

NEWS RELEASE

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**Okanogan County newspaper editor Roger Harnack receives Key Award from
Washington Coalition for Open Government**

Roger Harnack, editor and publisher of the Omak-Okanogan County Chronicle has been honored for calling out a Public Hospital District for violating the state's open meetings law in selecting finalists for a district administrator job.

Harnack was presented with the WCOG Key Award Tuesday, May 6, by Cynthia Mitchell, a journalism professor at Central Washington University and a WCOG board member. He received the award, given to individuals or groups who do something notable to advance the cause of open government, during a WCOG open government panel on campus in Ellensburg.

The directors of the Three Rivers Hospital District in Brewster held a closed meeting in February to winnow the field of candidates to fill the district's top executive position. After consulting with the Washington Newspaper Publishers Association and with Nancy Krier, open government ombudsman for the state Attorney General's office, Harnack told the board that the state Open Public Meetings Act requires elected officials to take such action in public.

Subsequently the district board backed down and conducted a properly announced public meeting to rank the candidates.

Join WCOG and help in the non-partisan fight for transparent government and open public participation. The Washington Coalition for Open Government is a statewide nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advocates for the people's right to access government information and for the principle that transparency and public participation are building blocks of good government. Membership in the coalition is open to all citizens who want to promote and protect open government.