

Sustainability partnership with University of Minnesota gives Rosemount a lot to work with

By [Emily Zimmer](#) on May 7, 2015 at 11:14 a.m.



The work done by University of Minnesota students as part of its Resilient Communities partnership with Rosemount was on display last week.

During his speech at the Resilient Communities Program end-of-year celebration May 1, Rosemount mayor Bill Droste called the year-long partnership a “great gift.”

The [University of Minnesota Resilient Communities](#) program celebrated the conclusion of its one-year partnership with [Rosemount](#) during a luncheon held at the [McNamara Alumni Center](#). The visual proof of that gift was spread throughout the room next door.

In all more than 400 University of Minnesota students worked on 31 projects that in ways big and small will advance Rosemount’s sustainability and resilience. On display at McNamara was a year’s worth of research, toil and gained experience.

Resilient Communities director [Carissa Schively Slotterback](#) called the year-long partnership a great success, adding that by working together they advanced sustainability and resilience in the community in ways they couldn't have individually.

In a competitive process, Rosemount was named the U of M's Resilient Communities partner for the 2014-15 school year. The city came up with a list 40 projects it wanted help tackling over the course of the year. The projects were assigned to various graduate courses.

Projects of note included investigating options for private housing for [Dakota County Technical College](#) students; daytime staffing solutions for the Rosemount Fire Department; researching best practices for safe youth driving behavior; looking at alternative energy sources; considering stormwater management opportunities; probing transportation advancements; exploring the possibilities of an eco-green business park and many more.

Council member Jeff Weisensel said he was particularly impressed with the investigative work done on the DCTC student housing project. The housing is something he would like to see developed in the community and he expressed hope the project would help find a developer.

Dr. Lyn Bruin, who taught the class that investigated the housing project, said her students benefited from the opportunity to work with working professionals. In particular, Bruin said her students worked with senior planner Eric Zweber and staff from the [Dakota County Community Development Agency](#).

Bruin said her students learned first-hand about funding resources available for housing and what it does not apply to.

"My students had exactly the experience I wanted them to have," she said.

Social sciences student Laura Modi investigated safe youth driving behavior. In particular she researched successful programs that currently exist and how Rosemount High School could implement programs with the help of area law enforcement.

"Parents play a huge role in teen driving behavior," said Modi of her research.

Her project focused on how driving programs can get parents to understand their roles in a teen's driving behavior and what they can do to help enforce safe behavior.

In particular, Modi said teens need clear guidelines laid out for what is expected of them while behind the wheel. Additionally, Modi said parents need to follow through with consequences if those guidelines are crossed.

Presently, Modi said [Rosemount High School](#) has a good student driving program that goes above the normal standards. She added that some additional work is in the pipes.

Modi said she enjoyed working on a project that may have real life implications. Overall she said it was good experience.

Resilient Communities Program manager Mike Greco said getting students practical learning experiences is part of what makes the program so successful. He said the experience adds a lot of value to their educational experience.

Community development director Kim Lindquist said the experience working with students on the various projects was great. While it had practical benefits for the city, Lindquist said working with young professionals also invigorated her.

“This would be a great experience for any community,” said Lindquist.

She said many of the projects were things city staff has had on the back burner for a long time but couldn’t get to. Now she said their job will be to go through all the work and find a way to use it.

While the burden will now shift to the Rosemount City Council on what to do with all the projects, Droste said it’s a good problem to have.

“We now have more tools and are better equipped for the future,” said Droste.

In addition to observing the conclusion of its partnership with Rosemount, Resilient Communities also celebrated its future partnership with Carver County during the 2015-16 school year.

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