



## *Center for Small Towns*

University of Minnesota, Morris

105 Blakely Hall

600 East 4<sup>th</sup> Street

Morris, MN 56267

320 589-6451

[www.centerforsmalltowns.org](http://www.centerforsmalltowns.org)

**Together with the City of Morris were the 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 central to all of the Center's programs by providing organizations with valuable, specialized, low-cost assistance on a wide variety range of activities including: applied research, coordination of programs or projects, resource assessments, and promotional writings. Students are involved through paid employment, internships, directed studies, or by volunteering.

#### **PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT**

Staff at the Center along with UMM faculty help communities, organizations, and schools to create and move forward with a strategic process, programs, or projects. Customized approaches are created for groups and techniques include: 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 on our website. Projections can also be provided for selected 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, selecting an appropriate method to solve the problem, gathering and analyzing data, and a 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

(OVER)

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

ensure statistically valid results and administer them through the mail, telephone, or Internet. Once the data is 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 assist 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 to develop a proposal for grants to ensure an integrated evaluation component for new or existing programs.

## **BROKERING RESOURCES**

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

## **CONVERSATION SERIES**

This is an on-going forum to convene individuals and groups across the region to discuss and learn about critical issues on important topics. Contact us with your ideas and suggestions.

## **SYMPOSIUM ON SMALL TOWNS**

The Symposium is an annual event designed to increase understanding about small town vitality and to 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.*