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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

UMM represented in environmental panel at State Fair Tuesday

Summary: Lowell Rasmussen, David Fluegel and student Tynell Kocer, all representing the University of Minnesota, Morris, will be participants in The Environment and Great Outdoors Panel at the Minnesota State Fair August 26.

(August 22, 2008)-Lowell Rasmussen, vice chancellor for finance and facilities, David Fluegel of the Center for Small Towns and student Tynell Kocer, all representing the University of Minnesota, Morris, will be participants in The Environment and Great Outdoors Panel at the Minnesota State Fair August 26 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. The panel will be broadcast over Twin Cities Public Television (TPT). Visitors to the State Fair can view the discussion live at the Big Top Chautauqua tent.

The panel is divided into an initial conversation (“Understanding and Protecting Our Legacy”) about the current status of Minnesota conservation planning and education, followed by a discussion with members of the Morris, Minnesota community involved in a wide array of sustainability practices and innovations. MPR and TPT host Cathy Wurzer will serve as host and moderator.

The session will open with a short musical presentation by folksinger and writer Charlie Maguire, known as the “Singing Park Ranger.” Through song and story, Charlie will remind us what we treasure—and what’s at stake—as we talk about conservation and environmental stewardship. McGuire has been a frequent visitor to the Morris area.

Conversation One: Understanding and Protecting Our Legacy, will key off the recently released Statewide Comprehensive Conservation Report issued by the University of Minnesota and will also involve discussion of innovative K-12 and public education programs intended to educate and invest a new generation of Minnesotans in conservation and stewardship activities. Panelists include Deb Swackhamer, of the University of Minnesota Institute on the Environment Peggy Knapp, of the Hamline Center for Global Environmental Education Amy Kay Kerber, a DNR educator and John Hellend, primary research staff for the Minnesota House Environment and Natural Resources Committee for over 35 years (invited).

Conversation Two: Going Green in Morris: Building Sustainable Communities, will feature activities in the Morris, Minnesota, community in west central part of our state that’s “deeply rooted in the tall prairie grass and connected to the blue prairie sky.” Working in partnership the University of Minnesota, Morris and the local community have received state and national recognition for its sustainable practices in alternative energy, “green building” and public education efforts. Panelists from the University of Minnesota-Morris include Lowell Rasmussen, the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Facilities David Fluegel, a community program specialist from the Center for Small Towns and Tynell Kocer, a student active in community/university efforts.

View the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center program that UMM students Tynell Kocer and Paul Eveslage worked on with the Center for Small Towns at [Prairie Woods](#). Prairie Woods ELC staff have been presenters at the past two Symposia on Small Towns. High school students in the Youth Energy Summit (YES) programs have been presenters at the West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership annual meeting and other events around

the region.

These State Fair activities are a part of the yearlong celebration of 150 years of the state of Minnesota. Activities in the Big Top will reflect on the past, assess the current situation and attempt to provide information that will be needed for the next 50 years and the 200th year state anniversary.

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 or call 888-866-3382.