



Points of Interest

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Campuswide Sustainability

Green Education

A University of Minnesota, Morris liberal arts education is all about asking and answering the big questions of our time. Sustainability issues are broad and encompassing, making them a perfect fit for the liberal arts. Resolving these issues will require the skills and qualities fostered by liberal learning: critical thinking, problem solving, communication, a broad base of knowledge from many disciplines, as well as tolerance, imagination, creativity, and openness to new ideas. In addition to “green” courses throughout the disciplines and opportunities to shape your own “green” area of concentration, Morris offers environmental studies and environmental science majors.

Local Foods and Healthy Eating

The Morris campus is a founding member of Pride of the Prairie, which promotes local use of foods grown in west central Minnesota. Campus food service provider Sodexo buys direct from area farmers whenever possible, a pledge that is written into its contract.

The Morris Healthy Eating project is working to expand the consumption of fresh vegetables and fruits on campus, within greater Morris, and in Stevens County.

Research

Local wind, biomass, and solar energy facilities do more than generate power—they double as sophisticated research and teaching tools. And they give other communities and institutions a chance to see how these new technologies work.

At Morris, students collaborate with faculty and staff on research opportunities in fields such as food production, biofuel crops, renewable energy economics, biomass gasification, solar energy production, prairie ecology, wind energy co-products, climate change and forest ecology, and many more.

Water Conservation

Water conservation is practiced across campus. Water flow restrictors on bathroom faucets and showers, low water flow toilets, and automated urinal flushers have cut campus water use by two million gallons per year.



1. Welcome Center

This renovated 18,500-square-foot building served as the Engineering building during the West Central School of Agriculture era. The gateway to campus, it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is built to LEED Gold standards, and one of only thirteen higher education LEED certified buildings in the world.

1a. Center for Small Towns (CST)

A point-of-entry to University of Minnesota resources, CST provides assistance to small towns and rural areas as a community outreach program. Small towns, local units of government, PK-12 schools, nonprofit organizations, and other University units utilize CST's resources when working on rural issues or making contributions to rural society. In 2009, CST enhanced its focus on energy and the environment.

1b. Office of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving

The UMM Sustainable Green Fund, launched in 2007, gives donors a way to support renewable energy projects on campus. The University of Minnesota, Morris Alumni Association (UMMAA) established the UMM Alumni Impact Fund, an endowed fund that benefits the Morris campus by addressing versatile strategic campus needs. Earnings from the endowment have paid for carbon credits that offset emissions from the campus fleet and grounds equipment.

1c. GreenCorps

The Morris campus was a strategic partner in developing the Minnesota GreenCorps program and continues to play a unique role in delivering the program to west central Minnesota. Unlike other organizations hosting full-time GreenCorps members, Morris campus students—all undergraduates—fulfill half-time service commitments, collaborating with local units of government, schools, and organizations like Stevens Forward!, and the Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center.

1d. Office of Community Engagement

Students from all majors participate in the Morris campus service-learning program, partnering students with service to the community outside the campus. Morris's Service Learning Sustainable Living initiative matches academic course goals with community needs in ongoing learning experiences. Student internships are available at the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center, on farms, and at partnering organizations.

1e. Office of Sustainability

In 2006, the Morris campus added a sustainability coordinator to its staff. The sustainability coordinator works with students and staff, providing green initiatives support and education. To help further foster the campus's culture of sustainability, a sustainability intern is employed for 10 hours per week in the Office of Sustainability.



What do we mean by renewable and sustainable?

You deliver more constructive energy than you consume.

You're always ready to think, create, and act.

At Morris, we believe what you learn in college should never run out of gas. In fact, it shouldn't need gas at all.



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Green Campus Map



Take the tour online at
morris.umn.edu/virtualtour

2. Hybrid Vehicle Fleet

The preferred vehicles of Morris campus faculty, staff, and students are the gas/electric hybrids. In 2005, the campus purchased seven hybrids in an effort to save money and reduce its carbon footprint. Today, electric hybrid vehicles, make up 40 percent of the campus fleet.

3. Recycling Center

At Morris, recycling makes “cents,” both environmentally and financially. When items are recycled, the campus avoids this charge and realizes income from aluminum, plastic, corrugated cardboard, and office ledger. The income is used to purchase equipment and to employ two to four students in the Recycling Center.

4. University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center

The community of Morris is home to an innovative “research triangle,” which includes the Morris campus, West Central Research and Outreach Center, and USDA Soil Conservation Research Laboratory. The three groups—all located within a few miles of each other—are collaborating on renewable energy research. An innovative research collaboration—“The Green Prairie Alliance”—is finding ways to turn rural Minnesota's abundant agricultural and natural resources into renewable energy and local wealth. And the knowledge gained here is being shared worldwide. The partners are making strides on a wide range of wind and biomass energy solutions, drawing on the strengths of each organization.

5. Wind Turbines

Two 1.65 megawatt wind turbines overlook the Pomme de Terre River near campus. The first wind turbine began generating power in 2005. Operated by the University of Minnesota West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC), it is the first commercial-scale turbine at a U.S. public university and powers the WCROC's wind-to-hydrogen-to-ammonia pilot plant. The second turbine began generating power in March 2011. The new structure stands 1,600 feet south of the WCROC turbine on city of Morris land. It is 10 meters taller and the combined output of both turbines will provide an average of 70 percent of the Morris campus's electricity. On some days, this statistic climbs as high as 100 percent.

6. Crocus Valley Organic Garden

Since 2008, Students in the Organic Garden Club have connected with the land by producing organically grown fruits and vegetables. Students are working to incorporate garden produce in campus dining and farmers markets. New community gardening and traditional American Indian gardening projects are also underway.

7. Dining Hall and Student Center

Morris is home to one of the longest running local foods initiatives in Minnesota higher education. From more than a decade, Pride of the Prairie Local Foods dinners and farmers markets have celebrated the bounty of the prairie each semester. Local foods are featured in daily dining and at special

events. Directories help students, faculty, and staff connect with area farmers for great foods grown by people we know.

8. Biomass Gasification Facility

In April 2005, the Minnesota Legislature approved a bonding bill that allocated \$6 million to construct this unique biomass gasification research and energy production facility. The facility is targeted to displace 70 percent of the campus's fossil fuel usage, primarily natural gas. This biomass gasification facility consumes about 9,000 tons of agriculture residue per year, harvested from farms within a 20-mile radius of Morris.

9. Solar Thermal Panels

During summer 2010, 32 flat-plate solar thermal panels—purchased from local company, Solar Skies, Inc.—were installed on the Morris campus to provide additional heating for the Regional Fitness Center (RFC) recreational pool. Assuming natural gas stays around \$1 per therm, the campus will save \$67,500 over the system's expected 25-year lifetime. The solar thermal array avoids about 30,000 pounds of CO₂ emissions per year.

10. Solar Photovoltaic System

A 3 kilowatt solar photovoltaic system on the south side of the Science building converts sunlight into electricity. The solar energy collector is used for solar polymer research and instruction.

11. Residence Halls

Campus facilities and student leaders have worked hard to “green” our residence halls. Energy audits performed in classes, sustainability-themed training for community advisers, energy kits available for residents to monitor energy usage, and signs promote residence hall energy and resource reduction. Also, each residence hall utilizes a reverse osmosis water treating system, which helps reduce plastic water bottle usage and provides tasty water to students.

11a. Sustainability Floor

The Sustainability Floor consists of co-ed students who share an interest in sustainability issues. These students along with other student groups plan sustainability-related activities and engage in community service. Events range from bringing well known speakers to campus, to campaigns for reducing electricity usage and waste. The Sustainability Floor is working hard to implement campuswide composting.

12. Bike share program

The Class of 2010 left a green gift for the campus, collecting bicycles to establish a free bike-share program. Bikes can be checked out through the Information Center in the Student Center.