



Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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SMMPA Provides Free Seed Packages in Effort to Save the Monarch Butterfly

ROCHESTER, MN – Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA) is providing free pollinator seed packages to customers in its Member municipal utility communities. The seed packages are part of an effort to create habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators. Loss of habitat has resulted in an estimated 90% reduction in the eastern U.S. population of the iconic butterfly.

“This is the second phase of our effort this summer and a way to invite members of the public to join in this effort by establishing their own “monarch waystations,” said Chris Schoenherr, Director of Agency and Government Relations at SMMPA. “We’ve come to understand that lots of small actions, right here in our communities, will be the best way to save this important species.”

SMMPA partnered with Sand County Foundation in developing the program. Sand County Foundation has made addressing the loss of the monarch population a priority issue. In cooperation with Sand County Foundation, Syngenta, a leading agriculture company, is helping fund the SMMPA effort.

SMMPA and its members recently completed planting of 29 monarch waystations in 14 different SMMPA Member communities. Providing the free seed packages will help individuals within the community join the effort. Each package will contain milkweed and nectar plant seeds, and instructions for creating an attractive pollinator habitat in your yard or garden.

“We really intend this to be a community effort and the seed packages will help make this a much broader partnership between the municipal utility and its customers,” said Schoenherr. “As people learn about the plight of the monarch, they naturally want to become part of the solution and we believe this will be an easy way for them to do so.”

The seed packages were assembled by Prairie Restorations, Inc. of Princeton, MN and are now available at the local SMMPA Member utility office. Each package contains enough seeds to cover a 36 square foot area. Minnesota Department of Agriculture brochures on creating pollinator habitat are also available at the utility office.

Participating SMMPA Member communities include Austin, Blooming Prairie, Fairmont, Grand Marais, Lake City, Litchfield, Mora, New Prague, North Branch, Owatonna, Preston, Princeton, Rochester, Spring Valley, Saint Peter, Waseca and Wells

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About SMMPA

SMMPA was formed as a joint-action agency by its Members in 1977. SMMPA generates and sells reliable wholesale electricity to its eighteen non-profit, municipally owned member utilities and develops innovative products and services to help them deliver value to their customers. SMMPA Members serve over 97,000 residential customers and over 12,300 commercial and industrial customers. The Agency's energy resource mix includes coal-fired and natural gas-fired resources, various renewable energy sources such as wind, biodiesel and waste-to-energy, and an array of intermediate and peaking units owned by member utilities. For more information about SMMPA please visit www.smmpa.com

About Sand County Foundation

Sand County Foundation (www.sandcounty.net) is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to working with private landowners across North America to advance ethical and scientifically sound land management practices that benefit the environment. Learn more at <http://sandcounty.net>

About Prairie Restorations

Headquartered in Princeton, Minnesota, Prairie Restorations, Inc., was founded in 1977. It is one of the first companies, nationally, devoted exclusively to designing, restoring and managing native prairie plant communities. In three decades Prairie Restorations, Inc. has grown from three employees in a single location to a full-time staff of 45 in six locations throughout Minnesota. Learn more at <http://www.prairieresto.com/>

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