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Morris representatives to present at 2010 Home Grown Economy conference

Summary: Sponsored by Congressman Collin Peterson, the conference is a forum to share ideas and connect resources in order to generate economic opportunities for farmers and facilitate the availability of home-grown foods.

(January 27, 2010)-The University of Minnesota, Morris will participate in the 2010 Home Grown Economy conference sponsored by United States Representative Collin Peterson (DFL-Minnesota District 7) to be held in Marshall at Southwest Minnesota State University and by interactive video in four locations throughout the state, including the West Central Research and Outreach Center in Morris. The event is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, February 15–16, 2010. Several Morris campus representatives will present during the conference.

The theme of this year's conference is "Equipping You to Build Community Based Food Systems."

"Changing attitudes about food, its impact on health and well-being, and growing opportunities for small farmers have sparked a movement across the country and in Minnesota of consumers seeking out locally grown foods," Peterson says, "and I'm hosting this conference to help get the word out and link people to the available resources."

Peterson has invited United States Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to provide the keynote address. Ken Meter of Crossroads Research Center will present insights on how food networks thrive and strengthen local economies.

Conference presenters from the Morris campus include Sandy Olson-Loy, vice chancellor for student affairs, who will provide the Farm to Cafeteria session welcome at the Morris site Mary Jo Forbord, UMM Healthy Eating Initiative and Kate Newland, UMM Dining Services and Sodexo food services. Carol Ford, owner of Garden Goddess Produce and Division of Science and Mathematics executive administrative and office specialist, will also present.

"The University of Minnesota, Morris is proud to participate in the 2010 Home Grown Economy conference," states Olson-Loy. "The Home Grown Economy grew out of work with the Pride of the Prairie local foods initiative, of which UMM is a founding partner. Morris hosted the very first conference three years ago in 2007. Since then, there has been growing interest and amazing progress here on our campus and beyond. The conference is an excellent opportunity to share ideas and connect resources to generate economic opportunities for our area farmers and businesses, and to facilitate the availability of fresh, healthy, home-grown foods."

In addition to connecting with plenary sessions from Marshall via interactive TV, each site—Morris, Marshall, Crookston, Bemidji, and Fergus Falls—will host separate afternoon sessions on community-based food system development, economic opportunities, and issues faced in that particular region. The highly interactive sessions will provide opportunities to discuss and generate ideas for next steps in local foods in communities particular to each area.

For more information, visit the [2010 Home Grown Economy conference](#) online, or contact [Dorothy Rosemeier](#) or Peterson's office at 218-847-5056.

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