

October, 2011

# The Chamber Connection



## *Morris Tourism*

Is “Morris Tourism” an oxymoronic idea? Doesn’t real tourism require mountains, waterfalls, ...or at least loons? Apparently not, because Morris is a tourist destination right now—and not just for Prairie Pioneer Days!

A tourist is “one who makes a tour for pleasure or culture.” It refers to those who come from beyond the nearby area (outside the normal retail community) to experience something other than work here. “Heads on beds” in our local motels is one tourism measurement, although travelers and truckers just passing through don’t count.

The Morris tourism initiative is gaining real traction, and creating considerable excitement. Like many movements that surface, this has been quietly gathering steam for awhile. Current Chamber of Commerce Chair Karen Berget hosted tourists years ago when she ran a Bed & Breakfast in town, and she sees significant potential for tourism growth.

Pamela Lent, Super 8 Manager, agrees with Karen that Morris is a tourist destination.

What are Morris’ attractions? The diversity is surprising!

First, the Morris campus of the University of Minnesota is a major draw. With 1900 students, lots of parents are coming into town perhaps several times a year. Since many students live more than 200 miles away, that results in overnight stays. And UMM activities go way beyond Parents Day! Think of the events that UMM sponsors: Jazz Fest and other music concerts, the Tin Man competition, Native American Powwow, Homecoming, conferences, and sports events with competitors’ fans coming from several hours away. These varied events add up!

How about food? Pamela Lent mentioned that they’ve had at least three guests within the last month who chose to stay in Morris so they could go to the Bello Cucina restaurant! Super 8’s discount coupons for the restaurant lured the visitors to choose that spot for lodging.

Hunting, fishing, snowmobiling, bird watching and other outdoor activities will always be popular. Hunting is obvious, but ...bird watching? Kate Livingston recalls sponsoring bird watching weekends, but those stopped years ago. Yet the Morris Wetland Management District and local motels attest that even without formal promotion there are still lots of “birders” who come to town—mainly from the Twin Cities, to see the wetland and prairie species.

Also, the area’s agricultural attractions are more numerous than you may suppose.

- Wulf Limousin Farms has an annual Opportunity Sale that draws buyers from across the continent for their award-winning beef cattle. In 2011, they sold to buyers from 26 states and three Canadian provinces. Wulf Genetics are marketed world-wide. Pamela Lent confirmed that Super 8 hosts international guests in town for the Wulf Limousin sale.
- Riverview Dairy’s state-of-the-art operation is toured 2-3 times a week in the summer. Local families and reunions come, as well as area groups like the Red Hat Society. There are also foreign visitors checking out how things are done in America, often as part of dairy tours that see multiple dairies across Minnesota and Wisconsin. The countries most represented are China and Russia!
- Some existing agriculture tours already include Morris in their stops. Bhupen Ray, owner of Best Northland Prairie Inn, noted that last week an agriculture tour (of Argentineans!) booked 30 rooms.
- North Central Soil Conservation Research Laboratory (“Soils Lab”) and West Central Research and Outreach Center are other local agricultural attractions with great stories to tell. Relevant, current research on multiple soil, plant and farm animal topics is of interest to agri-businesses as well as farmers (active and retired).

What’s focusing the light on tourism right now? How might tourism be encouraged and increased? What might higher tourism mean to Morris and Stevens County? More on these questions next month!

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**Member News:** Stevens EMS hired David Hoffmann as a new full-time paramedic. David is originally from New Ulm and obtained his Associate's degree in paramedicine from St. Cloud Technical College. He started work August 1 and will be moving to Morris in the near future. Welcome, David!

**Chamber Members, please let others enjoy your good news! This service is free to Members!**  
Contact us at 589-1242 or e-mail [mchamber@fedtel.net](mailto:mchamber@fedtel.net) if you have information to be included.

## *Welcome Picnic and Community Expo*

The 2011 Welcome Picnic and Community Expo was a success again this year. The perfect weather drew a good crowd of students and community residents. About 900 guests were served.

The Expo contained about 30 units, with a fun diversity including chiropractic, banking, auto dealer, appliances, radio stations, churches, newspaper, foods, electronics, hair care, printing, bottled water, entertainment, and more!

A difference this year from previous years was the role several area churches played. For the past seven years, local churches sponsored their own welcome picnic for University of Minnesota Morris students. This year the churches decided to join the Morris Area Chamber of Commerce's picnic instead. Their involvement and influence was very appreciated! First, about half of the Picnic volunteers were there on behalf of the participating churches. Second, the churches supplied all of the desserts—and you know how good those cookies and bars taste!

**THANK YOU** to the following churches for their cheerful, enthusiastic support of this community event:

- *Zion Lutheran Church*
- *St. Paul's Lutheran Church*
- *Morris Evangelical Free Church*
- *Morris Community Church*
- *Good Shepherd Lutheran Church*
- *Federated Church*
- *Faith Lutheran Church*
- *Assumption Catholic Church / Newman Center*

A hearty **THANK YOU** to these business and organizations that donated goods and/or services to the Picnic:

- *Willie's Super Valu*
- *Town & Country Supply*
- *Superior Industries*
- *St. Francis Health Services*
- *RiverWood Bank*
- *Power 106.3 Radio*
- *Otter Tail Power Company*
- *Morris Fire Department*
- *McDonald's Restaurant*
- *KMRS/KKOK Radio*
- *Engbretson & Sons Disposal*
- *Eco Water Systems*
- *Culligan of Western Minnesota*
- *City of Morris*
- *Bremer Bank*
- *Ag Country Farm Credit Services*

Volunteers are the face of the community to the Picnic guests. Their helpful attitudes, warm smiles and kind words promote Morris so powerfully!

**THANK YOU** volunteers!

- *Blaine Hill*
- *Paul LeTendre*
- *Jeff Miller*
- *Donna Eul*
- *Michael Hanson*
- *Kenneth Johnson*
- *Mick Ekren*
- *Mona Lee Hostetter*
- *Jill Loge*
- *Carol Berger*
- *Shirley Schliep*
- *Cheryl Main*
- *Joel Flaten*
- *Marlin Mohrman*
- *Gene Pasche*
- *Ruth Bentson*
- *Agnes Searle*
- *Sal Monteagudo*
- *Kris Hansen*
- *Teresa Kruger*
- *Phil Harpstead*
- *Bart Graves*
- *Darlene Pasche*
- *Randy Hamling*
- *Diane Anspach*
- *Sheila Leuthardt*



## UPCOMING PROMOTIONS:

### Scarecrows!

Scarecrows are already springing up in town, and fun to see! Businesses are encouraged to join the Scarecrow Promotion while you honor the autumn tradition of adding color and character to our commercial areas with these traditional symbols of harvest time. Details of the promotion are on the two-sided enclosed flyer.



### Adopt-A-Tree—be part of encouraging the holiday spirit this year!

We are looking for individuals, businesses or organizations willing to light up a tree along Atlantic Avenue for the holidays, to be turned on with the Grand Parade of Lights. The light strings will be installed and removed by the City of Morris. What could be easier?! For just \$20 per tree, Atlantic Avenue will look festive and inviting. Please fill out and send the enclosed form—along with a \$20 check—to Morris Area Chamber of Commerce, 507 Atlantic Ave., Morris. Progress and contributions will be acknowledged weekly in Friday Facts.

### Calling all Retailers to the Holiday Promotion!

It's early October, and we're already talking about the Holiday Promotion?! Yes! Let's get that early start that we've often regretted missing in those mid-November days, when we're behind schedule and overloaded.

The Morris Area Chamber of Commerce Retail Trade Committee has decided to repeat the formula that worked well last year. Festivities begin on Thursday, November 17 with the Grand Parade of Lights. That may seem a long way off, but it isn't too early to plan your float for this year. Give your creative juices free rein and be a real contender for the Best Show of Lights and Best Overall Entry prizes!

The Grand Parade of Lights is followed by the 2-day Holiday Open House, and then Santa's Great Giveaway which runs from Nov. 21 to Dec. 22. Like last year, Christmas-themed cards will be available to consumers, for participating retailers to stamp. When a consumer's card has eight stamps, it can be entered into one of the four weekly drawings, ending on Dec. 22. Winners will receive Chamber Cash or donated prizes from area businesses (a wonderful goodwill-building opportunity).

Interspersed in the Santa's Great Giveaway period are additional fun and attracting activities, such as Fantastic Friday with its special coupons, Fire Truck Rides with Santa, Pictures with Santa, a free movie at the Morris Theatre, and more.

Businesses can participate in this extensive promotion for the same low \$75 fee as last year. The higher the participation, the greater the overall attracting power of the promotion. If every business signed up, ...**WOW!** Think of the energy and momentum that would generate—the retail patronage it would attract! Yes, the Chamber Cash prizes would be bigger. But the sense of everyone pulling together has its own strength, the synergy of teamwork that might even be described as ...the Christmas spirit!

Corny? If you're a Morris Area retailer, let's find out! Commit to be part of this Holiday Promotion today. The registration form is enclosed with the Adopt-A-Tree form. Be one of the first to join this year's celebration!

#### **Welcome New Member:**

Please add this new member to your directory.

#### **Jule's Business Solutions, LLC**

Julia Gulbrandson, Owner  
13862 200th Avenue  
Herman, MN 56248  
320-815-2313  
julesbussol.llc@gmail.com

PROUD MEMBER OF



MORRIS AREA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Morris Area  
**Chamber**  
of Commerce

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Morris, MN 56267  
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MorrisMNChamber.org  
320-589-1242

**WHAT'S HAPPENING...**

**October:**

Oct. 13 Chamber Board of Directors meeting  
Oct. 20 Moonlight Madness

**November:**

Nov. 10 Chamber Board of Directors meeting  
Nov. 17 Grand Parade of Lights  
Nov. 25 Fantastic Friday  
Nov. 26 Fire Truck Rides with Kids

Visit the Community Calendar at [www.MorrisMNChamber.org](http://www.MorrisMNChamber.org)  
*Let us post your event for free!*

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

[Visitor Information](#)

The Chamber provides information packets for conferences, tournaments, reunions and other community events. If you would like packets for an upcoming event, contact the Chamber office prior to your event at 589-1242 with the number of packets you would like.



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