

August 26, 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **The City of Milan's Historic Video Preservation**

With years and years of video on VHS collecting dust and gradually deteriorating over time something needed to be done before the historical information Billy Thompson captured on his camcorder, depicting the town of Milan, Minnesota would be lost. Videos on various town events spanning several years, wildlife in Minnesota, as well as, some film going as far back as the 1950s are just some examples of the variety of historical content captured on the VHS tapes. Thus this project was formed to help the town of Milan preserve these historical videos by converting them to DVD.

One of the videos that was captured and converted depicted the town of Milan from 1950-1965. It was amazing to take this video which was already once converted from film reels to VHS and to preserve it further by converting it to DVD. It was fun to watch a film which is over a half a century old and see how much times have changed, yet a person's reaction to a camera has remained the same across many generations. Because this video was so old it did not have any sound along with the approximately 60 minutes of video, therefore, some of Milan's very own local music was used to fill up the silence. Thus the compilation of Carol Ford and Jerry Ostensoe's CD, *Prairie Dogs*, and the old film allows for both a visual and audible stimulation of Milan's culture.

Michele Olson, a senior majoring in Chemistry at the University of Minnesota, Morris campus, is working with the town of Milan to help preserve some of their town's history through the conversion of VHS to DVD. The digital conversion is carried out through the use of the program WinDVD Creator. This will allow people for years to come to sit down and watch a visual representation of what their town use to be like, and hopefully become a way to visually stimulate youth to become interested in their town's history.

The City of Milan has received funds from the Community Assistantship Program (CAP) of the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. CAP supports student research assistants to carry out community-initiated and community-guided projects that will impact their community. The students provide information or answers to questions that a group may need to better accomplish their goals or plans. The Community Assistantship Program's goals are to 1) enhance the capacity of community organizations by providing access to research and technical resources available at the University of Minnesota; and 2) provide faculty and students with increased opportunities to complete useful community-driven applied research projects.

The Center for Small Towns 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. Their Mission 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.

Contributed by Jessica Beyer '02, community program assistant at the Center for Small Towns