

MASWCD Teacher Award – 2009

Craig Colbenson, the vocational agriculture teacher at Rushford-Peterson High School has been awarded the **Teacher Award** by the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD). The MASWCD honors a K-12 educator/professional teacher who has created innovative conservation education activities for reaching students.

Craig's teaching philosophy centers around the idea that our environment and natural resources are the heart and soul of our being, having taught Natural Resources for 34 years in the public school system. As a teacher and farmer, he has learned and experienced the need of protecting our resources with the most powerful tool being education.

Mr. Colbenson offers a Natural Resources and Advanced Natural Resources class to juniors and seniors. The weekly agenda covers various topics from aquatics to winter survival in Minnesota. Students are required to research each topic and determine the environmental impacts to our natural resources.

During each of the weekly classes, Colbenson gets involvement from former students, community people, organizations and government agencies. He has found it very rewarding to his students, the community and himself to get outside involvement.

Colbenson has led the Rushford-Peterson Envirothon team to ten first and second place finishes at the Area level, has won the Minnesota State Envirothon five times and then advanced to the Canon National Envirothon, held at various locations across the country. "These challenges allow students to expand their knowledge and confidence in themselves" says Colbenson. "I am very proud of their success knowing I have done my best in teaching them."

The Teacher Award was presented at the 73rd Annual MASWCSD Convention held at the Entertainment Convention Center in Duluth on December 7th, 2009.

