



NEWS

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National Recognition Awarded to Maximize Northwest Missouri

ST. JOSEPH, Mo., November 6, 2025—Communities of Excellence and Resilience [C.O.R.E.], a national nonprofit organization, recently recognized four outstanding communities for their leadership, collaboration, and measurable progress in improving quality of life at their annual Fall Conference in Denver, CO. Bronze recognition was awarded to Maximize Northwest Missouri [Maximize NWMO], the regional vitality initiative of The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri. West Kendall, Fla. And Coral Springs, Fla. earned silver, and Coral Gables, Fla. earned gold recognition in 2025.

“These communities exemplify what happens when people come together across sectors to create shared systems for improvement,” said Stephanie Norling, President and CEO of C.O.R.E. “Each one shows us that resilience and excellence are not separate goals – they’re what make communities stronger over time.”

The communities participated in C.O.R.E.’s Assessment and Recognition Program, where cross-sector teams describe their processes, partnerships, and key results using The C.O.R.E. Guide’s criteria of questions on leadership, strategy, residents and other stakeholders, data measurement and management, people resources, operations, and culture. Maximize NWMO is the only collaborative group in the United States involved in the national organization that is working to not only involve multiple sectors but engaging an 18-county multi-jurisdictional primarily rural region. The initiative is focused on applying proven community development, distributed leadership, and quality performance principles through extensive resident and stakeholder engagement in collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and a shared commitment to build on what is working well across the region to ensure a stronger, more resilient place to live, learn, work, and play.

Maximize NWMO Director Christel Gollnick said, “Knowing that others recognize the wins along the way of the hundreds of people involved throughout the region in this multi-decade journey is icing on the cake.”

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Maximize NWMO serves the region by providing administrative, communications, data access, and coaching support on systems-thinking and community wealth building for individuals, communities and the region. The initiative's Navigation Team supports leaders and communities who want to *dream big, decide wisely, and maximize our region's potential by growing together*. Maximize NWMO is the regional vitality initiative of The Community Foundation of Northwest Missouri, primarily serving the 18 counties of Andrew, Atchison, Buchanan, Caldwell, Clinton, Daviess, Dekalb, Gentry, Grundy, Harrison, Holt, Linn, Livingston, Mercer, Nodaway, Putnam, Sullivan, and Worth. It has been made possible over the last decade through partnerships with Communities of Resilience & Excellence (formerly Communities of Excellence 2026), Patterson Family Foundation, the United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD), University of Missouri Extension, Missouri Department of Economic Development, and several other donors. www.maximizenwmo.org and together@maximizenwmo.org

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PHOTO ATTACHED:

1 – (L-R) Stephanie Norling, C.O.R.E. Executive Director, Sandra Potthoff, Ph.D., C.O.R.E. Faculty and Maximize NWMO Mentor, Steve Wenger, Maximize NWMO Navigation Team, Christel Gollnick, Maximize NWMO Director / JUPER Communications President, and Lowell Kruse, C.O.R.E. Co-Founder / former Heartland Health CEO.

