



DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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News Release

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HASTINGS TEACHER RECEIVES STATE AWARD AT SWCD CONVENTION

Representatives from Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) across the state attended the 75th annual meeting for the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Dec. 5-6 in Bloomington, MN. Approximately 700 participated in the three-day conference.

SWCD Board members attending from Dakota County included Kevin Chamberlain - Hastings, Chris Nielsen – Farmington, and Jason Swenson – Burnsville. Staff members Brian Watson, Laura Jester, Todd Matzke and Mike Isensee also attended and provided presentations.

The event included a keynote address by Dave McNally from Chaska, Minnesota on how to thrive as a leader and a panel discussion on how SWCDs are creating a shared vision and a broad coalition of partners to implement conservation.

Besides speakers and breakout sessions, the annual meeting featured a number of awards recognizing individuals and organizations for their work in conserving and enhancing the state's soil and water resource. Jack and Marlys Weber of rural Cannon Falls were recognized as Dakota SWCDs Outstanding Conservation Cooperator for 2011 based on the several conservation practices they have implemented over the past decade.

Hastings High School teacher Joe Beattie received the distinguished Minnesota Teacher of the Year Award for incorporating soil and water conservation education programs into his classes. Joe teaches 11-12 grade Biology courses through the Science Department at Hastings High School. "Joe has students learn by being outdoors rather than just in the classroom. He constantly has his students performing actual restoration, identification and collection activities of our natural environment," said Laura Jester, Watershed Conservationist with the SWCD. "These valuable real-world activities are helping shape and develop future conservationist and environmental leaders".

The SWCD congratulates the Weber family, Joe Beattie and the Hastings School District on their awards. To learn more about Dakota SWCD programs, you can visit their web site at www.dakotaswcd.org

Photo – next page...



Laura Jester, Dakota SWCD Staff and Joe Beattie, Teacher of Year with Award from MASWCD (Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts)