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UMM joins inaugural committee on renewable energy

Summary: The University of Minnesota, Morris will join only 25 institutions nationwide in creating a national higher education steering committee on renewable energy. Lowell Rasmussen, UMM's associate vice chancellor for physical plant and master planning, has been invited to serve as a founding member of the Higher Education Steering Committee (HEC) of the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE).

(October 31, 2006)-The University of Minnesota, Morris will join only 25 institutions nationwide in creating a national higher education steering committee on renewable energy. Lowell Rasmussen, UMM's associate vice chancellor for physical plant and master planning, has been invited to serve as a founding member of the Higher Education Steering Committee (HEC) of the American Council on Renewable Energy (ACORE). Rasmussen has played a significant role within the University of Minnesota in initiating renewable energy projects and developing partnerships across the University that advance sustainable energy priorities.

"I am pleased that the University of Minnesota and the Morris campus are being recognized for their leadership in promoting renewable energy," said Rasmussen. "The missions of ACORE and UMM are very complimentary and will lead to even more progress to bring renewable energy into the classroom and the boardroom."

Members of the ACORE steering committee will "take a leading role in planning and carrying out the mission of the HEC and, by doing so, help move renewable energy into the mainstream of the American economy and lifestyle," said ACORE President Michael Eckhart in a letter to Rasmussen from ACORE.

The UMM campus has played a leadership role within the state of Minnesota in advancing sustainable, environmentally friendly initiatives since the original Earth Day. These efforts have grown to levels of national leadership and now touch nearly all aspects of campus life.

Wind power supplies up to 60 percent of UMM's electrical needs. A biomass gasification demonstration and research facility has undergone bids and is in the permitting stage at UMM. The biomass facility will use corn stalks from the region's farmers to provide 80 percent of the campus' heating and cooling needs.

UMM is a founding partner in the Pride of the Prairie Local Foods Initiative. Each semester UMM hosts a Pride of the Prairie Food Expo and Farmer's Market, featuring locally, organically and sustainably grown foods. Minnesota Grown Food Alliance certified foods are served regularly in the campus' dining facilities.

A gas/electric hybrid, the Toyota Prius, is the preferred vehicle driven by UMM students, staff and faculty. Water conservation and recycling makes "cents" across the campus. The U.S. Department of Energy and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency have recognized UMM as a member of the Green Power Leadership Club.

UMM's vision is to be 100 percent energy self-sufficient by 2010.

In addition to UMM, other institutions that comprise the steering committee include Arizona State University, Cape Cod Community College, Carnegie Mellon University, College of the Atlantic, Colorado State University, Cornell University, Duke University, Emory University, Furman University, Juniata College, Middlebury College, Milwaukee Area Technical College, Mount Wachusett Community College, New York City of Technology-The City University of New York, Pitzer College, Saint Francis University-Carbondale, Texas Tech University, University of California, Berkeley, University of Florida, University of Wisconsin, Oshkosh, Washington State University and Western Illinois University.

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.