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For immediate release

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SCOTT SWCD RECEIVES AWARDS FOR 2007:

DISTRICT OF THE YEAR AND OUTSTANDING EMPLOYEE AWARD

St. Paul - The Scott Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) received two awards during the 71st annual convention of the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD), held Dec. 2-4, 2007 in Rochester, Minn.

The Scott SWCD was honored by MASWCD as the SWCD of the Year, and Pete Beckius, Scott SWCD District Manager received the Outstanding SWCD Employee award from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR). Both awards reflect the organization's accomplishments in implementing conservation projects and administering local, state and federal conservation programs.

"Being a successful SWCD manager takes competence, and Pete has that in spades," said BWSR Executive Director John Jaschke. "It also takes collaboration with other local organizations, and Pete's tremendous working relationships with partner organizations have led to many innovative projects that protect and improve water quality."

The SWCD is governed by an elected Board of Supervisors that is responsible for a variety of conservation efforts in Scott County. Board members are: Jim Fitzsimmons (Prior Lake), Ewald Gruetzmacher (Belle Plain), Paul Krueger (Prior Lake), Jim Schwingler (Jordan) and Scott Tracy (Lakeville).

Recent efforts of SWCD staff have led to a coordinated approach to natural resource conservation and project implementation. The SWCD's partners include Scott County, several local watershed management organizations and watershed districts, the Met Council, Pheasants Forever, and several state and federal agencies. These partnerships have resulted in nearly \$1 million worth of projects that reduce soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat in Scott County over the past two years.

Beckius and the SWCD staff also provide technical assistance to landowners and to the local government entities that administer the state Wetland Conservation Act (WCA) within Scott County. WCA protects wetlands and water quality by requiring construction and land alteration projects to first attempt to avoid the draining or filling of wetlands, and to mitigate for unavoidable wetland impacts by providing replacement wetlands. The high rate of development seen in Scott County the past several years has resulted in a high level of wetland-related activity and workload.

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources is the state agency that oversees local water management programs. For more details on the projects that the SWCD has accomplished, visit them at their office, 7151 West 190th Street, Suite 125 in Jordan, or their website at: www.scottswcd.org

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