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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Jolee Henkel '15 Works to Map Carbon Footprint of Stevens County

Summary: Jolee Henkel '15 works with Stevens FORWARD! to calculate Stevens County's carbon footprint.

(February 15, 2013)-Jolee Henkel '15, Clara City, has been working for the past year with the Center for Small Towns (CST) to help create a comprehensive breakdown of Stevens County's carbon footprint. She and CST have undertaken the project in partnership with Stevens FORWARD!, a nonprofit agency focused on creating a brighter future for members of Stevens County. This will be the first study of Stevens County's carbon footprint ever completed.

Using census data, surveys, local business information, and waste analysis, Henkel began the study by compiling the county's emissions in the categories of travel, household emissions, waste, food, and agriculture. She will now combine the information from each category to create a clear and inclusive image of Stevens County's carbon footprint. By 2015 Henkel hopes to create a comprehensive assessment of what Stevens County is emitting and propose actions that could help lower its total carbon footprint. She is excited about the impacts a project of this magnitude could have on education and awareness in the local area.

Stevens FORWARD! is an organization determined to create a brighter future for all residents of the county community: Alberta, Chokio, Donnelly, Hancock, and Morris. Funded through a variety of public and private sources including the county, the five cities, the townships, the University of Minnesota, Morris, financial institutions, and other local businesses, this initiative represents a genuine spirit of partnership and collaboration, claiming that "Stevens County will be the model community in rural Minnesota, recognized for our progressive development and our innovations: renewable energy, agriculture, business, and education. We will achieve this by building upon the intellectual and social capital already present within the county and by attracting new and diverse talent that will drive our economy and increase our population."

The Center for Small Towns is a community outreach program housed at the University of Minnesota, Morris and 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.

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