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# Press Release

**St. Charles, MN, April 16, 2010. St. Charles recognizes two people for their extraordinary efforts during the North Star Food Fire.**

One year ago our community witnessed many heroic people on April 17, 2009 during the devastating fire at our largest private employer. These extraordinary people will be honored during the community event being held this Saturday April 17, 2009.

One of these people was working at the community sanitary district. His quick thinking prevented millions of gallons of contaminated water from entering the environmentally sensitive Whitewater River. Brandon Stall knew something was wrong when he noticed the heavy dark smoke coming from the downtown area. Shortly there after he observed larger than normal volumes of water coming into the plant and quickly diverted the water to a holding area to lessen the environmental impact to the Whitewater.

Another hometown hero was North Star Foods' maintenance man, Larry Young. Young worked closely with firefighters and hazardous material personnel by providing valuable technical information. The plant used anhydrous ammonia for cooling and emergency personnel were very concerned about the deadly effects the gas would have if released into the air. Young was able to provided vital information to help prevent a major loss of life.

“The quick thinking of these two individuals greatly reduced the damage caused by this terrible fire,” commented Mayor Bill Spitzer, “Our community is saddened by the loss of North Star Foods but thankful no one lost their live as a result of the fire.”

The event will also recognize the countless individuals and emergency personnel that ensured the safety of the community resulting in no loss of life.

One year after the April 17, 2009 fire at the former North Star Foods site, the community is being invited to commemorate the event and celebrate the community support demonstrated during that event.

Over 200 emergency responders answered the call for help and emergency crews spent over 28 hours fighting the fire and evacuating the town in order to protect life and property. On Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup> the community is invited to remember that day with members of the various organizations that responded and risked their lives.

The event will be held in the west parking lot of City Hall as well as inside the Community Center from noon to 2 p.m.

Students of the St. Charles School District participated in an essay contest and those essays will be on display. People attending will receive a commemorative wooden coin recalling the historic event.

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