



## Working Together Coalition seeks members

### Group encourages safe, healthy community

By Kelly Virden  
Pine River Journal Editor

Pine River and Backus community members encourage safe and healthy environments for youth through the Working Together Coalition.

Members of the Working Together Coalition meet in Pine River-Backus, Walker-Hackensack-Akeley, and Northland-Remer communities to find ways to collaborate to prevent youth substance use.

The Working Together Coalition is made up of parents, businesses, school employees, youth-serving organizations, law enforcement officers, civic-volunteer groups, healthcare professionals and more.

The coalition has been around 10 years, but members have changed and refined the group's mission and vision.

Initially the coalition focused on rural violence before shifting to underage alcohol and drug prevention.

Working Together Coalition coordinators locally are LeeAnn Sampson, PR-B Alcohol Tobacco Other Drug prevention coordinator; and Kelly Felton, substance abuse prevention specialist.

The Working Together Coalition was recipient of a Drug Free Community Grant.

The PR-B, W-H-A and Northland-Remer communities are three of the 161 communities nationwide to receive \$125,000 each year for five years.

That means a total of \$625,000 in Cass County for use in training, supplies, curriculum and programming in the communities to reduce youth substance use.

The coalition is finishing its first year of the Drug Free Community grant.

The Working Together Coalition is focusing on reducing underage drinking this year.

The coalition will look at the data from the Minnesota Student Survey administered last fall to determine if there are particular areas of concern

involving teenage drug, alcohol and tobacco use.

They'll analyze the results and find ways to focus on helping prevent teens from using alcohol and drugs, Felton explained.

Click here to return to story:

[http://pineandlakes.com/stories/091510/localnews\\_20100915123.shtml](http://pineandlakes.com/stories/091510/localnews_20100915123.shtml)