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Second Annual Symposium on Small Towns: Rural Communities Adapting to the New Century

Summary:

(March 19, 2004)-Small towns are special places. Every big city was once a small town. In fact, over four of every five places in Minnesota is a small town.

The Second Annual Symposium on Small Towns, June 8-9 on the campus of the University of Minnesota, Morris, will focus on the uniqueness of small towns and feature people taking responsibility for creating positive change in their communities. The Center for Small Towns at UMM and the Minnesota Association of Small Cities will co-sponsor the event. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Attendees will learn and discuss how rural communities are adapting to today's challenges and how our political framework and issues can be changed to better support small towns. Participants will showcase success stories, develop projects, and celebrate rural living.

Highlights of the symposium will be discussion and active engagement in the following areas:

What projects are Small Towns engaged in?

Communities are invited to share their projects by bringing in pictures, news clippings, and people to showcase how they are adapting to the current times. These projects will serve as models for other communities to gain ideas. Examples of projects between small towns and institutions of higher education will be showcased and will provide avenues for potential areas of future work and collaboration.

What is the role of public policy?

Learn more about the Minnesota Legislature, legislative action, and issues that affect small towns and rural areas. Legislative leaders will share and debate current thinking and positions on the legislative process and issues. During this time community members will be able to ask questions and share opinions directly with legislators.

How can you help your community?

Bring your project ideas to the symposium. Representatives from state, regional, and non-profit organizations will be on hand to help locate resources to explore and develop your community projects.

Musicians extraordinaire Peter Ostroushko and Arkadiy Yushin will provide an evening of outstanding music for symposium participants. The concert, to be held on the evening of June 8, is also open to the public.

While in Morris, visit the Smithsonian Institute's traveling exhibit "Barn Again! Celebrating an American Icon," on display at the Stevens County Historical Society Museum.

The Center for Small Towns is a community outreach program housed at UMM, 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. Read more at <http://www.centerforsmalltowns.org/>

The vision of the Minnesota Association of Small Cities is to work collectively to be the eyes, ears, and voice of all the small cities of Minnesota with a population of 5,000 or less. The MAOSC stimulates communication among small cities and serves as a forum for the interchange of ideas of common concern by helping all to build quality communities for the future. Read more at <http://maosc.homestead.com/home.html>

This symposium is a part of the University of Minnesota President's 21st Century Interdisciplinary Conferences Series of the University of Minnesota. In recognition of the University's recent completion of its 150th year of service to the state and the people of Minnesota, a new University-community conference series is designed to celebrate the research, historical contributions, and the impact of the University on society.

Symposium fees are kept to a minimum to encourage participation. For information updates and registration visit the Center for Small Towns web page at www.centerforsmalltowns.org, click on the symposium link, 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.