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**Survey results from Prairie Pioneer Days show opportunities for healthy eating**

*Summary: A number of readily available fruits and veggies were among the favorites selected by nearly 300 local residents July 11 at Prairie Pioneer Days in East Side Park.*

(July 16, 2009)-A number of readily available fruits and veggies were among the favorites selected by nearly 300 local residents July 11 at Prairie Pioneer Days in East Side Park.

The survey was conducted as part of Morris Healthy Eating, a program to expand availability and access to fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods on campus, within Morris, and in Stevens County.

“By gathering information from our community, we hope to determine which fruits and vegetables people are likely to choose when given the option. We encourage people to choose fruits and vegetables in season, when they are at the peak of nutrition and taste,” said Mary Jo Forbord, Morris Healthy Eating Coordinator.

In the survey, asparagus placed first in the vegetable category, potatoes placed second and sweet corn placed third. In the fruit category, strawberries won hands down, with raspberries a distant second. In the locally grown fruits and vegetables in season category, sweet corn won big, with strawberries and tomatoes placing second and third respectively.

Forbord said that eating a healthy diet that includes two and a half cups of fruits and vegetables daily is one of the keys to turning the tide of overweight and obesity now affecting two-thirds of U.S. citizens. A recent study by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota titled, *Obesity and Future Health Care Costs: A Portrait of Two Minnesotas*, highlighted the fact that adult obesity-related health conditions could cost the state of Minnesota at least an additional \$900 million per year by 2010 and \$3.7 billion more per year by 2020.

“Turnout was even better than we expected at our Prairie Pioneer Days Healthy Eating booth, with community members expressing enthusiasm about the program. I was encouraged by the level of interest expressed by many people who visited our informational booth,” said Phil Rudney, a University of Minnesota, Morris student working with Morris Healthy Eating. “People seemed genuinely excited about opportunities to make the healthy choice the easy choice.”

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota is supporting Morris Healthy Eating as part of its Prevention Minnesota initiative to help improve the health of Minnesotans by combating the root causes of cancer and heart disease, of which unhealthy eating is a leading factor. Partners in the Morris Healthy Eating coalition include Pomme de Terre Food Co-op, Pride of the Prairie Local Foods Initiative led by the University of Minnesota West Central Partnership, Sodexo (manager of campus dining services), Stevens Community Medical Center, and the University of Minnesota, Morris.

Representatives from Morris Healthy Eating will be at Horticulture night on July 30 at the West Central Research and Outreach Center gardens and the public will have the opportunity to stop by and vote for their favorite fruits and vegetables, and find out more about the project.

For more information on the Morris Healthy Eating program, the public is encouraged to contact Mary Jo Forbord at 320-589-6075, [forbordm@morris.umn.edu](mailto:forbordm@morris.umn.edu), or visit the Morris Healthy Eating [Web site](#).

PHOTO: Morris Healthy Eating Student Leadership Team (L to R): Danielle Schatschneider, Jenna Sandoe, Anne Krohmer, and Phil Rudney

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