

TPT, AAUW partner to film “Women Making Change”

A documentary focusing on women in Minnesota politics has been created jointly by Twin Cities Public Television and the American Association of University Women-Red Wing Area Branch.

"Women Making Change" premiered Sept. 24 at the historic Sheldon Theatre in Red Wing. It includes historic footage, photographs, news clips and interviews telling the story of women in Minnesota politics and the hurdles they faced.

Goodhue County serves as a microcosm of the state, according to Sandy Wollschlager of Cannon Falls, a member of the Red Wing AAUW branch, who conceived and spearheaded the project. Women from both major political parties have been elected to state office out of Goodhue County, plus it is home to the Prairie Island Indian Community, which also has elected women to leadership roles.

Among featured women the positions they held are Audrey Bennett, Prairie Island Tribal Council president; Joanel Dyrstad of Red Wing, lieutenant governor; Wollschlager, state representative; and Linda Thielbar of Red Wing, community activist. In addition to women from rural Minnesota, the documentary also includes stories from Joan Growe, former secretary of state; and Margaret Anderson Kelliher, former Minnesota House Speaker, and others.

Financial support for the documentary came from the National AAUW, the Red Wing Area Fund, Husom & Rose Photographics and the Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. Fiscal sponsor is the Minnesota Women's Consortium.

The gala premiere was at 7p.m. Sept 24. Several people involved in the project were part of the program, and there was a slide show of Goodhue County women in politics over the decades plus music by the choral group Hot Flashes.

Following the premiere of "Women Making Change," the documentary will be broadcast statewide on public television, including KSMQ in the Rochester/Austin area and Twin Cities Public Television.