

Clean Energy Economy Discussion

You are invited to join the discussion of a bold path towards a clean energy economy.

- **WHAT:** Repower America Town Hall Forum
- **WHEN:** Friday February 20th, 11:00 AM
- **WHERE:** Centennial Student Union Heritage Room, Minnesota State University, Mankato

On Friday, February 20th at 11:00 AM, Environment Minnesota will join with **Rep. Tim Walz** and other local environmental groups to host the Repower America Town Hall Forum at Minnesota State University, Mankato. The forum will focus on green jobs, the federal economic recovery plan and the economy. Get the most up to date information about how the pending economic recovery package will create green jobs in Minnesota and protect our environment.

In attendance will be Gerry Parzino, International Staff Representative from the United Steelworkers and the Blue Green Alliance; Dan Juhl, CEO of Juhl Wind; **former Congressman Tim Penny**, President and CEO of the Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation; J. Drake Hamilton, Science Policy Director with Fresh Energy; and Dr. Vincent Winstead professor at Minnesota State University Mankato's College of Science, Engineering & Technology.

Rural Advantage to Host 3rd Crop Producer Meeting on Fruit Production

Rural Advantage will be hosting the second of four 3rd Crop Producer Meetings on Monday, February 23, 2009. "Getting Fruity" will focus on production of four different fruits as well as aspects to increase production in general. Presentations begin at 10:00 am and adjourn at 3:00 pm.

The morning session will begin with Rural Advantage's Jeff Jensen discussing production of Aronia Berries. Aronias are also called black chokeberries due to their dark purple, almost black, appearance. These small berries have an amazing amount of disease fighting antioxidants and are gaining popularity in the health food sector.

The rest of the morning session will be focusing on grapes. John Thull, Vineyard Manager for University of Minnesota Horticultural Research Center, will begin with "Grapes 101." Thull will be discussing the first three years of grape production here in Minnesota, from species selection to maintenance and harvest. Ray Winter, owner/operator of Winterhaven Vineyard and Nursery of Janesville, Minnesota, will follow. Ray will share his experiences with growing grapes in Minnesota, but also the steps he is taking to get Winterhaven Winery off the ground and running.

The afternoon will reconvene with Pat Altrichter presenting on Saskatoons. Saskatoons are also known as serviceberries and are native to North America. They are a native 3rd crop that is gaining new interest. Saskatoons are fairly closely related to apples which brings us to the next afternoon presenter. Eric Luetgers of Timberlake Orchard of Fairmont, Minnesota, will be presenting on apple production here in Minnesota. Timberlake Orchard is home to numerous varieties of apples and the Luetgers family has knowledge and experience to share.

The last two speakers of the day will be discussing topics that are important for both fruit and vegetable production. First, Harris Tinklenberg of Harris Honey Company of Madelia will give his presentation on how important pollination via bees is to our environment and also to agriculture. Harris Honey Company has been supplying honey to the area for many years. To round out the 3rd Crop Producer Meeting, Karl Foord of University of Minnesota Extension – Farmington, will give a presentation on the merits of using high tunnels in fruit and vegetable production. High tunnels, also known as hoopouses, allow producers to extend the growing season.

Registration for the 3rd Crop Producer Meetings is free. Arrive at the Knights of Columbus Hall located at 920 E. 10th St. in Fairmont, MN at 9:30 am for registration and coffee. Or, stop by as

your schedule permits. Lunch will be on your own. Any questions can be directed to Jill Sackett at 507.238.5449 or sacke032@umn.edu.

A Note from Patrick Moore of CURE

Nearly 300 people shared their love for the Minnesota River last Saturday night at the CURE Annual Meeting. It was an evening to remember and we thank all those who helped to make it happen.

We helped create a short one minute **video valentine** about the Minnesota River that was produced by Twin Cities Public Television and 1000 Friends of Minnesota that you can view by visiting:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-YA20U4zgE>. Please take a minute to watch it if you can.

P.S. In case you haven't heard, we honored **Dave Pederson** of the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center (PWELC) with the 2008 River Keeper Award, **Susan Williams** of the *Renville County Register* with the Good Reporting Award, **Tim Krohn and John Cross** of the *Mankato Free Press* with the Good Media Award, **Dennis Gibson** with the Good Business Award, and **Renville County** with the Good Government Award. **Malena Handeen** and **Butch Halterman** rocked the house with music and our eclectic silent auction brought in \$3,800!

MSU Library Services Presents *THE 11th HOUR*

On Monday February 23 students, faculty, staff and community members are invited to two free showings of the Leonardo DiCaprio's acclaimed documentary film, ***THE 11th HOUR***. The film showings will be held at 2:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. in the CSU's Ostrander Auditorium. ***THE 11th HOUR*** examines the environmental crises caused by human actions and calls for restorative action through a reshaping of human activity. Each film showing is 90-minutes long and will be followed by a 30-minute panel discussion on the need for ecological repair and social change.

This Minnesota State Mankato, Library Service's program is co-sponsored by three campus student groups, the Environmental Club, the Sociology Club, and the Students for Sustainability. It is also co-sponsored by the newly formed MSSA University Wide Environmental Committee. If you have questions about the program or would like to participate, contact Monika Antonelli, Reference / Instruction Librarian at 507-389-2507 or monika.antonelli@mnsu.edu.

Internship Opportunity

Moonstone Farm On-Farm Internship

A summer internship is being offered by Moonstone Farm outside of Montevideo. Join a farm team in multi-species planting and care, with both native and adaptive species to foster a perennial polyculture. Internship will include bunkhouse, board and monthly stipend.

- Learn fencing/trellising techniques, vineyard, paddock and grazing management.
- Prairie and woodland, crops and cattle, human-scale and machine-assisted projects – different every day.
- Opportunity to integrate and apply strategies of permaculture design and holistic management.
- Access to library, river, social network, music, art, local-organic livelihood and sustainable community.

Contact Richard Handeen and Audrey Arner at MOONSTONE (A Handeen Family Farm since 1872); 9060 40th Street Southwest; Montevideo, MN 56265; 320-269-8971; moonstone@moonstonefarm.net; www.moonstonefarm.net

Events:

Greater Minnesota Legislative Hearings

Minnesota State Lawmakers will be visiting communities around the state to gather input on the governor's budget recommendations and listen to the public's ideas to address the state's \$4.8 billion budget deficit for the next biennium. Here are some dates for the Legislative Hearings in the Minnesota River Watershed:

- February 19th (Thursday) starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Mankato Intergovernmental Center – Mankato River Room 10 Civic Center Plaza
- February 19th (Thursday) starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Kennedy Elementary School (824 – 7th Street SW) in Willmar
- February 20th (Friday) starting at 2:00 p.m. at the Alexandria City Hall (704 Broadway)
- February 20th (Friday) starting at 2:30 p.m. at Southwest Minnesota State University Lecture Hall (1501 State Street) in Marshall

February 19th (Thursday) is the **Chaska to York Factory in 49 Days presentation** at 7:00 p.m. in the meeting room of the New Ulm Public Library (17 N. Broadway St.). Sean Bloomfield and Colton Witte will talk about their adventure last summer paddling the entire Minnesota and Red rivers all the way to the Hudson Bay. For more information, <http://mrdbc.mnsu.edu/calendar/pdfs/hudsonbay%20flyer.pdf>

February 23rd (Monday) is a 3rd **Crop Producer Meeting – “Getting Fruity”** from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall in Fairmont. Discussion will include aronia, grape, Saskatoon, and apple production as well as starting a winery, bee keeping, and using high tunnels. For more information: Jill Sackett. Rural Advantage, U of M Extension at 507-238-5449 or sacke032@umn.edu

Check out additional upcoming events and workshops on the Minnesota River Calendar at: <http://mrdbc.mnsu.edu/calendar/index.html>

[Water Quality Articles](#)

[Minnesota farms make a large, diverse "community"](#) (Twin Cities Daily Planet). There are at least 257,732 people living and working on Minnesota farms. If all people residing on farms were counted, Minnesota's "farm" population would be larger than St. Paul's and pressing Minneapolis'.

[Hansen explains controversial strategy over Heritage Fund](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). The fallout continued this week over legislation introduced by Rep. Rick Hansen, DFL-South St. Paul, that would take \$1 million from the new Outdoor Heritage Fund -- dollars generated by the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment -- to map and monitor conservation lands.

[Oil Crosses Over Into The Ethanol Business](#) (Associated Press). If federal renewable fuel mandates require ethanol to be mixed into gasoline, the nation's largest independent oil refiner figures it might as well just do it itself.

[Minnesota, ready to upgrade energy-hog buildings, awaits word on stimulus funds](#) (MinnPost). This year's porcine-related obsession is the energy hog. And with a veritable barnyard full of energy-hog buildings, Minnesota is waiting for word from Washington about funding for efficiency upgrades in the massive federal stimulus bill.

[Editorial: Unearned black eye for biodiesel fuel](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). It wasn't the culprit in Bloomington bus problems.

[Sportsmen in giving mood](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Minnesota conservation groups are cautiously optimistic that their supporters will continue to show their support with their wallets.

[The eagles have landed](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Once imperiled, bald eagles now put on wintertime shows on the Mississippi River.

[Winter road salt ending up in lakes and streams](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A new report from the University of Minnesota says we're slowly turning our lakes into salt water. In the Twin Cities area, we use so much salt on our roads in the winter that the lakes and streams and wetlands are getting saltier.

[Road salt spreading into our water](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Professor says U study is a "wake-up call" to adjust deicing before it creates a significant problem.

[Big Stone II gets revised permit](#) (Associated Press). South Dakota environmental regulators have revised a clean air permit for the proposed coal-fired Big Stone II power plant proposed for the northeast corner of the state in an effort to address objections by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

[Customers lock in gas prices at fuel bank](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). A St. Cloud-based company is cashing in on consumer demand for a predictable gas price. First Fuel Banks allow customers to lock in the price of gas. Sometimes, that locked price is higher than the price at other gas stations.

[State on track to meet emissions goals](#) (Minnesota Public Radio). Minnesota is roughly on track to meet its goals of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. That's the gist of a report the Pawlenty administration will make to the legislature Thursday.

[Wolf trackers follow packs, challenge myths](#) (Minnesota Daily). University of Minnesota alumnus Mike Nelson stood on the frozen lake, a large swath of bloody snow at his feet, his eyes pointed in toward shore.

[Biomass plant on hold](#) (Fairmont Sentinel). Plans for a \$120 million Fairmont Energy Center - a Veolia biomass plant - have come to a halt.

[Corn-based ethanol under attack](#) (Marshall Independent). Two local businessmen and a farmer who work directly with the ethanol industry in the region said the University of Minnesota study released last week which states the use of corn ethanol may be no better than the use of gasoline doesn't tell the whole story.

[Latest funding shortage could mean more CO field vacancies](#) (Outdoor News). When it comes to tightening belts to address a reduction in funding to the state of Minnesota, there are few options for the DNR's Enforcement Division but to cut staff.

[LOHC hears \\$95 million in wetland, prairie proposals](#) (Outdoor News). The Lessard Outdoor Heritage Council likely will recommend to lawmakers how to spend about \$78 million for fish and wildlife habitat that will be raised in the coming year as a result of the constitutional amendment voters approved last fall.

[Chicken talk: City council and chicken decision](#) (Mankato Free Press). Chickens scratched. Fowl won't soon be gracing Mankato's backyards after the City Council stopped an "urban chicken" proposal on a 4 to 3 vote.

[State reworking fixes to farm program](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Last year's attempts to plug holes in a program meant to give tax breaks to farmers threatened by sprawl created new problems for landowners.

[DFLers tout bills for environment](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A bill that would enable Minnesota to join California's effort to fight global warming by reducing pollution from car tailpipes passed its first test in a House committee this week and was one of two proposals that DFL legislators highlighted Friday as top environmental priorities for this year's session.

[Almanac: Summit offers you a chance to have a say](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). One concern of the new Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, which increased the state sales tax to fund natural resources, is that the general public might not have much say in how that money is spent.

[Editorial: Beware of end-runs on legacy spending](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). Staring down the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression, Minnesotans showed their faith in the future by passing the Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, which will be part of the state's Constitution for the next 25 years.

[State warns about eating fish from Henn. Co. lake](#) (Associated Press). The Minnesota Health Department is warning that people shouldn't eat too many fish from another Hennepin County lake due to contamination by perfluorochemicals.

[Can a smaller home be more livable than a McMansion?](#) (Pioneer Press). Jim Ferderer could have bought a McMansion. It was going cheap, foreclosed and unwanted, like other flashy mega-homes all over the suburbs.

[Supersized no more: Homebuilders say the 'McMansion' era has ended in the Twin Cities](#) (Pioneer Press). The McMansion is dying, and Mandy Multerer is helping to kill it.

[Task force announces plan to create 'green jobs'](#) (Minneapolis Star Tribune). A task force charged with finding ways to create jobs that benefit the environment has announced its legislative agenda.

[The Brain Trust: Paul Eger, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency](#) (Saint Paul Legal Ledger). Paul Eger, new commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (PCA), owes it all to Mom.

[Dairy producers speak for state program that helps them](#) (Agri News). Sadie Frericks told lawmakers she and her husband wouldn't be milking cows on their own if it wasn't for the state programs that aid dairy producers.

[Tiny farms proliferate in Minnesota](#) (Mankato Free Press). To paraphrase Mark Twain, the death of the family farm has been greatly exaggerated.

[Information on wind farm doesn't convince opponents](#) (New Ulm Journal). If New Ulm Public Utilities and city officials hoped to change some minds with their "listening" session concerning the proposed wind farm north of here, they were sadly mistaken.

We generate our own environment. We get exactly what we deserve. How can we resent a life we've created ourselves? Who's to blame, who's to credit but us? Who can change it, anytime we wish, but us? – Richard Bach

The Minnesota River Watershed Alliance (Watershed Alliance) is an organized network of citizens, public agencies, and private organizations dedicated to communicating the benefits of an ecology healthy Minnesota River Watershed to others and are actively working towards its improvement and protection. We meet four times a year and encourage landowners and recreational users of the river to be part of the effort. For more information on the Watershed Alliance: <http://www.watershedalliance.blogspot.com>

Please register at the Minnesota River Watershed Alliance's bulletin board at <http://mail.mnsu.edu/mailman/listinfo/mrwa> to receive regular updates on what is happening in the Minnesota River Watershed.

Thanks,

Scott

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