



Prepare and develop effective leaders to strengthen rural communities. RLND Mission



RLND 2003-05 Class Summary

October 2005



Greetings and welcome to the Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) 2003-05 program summary. I am very excited to have this opportunity to share information about RLND and the first class of participants.

The RLND program is a two-year oasis of learning, networking, visioning, challenging your thinking and practicing critical leadership skills for improvement and enhancement. The participants of the RLND program are dedicated individuals who want to be part of shaping the future of their community and state.

The program started in fall 2003 with the selection of the first group of participants. The idea for the statewide leadership program emerged from several individuals discussing issues of leadership needs across the state. Sharon Anderson, former NDSU Extension Service director, crafted a plan on how to deliver the statewide leadership program through Extension. The plan was proposed to NDSU President Joseph Chapman, who got behind the program and made things happen by funding the RLND program director's position. Funding currently comes from the NDSU Extension Service, tuition and contributors.

The program is governed by a 15-member council and a 10-member design team. The RLND Council provides leadership in the overall program governance, financial stability, publicity and participant selection process. The RLND Design Team provides leadership for the three-day seminars, six-day study tour and evaluation of the program. The design team has created objectives and curriculum for the nine seminars and study tour every group experiences.

People are essential to moving communities and organizations ahead. The RLND program helps individuals who want to be part of this process learn more about themselves and how to help their community move ahead by creating positive change.

I hope you enjoy reading this booklet. This group of North Dakota leaders is an incredible group of individuals who will play many critical roles in the future of North Dakota. RLND is a concept that everyone wants to be part of in some way because it is about giving hope for the future to the people of North Dakota!

Marie Hvidsten
RLND program director



The NDSU Extension Service is pleased to help establish the RLND program and we're proud of the first graduating class of participants. This program prepares leaders to help communities deal with today's changing world and address the social and economic issues facing our state. Participants have the opportunity to enhance their critical and creative thinking and conflict-resolution skills. This experience also increases self-confidence and motivation to promote positive change. Our state will benefit from their training!

*Duane Hauck, director
NDSU Extension Service*

NDSU
Extension Service

*Heroes are not giant statues framed against a red sky.
They are people who say, "This is my community and it's my
responsibility to make it better."*

Tom McCall, former governor of Oregon



RLND Class of 2005

Back row, left to right: Marty Campbell, Kurt Froelich, John Zetocha, Keith Draeger, David Olson, Jeff Klemetsrud, Scott Bullinger, Merri Mooridian, Becky Meidinger, Jean Brandt, Donald Longmuir, Jr., Marie Hvidsten (RLND program director)

Front row, left to right: Allen Orwick, Michelle McCormack, Kelli Schollmeyer, Deb Kantrud, Heather Feiring, Dawn Jarolmek, Patti Patrie, Vicki Monsen, Lori Wagner, Rene Johnson, Beth Wieland, Brent Ekstrom

Not in group photo: Susan Goplen



Class of 2003-05 Mission Statement

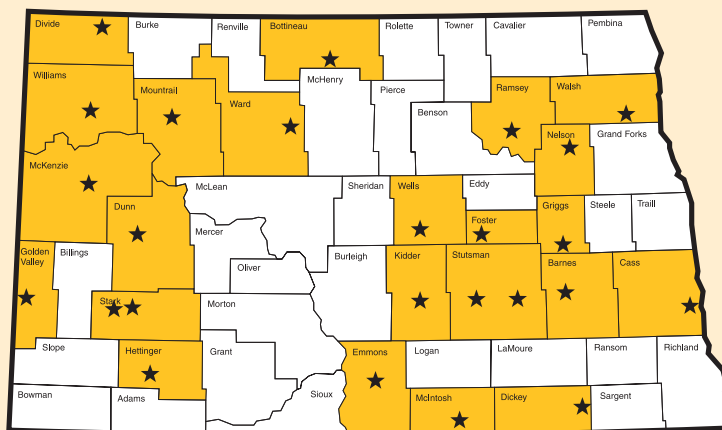
Rural Leadership North Dakota 2005...

Is a diverse group of pioneers for progress who have a passion, hope and commitment to North Dakota's future. We believe in empowering and helping people by developing excellence in *leadership* and *partnerships* in our communities.

RLND Project Stories

2003-05 Class Participants

The following stories are written by the 2003-05 RLND class participants. Every RLND participant is asked to work on a project in his or her community or organization. The participants come up with the project idea at the beginning of their RLND experience. During the two year time frame, participants implement a plan to accomplish their project. Some projects take a few months while other projects take a few years to complete. RLND projects improve the quality of life for individuals in communities and organizations throughout North Dakota. These projects create positive change in the community, as well as the RLND participant.



Map of RLND Class 2005 communities.

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful,
committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the
only thing that ever has.*

Margaret Mead

Jean R. Brandt

Kramer, N.D.



I live in north-central North Dakota on a farm near Kramer. We are a small farm/ranch community that is typical of most of the rural areas in the state. Struggling to maintain and enhance what we now have while trying to improve and advance into the future are issues that are being focused on in our area. The Rural Leadership North Dakota program offered excellent knowledge and assistance to me, enabling me to become a stronger, more effective and efficient leader. Rural Leadership also taught me ways to encourage and help other people in the community step forward to take on leadership positions.

The RLND project that I undertook was to go into the elementary schools and spend some time visiting with the third- and fourth-grade students about staying in the state of North Dakota. We talked about working and living in North Dakota, an excellent environment, rich with opportunities and possibilities. I titled my project “Stick Around ND.” My goal was to encourage students to start thinking about where they could live and pursue varied occupations right here in our great state.

I was able to visit four classrooms in our area. The children were very receptive to my message and participated in the discussion eagerly, staying focused and putting a lot of thought into the topic of life in North Dakota. I used North Dakota maps, Pride of Dakota lapel pins, and pens and sticky notes with the “Stick Around ND” logos on them as handouts.

Sen. David O’Connell provided the maps and pins for the students and the items were definitely welcomed and used by the children. In one of the schools that I visited, the students asked if they could just stay in for the recess

that followed my presentation and use their maps. As I left, they had the maps spread out across the room, playing a game that involved finding certain locations or telling where they would like to live in the state someday.

We discussed many occupations that could be engaged in right here in North Dakota, brainstorming many possibilities for the future, especially dwelling on technology and the excitement it holds for us in the future. The advantages of life here in North Dakota were discussed at length, along with hurdles that can and must be overcome to enable more people to “Stick Around ND.” To wrap up our sessions, I asked each of the students to write a short statement and draw a picture of why they would choose to “Stick Around ND.” Many insightful writing and drawings were collected and I considered my visits to the classrooms a very successful venture.

I felt that the students really took the subject of my visits seriously and asked many good questions. They put forth great thoughts and statements, brimming with desire to be able to stay in North Dakota, live, raise their families and work right here in their home state. I felt that addressing these issues with students of this age was very appropriate, knowing that at this time they already are forming opinions and thinking of what they would like to do in the future.

Overall, the project was a huge success and I would like to see the contents of this subject brought into different classes and areas throughout the upcoming years. I feel that this important subject must be discussed continually with students of all ages, working to remind them of the importance and the advantages of “sticking around North Dakota.” Our leaders in North Dakota must be informed of the concerns, expectations and desires of these young people – our future leaders!



Scott Bullinger

Dickinson, N.D.



With more than 55,000 young people participating in sponsored activities, 4-H in North Dakota is the largest youth development organization in the state. 4-H and Extension youth programs were supported by more than 5,600 volunteers who gave of their time and expertise to the youth of North Dakota. North Dakota 4-H programs help develop life skills in our youth and provide an opportunity for adult participation.

Financial support is accomplished in a number of ways, including an annual golf outing. The golf fundraiser has been a great success in the Fargo area but has lacked leadership in Bismarck. According to the 4-H development director, without leadership and proper support, the Bismarck fundraiser might not be able to go on as planned in 2005. I asked Tom McSparron, the 4-H development director, if I could be a part of the Bismarck Golf Benefit Committee. My intention was to use the skills that I've developed in the RLND program during the past two years to make this golf scramble a success for years to come.

The date of the event was June 20 at Hawktree Golf Club in Bismarck. Funds were raised in a number of different ways, including several levels of sponsorship. Besides the direct sponsors, individuals and businesses showed support through auction items, participant gifts, door prizes and cash donations and were recognized at the awards ceremony for any such contributions.

I planned on becoming involved in all aspects of running a tournament with the hopes of heading the committee for the Bismarck golf scramble in the future. Also, with the skills learned from this experience, I anticipate working with future RLND classes to host an annual golf scramble with the proceeds to be used for RLND scholarships.

Overall, the scramble was a success and brought in nearly double last year's net profit. However, a few things could have been improved and at our wrap-up meeting, we listed several important items for next year's event. The most important item was to get an early start. This year, with scheduling conflicts and a generally busy spring, we were not able to get into the full swing of things until May. The committee plans on meeting at least one more time this year to get a jump on things that need the most attention, such as promotion and sponsorships.

Another area we'd like to focus on is advertising. We will be approaching several news media outlets to get the word out. Along those same lines, the committee would like to offer a "celebrity" in our advertising. Several names were mentioned but nothing has been finalized.

Personally, I'm happy with what I've learned and am eager to get started on next year's event. We've got many dedicated individuals and several great ideas, and I'm convinced that with an early start and the proper promotion, this fundraiser will continue to grow and provide a good source of revenue for the 4-H Foundation for years to come.

Marty Campbell

Beach, N.D.



The Youth Leadership and Involvement Task Force is the starting point to identify the potential outcomes when the area youth are an active part of the community.

The goals of this project were to increase youth involvement in community planning and events; increase youth involvement in training for entrepreneurial ventures; empower youth to have a voice in the community; and increase awareness of youth potential and involvement in the success of the school and community.

Youth involvement in the community is present, but the youth have a limited voice that is heard and respected. This project begins the conversation and the mental shift toward youth being a respected voice at the table of community decisions.

This project has deep community change outcomes. This work has just begun, but the potential outcomes are exciting. Time will be necessary to increase the confidence of the youth in the community and in turn allow the adults to see the youth as a valuable asset. The adults care deeply about the youth but have not had the experience to share a conversation about deep community issues.

This project has allowed me to further the conversation with the youth in the community. It has shown me firsthand the young people's desire and urgency of caring about their community and how they are involved in the decisions being made. They truly care about and are concerned for the future of their school and community.

Rural Leadership North Dakota and this project have started a major shift in the community that will have long-lasting effects. Through the seminars and statewide and national contacts that I have made, I gained the confidence to voice my concerns and know that I must take action. I cannot wait for the "other person" to come save this community or ask the questions at the City Council meeting. It has to begin with ME!

On Aug. 3, 2005, the Prairie West Development Foundation board of directors passed a resolution to approve the creation of a Youth Relations Committee. This committee will include four youth and will direct the transfer of reports from the Student Council to the foundation meetings to create a youth voice in economic development for the future betterment of Golden Valley County. This outcome is a gigantic milestone in the forward movement of the increased youth voice in Golden Valley County.

Youth are the key component of long-term rural community success and sustenance. My belief is that we must empower our youth while they are in high school. They have the ability and talents to make a difference in rural communities. As adults, we must provide and encourage their input and participation with project and community planning. Rural Leadership North Dakota has given me new skills and confidence to take the step to make this change happen!

Courage is a door that can only be opened from the inside.

Terry Neil

Keith A. Draeger

Dawson, N.D.



The Dawson Area Visitors Center was built to inform the public about the attractions in and around Dawson. Costing a little more than \$10,000, the center was completed in May 2004. The majority of funding came from the fundraising efforts of the Dawson Area Development Association (DADA). The most successful was raffle ticket sales. The Dawson town council also helped with this project. Most labor was donated.

With the completion of the Veterans Memorial Wall in Dawson in 2002, the DADA decided that the display needed bathrooms to accommodate visitors. While in the planning stage, association members thought that an exhibit hall showing the history of Dawson would complement the Veterans Wall.

City Hall in Dawson has two garage bays attached to the building. The DADA asked and was granted permission from the city to use one of these bays for the center. We started the project after one year of fundraising.

The first phase was to build the exhibit hall. To maintain the Western theme, the entrance has log siding. This continues inside, as the interior also is wood. This achieved two purposes. The ½-inch plywood would deter vandalism and also give an old West atmosphere. The floor is painted a forest green to give the impression of the prairie.

The second phase was to complete the handicapped-accessible bathrooms. This was completed in spring 2004. They are located to the rear of the exhibit hall.

As predicted, visitors who stop and tour the center also tend to patronize Dawson business establishments. This was the primary goal. It worked. A recent survey indicated that business has increased.

Was it easy? No. Comments from naysayers – “What do we need that for, it’s a waste of time and money” – can take a toll on any endeavor. The Rural Leadership North Dakota program and my fellow classmates provided the energy for us to continue.



Brent Ekstrom

Lincoln/Bismarck, N.D.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Intermediary Relending Program Revolving Loan Fund project was to establish a revolving loan fund to finance expansion and retention of existing businesses, as well as finance startup costs of new businesses.

The loans are intended to create new employment and new wealth in the 10-county area serviced by the Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council, including Burleigh, Grant, Emmons, Sioux, McLean, Oliver, Mercer, Morton and Sheridan.

The goal of the project was to raise contributions from the 10-county area serviced by the Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council that would be matched at a rate of 3-to-1 by a loan from USDA Rural Development through the Intermediary Relending Program. The amount to be requested from USDA Rural Development was projected at \$350,000, requiring raising matching funds from the counties of \$117,000, for a total revolving loan fund of \$467,000.

Through an extensive effort of contacting and meeting with all 10 county commissions throughout the summer and fall 2004, we were able to raise contributions totaling \$151,000, which allowed the Regional Council to request a matching loan from USDA Rural Development in the amount of \$450,000.

The USDA IRP loan application is a nationwide competitive application for funds. The scoring is based upon several criteria, including the number of low- to moderate-income people served, strength of the proposed work plan, strength of the organization, past performance of the organization and community support as shown in the matching contributions.

In February 2005, the application for the IRP for the Lewis and Clark Regional Development Council was approved by USDA with the second highest national score. With the matching contributions from the 10 counties, as well as a contribution for a local nonprofit agency in the amount of \$5,000, the total revolving loan fund created totals \$606,000.

The funding for the project was released by USDA in June 2005, with the first business being funded in August 2005. To date, the project has resulted in funding of three projects totaling \$103,000 in loans and total commitments for 26 new full-time jobs.

Based on the past experience of the Regional Council, council members expect the first round of loans to businesses will create at least 60 new full-time jobs in the area, and that over time, with the funds continuing to revolve, the employment potential within 10 years is expected to be more than 400 new jobs.

This project has provided an additional source of funding for businesses to retain their current employees and create additional jobs through expansion, as well as allow new business ventures to begin, creating new employment and new wealth for the 10-county area.

Heather C. Feiring

Epping, N.D.



I applied for and received a \$950 North Dakota Community Foundation grant to cover the costs of printing a tourism brochure offering information about our rural community. It outlines the historical story that our museum tells about North Dakota and showcases the benefits of living in rural North Dakota.

My goal was to finish the brochure last fall, but with new changes coming to our community, we decided to hold off creating the brochure until this fall/winter. Not only will the brochure be created, but our community will be developing an eye-catching sign on the new U.S. Highway 2 (when it becomes four lanes from Ray to Williston) that will invite more tourists to stop and visit our community. We also will be putting in RV hook-ups for campers to experience the friendly, community-based atmosphere we have created within our community.

The Rural Leadership North Dakota program taught me that I don't have to be great at or know everything. Life is not about what you know, it's developing relationships with others who have the skills to teach me what I need and want to learn. The program participants were from such diverse backgrounds that I was able to turn to my peers for the information and guidance I needed.

The seminars were great and helped me push through personal, emotional and intellectual barriers to be able to consider the thoughts, ideas and opinions of others. Anytime you have the opportunity to see the world from the other side is an opportunity worth pursuing. The seminars were a jumping off point in helping me complete my project. The people you associate with are really who make the difference and who made the difference in me.

The impact of this project on my community is what I can see happening to Epping in the future. The community is strengthening our sense of community and the urge from our surrounding communities to be a part of us. Our community has started our Sunday School for the first time in years and had a community cleanup program this spring. With just those two small differences, individuals are asking us if we have space available to move into our community. Most times, you have to start within a community, both personally and collectively, to make changes before you can share your community with the rest of the world. It's exciting to think what could happen when we start sharing our community with tourists and the rest of North Dakota.

This project has helped me think about my community first and what my actions do to either increase or decrease the value of my community. I get excited that what I do will have a greater impact on our success (either great or small) because here (in my community and in North Dakota) the value of one is sometime far greater than in larger cities.

My obligation to my community has truly grown. I am more excited about what I can do for my community that what it can do for me. I truly am proud to live and belong to Epping, and I will continue to look for those who need what Epping has given me: pride, a sense of belonging and security, and friendship.

When I first started the RLND program, I thought my involvement in my community needed to be because of what I knew and who I was, so I thought up a grand project idea that I was and probably still am unable to do at this time in my life. What this program taught me was that positions or knowledge do not matter as long as you want to leave your community better than you first arrived in it. What my project has taught me is that sometime the simplest things you can do are just as powerful and productive as the grand images we create for ourselves.

*Service is the very purpose of life.
It is the rent we pay for being on this planet.*

Marion Wright Edelman

Kurt Froelich

Dickinson, N.D.



The Stark-Billings 4-H Achievement Days are held in conjunction with Roughrider Days in Dickinson the last week of June and first part of July. The livestock show is held on the campus of Dickinson State University at its indoor arena. The livestock shows consist of beef, dairy, goats, sheep, swine, poultry and rabbits.

The Dickinson Chamber Ag Committee sponsors the West River Ag Expo during October. One of the components of the Ag Expo is a livestock show for open and youth beef and dairy exhibitors. The committee also helps coordinate a regional rabbit show held at the recreation center in Dickinson. The livestock show is held on the campus of Dickinson State University in the same indoor arena as the 4-H show.

Both organizations borrow equipment, such as livestock portable panels, to conduct the events' activities. This equipment is borrowed from the NDSU Dickinson Research Extension Center beef unit, which is 23 miles north of Dickinson near Manning. This requires quite a bit of coordination in securing and transporting the equipment.

The overall goal of the project is to acquire equipment that will be shared by both organizations and events to enhance the overall success of the Stark-Billings 4-H Achievement Days and the West River Ag Expo. Immediate needs of equipment identified were three tables for rabbit cages, 20 sheep and swine panels and 40 portable panels.

Rabbit tables were redesigned, which allowed the purchase of five, instead of three, tables. In addition, the old tables were painted to match the new tables. Twenty sheep and swine panels were made and painted by the Dickinson High School Vocational Agriculture program. Prifert continuous fence panels were purchased for use in the show ring during the 4-H Achievement Days and West River Ag Expo.

This project has helped both organizations in preparing and managing their events/activities. The acquisition of the equipment has given the events a professional appearance to the public. The equipment also has made the shows run much more smoothly.

The completion of this project has made managing the 4-H Achievement Days and the West River Ag Expo easier for me and Rich Wardner of the Dickinson Chamber of Commerce Ag Committee. Wardner has commented that more time can be spent on other aspects of the events, rather than on securing equipment.

Organizations need to work together more and more in the future to put on events due to the cost of productions. I would strongly encourage groups to work together for the benefit of communities and the people involved in the activities.

Rural Leadership North Dakota played an important role in this project through the contacts made across the state and in Dickinson. I would strongly encourage people to take part in this program for the education, knowledge and contacts that will enhance the individuals and their community. Rural Leadership has helped me in how I look at situations, especially those with conflicting interests, prior to making a decision. This program has greatly enhanced my decision-making abilities.

Your success or failure in life will not be decided by the number of setbacks you encounter, but rather how you react to them.

Anonymous

Susan Goplen

Hannaford, N.D.



In spring 2004, the Griggs County Central School District closed the Hannaford Elementary School building. A majority of district patrons, after very contentious discussions, voted to close it in favor of building an addition to the school in Cooperstown and substantially raising the school mill levy.

The Hannaford School was the center of activity for the community. Most community functions, such as the Senior Citizen Christmas party, the Winter Carnival and many community meetings, were held there. It still is in excellent shape and is all on one level.

I am secretary of the Hannaford Economic and Community Development Corp. Our board took the lead in looking at ways we could keep the facility open for the community to use. The School Board agreed the HECDC could purchase the building for \$1. Then we were faced with the difficult task of what to do with it. As I learned from my RLND seminars, the first thing we needed to do was get community input and create community support.

The HECDC held a community meeting with more than 75 people in attendance to discuss options for the facility. I was the speaker for the board and explained our options. If not for the confidence I gained from RLND and the tips I learned on public speaking, I am not so sure I could have been the speaker for our board.

We gathered some great ideas, including a fitness center, senior housing, technology center, library, craft room, keeping the gym open for recreational use, and meeting space. Through networking with RLND classmates, I learned of other ideas and funding options. I took all the ideas to our HECDC board and we started working on a final plan.

The HECDC advertised for donated books for the library and received more than 2,000 that volunteers have cataloged. The HECDC also received donated items for a fitness center and craft room. It is pursuing grants and financing for additional equipment. A craft club started in winter 2004.

The Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone received a grant for setup of a technology center. The grant paid for 24 computers, a fax, printer, scanner and digital camera. Invisimax Inc. donated high-speed Internet service to the facility. Technology classes are being held in the building.

All ages are using the gym for recreational purposes. A conference room was set up for various organizations to use for meetings.

We received a grant from the Griggs-Steele Empowerment Zone for \$30,000 to remodel a wing of the school to provide space for business tenants. We have four new businesses looking to relocate to Hannaford, which could add 30 jobs to the community. We are hopeful that all the space will be rented by spring 2006. All lease payments will cover maintenance and utility costs for the facility.

Maintenance of the facility was the biggest concern for our board and members of the community. The Green Thumb program is providing funds to hire someone to oversee the facility.

Events in 2005 and 2006 to be held at the new Hannaford Community and Business Center are a Spring Women's Showcase, Winter Carnival, Community Dinner Theatre, teen dances and three wedding dances.

I feel very blessed to be part of this project. It has been a big task to take on, but the benefits to the community will be felt for years to come. I am thankful for being part of the RLND class and the skills it has given me to help with this project and assist my community.



Dawn Jarolimek

Rural Forest River, N.D.



My project for the Rural Leadership North Dakota program is a community health center in Minto, N.D.

The city has a need for a facility where we could have a place to exercise and a room for large functions such as wedding receptions, school functions and other community activities.

We have several organizations that would like to help develop this facility. The Jaycees have offered funds toward the building. The organization would like to have a meeting room available to it for meetings. The area's Polish Alliance also is willing to help with funds; it needs storage space for its costumes and a place to meet. The American Legion also would help with fundraising. It needs a new facility, so it would like to have a meeting room and be able to use the community center for its functions. The Boy Scouts and Girls Scouts also have expressed interest if the facility is built.

Boys and girls basketball games are held at the same time of the year. This has put stress on our smaller schools to find time to get practice in for both sports. A new community center could help with this problem.

Our community center is an old house in town. Eventually, this house will need to be replaced and a new community center would solve this problem. Our senior citizens and the rest of our community need a place where they can exercise or walk. A new health center would enable the people in our community to exercise year-round and not have to drive 40 miles to accomplish this.

Our community has only one facility for functions and it is the American Legion building. It is too small and has moisture problems. Repairing and remodel this building is not cost effective.

As with all good ideas, there also is the reality. Delays sometimes happen with any project. We have experienced delays in getting our project started. We had a community leader who passed away and left money to build a community center. This gift was unexpected. This has created delays but the project is worth the wait.

Rural Leadership North Dakota afforded me the opportunity to see our state in a different light. I am proud of the strong core of people we have in our state. The cities of Dickinson, Langdon and Oakes, to name just a few, have left a lasting impression with me. These cities have people who have a true passion for the communities. They aren't afraid to step outside the box. These community leaders have inspired me to help our state grow.

When I am traveling in our great state or outside of our state, I don't let the jokes about North Dakota go unchallenged. I can share examples of economic development and talk about families moving back to North Dakota to raise their children.

I know of a company that was looking at doing business in North Dakota and went to the community cafe to listen in on people visiting to see if the people in town were talking positively or negatively about their community.

For us to have our state grow, we need to embrace all economic growth, tourism, agriculture or industry. North Dakota has a future if we make it happen!

Rene Johnson

Watford City, N.D.



The project I chose to do was a community-built children's playground. What made this project unique is that the playground was designed by the children, and the entire community helped with the fundraising and supplied the labor to build the playground. It's more than a playground, it is a community gathering space for all to enjoy.

In December 2004, a designer from Leathers & Associates interviewed children at our local school to gather input on the playground. With the children's guidance, he designed their playground and presented the concept in a community meeting with more than 125 people attending. The committee of six then took on the daunting task of raising the \$250,000 for the playground and bathrooms and coordinating everything for the week of construction. We divided the project into seven areas of donated tools, purchased materials, food, day care, children's committee, volunteers and fundraising so the project could be handled more efficiently. Volunteer construction of the playground was a five-day process from Aug. 3-7, 2005. With the entire community, young and old worked together to build a safe, accessible, imaginative, educational, one-of-a-kind playground.

Being a participant in the RLND program gave me the courage to take on this large community project. The most valuable resource acquired through the program for me was the network of other RLND participants, many of whom already have the skills and knowledge to complete any successful community project. The RLND program gathers a diverse group, which gave me all the skills, direction, sympathy and encouragement I needed to complete my project. I know I couldn't have done it without the participants and I thank you.

This project has had a large impact on me and my community. I spent countless hours for more than a year planning every detail for the construction week. I wanted every volunteer's experience to be a positive one. When the time came to build the playground, the money was raised, the materials ordered, the day-care center operational, tools donated and food prepared.

The one thing I could not control was the most important detail of all – volunteers. I have a hard time expressing the feeling I had as I looked up on the first day to see that more than 100 volunteers had come out to support the project, or the feeling I had as I watched parents and their children working together. Seeing people who never have gotten involved in the community before turn out for this project also was overwhelming. I feel very fortunate to have had this experience and wish everyone could go through what I did during those five days.

The entire community has pride in "our" playground. Volunteers and children have first-hand knowledge of the sweat, tears and laughter that went into building the playground. Many volunteers expressed that the full understanding of what we had accomplished didn't hit them until they watched their children play and had such an overwhelming sense of pride for being a part of something so wonderful.

Thank you, RLND, for giving me the tools I needed to make this happen!



Deborah Kantrud

Dickinson, N.D.



For my Rural Leadership North Dakota project, I organized a meeting for community leaders who are on community planning committees in their communities. I sent invitations to about 200 individuals from 17 communities in southwestern North Dakota, inviting them to a supper and sharing meeting from 6 to 9 p.m., Wednesday, May 4. Thirty-six individuals were intrigued by the idea and responded.

In my work in southwestern North Dakota with the Roosevelt-Custer Regional Council, people often ask me how communities make projects happen. Common questions are: How did Beach start Spirit of the West and host major concerts that draw hundreds of people to town each year? How did Dodge obtain grants to improve a park? How did Dunn Center, a community of 200, start a library? When Dodge's mayor finished the renovation of the Dodge Community Center, she said the project was a huge learning curve and she had lots of valuable information that she probably would not use again in Dodge, but would love to share with other communities considering a building renovation.

My Bridging Communities Working for Change project created an opportunity for community leaders to meet one another, share their successes and identify ways to keep the momentum building in the region. After experiencing the World Café, a facilitation process focusing on small-group conversation, at one of our RLND sessions, I decided to use this process. I originally had planned to hold a forum and let three or four leaders from the most successful projects in the region talk about their successes.

Four or five people sat at each of the small, café-style tables decorated with gingham tablecloths, candles and flowers. For 15 to 20 minutes, people discussed specific questions that I had written, designing them to be open ended and thought provoking. During the evening, the people switched tables to continue discussions and meet new people, many in similar positions of power and leadership in other communities.

The participants relished the lack of structure and their ability to control the conversation. The format empowered them to take responsibility to make things happen in their communities by further developing relationships with one another. Repeatedly, people commented that they hadn't realized how many positive things were happening in our eight-county region of 38,365 people. The process allowed the participants an opportunity to increase their political capital. One county commissioner said it was one of the first opportunities he had had to communicate with city leaders and civic leaders in his county. When the participants from one table reported to the group, a county commissioner said he encouraged city council members to come to county commission meetings and share their vision and goals and look to the county commission as a source of financial capital.

As a result of my project, a couple dozen new relationships were started that hopefully will build stronger bonds among our communities in southwestern North Dakota. The advantage of the process is I gave away the control and allowed the participants to share their experiences and knowledge and ask one another for assistance. To further promote the networking, I have compiled a booklet that includes a contact list of who attended the meeting, common community projects and lists of planning committee, city council and county commission members who have done community plans recently.

I see this as the kind of networking opportunity that will be valuable to continue, and I hope to have the resources to do it every other year.

You have to believe in yourself first before you get others to believe.

Ashraf Seddeek, Oracle Corp.

Jeffrey Klemetsrud

Devils Lake, N.D.



The Southside Park idea grew out of a need for the residents who reside south of U.S. Highway 2 in Devils Lake to have a place for their children to play and have fun without having to cross a major U.S. highway. The initial plan called for a basic park. The park has a playground set, volleyball court, paved full-court basketball court and the beginnings of a baseball/softball diamond.

The first of very few challenges was how to fund the project. The Devils Lake Park Commission was extremely optimistic about the idea, but said that funding would be the one area where it would be limited. The park superintendent did write a successful grant to the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation.

With the funding in place, the next issue was park layout. Each individual had his or her own views of how the park would take shape. This was handled by the park equipment distributors. Each bid had a price not to exceed \$ 50,000. But the bids would be chosen on the distributor's layout plans. This made most people happy.

The greatest asset I used from the Rural Leadership North Dakota program was learned in the seminar where we concentrated on working with groups. Understanding the dynamics of a group and letting those play out prevented me from making some mistakes that might have hindered the development of this park.

The park is completed and the residents of that area are using the park to its full potential. The usage has been greater than anybody anticipated. The area residents have returned to the Park Commission and stated they truly are grateful. They also have given us a list of future improvements that truly would make this park a regional gem in the Devils Lake park system. The main addition in their eyes would be the inclusion of a bathroom facility. Other improvements they have stated interest in include an outdoor hockey rink, expansion of the baseball/softball field and possibly a swimming pool. The park has been a success in everyone's eyes, from the Park Commission to the area residents.

From doing this project, I have grown as an individual. Prior to attending the Rural Leadership North Dakota workshops, I never would have thrown my hat into the ring. RLND taught me to have a vision and see that vision through. If there is a need, do it. If everybody were to wait for someone else to start a project, the project never would be started. A great quote from the seminars that has stayed with me is, "If not now, then when?" I am unsure of who is responsible for this quote, but that is the single most important thing that I can quantify from my 1½-year stint as a member of the great group of people who made up the inaugural class of Rural Leadership North Dakota.

Whether you think you can or think you can't ... you're right.

Henry Ford

Donald W. Longmuir, Jr.

Stanley, N.D.



The city of Stanley, in collaboration with the city of Bottineau; the Souris Basin Planning Council; Roderic Hewlett, a certified financial manager and certified treasury professional; and the Denver regional office of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration, will conduct a targeted industry study of the community using an economic model developed by Hewlett. All of the community's businesses, educational institutions, community leaders, community organizations and randomly selected community members will be asked to complete one of five surveys. The surveys are on education, risk assessment, human capital, quality of life and business/entrepreneurship. The information gathered through the surveys will be forwarded to Hewlett for compilation and a final report to be prepared for the city. Hewlett will be conducting four focus group meetings in Stanley to acquire additional information to be included in his final report.

The goal of these surveys is to determine what assets the community of Stanley has to offer to potential businesses and what assets can be developed to enhance the business climate. Information obtained in the surveys also will identify areas that could be improved to develop a higher quality of life for the residents of the community and what areas can be capitalized upon to attract new residents to the community.

As part of this project, I will be working with Cori Otto, community development director, in conducting the interviews with the businesses and community leaders. In addition, I will be available to meet with the various community organizations that would like additional information regarding the targeted industry survey. In my position with the Souris Basin Planning Council, I will be responsible for coordinating the gathering of information from the community, providing the information to Hewlett, and responding to inquiries or additional information requests from Hewlett.

This project will result in the community knowing what it has to offer to existing businesses, how it can assist existing businesses with expansion and diversification into additional markets, what type of industries would be the best "fit" to attract to the community and what improvements can be made to enhance the quality of life for the community. The final report for this project is due to the city on March 31, 2006.

This project has been ongoing since November 2004. It has had a number of obstacles and challenges to overcome to keep moving forward. It has tried and strengthened all of the skills that I was able to fine-tune through my participation in the RLND program. Skills that I developed and sharpened through participation in the RLND program include communication, organization, self-confidence, implementation of new ideas and "thinking outside the box."



Michelle McCormack

New England, N.D.



My project for Rural Leadership North Dakota was to assist the community of New England to replace the leaking and condemned swimming pool.

My involvement in the project was threefold: I helped the group develop, articulate and share its vision with the community; I participated in numerous fundraising efforts; and I was the grant writer.

During the two years I worked on this project, the skills I learned through RLND helped me be an effective leader. My initial involvement in the project began immediately after the first RLND weekend. The seminar emphasized the importance of “sharing the vision.” Using what I had learned, I led the group discussion to put the vision into words. This led to a community information meeting and a cohesive vision of what the New England Pool would become. Community members envisioned a completed outdoor pool with a shallow area and water toys for young children, a diving area, lap swimming area, a water slide, and a large deck for families and friends to gather and socialize. It truly became a community project!

My contacts and colleagues in RLND were a valuable source for information about grants and the process of grant writing. The pool project received numerous grants, including major funding from Basin Electric, Wal-Mart, Lutheran Brotherhood, Operation RoundUp and several others. We received a landscaping grant from the North Dakota Forest Service. We applied for Leach Foundation and land and water grants. In the process, I worked with the treasurer of the group to clarify the reports and the tracking of in-kind contributions.

It is a rewarding process to see the talents and skills that were brought to the project, and the value of each contributor. I believe that my small contributions, just like everyone else’s, made all of us better, more knowledgeable and more appreciative of each community member’s uniqueness and willingness to contribute. We definitely created a network of people who will work together in the future.

Fundraising activities for this project were anything from small to large. Pennies-for-the- pool jars were in all the businesses, and a weekend celebration, Splish Splashin’ in New England, made giving to the project fun. The weekend event involved most community members, from the 60-voice choir to the Lawnmower Racing Association, which hosted a rip-roaring race. If someone had an idea for fundraising, they made it happen. Within the community and surrounding area of 1,005 people, we raised nearly \$100,000.

This project introduced me to many community members and I was delighted to be part of the skills and synergy that can be created in small towns to improve everyone’s quality of life. I know that one of the biggest results for me is a belief that we can make things happen when we collaborate on a vision of the future.

Another result is an understanding of the way projects and leadership work. No one on this committee was carrying the ball alone. There was very little structure and hierarchy. However, the shared vision was the key, and everyone was enabled to act in a way that suited their talents and enthusiasm.

As a direct result of the learning experience of RLND, I already have become involved in several projects in communities in my area. My writers group is putting on an original play in Mott, and I will be teaching a journaling class at the women’s prison in New England with some grant funding.

On a personal level, Rural Leadership has increased my knowledge, my confidence and my hope for the future of North Dakota. Choosing to be an active community member is the way to create positive change for all of us. Thank you for the opportunity to be part of RLND.



Becky J. Meidinger

Ashley, N.D.



The Ashley Horizons Community and Information Center project started with a vision of how our community could market our tourism opportunities and provide an information center for visitors to the community. I was a member of a local leadership group called the Ashley Horizons group, which worked to identify what we wanted to have in our tourism brochure and how we could secure the funds for developing and printing it. We also were trying to develop a community information center that could be used as a tourism center.

We were able to secure funds from the North Dakota Department of Tourism and Ashley Chamber of Commerce to pay for the printing of 10,000 brochures. Funds were available to help pay for developing the brochure, as well as the printing costs. The brochures were distributed at the rest stops throughout the state and are used in the local businesses and motel to market the community.

Our Horizons group was part of a leadership capacity building program that was sponsored by the Northwest Area Foundation. We had some funds that were made available to us to develop the community and information center that could be used as a tourism center, as well as a place to hold adult education classes. We were able to secure a building, line up volunteers to clean and paint it, and are in the process of organizing the office and identifying partners to promote tourism in the region.

We now have a marketing presence in the state through our tourism brochures, and we have a community information/tourism center that can help market the community and provide a location for community meetings and educational opportunities. We are planning on securing funds to purchase some computers so we can provide computer educational classes to seniors and others in the community. We also are planning on having the center utilized by local artists and craftspeople for classes and other educational opportunities for our community residents. It will provide a meeting place for a minimal cost for neighborhood activities and events for those who have had to struggle for a location big enough to have a good-sized crowd. We also will be providing a part-time

job for a senior who is willing to help out as the tourism contact for the community. Overall, it will benefit the community for years to come

The entire process of developing this project and working with the local group was enhanced because of the various resources and skills that I had gained during the RLND experience. These included communicating more effectively with the people whom I work with in groups and organizations, and understanding how my leadership style and skills affected my ability to communicate more effectively with others. I was able to utilize several of the resources that I learned about in the various seminars, including some of the state and federal organizations, as well as regional groups, to contact for technical assistance, funding and a variety of ideas for this project. I also contacted some of the speakers, as well as several of the RLND participants, for ideas and suggestions to make this work more effectively.

I am more of a believer in the leadership process. Just doing it myself would have been much easier, but because of the skills and knowledge that I gained throughout the RLND process, I realized that I needed to help others recognize their leadership skills as well. I gained a newfound respect for “the process” and am using it in other areas of my life in working with other groups and organizations. In the long run, as a result of this and other projects that I am working on, we will have a much stronger core group of leaders to help guide our community.

Personally, the RLND program was one of the best experiences I have had in my lifetime. For the money and time spent, it was a much more worthwhile program and experience than several years of college education. I know it changed my life for the better and I believe it can help anyone become a much better leader and person. I was able to have the confidence to start my own consulting business as a result of this program, and I do not believe I would have had the abilities to be successful in this had I not participated in the program – or at least not recognized these abilities. It is a very worthwhile program and will lead to some really great things for the state of North Dakota.

Vicki Monsen

Watford City, N.D.



Adequate, affordable housing is a challenge in Watford City, as it is in many rural communities in North Dakota. Our community has been fortunate to have an increase in the number of new families moving into our city, which has resulted in a housing shortage. The Watford City Economic Development Corp. and the McKenzie County Job Development Authority have both identified housing as a top priority.

The goal of this project is to create new housing in the form of multifamily units such as condominiums or patio homes. This housing project would provide housing for elderly, retirees and young professionals who are just starting their families. This also creates additional availability of single-family housing as the elderly and retirees move into this complex and they sell their existing homes.

My project began in spring 2004. I did research with local housing entities, such as HUD, Fannie Mae, Federal Home Loan Bank and other local development boards. Most of these contacts came back with valuable information, but their programs were aimed for low to moderate incomes. This was not what Watford City needed. We felt we already had adequate facilities meeting those needs. A community meeting was held in spring 2005 with contractors, investors, bankers, appraisers, community leaders, and city and county officials. After the meeting, the group's consensus was that we will just have to let supply and demand take care of the housing problem.

A new housing bill, SB 2227, became effective Aug. 1, 2005. This bill allowed communities with fewer than 5,000 people to form a housing authority. The housing authority process has many advantages over private investment, including the availability of low interest rates through the use of tax-exempt revenue bonds and the option of not paying real estate taxes due to the the housing authority's public ownership of the units. All we needed was someone who had some experience and a developer willing to start the project.

After learning about F & L Management & Development Inc. and the work it was doing in other small communities in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota, I contacted representatives to come to Watford City and see what they could do for our housing needs. After being presented with the information on what their company could offer, the City Council adopted a resolution on Aug. 23, 2005, declaring a need to create a housing authority. On Tuesday, Sept. 6, 2005, the mayor of Watford City appointed five people to serve on the Housing Authority.

At this point, we still are in the process of having the first meeting for the newly formed Housing Authority. I am confident that the Housing Authority will take the first step toward helping with our housing needs by approving the construction and ownership of a new eight-plex multifamily housing unit.

This project will be very beneficial to Watford City. It will create new housing, plus create a change of ownership in some existing housing.

Through this project I have learned many things, from dealing with government entities to learning about new legislation. Without the RLND program, I would not have taken on a project of this magnitude. RLND has given me the confidence that I can make a difference in my community.

One generation plants the trees; another gets the shade.

Chinese proverb

Merri Mooridian

Jamestown, N.D.



Rural Leadership North Dakota has encouraged me to be more active in my community and instilled in me the desire to give back to an area that has shaped who I am. This program has enabled me to present new ideas to the Jamestown area and inspired me to help facilitate meetings with groups such as Community of Planners and Strategists (COPS) and After 5, a young professionals club.

With this newfound motivation to become involved in my community, I tried to think of a project that would enhance the area and bring pride to the citizens of Jamestown. As the owner of a large dog, I regularly walk my pet in Jamestown. According to city law, dog owners must keep their pets on a leash when in public. As many people who own large dogs know, these dogs crave space to run and play. So, while out on a walk with my dog, I observed several other owners out with their pets, and the thought came to me to develop a dog park in Jamestown. “Bark Park,” as it may be called, was born.

The reasons to construct a dog park in Jamestown are many. Dog parks are great places for social interaction; they bring people (and pets) together. A dog park gives a dog the chance to just be a dog. They provide a safe and controlled environment in which dogs can run and play. Dedicating an area where dog owners can play and exercise their pets allows this type of interaction without infringing upon other people’s space.

The community of Jamestown will benefit greatly from this dog park. It will promote responsible pet ownership and provide owners who are elderly or have disabilities with an accessible place to exercise their companions. In addition, the dog park will enable dogs to run off their leashes legally and serve as a realistic enforcement of leash laws.

The Jamestown Park Board supports building this dog park but does not have funds available. In light of this, several citizens, including me, have formed a committee to develop ideas for the dog park and see it through the construction process. So far, the committee has identified grant opportunities, possible sponsors and donors, suitable locations, components to include in the dog park, construction costs and fundraising ideas.

The committee has three fundraisers on the horizon. The “Mutt Strutt” is a dog walk-a-thon. The “Lint Roller” will be a party where participants dare to wear black at a social event to which dogs also are invited. The committee also is interested in hosting a “Hogs for Dogs” motorcycle run. So, several diverse fundraising efforts are in the works.

Having a dog park will showcase Jamestown as a community that is committed to providing its citizens new opportunities for recreation and social involvement. This dog park also will encourage tourism by providing a place for tourists to stop and exercise their dogs. Because of these reasons, a dog park will be an asset to the community upon its completion.

David S. Olson

Crosby, N.D.



I was fortunate enough to be involved with the first Rural Leadership North Dakota class. One of the objectives of the class was to get each participant involved in completing a project in his or her community. The goal of my project was to create a community technology center for Crosby and Divide County.

The community of Divide County envisioned a community technology learning center as a core piece in its expansion plans. A unique opportunity exists to increase the quality of the local work force and provide services to all Divide County residents and current businesses, as well as high-tech startups and relocating businesses. The technology center offers the Divide County area an opportunity for economic growth, increased work force skills development, and potential job creation in local technical support and expanded computerization of the public and private sectors. The technology center also can be used to give residents the ability to use computers and the Internet in a friendly community atmosphere. The community also envisions the technology center as a place to facilitate high-tech startups.

The Divide County Community Technology and Learning Center opened its doors in August 2005. One of the major challenges that the community faced was the funding of the center. The Rural Leadership North Dakota seminars helped by giving me the skills to look at what “capital” was available in our community. We were able to show the need for the center, and the city stepped forward and helped financially with the

construction of the center. By identifying other financial “capital” in the surrounding area, such as the Northwest Communications Cooperative, Tri-County RC&D and MDU, we were able to finish the project and purchase the equipment needed to create a valuable center.

We also were able to get a Microsoft Foundation grant to help with hiring a skilled technology coordinator for the center, and we received a large donation of computers from a former Divide County resident. Other skills learned from RLND seminars that helped finish this project were communicating effectively and thinking creatively and critically. I needed very good communication when explaining the project and the benefits that would come out of the project.

This project has had a large impact on me as I have seen the positive that can come out of working hard on a project with community leaders. I believe that working on this project has showed me the value of patience as we were unsuccessful in certain funding for which we applied. Yet by continuing to explain the benefits of the project, we finally were able to come up with all the funding necessary. If I were to do something different with another project, it would be to have a better and more detailed project plan. As a result of this project, I learned that by getting different groups and organizations to work together, a community can accomplish something positive.



Allen I. Orwick

Michigan, N.D.



My Rural Leadership North Dakota project was the establishment of a Veterans Memorial Park on the corner of Broadway and Main Street in Michigan City.

The original idea was brought forth to accomplish two very important goals.

1. The establishment of a park to recognize and honor those who have served our country in the U.S military
2. To clean up a highly visible corner lot on Main Street

The Great Northern Railroad depot had been located on the property with the intention of having it serve as a city museum. This project lacked funding and community support. The depot building was donated to the Pioneer Village at Stump Lake in rural Nelson County, N.D. After the depot was moved out of town, a cement slab was left on the lot and the vegetation had become overgrown and out of control. A local body shop owned the property and had been using the lot for limited storage.

This community project is turning what had become an eyesore into a beautiful public park. Many local groups and volunteers have been working together to make this project a success. They include but are not limited to the Michigan City Council, Michigan Service Club, Michigan Park Board, W.L. Cowper American Legion Post and Rod's Auto Body and Repair Inc.

We defined the steps and the duties of each organization involved with our project as follows:

1. Michigan City Council – Waived all past due, current and future special assessments on the property. The city agreed to provide lawn maintenance for the property once the Michigan City Park Board owned it. Because the Park Board is exempt from property taxes, it is not assessed taxes on the lots.
2. Rod's Auto Body and Repair Inc. – Agreed to sell the property to the Michigan City Park Board

for \$1. The Michigan City Park Board paid for the legal costs to transfer the property. The board also paid the outstanding real estate taxes on the property.

3. Michigan Service Club – Donated \$500 to the Michigan City Park Board to cover the costs of acquiring the property. The Service Club also has provided physical and financial support to the project in helping improve the property.
4. Michigan City Park Board – Purchased the property, trees, flowers and sod to beautify the grounds. The board also was very involved with the clearing and planting of the lot.
5. W.L. Cowper American Legion Post – At last count, our local legion post has spent approximately \$6,000 for the placement of flags, flag poles and a stone marker showing the name of the park. Originally the plan was to place a piece of retired military equipment on the cement slab honoring our veterans. Post officials have discovered that finding such hardware is impossible. However, a new plan recently was brought forth to place a “wall of honor” or “wall of recognition” on the site. A fundraising effort is starting to make this dream a reality. I believe this will provide for a more peaceful, respectful and aesthetically pleasing memorial to our military men and women.
6. Contacts also have been made to local utility companies to aid with lighting the park, monuments and flags. No official approval has been received, although they did express interest in becoming a partner in the project. Once the wall is in place, further contact will be made.

The new goal of our project is for completion with a dedication ceremony at our annual Memorial Day program in May 2006.



Patricia Patrie

Bowdon, N.D.



I have lived in Bowdon since 1976 and farmed with my husband and three children. We raise small grains and Angus cattle, and own Patrie's Raspberries on the Prairie - a farm diversification project selling fresh berries and raspberry products. I came to North Dakota during my college years to intern with Native Americans and fell in love with the state, its wide-open skies and waving grains, history and community.

Bowdon is a town of approximately 130 people with a service area including another 300 people. Located in the center of Wells County along U.S. Highway 200, it has been affected adversely by the agriculture shift to larger farms and out-migration. Its school consolidated with Fessenden, and Bowdon's buildings were closed in 2001. Bowdon drew up a strategic plan that year to sustain the community by re-creating its economy around nature tourism. The community received two RCA grants to build a six-unit, fully functional RV park on the football field. The community is planning its second annual Duckfest around the waterfowl season to attract out-of-state hunters. New directional signage is in the making.

The Bowdon School consists of its original 1913 brick two-story building with seven classrooms and a 1960 addition including five classrooms and a very functional gymnasium. I chose as my RLND project the goal to renovate the 1913 section of the Bowdon School into a lodge for hunters, retreats, family reunions and tourists.

I joined the RLND program to increase my awareness of leadership skills and resources needed to move forward with the lodge. I learned that a leader must keep the vision in front of its members. A visual perception of what Bowdon can be in the future is so important when people can see only the present.

The tours provided by RLND showed me new possibilities and how teamwork created success. I used the tour idea by arranging a bus to take Bowdon people to lodges that had been created through preservation and adaptive reuse. A historic church tour gave the participants a feeling for what Bowdon could offer to its lodging guests.

Members of the RLND class gave me a network of expertise in several areas of leadership and information, and an idea for a fundraising project to pay for fuel in the school building and an off-peak heating renovation in the community-owned café. It was a huge success!

The RLND program may have helped Bowdon the most in that it has given me tools to share with the Bowdon people. We have no economic development professionals in the community, nor do we lie within an Empowerment or Reap Zone. I have no business, management or marketing expertise other than that which I have picked up through the Pride of Dakota Program and my raspberry business. The presentation on "seven capitals" by Cornelia Flora is perhaps the one great piece of education that will help us most in Bowdon. My plan is to have the BDCI board look at how to use the seven capitals information to empower the community to see its great assets. Our assets often are forgotten.

I have been greatly encouraged through the RLND program by its willingness to help rural America when we are losing that attention on the national level. We have one of the best places to live on this earth and it would be a disgrace to let its infrastructure collapse because of changing economics. The RLND class has taught me that we must keep the communication lines open and empower everyone to find his or her place in making Bowdon into a community that will survive the changes and become a better place because of it. We will know we have been successful when people are making Bowdon a destination for our great hospitality and nature-based tourism.



Kelli Schollmeyer

Killdeer, N.D.



When we were given an assignment to have a project for RLND as part of the course, I started brainstorming about physical projects that you could see and feel. As I was brainstorming, part of my thought process was to think of all the things we have in our community and how they have an impact on us.

It occurred to me that many people are not aware of what our community already has to offer; whether it is for recreation, sightseeing or learning about our history. That was when I made up my mind to make my project about community awareness.

I scheduled a meeting with a few local individuals in the community to get ideas about how to go about a project like this one – who should we target and what is the message that we want to send. We chose to target the employees throughout the community and high school students.

Once we had our goals in place, we scheduled an evening to host a community awareness meeting and sent invitations to the local convenience stores, grocery stores and restaurants. We discussed the different area attractions and the history of the Killdeer area, and then opened up the meeting for discussion. Our main point was to inform those who work in the community so they could better inform tourist as they stop for gas or a bite to eat. Our meeting was well received by those who attended. We then followed up by placing Dunn County brochures at the area businesses.

We also made arrangements with Gary Wilz, superintendent of Killdeer School, for the juniors and seniors to go on a field trip. The trip would include a tour of all the Killdeer area attractions covering the area's history, scenic sites and recreation. Wilz was very eager to work with us and offered a school bus and a picnic lunch for the students. We had an itinerary drawn up and everyone approved. Three of the stops had someone there to speak about the history and purpose of the location. Unfortunately, we had more rainfall than average and we postponed the tours twice, then canceled them as school was out for the summer.

I am working with the superintendent to schedule a tour for this fall. Also, some people have brought to our attention that the upperclassmen may not be the best candidates for this tour and we should target the freshman and sophomore classes. The students will be asked to complete a survey about the tour and sites visited when they return to school. The outcome of the survey will be used as a guide for future school tours and how we can improve for the next one.

This project not only allowed us to improve awareness within our community, but I have a better understanding of what we have to offer. I am excited to see the reaction of the students, as many of them, even though they grew up in the area, never have seen many of the area attractions or know of the history of Killdeer.

Lori Wagner

South Heart, N.D.



The Adamski Park and Baseball Diamond renovation projects were identified as a need in the city of South Heart's strategic plan that was completed in 2002. The main focus of the project is to make much needed improvements and renovations to make the area more appealing and usable for community members and visitors, as well as to provide a recreational setting for people to use for many years to follow. The project idea was adopted by South Heart Park and Recreation. In summer 2004, community members from in town, as well as the rural area, came together to assist with the project. Many volunteers donated time and equipment to help in the beginning stages of the project. The time, commitment and energy shown demonstrates how people get together for a common good and make things happen in their community.

The goal of the project is to address needed updates to the bathroom facilities, baseball diamond and picnic area. One of the challenges is to obtain needed funds to move forward. Working in unity with South Heart Park and Recreation allowed me the opportunity to apply for grants and search for other funding opportunities. As grant funds became available to assist with the project, South Heart Park and Recreation also committed funds it had available in its budget. Grant monies for the project were received from entities such as Montana Dakota Utilities, the Dickinson Regional Grant Program, Mid-Continent Cable and Farmers Union.

The first park project was started in 2004 when a group of community members began building a picnic shelter. This also led to the ag class at South Heart School and a local National Guard Unit coming aboard to build new picnic tables. During this time, horseshoe pits also were added to the area.

Next to start was the siding project on the bathrooms. The materials were purchased and construction began. A

local contractor completed the bathroom renovation in August 2005. During summer 2005, Park and Recreation members and community volunteers worked hard to keep the grass mowed, planted new trees and trimmed existing trees in the area. The weeds were killed in the infield of the baseball diamond and new benches and bike racks were purchased and will be installed in fall 2005. The plumbing in the bathroom is scheduled to be repaired in fall 2005 and the inside of the bathroom will be painted in late fall, if time permits, or in spring 2006.

The final phase of this project will be repairs to the existing sprinkler system. The current system is about 25 years old and has not worked for about five years. In spring 2006, the work will begin on the system with hopes to have it operational by summer 2006. The challenges ahead are a mystery since the condition of the sprinkler system is unknown and the estimated cost of the program will not be identified until the job is started.

Community support and participation is vital to the success of this project. The entire community of South Heart plays a major role in this project, and as the project moves forward, everyone can see the benefits and hard work done by the volunteers. The end result will be an attractive place for everyone to enjoy, as well as a recreational location for youth and adults to use for activities and social gatherings for many years to come.

My participation in the Rural Leadership North Dakota program has provided me the resources to obtain the skills to become an effective leader. It has provided tools to build teamwork and the skills to develop relationships to seek individuals who have a passion that will benefit the entire community. Being a leader is having the willingness to serve, maintain high energy and taking an active role in developing, expressing and defending civility and values. Rural Leadership North Dakota has created a network of contacts and resources across the state of North Dakota and created friendships that will last a lifetime.



Beth Wieland

Sanborn, N.D.



My project involved developing a set of guidelines for managing the county 4-H horse show.

The main goal of my project was to develop a template for the Horse Show Committee, whose members change from year to year. The template could be used for years to come to assist the committee with running the show so the group would not have to “reinvent the wheel” each year. It will be used as a timeline for making contacts with judges for the show; recruiting workers for registration, announcing, recordkeeping, ring stewards, gatekeepers, ribbon master and setup; setting dates; organizing supplies; and doing other things necessary to make sure the show runs smoothly.

Rural Leadership North Dakota helped me to learn what my own strengths and weaknesses are, how to work with other people to accomplish a task, and how to find the resources to make it easier. I reviewed guidelines from other states for ideas. I worked with others on the Horse Show Committee and NDSU Extension Service staff to discuss what worked, what didn't work, and how it could be made better. We got feedback from 4-H'ers and parents after the show, which was helpful when making improvements.

The Barnes County 4-H Horse show management guidelines are drafted, but still need to go before the Horse Show Committee in October for final approval. When they are adopted, they will be incorporated into the Barnes County 4-H supplement to the State Fair book.

My project should make organizing and producing the Barnes County 4-H Horse Show simpler for the Horse Show Committee. This project has been important to me because of my fondness for the 4-H program in general, and my love for horses and kids in particular. Working with the 4-H'ers, other leaders, parents and Extension staff has been very enjoyable.

Whenever you are involved with other people to accomplish something, it is an opportunity to learn about them and about yourself, and to do the best you can and leave things a little bit better for the next guy.

*For the effective leader, change is a friend, a companion,
a powerful tool, the basis of growth.*

Creating positive change is what leadership is all about.

Stephen Covey

John Zetocha

Oakes, N.D.



The primary goal or focus of my RLND project was to help in getting an ethanol plant established in the southeastern part of North Dakota, utilizing corn produced locally. Our group was a mix of farmers, business leaders, economic developers, and finance and commodity groups. We worked as a group to provide and establish a vehicle for people of North Dakota to invest in a value-added project and help rural communities by providing jobs, and in the process, help the farmer get more revenue from a bushel of corn.

The Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) program was helpful in providing me tools in working not only in group settings, but in my daily work environment and with my family. RLND, through the seminars and professional presenters, offered us the ability as a class to network and share our experiences and grow as individuals. I believe all of us who have been part of or experienced RLND had life-altering experiences. Creating positive change is what leadership is all about.

My project is on-going, as we have not completed our goal to have an ethanol plant up and running today. We have, through a cooperative effort working with the North Dakota Corn Growers Association and Dakota Renewable Fuels, established at the state level, legislation to offer tax incentives to invest in state-owned, value-added projects that were not available in North Dakota.

The work completed by our group has benefited other groups working on investing in value-added projects. I believe because of the hard work, persistence and working together as a group, we have opened opportunities for citizens of North Dakota to have the tools and acceptance to invest in other value-added projects. Winston Churchill said, "Never give in, never give in, never, never, never, never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty - never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense." The persistence, drive, time and energy needed to accomplish any goal are important in any aspect of life. Whether it's working on a RLND project, daily work projects or personal life issues, having a good attitude and persistence of never giving in until the job is done and goals accomplished are vital.

The program helped us understand fully what leadership is capable of doing. It's about inspiring or sharing a vision, enabling others to "jump on board" because you believe you can accomplish whatever the goal or end result. We, as the class of 2003-05 RLND, came together not knowing the end result. We are leaving together with a purpose of sharing the passion we have for our communities. We have a duty to help each other. RLND brings together and fosters the attitude of "we can" by sharing and working together – networking.

The communities throughout North Dakota have unique qualities, but the same inspired goals – goals of bringing people together, uniting to make economic choices to better utilize talents and resources. The cultural differences we experienced by having seminars in different parts of the state allowed us to recognize gifts of others, to be good neighbors, share our talents, work as a team.

Bill Patrie, presenter at the RLND seminar at Oakes in March 2005, spoke about "the importance of the people development in economic development." He explained the perception that those rural places are dying and the migration of rural people to urban places. Having dedicated more than 30 years as a professional developer, Patrie spoke passionately about the challenges rural communities face and his theories to resolve some issues. His passion was in his words and emotion as he described the importance of the power of individuals working together.

Winston Churchill said, "Yesterday I was on the bridge, watching the mountainous waves, and this ship – which is no pup – cutting through them and mocking their anger. I asked myself, 'Why is it that the ship beats the waves, when they are so many and the ship is one?' The reason is that the ship has a purpose, and waves have none. They just flop around, innumerable, tireless, but ineffective. The ship with the purpose takes us where we want to go. Let us therefore have purpose in our private lives. Thus, the future will be fruitful for each and for all, and the reward of the warriors will not be unworthy of the deeds they have done."

And finally, I want to thank my employer, Starion Financial, for my sponsorship, and my co-workers for their support and encouragement. Also, I thank my family as everyone supported me and understood the time spent at the seminars away from home meant missing school and sporting events, homework assignments and nighttime stories. You are the purpose. Thank you.

Testimonials

Rural Leadership North Dakota and this project have started a major shift in the community that will have long-lasting effects. Through the seminars and statewide and national contacts that I have made, I gained the confidence to voice my concerns and know that I must take action. I cannot wait for the “other person” to come save this community or ask the questions at the City Council meeting. It has to begin with ME!

Marty Campbell, Beach, N.D.

Was it easy? No. Comments from naysayers – “What do we need that for, it’s a waste of time and money” – can take a toll on any endeavor. The Rural Leadership North Dakota program and my fellow classmates provided the energy for us to continue.

Keith Draeger, Dawson, N.D.

The Rural Leadership North Dakota program taught me that I don’t have to be great at or know everything. Life is not about what you know, it’s developing relationships with others who have the skills to teach me what I need and want to learn. The program participants were from such diverse backgrounds that I was able to turn to my peers for the information and guidance I needed.

Heather Feiring, Epping, N.D.

Rural Leadership has helped me in how I look at situations, especially those with conflicting interests, prior to making a decision. This program has greatly enhanced my decision-making abilities.

Kurt Froelich, Dickinson, N.D.

RLND taught me to have a vision and see that vision through. If there is a need, do it. If everybody were to wait for someone else to start a project, the project never would be started. A great quote from the seminars that has stayed with me is, “If not now, then when?” I am unsure of who is responsible for this quote, but that is the single most important thing that I can quantify from my 1½-year stint as a member of the great group of people who made up the inaugural class of Rural Leadership North Dakota.

Jeff Klemetsrud, Devils Lake, N.D.

As a direct result of the learning experience of RLND, I already have become involved in several projects in communities in my area. My writers group is putting on an original play in Mott, and I will be teaching a journaling class at the women’s prison in New England with some grant funding.

Michelle McCormack, New England, N.D.

Through this project I have learned many things, from dealing with government entities to learning about new legislation. Without the RLND program, I would not have taken on a project of this magnitude. RLND has given me the confidence that I can make a difference in my community.

Vicki Monsen, Watford City, N.D.

As a result of this project, I learned that by getting different groups and organizations to work together, a community can accomplish something positive.

David Olson, Crosby, N.D.

I have been greatly encouraged through the RLND program by its willingness to help rural America when we are losing that attention on the national level. We have one of the best places to live on this earth and it would be a disgrace to let its infrastructure collapse because of changing economics.

Patti Patrie, Bowdon, N.D.

Being a leader is having the willingness to serve, maintain high energy and taking an active role in developing, expressing and defending civility and values. Rural Leadership North Dakota has created a network of contacts and resources across the state of North Dakota and created friendships that will last a lifetime.

Lori Wagner, South Heart, N.D.

I believe all of us who have been part of or experienced RLND had life-altering experiences. Creating positive change is what leadership is all about. RLND brings together and fosters the attitude of “we can” by sharing and working together – networking.

John Zetocha, Oakes, N.D.

RLND Staff



Marie Hvidsten

RLND program director

Marie Hvidsten is the rural leadership specialist and Rural Leadership North Dakota program director with the NDSU Extension Service. She has been in her Extension position since October 2002. Prior to coming to NDSU, Marie was the corporate learning and development manager at Digi-Key in Thief River Falls, Minn., for eight years.

Marie's professional experience also includes 11 years as a music teacher and eight years working with numerous grant programs, including a teacher center, mentorship program, arts school, Center for School Change initiative with the University of Minnesota, and curriculum director for the Thief River Falls School District. Marie was part of a community team that created and implemented a nine-month leadership program for the Thief River Falls community as a result of completing a yearlong Blandin Community Leadership program.

Marie holds a bachelor's degree in music from Bemidji (Minn.) State University and a master's degree in educational administration from the University of North Dakota, and is working on a doctorate in organization development from the University of St. Thomas in Minneapolis. Marie's doctoral dissertation is on women entrepreneurs in North Dakota.



Cindy Selstedt

Administrative Secretary

Cindy Selstedt began working for Rural Leadership North Dakota in December 2004. Before coming to RLND, Cindy worked for Counseling and Disability Services, NDSU. Cindy and her husband, Randy, have three children and farm near Walcott, N.D.

*If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more,
do more and become more, you are a leader.*

John Quincy Adams, former U.S. president

RLND Council

2003 to present

The RLND Council members are individuals who were asked to serve for a two-year term on the council. Council members provide direction, create policies and procedures, advocate for the program, maintain appropriate fiscal policies, create an endowment for the financial future of RLND and assist with class selection. These individuals have an enthusiastic outlook about the future of North Dakota. We appreciate their volunteerism and leadership on the Rural Leadership North Dakota Program!



Carol Goodman
Council Chair,
Executive Director,
Cavalier County
Job Dev. Authority,
Langdon, ND



Keith Bjerke
VP for University
Relations,
NDSU, Fargo, ND



Julie Burgum
Educator,
Casselton, ND



Paul Govig
Division Director,
Dept. of
Commerce/
State of ND,
Bismarck, ND



Maynard Helgaas
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Growers of ND,
Jamestown, ND



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General Mgr.,
ND Assoc. of Rural
Elec. Coop.,
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LFS Professional
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District 7,
Towner, ND



Duane Hauck
Ex-Officio Council
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Director,
NDSU Extension
Service,
Fargo, ND

Former RLND Council member:

Gene Veeder
Executive director,
McKenzie County JDA
and Tourism Bureau,
Watford City, ND

RLND Design Team

2003 to present

The RLND Design Team members are individuals who were asked to serve on this team. Design Team members provide direction to the RLND director regarding the seminar curriculum, study tour agenda, evaluation process and application process. They have created learning objectives for all of the program seminars and study tour. These individuals craft the experiences the participants have during their seminar and study tour experiences. They believe in the learning process and have developed an experience that allows participants the time to gain skills, challenge beliefs, practice skills and network with individuals across North Dakota and the country.



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Contributors

2003-05 RLND Class

The organizations, businesses and individuals listed graciously have contributed financially to the Rural Leadership North Dakota program from October 2003 to May 2005. These contributors have made offering the RLND program to individuals across North Dakota possible! They understand that people are the greatest resource North Dakota has to strengthen communities and organizations in the state. They are leaders who understand that investing their financial resources in people is the way to move North Dakota forward. We appreciate all of their generous contributions.

We've made every effort to list the names correctly, but in the event we have made an error, please contact the RLND office.

Sponsor

REAP Development Fund
REAP Investment Fund

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Department of Commerce
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ND Rural Development Council
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North Dakota Pork Producers
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Starion Financial
Watford City Economic Development
Wells Fargo Bank North Dakota

Gold

Affordable Housing Development
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McKenzie County JDA
Oakes Enhancement, Inc.
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Souris Basin Planning Council
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Cloverdale Foods
Hannaford Community and Economic Development
Heartland Rural Assistance Program
Hope Electric
Mountrail County Abstract & Title Company
Thompson Devils Lake Paint and Glass
Tri-link Telemanagement
Western Cooperative Credit Union

Contribution Levels

The following gift recognition levels have been designated on a per class (two year total) basis.

| | |
|----------|-------------------|
| Leader | \$100,000 + |
| Investor | \$50,000-\$99,999 |
| Builder | \$25,000-\$49,999 |
| Patron | \$10,000-\$24,999 |
| Sponsor | \$5,000-\$9,999 |
| Platinum | \$1,000-\$4,999 |
| Gold | \$500-\$999 |
| Silver | \$250-\$499 |
| Bronze | \$100-\$249 |
| Copper | \$1-\$99 |

*Watch your thoughts; they become words.
Watch your words; they become actions.
Watch your actions; they become habits.
Watch your habits; they become character.
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.*

Frank Outlaw



**Prepare and develop effective leaders
to strengthen rural communities.**

RLND Mission



Prepare and develop effective leaders to strengthen rural communities. RLND Mission

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