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Students Bring Technology Education to Rural Minnesota

Summary: Michael Lindgren '14, Crystal, and Zak Threadgill '15, Ramsey, are performing a statistical analysis of Lac qui Parle's Computer Commuter.

(April 12, 2013)-Michael Lindgren '14, Crystal, and Zak Threadgill '15, Ramsey, are working together with the University of Minnesota, Morris's Center for Small Towns (CST) to create an analysis of Lac qui Parle County's (LqP) technology education project, the LqP Computer Commuter system. Lindgren and Threadgill are assisting the county's Economic Development Administration in reviewing the system's role in promoting computer and internet literacy throughout the community. This analysis is intended to help the administration better understand the effectiveness of the program while generating ideas that could be added to the current model.

According to Lindgren, the goal of the LqP Computer Commuter is to "increase broadband access and computer knowledge in the county." He adds that "it has been shown to improve the local economy."

The Computer Commuter is housed in a small bus outfitted with computer and mobile device workstations that provide individuals the opportunity to practice computer skills. The bus travels to cities throughout LqP and invites people to explore the electronics under guided instruction, providing them with information and answering any questions they might have.

The project demands a great deal from both students, as it requires them to collect, analyze, and compile a variety of data related to the Computer Commuter. The two agree that they enjoy both the work and the opportunity to interact one-on-one with communities and CST. When asked why he enjoys working at CST, Threadgill notes that he likes "just being able to work with and help small towns."

Additional information on the Computer Commuter, including a detailed schedule, is available [online](#).

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 the Center's resources as they work on rural issues or make contributions to rural society. Their 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.

Photo: Lindgren, left, and Threadgill, right.

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