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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications  
Phone: 320-589-6414, [weberm@morris.umn.edu](mailto:weberm@morris.umn.edu)

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer  
Phone: 320-589-6068, [jrray@morris.umn.edu](mailto:jrray@morris.umn.edu)

**2013 Rural Arts and Culture Summit to be Held in Morris**

*Summary: The 2013 Rural Arts and Culture Summit will be hosted by the Center for Small Towns June 5-6.*

(March 29, 2013)-The 2013 Rural Arts and Culture (RAC) Summit, “Leveraging Arts and Culture to Build Thriving Communities,” will take place on Wednesday, June 5, and Thursday, June 6, at the University of Minnesota, Morris. The summit will celebrate the transformative power of arts-based community development in rural towns, guiding its attendees to strengthen rural towns through innovative partnerships between communities and artists. The summit is hosted by the University of Minnesota, Morris’s Center for Small Towns (CST), in partnership with Springboard for the Arts.

The summit will feature a wide variety of presentations, panels, networking opportunities, and hands-on workshops. Attendees will have the chance to hear about models from leaders across the country, including Chris Beck from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Washington, DC, Matthew Fluharty from the Art of the Rural, Missouri, Gwynn Rukenbrod from Handmade in America, North Carolina, and Donna Neuwirth from the Wormfarm Institute, Wisconsin. Sessions will explore topics such as creative placemaking, building audiences through cross-sector partnerships, planning, design and economic development, the intersection of art and agriculture, funding challenges and opportunities, and case studies of innovative models that foster community interaction or enhance a region’s identity.

There will be three featured speakers at the 2013 conference: June Holley, Michael Strand, and John Davis. Holley, author of *The Network Weaving Handbook*, provides consulting, training, and coaching to organizations and communities around the world interested in creating healthier networks through a better understanding of self-organization, collaboration, innovation, and learning. Strand, a potter whose mission is to build community through art, craft and design, is the head of the Art Department at North Dakota State University. He has traveled around the world combining art with social practice and community development as he investigates the potential of craft as a catalyst for social change in communities of all sizes. John Davis lives in Lanesboro, a small town in southeastern Minnesota, where he has been instrumental in transforming the community into a regional center for the arts. His work and initiatives have included founding the New York Mills Cultural Center, The Great American Think-Off, and an International Kids Philosophy Slam.

In addition to Springboard for the Arts and CST, the Rural Arts and Culture Summit is supported by a multitude of organizations, including the Forum of Regional Arts Councils of Minnesota, PartnerSHIP 4 Health, the Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission, the Five Wings Arts Council, the Viking Library System, and Green Island Art and Nature Sanctuary. This activity is made possible by the McKnight Foundation and by the voters of Minnesota through a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund and by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Early registration for the summit is open until Tuesday, April 30. The registration fee is \$100 for two days and \$70 for one day. This cost includes attendance to the conference as well as breakfast and lunch on both days. After April 30, registration will be \$125 for two days, and \$90 for one day. To register visit the RAC Summit website, call

218-998-4037, or email [racsummit2013@gmail.com](mailto:racsummit2013@gmail.com).

Additional information on the Rural Arts and Culture Summit is available [online](#) and on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Springboard for the Arts is an economic and community development organization based in St. Paul and Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Springboard for the Arts's mission is to cultivate vibrant communities by connecting artists with the skills, information, and services they need to make a living and a life. Their work is about building stronger communities, neighborhoods, and economies, and supporting artists to be an important leverage point in that work.

Through personal and academic discovery, the University of Minnesota, Morris provides opportunities for students to grow intellectually, engage in community, experience environmental stewardship and celebrate diversity. A renewable and sustainable educational experience, Morris prepares graduates for careers, for advanced degrees, for lifelong learning, for work world flexibility in the future, and for global citizenship. Learn more about Morris at [morris.umn.edu](http://morris.umn.edu) or call 888-866-3382.