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A Conversation on Rural Life

Summary:

(October 20, 2004)-by Jessica Beyer, the Center for Small Towns

As you drive across the countryside in west central Minnesota, there are fields of crops such as corn and soybeans. You think, “This is a rural place.” However, rural is much more than just agriculture. Although agriculture is important, in today’s society, farming accounts for 7.6% of rural employment in the United States. Just because you don’t see skyscrapers rising from our small towns, don’t think there are not diversified economies! Recreation, educational services, health services, manufacturing, and more are in our rural landscape. The recreational areas, whether they consist of lakes or forests, are in high demand resulting in a boon for some rural places.

What are the global events that impact rural life? What do these changes mean for the sustainability of rural places? How are we personally experiencing these changes? Discussions lead by Dr. Daryl Hobbs, a professor of Rural Sociology at the University of Missouri, Columbia campus will help answer these questions and the explain the trends affecting today’s rural society.

This “Conversation on Rural Life: The Changing Rural Landscape” is open to the public and is free of charge on November 11 from noon – 1:30 p.m. in the Alumni room at the Student Center on the University of Minnesota, Morris campus. So bring a brown bag lunch and join us in a great conversation about rural life. Beverages will be provided. For more information call the Center for Small Towns at (320) 589-6451.

Dr. Hobbs will also keynote the West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership Annual Meeting/Citizen Forum “To Shape or Be Shaped: Working together to SHAPE our Rural Landscapes” the evening of November 11 at the Kerkhoven Civic Center in Kerkhoven, MN. Contact Dorothy to register at 877-501-3735 or rosemeie@umn.edu.

The Center for Small Towns and the West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership are co-sponsoring this “Conversation on Rural Life”. The Center for Small Towns <http://www.centerforsmalltowns.org/> is a community outreach program housed at the University of Minnesota, Morris and serves as a point-of-entry to the resources of the University of Minnesota. Small towns, local units of government, K-12 schools, non-profit organizations, and other University units are able to utilize the Center’s resources as they work on rural issues or make contributions to rural society. The mission of the Center is to focus the University’s attention and marshal its resources toward assisting Minnesota’s small towns with locally identified issues by creating applied learning opportunities for faculty and students.

The West Central Regional Sustainable Development Partnership <http://regionalpartnerships.umn.edu> in one of five University of Minnesota Regional partnerships, legislatively funded initiative led by citizen leaders. The partnership is committed to leverage U of M resources to sustain West Central Minnesota’s natural resource base economy and empower citizen participation and leadership. Since it’s inception in 1999, the partnership has funded/partnered on 20+

applied research and education projects.

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.