

September, 2011

# The Chamber Connection



## FREE Software Training

Business owners, how often have you or your employees needed to learn the basics of a computer software program like Word, Excel, Power Point (or 146 other PC and Mac-based software applications)? How often have you or your employees been using a particular software program and forgotten how to perform some function?

Wouldn't it be nice to have access to a library of on-line software training packages 24/7?

Stevens County Economic Improvement Commission, Inc. (SCEIC) is offering free, one-year AtomicTraining.com subscriptions to businesses in Stevens County. Any business in Stevens County is eligible for a subscription to this creative and very beneficial on-line software training company. The training is modularized to accommodate the beginner as well as the experienced user needing to brush up on some specifics. The key distinction is in the delivery method. When the lesson can be found, seen, and heard at the exact moment of need, learning happens. With over 40,000 tutorials on 140+ software applications, this comprehensive how-to resource has a proven history of guiding people through their learning journey.

The Morris Public Library has access to all of AtomicTraining.com's learning modules and is available free to the public. The Hancock Public Library will also have AtomicTraining.com available free to the public.

AtomicTraining.com's parent company, Atomic Learning, Inc., is located in Little Falls, Minnesota. AtomicTraining.com is a partner in the Broadband Technical Opportunities Program (BTOP) grant that was awarded to the C.K. Blandin Foundation, the Stevens County Economic Improvement Commission, Inc. (SCEIC), and the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Community Program (MIRC). The grant is from the U. S. Department of Commerce, under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

To obtain information about free one-year subscriptions to AtomicTraining.com, or for more information regarding the Stevens County MIRC Program, contact Michael Haynes, Executive Director, [sceic@hometownsolutions.net](mailto:sceic@hometownsolutions.net), 320-585-2609, 507 Atlantic Avenue, Morris.

## Practical Research at the Soils Lab

Congratulations to North Central Soil Conservation Research Laboratory on its successful 9th Annual Field Day! This year's event was well attended for more reasons than the delicious, free lunch. The Sustainable Landscapes theme was developed along multiple lines, with focuses on ecosystem advantages from agricultural diversity, new oil-



seed crops' benefits to honey bees, the relative merits of perennial versus annual crops, and properly managing ethanol production from corn biomass. It may sound dry on paper, but when you're hearing about it at beautiful Swan Lake Research Farm on a warm, sunny morning, it's downright inspiring! The Lab scientists teamed with business and practitioner experts on each topic, noting real world applications to research findings. Enjoying the beauty of blooming cuphea and Echium, while hearing how they may help paint to dry more safely, and remove human wrinkles, and help my squash to

develop more fruit, and keep a strong supply of almonds flowing from California... that's fascinating!

The afternoon trip to Prairie Horizons Farm was just as interesting, with their 'grass-fed' beef grazing on a diverse mixture of prairie perennials—a great picture of going back to the future. Overall, an enlightening and enjoyable day!

### Member News:

- The Morris and Donnelly Fire Departments are working with local schools, pre-school programs and day care organizations to provide age-relevant Fire Safety Education Materials and presentations for Fire Prevention Week, October 9-15. The cost per child is \$2.00, and funding help is requested to enable reaching as many kids as possible. Please make checks payable to "Fire Prevention for Kids", and mail to Morris Fire Dept., P.O. Box 438, Morris, MN 56267.
- CONGRATULATIONS to the University of Minnesota, Morris! UMM has received another honor for its academic excellence and value-for-the-dollar. *Consumer Digest* evaluated more than 2,000 four-year degree institutions across the country to pick 100 as "top values." **UMM placed second** among the 50 public institutions from across the nation that were cited as top values! Student achievement, faculty credentials, and education costs were all factored in. Of the 100 schools, the private schools' average annual cost was \$47,156, compared to \$26,344 for the public institutions. UMM's 2011 cost of attendance was \$18,582. What a bargain!

*Did you know that Chamber members can share their news in this section of the newsletter at no charge?*

*This free exposure is just one of many Chamber membership benefits.*

*Contact us today at 589-1242 or e-mail [mchamber@fedtel.net](mailto:mchamber@fedtel.net) if you have information to be included.*

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### Emergency Readiness

The American Red Cross has launched a newly designed web-based service, Ready Rating, to help businesses and other organizations better prepare for emergencies. Ready Rating is a free, self-paced, web-based membership program that helps a business measure how ready it is to deal with emergencies, and gives customized feedback on how it can improve business continuity efforts.

Ready Rating begins with a comprehensive assessment of whether a business or organization is prepared to handle a disaster. Members score themselves on how prepared they are and receive steps they can take to improve their planning. The assessment covers items from hazard vulnerability to continuity of operations and employee readiness. Go to [www.ReadyRating.org](http://www.ReadyRating.org). This information was submitted by Stevens Traverse Grant Public Health.

### Benefit of Aging

Things are looking up for those of us who have slipped over the 55 year mark. Not only are we (hopefully) reaping the benefits of more profound, perspicacious and sagacious inner musings, but now we can **save 10% on our car insurance!** There is a state law, Linda Wasmund and Doug Wartner assure me, that requires insurance companies to give a 10% discount to all 55+ers who complete a mature driving class. The initial class costs \$14, runs eight hours, and is good for three years. Refresher courses are needed every three years to keep the discount, and only take four hours.

**Advance registration is required** (call 320-208-6600), and you pay at the door.

Here are the scheduled classes for the remainder of 2011.

INITIAL CLASS:	Wed. & Thurs.,	Sept. 28 & 29,	5:30-9:30PM
	Wed. & Thurs.,	Oct. 26 & 27,	1:30-5:30PM
	Tues. & Wed.,	Nov. 29 & 30,	5:30-9:30PM
REFRESHER CLASS:	Tuesday,	Sept. 27,	1:30-5:30PM
	Thursday,	Oct. 20,	5:30-9:30PM
	Wednesday,	Nov. 16,	1:30-5:30PM
	Wednesday,	Dec. 7,	1:20-5:30PM

## The Unsung Blessing of Essential Services

When we plug a light into an electric outlet, or pick up a ringing telephone, or turn the ignition key, we just expect the light, the phone and the car to work. Okay, the car may be more iffy, but the point is most of us don't typically spend time thinking about these things, much less being thankful that they do their jobs dependably day after day. The same is true when we take out the trash. The container at the curb is full when we leave for work, and empty when we come home. Pretty nifty!

Well, I want to draw attention to the significant blessing that Engebretson & Sons, our local disposal company, has been to our community. As important as garbage removal is to our homes and businesses, it is at least as critical to the success of a major event. For instance, have you ever wondered how much trash Prairie Pioneer Days generated? Probably not—but it was an impressive load every day! And each morning during that event this summer (and last summer, and each summer before that for several years) Engebretson & Sons came by to empty the many trash and recycling receptacles they had provided. And they did it all for **FREE!** Even though one of those shiny new carts was stolen over the weekend this year, there was no bill for either the loss or the services.

The annual Welcome Picnic and Community Expo is coming up on Sept. 8. We are expecting 1200 guests to enjoy the meal this year. As in past years, we are serving on paper and plastic instead of the good china, silverware and crystal.

Result: trash!

Again, Engebretson & Sons is offering the use of extra trash carts and their collection service at no charge. **Free.** Between those two events in this year alone, that is **over \$1,000** of services donated to the Morris community! So, on behalf of the Morris Area Chamber of Commerce, the hungry students from the Morris campus of the University of Minnesota, and all those within our community who benefit from these generous donations, I say **THANK YOU** to Troy Engebretson and his colleagues.



## Making Simple Websites

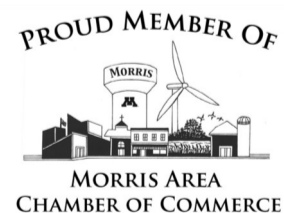
**FREE workshop** on Tuesday, September 15, from 9 to noon, in UMM Imholte Hall Room 11, Computer Lab. Starting a business website doesn't have to be an intimidating process. In this hands-on workshop, participants will learn options to create a business website. Options involve using free and easy-to-use resources, moderately priced customizable websites, and more customized websites. Participants learn tips related to working with web designers and programmers, plus understanding pricing and costs. Participants will also explore websites created at all levels of complexity and determine the best options for their needs. Presented by Extension Educator, Ryan Pesch.

To register, contact Morris Area Chamber of Commerce: 320-589-1242 or [MChamber@fedtel.net](mailto:MChamber@fedtel.net). There's room for 40 to attend; **registration is required.**

**“Tech Day”** on Sept. 29 is a follow-up to the website workshop—a time to ask specific questions one-on-one with Ryan Pesch. Discuss technical obstacles, the relative values of a blog vs. Facebook vs. website, etc. To schedule appointments, contact Carolyn Peterson at [stevensforward@fedtel.net](mailto:stevensforward@fedtel.net) or 320-585-6700.

For more information on either of these days, contact Carolyn Peterson or Susanne Hinrichs, UMN Extension (218) 851-5768 or [hinri110@umn.edu](mailto:hinri110@umn.edu).

These workshop and tech day services are provided at no charge through the University of Minnesota Extension Service as part of the Minnesota Intelligent Rural Communities (MIRC) program coordinated by the Blandin Foundation of Grand Rapids, Minnesota, and funded by a U. S. Department of Commerce grant.



Morris Area  
**Chamber**  
of Commerce

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**WHAT'S HAPPENING...**

**September:**

Sept. 5	Labor Day
Sept. 8	Welcome Picnic and Community Expo
Sept. 10	Old #1 Softball Tournament & Street Dance
Sept. 17	Harvest Holiday Festival

**Sign up for a table at the Sept. 8th  
Community Expo!**

At no charge to Chamber members, this marketing opportunity spans both community members and UMM students. We are expecting about 1200 people: half students, half community.

Call (589-1242) or email (MChamber@fedtel.net) for an Expo registration form.

Don't miss this free chance to make your business or organization better known!

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

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



**320-585-5395**

[www.rocksolidrehab.com](http://www.rocksolidrehab.com)

**616 Atlantic Ave - Morris**

**Prairie Renaissance Cultural Alliance**

*Dedicated to the arts & cultural life on the prairie.*

Gallery located at 630 Atlantic Ave, Morris 320-585-5035  
proa@prairierenaissance.org

Open: Tuesday-Friday: 11-5:30 & Saturday: 10-2  
Closed Mondays

Gifts • Cards • Pottery • Artwork • Jewelry • Photography



Starbuck Area (320) 239-7259  
Morris Area (320) 585-7259