

## Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council Supports Provider Pals® Program

*'Soybean checkoff invests in educational program connecting farmers with Minnesota students'*

(Libby, Montana) - Provider Pals, a Presidential Award winning urban/rural cultural exchange program, announced that the [Minnesota Soybean Research & Promotion Council](#) (MSR&PC) has invested \$30,000 to bring the innovative program to Minnesota schools.

*"We are excited to be adding Provider Pals to our long list of educational programming because it will help students, educators and their families make the connection between farmers and the safe, abundant food we all enjoy,"* says Ron Obermoller, Chairman of MSR&PC's Education Committee and soybean farmer from Brewster, Minn. *"We also hope it reminds the next generation that agriculture is a noble profession, providing many career opportunities."*

One of the main elements of the Provider Pals program is to facilitate classroom 'adoptions' of rural resource workers in the fields of farming, ranching, mining, logging and fishing. This year's Minnesota adoptions will take place within Centennial Middle School in Lino Lakes, Humboldt Junior High School in St. Paul, Red Rock Central High School in Lamberton, and the Lake Nokomis and Susan B. Anthony Middle schools in Minneapolis.

Each of these schools has volunteered to adopt one or two people from a natural resource-providing profession and host them at the school for a day this spring. Farmers Brad Hovel of Cannon Falls, Kevin Estrem of Nerstrand, and Bill Gordon and Matt Widboom of Worthington are four of the nine adoptions taking place. A Montana Rancher, North Carolina Commercial Fisherman, and Montana Wild Lands Firefighter are also among the adoptions. The students and teachers are currently learning about and communicating with their 'Pals' and look forward to the Provider Days this spring.

Bruce Vincent, Executive Director of Provider Pals, is thrilled to bring the program to Minnesota. *"Minnesota is vast in natural resource professions and cultures, so this program is a natural fit. We are proud to be working in partnership with MSR&PC and MN Ag in the Classroom and look forward to helping bring natural resource education and career awareness to Minnesota students."*

MSR&PC's investment also provided more than 1,000 one-year memberships to the new and exciting educational gaming web site called [Provider World](#). This website allows students and guests to visit farms, forests, ranches, mines and fishing operations and cultures in a safe, interactive and educational gaming format.

The MSR&PC is made up of an elected board of 15 soybean producers from across the state whose mission is to invest soybean check off dollars in well-defined research, marketing and education projects designed to increase demand for soybeans and improve the profitability of Minnesota's soybean farmers. Learn more at [www.mnsoybean.org](http://www.mnsoybean.org).

Provider Pals is a non-profit education organization with a mission is to build a common-ground bridge of understanding and respect between urban youth, rural youth, and their natural resource providers. The program is in its twelfth year of operation and with the help of support of organizations such as Ford Motor Company, Caterpillar, and Monsanto Fund, has grown to include over 10,000 students per year in over 25 cities in the United States and Canada. The *Wall Street Journal* has called the program 'the most exciting educational initiative in decades.'

**For more information on Provider Pals, contact Bruce Vincent at (406)293-8822 or [bruce@providerpals.com](mailto:bruce@providerpals.com). You can also visit them on the web at [www.providerpals.com](http://www.providerpals.com). Provider World: [www.providerpals.com/pworld](http://www.providerpals.com/pworld)**