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Center for Small Towns Completes Four Townships Economic Report

Summary: The results illustrate valuable information about the economy and demographics of the Four Townships area.

(February 18, 2014)-Since January 2012 the University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns (CST) and the Four Townships Economic Survey Committee have been coordinating a survey to gather data on the economic and demographic conditions in the Four Townships area. Located near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and encompassing Fall Lake, Eagles Nest, Morse, and Stony River, the region is crucial to Minnesota.

The goal of the report is to provide a clearer picture of the economic landscape in the Four Townships area. Finalized in early January, the report illustrates the demographic breakdown of permanent and seasonal residents, of which the area is almost evenly comprised. The report shows that both groups, and their continued dedication to the area, keep the economy afloat and support the vibrant community.

To get a complete and more accurate picture of both full- and part-time residents, the survey solicited information on tax expenditures and amounts paid by different types of residents. The survey also covered suggested areas for improvement, and results indicated a large interest in improving technological services, fiber optics, fire protection, and health services for the area.

Morris students involved in the project include Reid Ronnander '14, Bemidji, Jordan Wentz '15, Dodge Center, Meara Hove '14, Falcon Heights, and Jacob Bibeau '15, Grand Rapids. Faculty and staff involved include Engin Sungur, professor of statistics, and Kelly Asche, CST program coordinator. Anne Stewart Uehling, a permanent resident and member of the Four Townships Economic Survey Committee, and David Fluegel, South West Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, were key contacts and members of the team.

The report is available in both its full and summary version at centerforsmalltowns.org/fourtownships. For more information, contact [Asche](#) or [Uehling](#).

This project is partially supported by an operating support grant to the University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns from the Otto Bremer Foundation.

The University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns (CST) is a community outreach program that serves as a point-of-entry to the resources of the University of Minnesota. Small towns, local units of government, k-12 schools, nonprofit organizations, and other University units are able to utilize CST's resources as they work on rural issues or make contributions to rural society. Its mission is to focus the University's attention and marshal its resources toward assisting Minnesota's small towns with locally identified issues by creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students.

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