

News Release

Local Foods Featured at UMC Chancellor Inauguration

By Elizabeth Tollefson on Thursday, February 23, 2006

Crookston, MN—With preparations underway for the inauguration on March 3 of the fourth chancellor of the University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC), local foods have taken center stage as a key part of the celebration. Why local foods? UMC's chancellor, Dr. Charles H. Casey and his wife, Barbara Muesing, have roots in rural Minnesota. After a 27-year career in rural veterinary medicine, Casey especially requested that local producers be a part of the celebration on inauguration day.

UMC began as a residential high school in 1906, and the inauguration is the highlight of a yearlong celebration that began in June of 2005. Today, as a four-year baccalaureate degree granting institution, UMC is in the midst of working on strategic planning, looking to the future, and building on the legacy of its first century. Agriculture has been central to the campus since it began, and with the location of the Regional Center of the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Northwest Research and Outreach Center located adjacent to the campus, agriculture remains at its heart.

Pasta served at the centennial dinner, is the result of research aided by UMC professor Brent Sorenson. Heartland Ingredients, L.L.C. will provide their gluten-free pastas as part of the meal. One of the pasta sauces is being made using Italian sausage from Neil's Quality Meats in McIntosh, MN. Lonnie Spokely, 2003 graduate of UMC, is providing the potatoes from Spokely Farms, Nielsville, MN, a fifth generation family farm. Bison roast will come from FaVer Catering, Fertile, MN, owned and operated by Faye and Verdell Olson. Noreen Thomas, a Clay County 4-H leader who with her husband, Lee, operates an organic farm, helped to make the connections for much of the rest of the food. Items including carrots, parsnips, and beef and pork roasts are a few of the local foods she helped secure. European style breads will accompany the meal and Thomas uses her certified kitchen and the help of her 4-H Club members to prepare the breads.

Native Harvest, a part of the White Earth Land Recovery Project, is the source for the coffee and wild rice for the dinner. RBJ's Spreadable Fruit, made in Crookston, MN, will accompany the meal. Wines for the evening are the work of Two Fools Vineyard in Plummer, MN. Owned and operated by LeRoy and Carol Stumpf, it is Minnesota's northern-most vineyard.

No meal would be complete without chocolate from Widman's Candy shop. George Widman, Grand Forks, ND, used his family's famous chocolate in a mold featuring the UMC centennial logo designed especially for the campus centennial. The chocolates will be used as gifts for those attending the inaugural ceremony.

Food is not the only thing made locally being featured as part of the inauguration. Gifts for the platform guests are clocks made in the Lundin Shop owned and operated by woodworking artisan Marv Lundin of Thief River Falls, MN. The clocks have been engraved in recognition of inauguration day. The candles in the centerpieces on the tables will be created by the Bridge Street Candle Company in Crookston and will be used in floral arrangements designed by UMC's horticulture students. Floral arrangements will be created by Stephani Paverud and the staff at Montague's Flower Shop in Crookston and balloon arches will be the work of Crookston Floral, owned and operated by Brian and Lisa Schumacher. Brian is a 1988 graduate of UMC.

Ceremony guests will also receive note cards made from original watercolors by local artist LaVonne Forsberg. The paintings hang in the Kiehle building and feature the new Student Center, the Kiehle building, and the Harris Peterson Gazebo located on the campus mall. Forsberg is from Thief River Falls, MN and has had her work shown in Minnesota, North Dakota, Nevada, and Wisconsin.

Local foods and local artisans will make UMC's inaugural celebration unique while commemorating the history of the campus and celebrating its new leadership. It is an event bringing the region together, reminding everyone how connected UMC is to northwest Minnesota, and recognizing the valuable resources we have available locally.

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