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**Barbara Rankins of Visibly Community Receives 2011 Sarah Orne Jewett Award
from the Maine Women's Fund**

Lewiston: We are pleased to announce Barbara Rankins, a founding member of Visible Community, a coalition led by downtown residents designed to empower others to shape future development of their neighborhoods, as our 2011 Sarah Orne Jewett Award Recipient.

The Sarah Orne Jewett award is given to a Maine woman who exhibits the attributes of the women in Jewett's works of fiction: true grit, independence, courage, humor and discipline. Sarah Orne Jewett was noted for her works of fiction that highlighted those she was most familiar with - the everyday world of villages and ordinary people in Maine. Like Jewett, Barbara Rankins has dedicated much of her time highlighting the work, successes and struggles of everyday people in Lewiston's downtown residential neighborhoods.

Ms. Rankins is a woman who understands the power and eloquence of her own voice in conveying the ideas and aspirations of residents who have long felt shut out and left behind. A close colleague stated, "When Barbara speaks, people listen; and when people listen, the voice of the entire community is heard." Through her bold leadership and tireless advocacy, the city of Lewiston has changed its approach to civic engagement emphasizing a grassroots approach of seeking out the voices of downtown residents. Through Barbara's efforts, the community has moved away from thinking of neighborhood development as an investment in physical infrastructure to one built upon developing its human assets. Her leadership has helped to change the way things get done and helped the community realize that every person can make a difference.

We are delighted to celebrate Ms. Rankins' accomplishments by presenting her the 2011 Sarah Orne Jewett Award. We will honor and hear her thoughts on how women are creatively shaping the future of Maine at our May 18th Leadership Luncheon.

About the Maine Women's Fund

In 22 years, the Maine Women's Fund has granted over \$1.5 million to nonprofits across the State which are creating long-lasting change that will build the economic security of thousands of women and girls. Through grantmaking, we are pushing for policy changes and investing in education and girls' independence. We are helping women build and expand businesses, train for better jobs and wages, build assets and make smart financial decisions. We are working with women as leaders and donors to prioritize women as key agents of change for their families, communities and Maine.