

Thomas, Davis Featured in Prairie Talks

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Native American Development Center founder Lorraine Davis and Prairie Public Radio director Bill Thomas, Fargo, will discuss the life-shaping power of stories during a Prairie Talks presentation at 2 p.m., Sunday, June 14, at Prairie Village Museum in Rugby. The event is free.

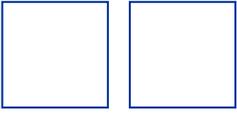
The museum will open for touring at noon and Friends of the Museum will have hot dogs, burgers and beverages available for purchase from noon until gone. The Friends also will provide bars and coffee after the talk.

A Native American woman, professional, and mother of four, Davis has overcome alcoholism, poverty, homelessness, oppression, and violence. She is collecting stories of resilience from some 50 Native Americans in the Bismarck-Mandan area that Prairie Public Radio will begin airing later this summer. The series also will have a page on the Prairie Public website, where people can listen anytime or download the stories onto cell phones or tablets.

Article Photos



Davis



At Prairie Talks, Davis and Thomas will discuss the power of stories to shape the lives of individuals and communities, especially within Native American communities.

Davis founded the Native American Development Center in 2012 to provide a supportive and culturally relevant foundation for Native Americans seeking better lives. An enrolled member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Dakota Oyate, Davis is a descendant of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation. She has served as part of the homeless and poverty coalition, a Mandan Public School board member, and advisor to the Mayor of Bismarck to recruit Native American career talent.

Thomas joined Prairie Public in 1999 as the first manager for a new public radio network formed with NDSU and UND. Today Prairie Public Radio reaches homes across North Dakota, northwestern Minnesota, and Canada. Prior to accepting the position in North Dakota, Thomas worked for Nebraska's Public Radio Network and held a variety of positions in Illinois, Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., and St. Louis.

"When I moved here," Thomas said, "I knew North Dakota was home to several Indian nations, so I was surprised at how little I heard about them. We have done some things at Prairie Public, but we've done a lot more on Germans from Russia and Scandinavians. This will be a chance for those who are not Native American to get a better, fuller sense of what that's like. And for our listeners who are Native American, a validation of their own struggles in the stories they hear."

Prairie Talks events are intended to engage, challenge, and inspire. This Prairie Talk is co-sponsored by Prairie Village Museum and is supported in part by the North Dakota Humanities Council. Donations are welcomed to help defray expenses.

Previous Prairie Talks events have featured author and former National Press Club president Alan Bjerga; author and human rights advocate Roxana Saberi; Secretary General of the Norwegian Helsinki Committee Bjørn Engesland; Prairie Silence author Melanie Hoffert; and documentary filmmaker Todd Melby and rancher Marty Young Bear. The series was started to connect people in North Central North Dakota with people from around the world. Kristi Rendahl, the founder of the series, was born and raised in Benson County and is a graduate of Rugby High School. Prairie Talks has an advisory council comprised of residents in the Rugby area.