



media release

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contacts: Greater Mankato Growth, Inc.
Shelly Megaw, 507.381.2767
smegaw@greatermankato.com

Twin Rivers Center for the Arts
Shannon Robinson, 507-387-1008
shannon@twinriversarts.org

Greater Mankato Area Receives Two Community Pride Awards

MANKATO, Minn. (September 8, 2009) – The Greater Mankato area received two awards at the 25th Anniversary Minnesota Community Pride competition, announced at the Minnesota Community Pride Showcase and Awards Ceremony **September 6** at the Minnesota State Fair Carousel Park. The Minnesota Community Pride Awards were created to lift up and publicly recognize the energy and ingenuity of Minnesota's communities in both overall community and economic development achievement.

Greater Mankato Growth (GMG) received the Creative Capital: Education and Lifelong Learning Award, which included a \$500 cash prize from the Minnesota State Fair, for their work in forming collaborations with education, government and non-profits to develop, attract and retain the talented workforce important to the community's continued vitality. GMG, funded through the business community, has a full-time Talent Development Director, specifically dedicated to creating partnerships and implementing talent development, attraction and retention programs for college students, young professionals and experienced professionals. GMG also partners with Mankato Area Public Schools to fund a full-time Career and Technical Education Coordinator to provide secondary career education programs for grades 7-12, with the South Central Perkins Consortia contributing additional funds to bring the service to other students in the region.

Twin Rivers Center for the Arts (TRCA) was named runner up for the Arts & Culture Award and received a \$300 prize, for their collaboration to create a community-wide online events calendar with other community organizations, including The Free Press, VoyageurWeb, Greater Mankato Growth and Greater Mankato Convention & Visitors Bureau. The online calendar, greatermankatoevents.com, which was launched in February, 2009, centralizes community events in one easy-to-search website. The site also links directly to online ticketing sites, including TRCA's own ticketing site twinriversarts.org, enhancing access to the events of TRCA's 35 members of the regional arts and culture community. In its first five months, the site had 20,733 unique visitors, viewing an average of five pages each per visit.



More about the 25th Anniversary Minnesota Community Pride Competition

The 25th Anniversary Minnesota Community Pride competition was co-sponsored by the Minnesota State Fair, MinnPost, The Blandin Foundation and Minnesota Rural Partners, Inc., who worked together to organize the summer-long competition and the State Fair event as part of the Reinventing Minnesota initiative, to lift up innovations across the state that help Minnesota thrive.

“Connecting, creating, thriving” is the tagline of Reinventing Minnesota. It’s a way to think and act, to turn the current economic challenges into opportunities that encourage people to connect and share good ideas and resources to move us into a thriving future for all. It builds on Minnesota’s history of inventiveness, innovation and compassion to recognize the goodwill and good actions that communities, neighborhoods and organizations across our state are doing right now to help one another.

The 25th Anniversary Minnesota Community Pride competition attracted more than 30 entries from across Minnesota, representing cities and neighborhoods, large and small, all generally sharing their stories of connecting, creating and thriving.

That’s why the State Fair was the perfect venue to showcase the Minnesota Community Pride communities. Where else do all Minnesotans gather to see what improvements have been made since last year? There are exhibits on agricultural innovations and sustainable energy and arts & culture and more. Why not examples of community and economic development improvements, too, that people can take home to their own cities and neighborhoods?

Finalists for the Minnesota Community Pride awards were determined by a panel of judges reviewing the entries received earlier this summer. Top winners among the finalists were selected by a public online vote. For more information on the Minnesota Community Pride Awards visit

http://www.reinventingminnesota.org/mn_pride.html

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