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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)

### **Open house events celebrate University of Minnesota history in west central Minnesota**

*Summary: Visit the new West Central Research and Outreach Center Renewable Energy Office and addition, and tour the new University of Minnesota, Morris Welcome Center.*

(January 29, 2010)-On Tuesday, February 23, 2010, the community and campus are invited to open house events that celebrate the University of Minnesota's 100-year history in west central Minnesota and history-in-the-making. From 1 until 7 p.m., visit the new [West Central Research and Outreach Center](#) (WCROC) Renewable Energy Addition and Office, and from 2:30 until 5:30 p.m., tour the new University of Minnesota, Morris (UMM) Welcome Center. The events are part of the yearlong [2010 Celebration](#) commemorating UMM's 50th birthday and the [West Central School of Agriculture](#) (WCSA) and Experiment Station's 100th anniversary of its founding.

"The 2010 anniversaries provide a wonderful opportunity for us to celebrate this community, the educational and research resources that exist here, and the people—past and present—who believe in, value, and support our mission," states UMM Chancellor Jacqueline Johnson. "The open houses are the two of many events that will take place this year as we honor our past, the connections that unite us in the present, and our vision for the future."

#### Renewable Energy Addition and Office

Although the WCSA closed in 1963, the WCROC carries on the Experiment Station's legacy of agricultural research and education. Today, in 2010, their mission also includes environmental, social, and economic issues. The WCROC's new addition and renovation features energy efficient design and technologies coupled with renewable energy research. The new green building includes healthier and more productive environments for WCROC and Extension Regional Office staff and visitors. The design opens the building to additional day lighting and provides quality indoor and outdoor space for professional interaction. The expanded office and work space includes a new conference/multi-purpose room that seats up to 200 people theatre style and 120 people in seminar and class room settings. The handicapped-accessible building serves as a test showcase for green building and renewable energy. Even though the building doubled in size, energy usage is expected to remain constant by using solar panels, motion sensors to monitor lights, improved insulation, and energy efficient doors and windows. The project was funded through Minnesota Legislature bonding and a grant from the Initiative for Renewable Energy and the Environment.

#### Welcome Center

UMM's new Welcome Center also has ties to the past while illustrating a vision for the future. The former Community Services building, named Engineering during WCSA days, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the WCSA and Experiment Station Historic District. It is also the first building in Minnesota to use energy efficient chilled beam technology. Chilled beams, using water not air, and in-floor radiant heat cool and heat the facility. The WCROC wind turbine and the campus's biomass plant will power the building. Funded through Minnesota Legislature bonding, the facility was built to LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Platinum standards. It houses the Offices of Admissions, External Relations, Continuing Education, Community Engagement, and the Center for Small Towns.

“Everyone in the University community here in Morris is excited about the open house events,” says WCROC Professor and Director of Operations Lee Johnston. “They will give us a chance to show off our wonderful new and updated facilities that will support our mission of bringing the resources of the University of Minnesota to the citizens of Minnesota.

The WCROC is located at 46352 State Highway 329, and the Morris campus is located at 600 East Fourth Street. Parking will be free at both locations, and light refreshments will be served. A complimentary van will shuttle visitors between facilities to enjoy the open houses as well as the UMM Pride of the Prairie Farmers Market from 1:30 p.m. until 5:30 p.m. and the Local Foods Meal served from 4:45 until 7 p.m. Visit [2010.morris.umn.edu](http://2010.morris.umn.edu) for details or call 320-589-6414.

A formal dedication for the WCROC facility will be held on Horticulture Night, July 29, 2010. A formal dedication for the Welcome Center will be held Founders Day, September 26, 2010.

Photo above: The new Welcome Center is located in the renovated Community Services building, named Engineering during the WCSA and Experiment Station days on campus.

Photo below: The new WCROC Offices and addition.

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.