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Secretary of State Mark Ritchie to visit Morris

Summary: Ritchie will speak to students and community members on campus and attend the Morris Community Meal on Monday, April 26, 2010.

(April 22, 2010)-The Office of the Secretary of State is teaming up with higher education institutions and groups during April 2010 to organize nonpartisan voter education and outreach events. Secretary of State Mark Ritchie will visit Morris on Monday, April 26, 2010. At 5:15 p.m., he will speak to students and community members in the Welcome Center Conference Room at the University of Minnesota, Morris. After his talk, he will join the Morris community at the monthly [Community Meal](#), a collaborative between the UMM Office of Community Engagement and community partners. The meal is served from 5:30 until 7 p.m. at the Morris Senior Center.

In his talk, “Democracy and You,” Ritchie will speak to the importance of voter participation, explain legislative changes to election law that impact students, and encourage them to become election judges and be a part of the elections process. Office staff will be on hand to assist students interested in registering to vote and answer questions about voting.

Morris students vote in high numbers. In 2009, 92 percent of UMM’s graduating class had voted in federal and state elections. However, as a group, eligible voters ages 18–24 tend to vote less than any other voting age group. If voters age 30 and younger voted in equal percentage to older age groups in the 2008 election, an additional seven million votes would have been cast nationwide. If Minnesota voters younger than 30 years old voted in equal numbers to other age groups, there is the potential to increase voter turnout in Minnesota by more than one hundred thousand voters. The Morris campus is pleased to partner with the Office of the Secretary of State to encourage students to be civically engaged.

“Voting is a powerful expression of our personal commitment to shaping our future as a state and country,” Ritchie says. “It is so important that we engage students and provide information about their voting rights so that they feel welcomed into the process.”

Free and convenient parking is available in the North Lot. For more information, contact [Argie Manolis](#), Office of Community Engagement, at 320-589-6276, or John Aiken, Office of the Minnesota Secretary of State, at 651-201-1339

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 or call 888-866-3382.