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2-5-2009

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Pride of the Prairie Community Foods Day

Summary: The Morris campus will host its semiannual Pride of the Prairie Community Foods Day on February 17. The event, which will showcase local foods and local producers of west central Minnesota, will include an afternoon Farmers' Market followed by a Local Foods Meal.

(February 5, 2009)-by Matthew A. Johnson, Morris campus Local Foods Intern -- The University of Minnesota, Morris will host its semiannual Pride of the Prairie Community Foods Day on Tuesday, Feb. 17. The event will include an afternoon Farmers' Market followed by a Local Foods Meal. Both events, which will showcase local foods and local producers of west central Minnesota, are open to the public.

The Farmers' Market will be held from 1 to 4:30 p.m. in Oyate Hall in the campus Student Center and will showcase Minnesota farmers and organizations dedicated to promoting local agriculture. The event will give attendees the chance to support the local economy by purchasing locally grown products, learning more about community-based food systems and visiting with local food producers. The Farmers' Market will feature locally grown squash, fresh apples, whole wheat flour, jams, jellies, baked goods, eggs, beef and pork.

Morris campus Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Sandy Olson-Loy said of the event: "Pride of the Prairie Community Foods Day represents a great opportunity for farmers, local food advocates, community members and students to come together and celebrate our vibrant local economy and our incredible wealth of local food producers. It is an important opportunity for us to strengthen the bonds in our community and reestablish the connections between farm and plate."

Farmers' Market participants to date include American Farm & Garden, the Buy Fresh Buy Local Campaign, the Hoffman Farmers' Market, Life Design Organics, Moonstone Farm, Pomme de Terre Food Co-op, Prairie Horizons Farm, Swenson Orchard and the Sustainable Farming Association.

Following the Farmers' Market, the campus will again host a delicious spring Local Foods Feast featuring ingredients from many local and sustainable farmers. While dining, attendees will be able to enjoy live music performed by Ina Mae & the Sea Arrows, Mariah Ralston & Ben Cook and the prairie's own Homemade Jam. The spring feast will include apple wild rice salad, carrot, cabbage and onion slaw, flax seed muffins, rustic sourdough bread, mushroom, onion and squash medley, country sausage and gravy with biscuits, baked beans, carved ham and apple-strawberry crisp and compote. The menu includes a variety of vegetarian, vegan and low-fat options.

Dinner will be served from 4:45 to 7 p.m. in the campus' Food Service building. Tickets are available at the door or in the Student Center lobby on weekdays from February 12 to 17 (10 a.m. - 2 p.m. daily). Adult tickets are \$10, off-campus students and children's tickets are \$6 and children under five eat free.

Local farmers who will supply food for the meal include Dry Weather Creek Farm, Honey and Herbs, Pastures A' Plenty, Stony Creek Dairy and Steve's Strawberries.

This event is made possible thanks to the University of Minnesota, Morris Foodies, U Plan Wellness Program, Sustainable Farming Association, West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, Land Stewardship Project and Minnesota's farmers.

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