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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Clean Energy Research Team

The country is facing a growing need for renewable energy. A student at the University of Minnesota, Morris is researching and creating an inventory of past, present, and future renewable energy projects/initiatives in central and west central Minnesota. Elizabeth Jensen, sophomore from Bloomington, Minnesota with a double major of political science and German is working with the regional Clean Energy Resource Teams, which are organized by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities. Jensen's inventory and analysis of region-specific renewable energy resources can then be used by the regions in identifying viable energy alternatives. These alternatives include wind, hydro, biomass, and solar power.

Jensen works with staff to perform an energy inventory of the region that looks at current energy usage, opportunities for conservation, current renewable energy activities underway in the region, and the availability of and potential for local renewable energy resources. This project is supported by the Community Assistantship Program 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. 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.

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