

Subject: 40th ANNIVERSARY OPEN HOUSES OCT. 2 AND 3 AT MPCA SOUTHWEST REGION OFFICES

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St. Paul, Minn. — In recognition of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's 40th anniversary, the regional offices in Willmar and Marshall will be hosting open houses Oct. 2 and 3, respectively. The public is invited to visit between 3 and 6 p.m. for refreshments and to learn about the MPCA and its work.

Visitors at the open house events can learn more about the history of the agency, and where it is headed in the future. "Our mission today incorporates different strategies than we used 40 years ago," says MPCA Commissioner Brad Moore.

"In 2007, partnerships are key to environmental protection — partnerships with industry, municipalities and even individuals. The time is past when the MPCA alone can take responsibility for our environment. We need all Minnesotans to be our partners, and we're not afraid to ask," Moore says. "The MPCA still handles 'typical' pollution issues, but we have conservation goals, now, too. We urge Minnesotans to buy green products and services, conserve resources and act on their environmental knowledge. We urge you to learn ways you can help keep our air, land and water clean."

The decade of the 1960s saw much social and political change. In Minnesota, concern for the environment grew in the wake of a series of incidents that affected the natural environment. In the winter of 1962, a pipeline break released one million gallons of oil into the Mississippi River. In spring when the ice melted, an estimated 10,000 ducks and other wildlife died from the oil contamination, attracting much public attention. This history is chronicled in the summer 2007 edition of Minnesota Environment magazine, available on the Web at www.pca.state.mn.us.

In response to growing concern about the environment, in 1967 the state legislature created the MPCA, three years before the formation of the federal Environmental Protection Agency. In the early years the agency focused on large industrial and municipal sources of pollution — factories and wastewater treatment — so called "point sources." With virtually all of these now under regulation, today the focus is expanding to include "non-point sources" — vehicle exhaust emissions, stormwater runoff and private septic systems.

The MPCA's Marshall office opened in 1976 and now has about 20 staff. The Willmar office opened in 1999 and houses seven staff. Additional staff in St. Paul are assigned to the region. Primary program areas include municipal wastewater, feedlots, solid waste landfills, private septic systems, watershed projects, storage tanks, emergency response and local government assistance.

The MPCA-Marshall office is located at 1420 E. College Dr., Suite 900, on the west side of the Market Street Mall, 507-537-7146. The Willmar office is located at 1601 E. Hwy. 12 in the former Home State Bank building, 320-214-3789.

Broadcast version

In recognition of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's fortieth anniversary, the agency's offices in Willmar and Marshall are hosting open houses.

At the Willmar office, which is located at 1601 East Highway 12 in the former Home State Bank building, the open house will be from 3 to 6 p.m. on October 2nd. The open house in Marshall will be from 3 to 6 p.m. on October 3rd. The Marshall office is located at 1420 East College Drive, Suite 900, on the west side of the Market Street Mall.

People are invited to stop by either office for refreshments and to learn more about Minnesota's environment and what the agency does to protect it. You can also learn more on the MPCA's Web site at www.pca.state.mn.us.

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The mission of the MPCA is to work with Minnesotans to protect, conserve and improve our environment and enhance our quality of life.