manager for the Okanogan Transit Authority (TranGo) announced that on July 1, they are expanding bus services to reach the full county. There will be a route between Twisp and Winthrop, Pateros to Brewster, Okanogan into Tonasket and Tonasket in to Oroville. TranGo will be adding van pool service as well. For example, a group of 5 people going to Wenatchee for school could form a van pool and travel together and save transportation costs. To get the vans on the road, she has reduced the number to five. In the future vanpools will need 8 members as that is the participation level at which the vans begin to pay for themselves.

Currently TranGo routes are on the main roads. Kelly is working to get bus signs and designated bus stops and she is hoping to have them in place by the end of the summer. Best pick-up location can be determined by calling their office. They also pick-up riders if you just wave letting them know you want a ride. The bus will stop at the closest safe spot. Bus service is available Monday through Saturday from 7:00 am to 7:00 pm. For the Omak/Okanogan routes the cost is \$1.00 per trip or \$30.00 per month.

**Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition** provides Door-to Door Service within a 10-mile radius of each town, subject to availability. Transportation began as a service to seniors but has grown to provide transportation services to everyone in Okanogan County. Riders need to call to arrange pick-up 24 hours in advance. General Public Fares: \$2.00 per boarding within city limits, \$4.00 per boarding outside city limits. Senior Donation: \$2.00 for all day rides. Okanogan County Transportation and Nutrition is located at 431 W 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Omak, WA 98841 and their phone number is 509.826.4391.

## **Veteran Services**

### **Participant Comments and Concerns:**

Larry who is a disabled veteran needs to travel to Spokane for medical services. He occasionally is able to get medical services in Tonasket. There are no Veteran Administration (VA) representatives in the area. As a result of his disability he needs to retrain and learn new skills to be able to work. The community college in Omak does not offer technical courses, its curriculum is geared more towards degrees in social work. His goal is to become a security network programmer because there are job opportunities with Coulee Dam or with the local Public Utility Districts.

Irene Jordan, with the WorkSource in Omak shared that unfortunately they no longer have a full-time veteran representative. A veteran representative out of Wenatchee provides case management services every two weeks in the WorkSource office.

Commissioner Kennedy said the county supports a strong veterans program. Eric Fritts works in Tonasket, he has been there a little over a year. A team of volunteer veterans help staff the office so there is always somebody available to provide assistance. Services available are case management, crisis intervention, financial assistance and mental health counseling. Eric can reach by calling 509.486.2121 and his email contact is [www.okanogancountyvets.com](http://www.okanogancountyvets.com).

**Okanogan County Community Action Council** provides Supportive Services for Veteran Families and prevents homelessness by helping qualifying Veterans and their families gain access to the resources needed to successfully transition to or maintain permanent housing. Through the SSVF program, Okanogan County Community Action Support Specialists provide guidance and coordination to Veterans and their families, helping them make informed decisions, understand their options and gain access to VA benefits. Their phone number is 509.422.4041 or toll free at 1.877.641.0101.

## **Voter Access**

Marlene White, voter Education & Outreach Specialist with the Office of the Secretary of State (SOS) attended the Omak meeting and provided resource material. The SOS created an Elections Outreach Toolkit which provides resources to organizations or individuals conducting civics events or voter registration drives. The Toolkit is free and available to anyone. The toolkit includes: voter registration forms; informational fliers; buttons; and other promotional materials. If you're interested in a Toolkit, please e-mail: Marlene White, at [marlene.white@sos.wa.gov](mailto:marlene.white@sos.wa.gov) for tool kits. She can also be reached by phone at 360.902 4174.

**Note:** The deadline for voter registration, address change and other updates is July 4, 2016. July 25, 2016 is the deadline for new Washington State voter registration (in person only). The Okanogan County Elections office is located at 149 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue N. Rm. 104, Okanogan, WA 98840. Their phone number is 509.422.7240.

**Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)** is an annual program offered by GCDE each summer for high school students with disabilities. Kids come from all over the state for a week-long program on a college campus. The kids learn about advocating for themselves and how to become a leader in the disability community. YLF gives kids an opportunity to experience many firsts: first time they have been away from their family, first time they have lived in a dorm and experienced college life, and it is often the first opportunity to meet other young people with similar disabilities. This year's program will be held at Western Washington University in Bellingham. The dates for the event are July 25 through July 30. There is no cost for the student to attend, GCDE provides all needed accommodations, pays travel, lodging and meal expenses. For more information contact Debbie Himes at 360.902.9362 or email her at [dhimes@esd.wa.gov](mailto:dhimes@esd.wa.gov).