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John Jones '11, Stevens Forward! steward influences "green" changes at summer job

Summary: Influenced by the carbon neutral goals of the Morris campus and the Stevens Forward! initiative, Jones helped Pizza Ranch owner Ron Tappe initiate cost and carbon saving changes.

(November 10, 2009)-Last summer, John Jones '11, Bloomington, worked at Pizza Ranch of Morris as a pizza delivery person. A Stevens Forward! steward through the Center for Small Towns, Jones started noticing that there was more than one kind of "green" to be made in business. Influenced by the carbon neutral goals of both the Morris campus and the Stevens Forward! initiative, he began helping Pizza Ranch owner Ron Tappe to initiate cost and carbon saving changes for the business.

Jones and Tappe worked together to save money and to better light the dining room by switching to compact fluorescent light bulbs. To cut down on gas consumption and emissions, the restaurant now offers delivery drivers a bicycle for nearby pizza deliveries. The business uses a dumpster to recycle its cardboard and has invited neighboring businesses to also use the receptacle. Tappe says the recycling participation is so intense they had to get a second bin, and the lighting change has already cut his electricity bill by 12 percent.

"People sometimes look at college students and they say you don't have the connections to do anything," Jones says, "but when you're associated with something you can say is a countywide program, and you work with business leaders, the chancellor, and city planners, it definitely gives you more credibility."

According to Jones, they are also exploring using local food products and pizza boxes that double as plates. "Working with a franchise is challenging because vendor arrangements can't be changed or even rearranged without corporate approval, but on the other hand the impact is amplified if the changes become institutional," he shares.

As a Stevens Forward! steward through the Center for Small Towns, Jones is one of about twenty-four county residents who offer input and inspiration to create a shared vision that will help develop the county's future achievements. He assists with activities such as collecting information to develop narrative descriptions for the Destiny Drivers, posting information and updating the Web site, updating brochures, preparing information for media distribution, and assisting the coordinator with project logistics.

Stevens Forward! is sponsored by the Stevens County Board of Commissioners and is an effort to create a brighter future for all residents in the county by establishing countywide partnerships and working together to make economic, environmental, and social improvements.

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