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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

COPC grant to celebrate milestone

Summary: The Community Outreach Partnership Center's (COPC) Partnership in Morris has reached a milestone. For the past one and one-half years, this program has been creating partnerships between UMM and the City of Morris with a focus on community revitalization.

(September 20, 2006)-The Community Outreach Partnership Center's (COPC) Partnership in Morris has reached a milestone. For the past one and one-half years, this program has been creating partnerships between UMM and the City of Morris with a focus on community revitalization. The COPC Partnership is now half-way complete in terms of the three years of grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) COPC program. Those who have worked enthusiastically to guide the COPC Partnership are sparked by what has been done and what can still be accomplished.

"It's been impressive to see the broad community participation in the many different COPC projects. It is a good time for us to stop and assess how far we've come and consider what is ahead," said Tom McRoberts, director of the Center for Small Towns at UMM and co-director of the program.

To celebrate the progress of this partnership between the City of Morris and UMM a COPC Partnership Fall Kickoff event will be held Wednesday, Sept. 27. A variety of activities are planned for project participants to review the progress of the COPC Partnership, look at the potential for the remaining grant period and consider the legacy of the program following the HUD grant period. Organizers are also promoting this as a time for the general public to learn more about the program. A COPC Partnership community display highlighting the projects will be on exhibit in the Morris Public Library Conference Room beginning at 8:30 a.m. The display will highlight the priority areas of Economic Development, Housing and Community Organizing / Neighborhood Revitalization and will include a locally-produced methamphetamine video, titled "Meth in the Heartland: A Community's Response," information on the "The Idea Factory" – a new program for entrepreneurs, the master concept plan for the School Property Reuse project, Adopt-a-Grandparent, Take Back the Night and Habitat for Humanity. This public display can be seen until October 18.

Kinnard D. Wright, head of the COPC grant project from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, D.C., will be in Morris for meetings, a tour and discussion during the Fall Kickoff and on hand at the community display site at 8:30 a.m. September 27. "We are pleased that Kinnard will be in Morris so he can see first-hand the kinds of campus/community partnerships we are creating here and also to ask for his insights and any additional resources available through this national program," said Roger McCannon, co-director of the COPC Partnership in Morris.

Morris is only the third Minnesota awardee in the 10-year history of HUD's COPC grant program and in 2004 was one of 14 selected from 144 applicants nationwide. The combination of small size and remote location of UMM and Morris is unique in the history of the program. The three-year, \$400,000 grant was awarded to the University of Minnesota, Morris and is being administered by the Center for Small Towns, reaffirming the partnership between the campus and

the community under the theme, “Adapting to Change: Managing Urbanization in Rural America.”

“We’re excited by what we’ve accomplished and by where we’re heading with this COPC Partnership in Morris,” said Carol Wilcox. “It is a very participatory, grassroots program and we invite everyone in Morris to get involved in making improvements in our community.”

A COPC newsletter will soon be sent to all households with a Morris mailing address and to UMM staff and faculty. Extra copies of the newsletter will also be available by contacting the Center for Small Towns at UMM, (320) 589-6451.

To find out more about the COPC grant and how to become involved, visit morrispartnership.org or call (320) 589-6451.

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.