



## *Center for Small Towns*

University of Minnesota, Morris  
110 Community Services Building  
600 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Morris, MN 56267  
320 589-6451  
[www.centerforsmalltowns.org](http://www.centerforsmalltowns.org)

### **Recipients of the 2006 Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter Partnership Award for Campus-Community Collaboration**

## **Deliverable Programs and Services**

The University of Minnesota, Morris Center for Small Towns is a community outreach program that 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 services and resources as they work on rural issues and make contributions to rural society. The following is a list of program areas of the Center along with brief descriptions of the services offered:

### **STUDENT INVOLVEMENT**

Students at UMM are involved in all of the Center's programs by providing organizations with valuable, specialized, low-cost assistance on a wide variety of projects. Examples of student assistance include: applied research, coordination of programs or projects, resource assessments, and promotional writings. Students can be involved through paid employment, internships, directed studies, or volunteer activities.

### **COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

Staff at the Center along with UMM faculty can help communities, organizations, and schools create and move forward with a program or project. This is done through community development techniques such as asset mapping, issue identification, goal setting, consensus building, conflict management, and leadership development.

### **DATA ANALYSIS, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION**

**Historical census and other data** provide information for grant applications, community planning, or general knowledge. The Center is an affiliate member of the Minnesota Data Center network, which provides access to U.S. Census Bureau data and publications. Data about city and township growth, population, housing, income, retail sales, agriculture, education, and ethnicity is available upon request. Projections can also be provided for selected variables.

**Mapping community data** services are available to assist organizations to visually represent selected variables. Geographic Information System (GIS) software will be utilized to provide another avenue of displaying and interpreting data about the community, county or region. This includes the analysis of selected trends for demographics, economic, cultural, and social variables.

**Research assistance** is provided to organizations that are confronted with a problem that requires an unknown solution. This consultative process includes defining/refining the problem,

(OVER)

## **DATA ANALYSIS, RESEARCH, AND EVALUATION** (Continued)

selecting an appropriate method to solve the problem, gathering and analyzing data, and reporting of the results.

**Survey design** assistance is provided as a tool to measure attitudes, reactions, feelings, opinions, and/or preferences as they relate to community infrastructure, the social aspects of communities, or current events. Our staff together with UMM faculty work with clients to design surveys to ensure statistically valid results and administer them through the mail, telephone, or Internet. Once collected, survey responses are analyzed and results are reported.

**Data analysis** can be completed when an organization has already collected data that needs to be examined scientifically. Statistical models are customized and the data interpreted to meet the individual needs of the organization.

**Program evaluation** is provided to organizations to help determine the value of their operational programs. The Center's staff along with UMM faculty assist groups in creating evaluation plans to assess the design, implementation and impact of program activities. Services offered include working with groups developing a proposal for grants to ensure an integrated evaluation component for new or existing programs.

**Website planning** is provided by UMM students and utilizes their creative technical expertise to plan web sites for organizations.

## **BROKERING RESOURCES**

By cooperating with other units across the University of Minnesota and with state and national organizations involved in community and rural development, the Center connects people to needed information and services. The Center provides assistance by involving faculty, students, staff and programs in the time and place that provides maximum benefits.

## **CONVERSATION SERIES**

This is an on-going activity where the Center collaborates with community and rural development groups and governmental organizations to offer current information on important topics through a discussion format. Contact us with your ideas and suggestions.

## **SYMPOSIUM ON SMALL TOWNS**

The Symposium is an annual event designed to increase understanding about small towns and celebrate rural living. Leaders, practitioners, and citizens come together in this creative atmosphere to reflect on histories, share happenings, and look to the future.

*Believing in a bright prosperous future for small communities.*