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2-15-2011

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#### Recommended Citation

University Relations, "Going brown to get green at the University of Minnesota, Morris" (2011). *Campus News Archive*. 714.

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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)

**Going brown to get green at the University of Minnesota, Morris**

*Summary: Will Dolezal '11, Minneapolis, introduces composting system to campus and community.*

(February 15, 2011)-More than 50 percent of the waste sent to landfills is made up of organic material. That means that more than half of the material in landfills doesn't need to be there, taking up space and releasing harmful greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. Will Dolezal '11, Minneapolis, an environmental economics major and member of the [GreenCorps](#) at the University of Minnesota, Morris, is working to address the campus's waste stream by implementing composting on campus. He then hopes to move the project out into the community. He says that composting is "one of the largest opportunities the campus has to become even greener."

Dolezal says his initial focus has been exploring on-campus composting in Dining Services, but hopes to move the initiative to the Turtle Mountain Cafe and the campus restrooms (most paper towels can be composted) as well. The long term goal is to extend this initiative out into the community. He says that there's some concern about the upfront costs and increased workload, but that it will be worth it in the long run. Eventually he's hoping to engage with other local stakeholders, possibly including the local schools, hospital, and restaurants.

Dolezal cites a lack of both proper outreach and continuity as the main problems with past composting initiatives. "People graduate or get busy, but if it's really established within the system, it will last within the system," says Dolezal. Outreach and continuity have been two things he has been particularly concerned with. To make sure the work continues after he graduates, he helped launch the Composting Initiative on campus. They had their first meeting last semester and packed the University's Prairie Lounge with interested staff and students. The group divided up into three sections this semester, each concerned with a different aspect of the project, including waste stream analysis, composting operations and research, and tours and external contacts.

He has also partnered with Minnesota Public Interest Research Group's Local Foods and Sustainable Agriculture task force to reach out to student groups on campus. Together, they reached out to organizations that are completely unrelated to composting, as well as those with an obvious connection, such as the Saddle Club. Dolezal was pleasantly surprised at the number of students who were interested from all kinds of organizations.

Dolezal's interest in composting started after his mother became involved with Linden Hills Light and Power, a community based organization in Minneapolis working to shrink their local carbon footprint. He met and worked with the directors of their composting system over the summer and saw just how much could be done. He thought it matched well with his job at GreenCorps as waste prevention and recycling member. Dolezal hopes that the momentum of this project will continue to build and that by the end of his service there may be a new composting system on campus. He will finish his term of service with the GreenCorps in August 2011.

The Minnesota GreenCorps is an environmentally focused AmeriCorps program administered by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. This program is funded through a grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service with additional support from ServeMinnesota. Partnering in this program is University of Minnesota, Morris

Center for Small Towns.

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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