

MACDE Board of Directors:

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◆ Area 4

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◆ Area 5

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◆ Area 8

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Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees

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Don Flatness, Freeborn SWCD Manager, Honored

Many of you may not know this, but the state Employee's Association (the current MACDE) was started in 1981, almost 30 years ago. However, the very first employee's association was actually formed in April of 1977 in South East Minnesota. Don Flatness played an important part in forming that South East employees association.

After the South East association was formed, two more areas formed employee associations, and on December 7, 1981 the State MACDE was formed and the original By-Laws were approved. The purpose of forming an employees association then was to mainly have a common voice, and address several issues regarding employee benefits – including health insurance, retirement benefits, employee training, and uniform wages just to name a

few.

In 1981, a law was passed to include SWCD employees in the Minnesota PERA retirement benefits— Don was instrumental in contacting legislators to get the law changed to include the SWCD employees.

He has a common sense approach to problem solving, and explains technical issues to landowners in a way that they understand and respect. He has been involved with so many projects over the almost **45 years** he has been with the SWCD, there's no way we could mention them all.

Some of the major projects he has worked on have included CREP I & II, RIM/WRP Projects, numerous basins, waterways, and windbreak



Felicia Brockoff, MACDE President, presents Don Flatness, Freeborn SWCD Manager with the 2010 Extraordinary Contribution Award.

installations. He has served on many local committees as well, and currently serves on the Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance Technical Committee, the Shell Rock River Watershed Advisory Committee, WCA TEP Panel for Freeborn County, and also serves as the Clerk for his Township.

Congratulations Don!

MACDE Raffle Tickets & 2011 Memberships

Once again this year, MACDE is sponsoring a raffle as our annual fundraising event. Each SWCD should have already received your tickets. The MACDE will be having a booth at the MASWCD Trade Show, where ALL of the sold and unsold tickets need to be returned. Prizes this year for the raffle include:

- 2-Rock Bakken Prints
- 2-\$50 CASH Prizes
- \$100 Gander Mtn. Card
- Twins Fan Basket
- 2-Vikings Fan Baskets
- 2-\$50 Visa Gift Cards
- \$50 Cabela's Gift Card
- 2-\$50 Gander Mtn. Cards
- MN Wild Hockey Tickets (vs. Dallas Stars)
- \$50 Target Gift Card

2011 MACDE membership forms were also mailed along with your Raffle tickets. Memberships run on a calendar year, so don't forget to send in your membership renewal!

Don't forget about the 'Early-Bird' drawing...

Get your 2011 memberships paid by November 20, 2010, and you'll be entered into the random drawing for 1 of 8—\$25 cash prizes!

Do you have something you'd like to see included in the Newsletter? Have an idea for a website posting? Or need more information on something? Contact your MACDE Area Director or:

Felicia Brockoff, MACDE President
E-mail: fbrockoff@co.carver.mn.us



MACDE Mission

- Provide a means of communication between district employees to exchange information and ideas that encourage unification and coordination of our district programs.
- Help to establish and support a continuing education program for all district employees.
- Provide input into the activities of MASWCD and the Board of Water and Soil Resources, to increase the contribution of district employees and effectiveness of districts and their programs.
- Inform district employees of current events and job opportunities.
- Strive to maintain a stable and harmonious working relationship between districts, employees, supervisors, and cooperating agencies.

Noteworthy Tidbit: What sort of options are there for SWCD's to receive Health and/or Dental Insurance?

I was recently contacted by an MACDE member, who requested that I get this information out to all MACDE members. The SWCD recently changed their health/dental insurance providers for 2011. The cost savings to both the SWCD and the employees were **extremely significant**. The Agent they went through was **Dan Kneip** from **Streamline Benefits**. For more information, or for a quote, please contact Dan directly at Streamline Benefits (952) 758-3049, or email him at dkneip@healthet.com.

A note from your outgoing President...

As some (or most!) of you know, I HATE talking in front of a group! As Greg Ostrowski (Todd SWCD) stated during the "Telling isn't Selling—Conservation Marketing" session at the BWSR Academy, "Public speaking is NOT my thing...I am out of my comfort zone here." Greg, I know EXACTLY what you mean, however you did just fine! You've all heard the phrase 'Just try to imagine everyone in their underwear, you'll be fine.' No offence to anyone, but I really don't want to imagine any of you in your underwear... and I'd be willing to bet that feeling is mutual 😊



When I started on the MACDE Board 4-years ago as the Metro Area representative, I felt 'out of my comfort zone.' And when I was nominated to serve as your President, I REALLY felt out of that comfort zone! "I've never done this before...I'm sure there is someone else who is WAY more qualified than me to do this!" is what I kept thinking. Although a lot of us feel the same way at some point, I think we all also know that we DO have it in us to get out of our comfort zone once in a while. In doing so, you might actually find that you enjoyed it.

For those of you who have already been MACDE members for years and years, or just joined and are

enjoying being an MACDE member, THANK You! For anyone that has not been an MACDE member, or doesn't know what the Employee's Association does, I'd encourage you to step out of your comfort zone and become a member! The MACDE exists to benefit the Soil & Water Conservation District EMPLOYEES. We have sponsored a \$300 per area training stipend, so that you can hold area trainings and offset the costs by using some of the funds you put into MACDE. We have also sponsored an MACDE member to attend the NACD Legislative Conference in Washington DC over the past 3 years. Our membership has increased over the past couple years, which I can only assume means employees are seeing a benefit to being members of the MACDE.

I would like to thank the employees that are members of MACDE, as well as Supervisors, and MASWCD Board for the kindness you've shown toward me over these 4 years. Our MACDE family is a great one to be a part of. I've come to know so many of you personally, as well as your families through talking with so many of you at different trainings/conventions.

So... Thank YOU for getting me out of my comfort zone!

Felicia