

**Navigating change together with impact,  
through self-awareness and service to community,  
and with a collective commitment to connection.**

RLND 2021-2023 Class Motto



## **Class IX Summary**

**RLND 2021-2023**



## *Greetings and welcome*

to the pages of the Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) Class IX (2019-2023) Summary Booklet. At RLND, our mission is clear: to prepare and develop effective leaders to strengthen North Dakota. The thirteen participants of RLND Class IX wholeheartedly embodied this mission on their extraordinary journey.

The journey of RLND Class IX began with their orientation seminar on November 21, 2019. Over the following 42 months, these individuals embarked on an exploration of themselves, our state, our nation, and the world. Along the way, they forged bonds of friendship and mentorship that will endure throughout the rest of their lives. Their resilience was tested as the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted their class, yet Class IX emerged stronger, sharing stories of their own resiliency and unraveling the complex tapestry of an ever-changing world.

Through their participation in thirteen diverse seminars, RLND Class IX expanded their horizons through:

- Ten in-state seminars in Bismarck (three seminars), Minot, Fargo, Valley City, Carrington, Dickinson, Grand Forks/Hillsboro, and Wahpeton/Forman.
- One regional seminar in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.
- One national seminar in Washington, D.C., where they met with Kentucky leaders.
- One international seminar in Spain.

Class IX will be remembered for several historic RLND firsts:

- The first class to confront a global pandemic head-on
- The first class to experience Clifton StrengthsFinders as a class
- Pioneers in RLND's international studies to the European continent
- Memorable visits to Wabasha Street Caves in Minneapolis, the VanBedaf Dairy in Carrington, the Baker Boy factory in Dickinson, and the Coteau des Prairies Lodge in Havana

The impact of RLND Class IX reaches far beyond these pages. Armed with the knowledge and networks they cultivated during their RLND experience, these participants returned to their communities, organizations, and industries, demonstrating their leadership through the individual leadership projects. This summary booklet serves as a testament to the ripple effect of their endeavors across North Dakota, touching communities, organizations, and industries alike.

Congratulations, Class IX participants, on your completion of your RLND journey! It has been my privilege to accompany you on this incredible path, getting to know each of you as exceptional individuals. You represent a group of leaders who deeply care for one another, their communities, their industries, and the great state of North Dakota. I eagerly anticipate witnessing your continued journey of navigating change with impact. Your self-awareness and dedication to serving your communities will only flourish with your unwavering commitment to connection.

As you transition into the ranks of RLND program alumni and members of the RLND Alumni Association, I am excited to continue working with you and supporting your ongoing success.

**Katie Tyler**  
RLND Program Director



Nearly 8,000 governmental units and nonprofit organizations in North Dakota need engaged leaders in counties, cities, townships and school districts.

That means one in 13 people age 18 and older needs to step up to a leadership role. But finding good leaders doesn't happen by chance.

North Dakota requires dedicated, creative and visionary leaders to guide the aspirations and accomplishments of our organizations, communities and state.

That is why North Dakota State University Extension leadership development programs such as Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) are so vital. They help citizens learn the necessary skills to create and maintain thriving rural economies, lifestyles and communities.

During the past 42 months, you, as members of RLND's Class IX, have experienced personal development, acquired and enhanced your leadership skills, established a new professional network and gained a wealth of new friends. You also became well-informed about important state, national and international issues, and undertook projects to benefit your operation, business, organization, community or region. Your commitment and dedication were essential for your success.

I am honored to recognize you as graduates of Rural Leadership North Dakota and congratulate you on your accomplishments. You are fully equipped to be North Dakota's leaders for today and tomorrow.

However, please don't mistake this graduation event as the end of your leadership journey. The transition from students to alumni brings additional expectations because of your enhanced leadership talents and vision. You have the opportunity — perhaps even an obligation — to help shape the future. I am eager to see what you will accomplish.

Congratulations and best wishes!

**Greg Lardy**

VP, Agricultural Affairs and Director, NDSU Extension

*The growth and development of people is the  
highest calling of leadership.*

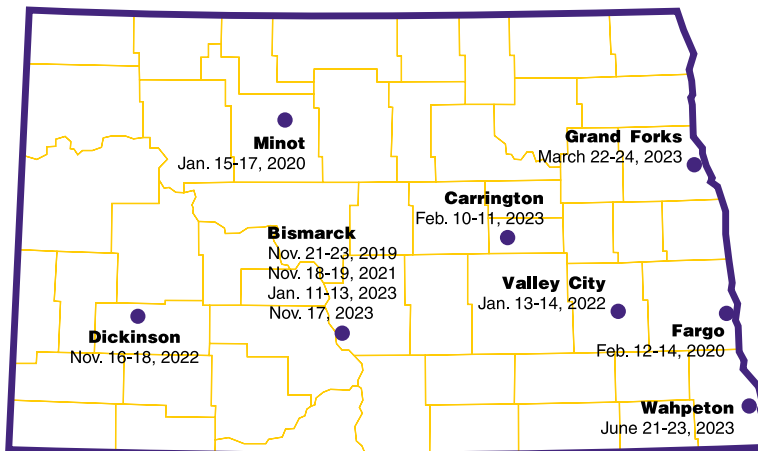
Harvey S. Firestone

# RLND Class of 2021-2023



Back row: Fayme Stringer-Henry, Kristina Dick, Becky Peterson, Julie Johnson, Eric Muller, Stephanie Blumhagen, Kerri Kraft  
 Front row: Andrea Nelson, Kylee Merkel, Dantae Anderson, Tom Jones, Susan Milender  
 Not pictured: Jasmin Fosheim

## 2021-2023 Seminars



● **Washington, D.C.**  
 March 14-19, 2022

● **Minneapolis, Minn.**  
 June 21-24, 2022

● **Spain**  
 Feb. 7-18, 2023



# Class IX Redesigned: A 4-Year Degree in Resiliency

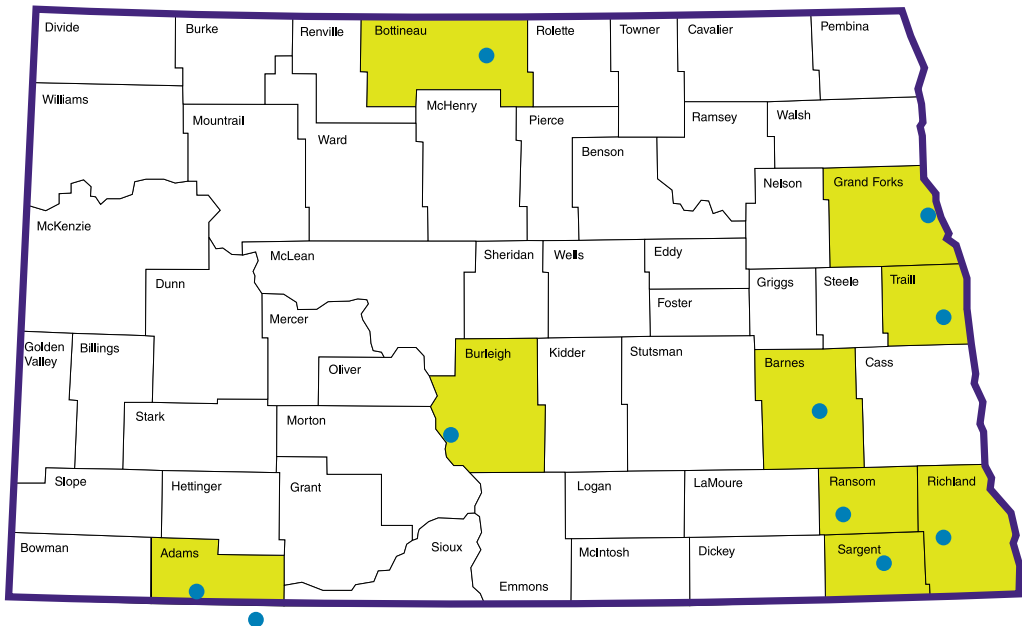
RLND 2021-2023 Class Slogan

## RLND Project Stories

### 2021-2023 Class

Every RLND participant worked on a project in his or her community or organization. Some projects take a few months, while others take a few years to complete. RLND projects improve the quality of life for individuals and organizations throughout North Dakota, creating positive change in their communities, as well as the RLND participant.

## RLND Class 2023 Communities



## Growing Collaboration: The North Dakota Local Food Development Alliance

**Stephanie Blumhagen**, Executive Director, FARRMS (Foundation for Agriculture and Rural Resource Management and Sustainability), Bottineau



**The project:** The ND Local Food Development Alliance brings together local food advocates, producers and consumers to co-create resilient local food systems supporting equitable, healthy communities.

**The impact:** I built the capacity of this fledgling organization by writing grants and applying for an AmeriCorps member. We created a membership structure, set up a website and held a strategic planning meeting. Both the member list and monthly meeting engagement doubled, and \$23,000 was raised for the organization's growth. We came together to address issues that emerged from the pandemic and, through increased collaboration, were able to access more funding and pursue new local food projects. Together the participants in the alliance have supported the growth of farm-to-school efforts, farmers markets and new local food businesses. We are creating a more robust, thriving local food system for North Dakota. The ND Local Food Development Alliance meets online on the third Tuesday of each month from 2–3 p.m. CST.

Learn more at [www.ndlocalfood.org](http://www.ndlocalfood.org).

*RLND gave me the opportunity to make new connections and build lifelong friendships. I got to take tours and discover aspects of ND's communities that I would not otherwise have been able to see. – Stephanie Blumhagen*



## Sharing Knowledge in Small Towns

**Dantae Anderson**, Loan Officer/Office Manager, Farm Credit Services of Mandan, Lemmon, SD

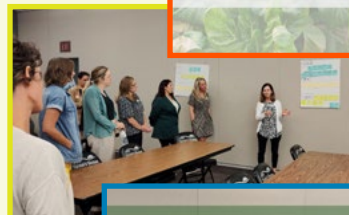


**The project:** My RLND project was to create a template for people to use to share their knowledge and talents with others in our community.

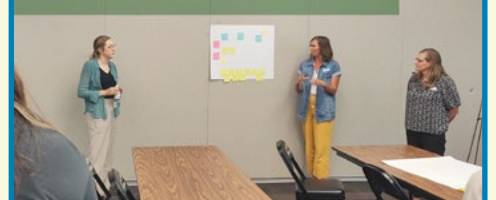
**The impact:** Placemakers is a group of makers and doers who share ideas for the good of the community.

Being a part of the Placemakers group in Lemmon showed me that there are many hidden talents in our small town, but the main hurdle people face is how to share these skills with others. By creating a template that can be used to host informal classes, people felt confident that they can host a great class without forgetting something. This template created a checklist for people to follow when organizing their own classes. It also included resources that could be used for each step. Things like creating a Facebook event, designing a poster, setting up ticket sales, finding a place to host, gathering materials and figuring out the number of helpers needed are listed so the hosts can use what applies and take care of things before, during and after the event. Using this template has allowed people who do not normally take leadership roles to feel more comfortable hosting an event and teaching a class.

*RLND gave me confidence as a leader within my community and my workplace. Being able to observe different leadership styles helped me understand how diverse groups can work together and that everyone has their individual strengths. – Dantae Anderson*



**North Central Regional Food Business Center Kickoff!**



## The Rural Collective

**Jasmin Fosheim**, Realizing Rural co-creator, Hettinger



**The project:** The Rural Collective is a co-working and collaborative workforce center in Hettinger, ND.

**The impact:** Prior to creating The Rural Collective, the dilapidated downtown space it occupies had been vacant for years. This newly

renovated, mixed-use community space has allowed access to opportunities for education and professional development in the community. The space is equipped with amenities lacking in most of the few existing meeting spaces in town such as a high-definition color printer/scanner, high-speed wireless and wired internet donated by Midco, audiovisual conferencing technology, touchscreen smart board, a kitchenette, complimentary office supplies, modular furniture, a video surveillance system, accessible parking and facility, and all-hours key-card access. The Rural Collective has met the needs of dozens of individuals, businesses, events and organizations. In addition to day passes and event rentals, yearly and monthly memberships are available for students, youth organizations, businesses, individuals and community organizations. Since opening, The Rural Collective has won both the Main Street Initiative Smart, Efficient Infrastructure Award and the Governor's Choice Award for Community Development.

*Since its conception, The Rural Collective has blossomed into a space fit to house the dreamers of the Hettinger community and the architects of its future, from youth and businesses to organizations and entrepreneurs. The space was intentionally designed to support all big ideas, from events and businesses to clubs and classes. Rural Leadership ND has given me the bravery and connections necessary to execute this monumental project from start to finish, and I'm eternally grateful. – Jasmin Fosheim*



## Green Space on Main

**Kristina Dick**, Auditor and Economic Development Director, City of Lisbon, Englevale



**The project:** To take a vacant useless lot and turn it into a useful place on Main Street.

**The impact:** This project has not only beautified a vacant lot on Main Street. It has made a place for community events or just sitting

and people watching. Once a week during the summer this space is utilized by a food truck, to bring a different variety of food to our residents. This has had a positive impact on our community as we have lost a restaurant business in town recently. The green space also holds our North Country Trail Kiosk, which was a Boy Scout Eagle Project from the local troop. The trail itself leads you straight through Lisbon. Each season the Main Street Beautification committee decorates the area with flowers in the spring, corn stalks in the fall, and Christmas Trees in the winter. To transform this area has been an effort by many committees in Lisbon. We have received grants from the Lisbon Community Foundation, Lisbon Visitors and Events Bureau and the City of Lisbon.

*The RLND experience has been life-changing for me. It not only helped me grow personally but professionally as well. I learned a lot about myself since this program made me step out of my comfort zone. I am now more confident to speak in public and to step up to more of a leader. I will be forever grateful for the networks that I have made these past few years. – Kristina Dick*





## TNT Parish and Beyond

**Julie Johnson**, Pastor, TNT Parish, Forman



**The project:** This project's goal was to tend to the sacramental and worship leadership needs in southeast ND for Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) congregations through encouraging, inviting, coordinating

and training lay leaders in the TNT Parish to preach and lead worship services.

**The impact:** The goal also was to identify and encourage people to consider lay minister education offered by the Eastern ND Synod of the ELCA and/or an ELCA seminary. One parishioner will be starting her second year of seminary classes. Another goal was to facilitate conversations and visioning of the TNT Parish with congregations geographically surrounding the TNT Parish geographically regarding how to support one another, share resources (including ministers of word and sacrament), and partner with each other to meet the sacramental and worship leadership needs in the area. A community conversation led by Deacon Erin Power, director for evangelical mission in the synod, which I co-facilitated and organized, was held July 2023.

*I have discovered my strengths on which to capitalize in leading and have learned new leadership skills in the RLND experience and believe that RLND has definitely made me a better leader. – Julie Johnson*

## Teaching Teachers about Rural Student Trauma

**Tom Jones**, Self employed, Wyndmere



**The project:** To bring information and awareness to rural schools and communities on how childhood trauma affects the lives of families and the community they live in.

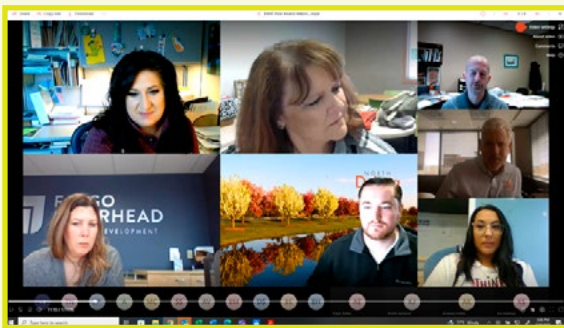
**The impact:** Children dealing with trauma are expected not to bring their own personal life into the classroom. The unspoken rule is to leave it at the door. This model does not work anymore. I am on the board of Attach, a national organization that teaches and informs schools on implementing tools to assist students with trauma and attachment behaviors. I am working with schools to educate staff about trauma and attachment behaviors at teacher educational meetings.

*RLND has widened my perspective of how rural North Dakota is a team effort between farms and small communities to bring a high quality of life to our rural state. I also learned there are many opportunities in ag-related careers I never even dreamed existed. – Tom Jones*

*Before you are a leader, success is all about growing yourself. When you become a leader, success is all about growing others.*

Jack Welch





## Regional Workforce Impact Grant Unified Awareness Webinars

**Kerri Kraft**, Work-based Learning Program Coordinator, North Dakota Department of Commerce, Bismarck



**The project:** The ND Regional Workforce Impact Program (RWIP) provides grants to regional workforce entities to design and implement innovative plans to address their region's most demanding workforce challenges. The grant program will

respond to the negative impacts the COVID-19 pandemic has had on workforce and industries by encouraging regions and communities to develop sustainable, innovative solutions to help businesses find workers, and help workers and jobseekers prepare for and connect to higher-quality and better-paying jobs. The RWIP grant aims to offset the cost of local solutions that will have a regional impact. Funds may be provided as a resource to implement a long-term solution to permanently mitigate workforce participation issues.

**The impact:** I chose this project to ensure that the messaging about this new program was delivered in the most efficient and consistent manner. Since this grant application required many levels of touchpoints, we needed to provide the best messaging to get the best results. Three webinars shared the messaging.

A total of 63 agreements have been executed. Program examples include commercial driver's license (CDL) training, career and technical education enhancements, talent attraction and daycare expansions. The 33 childcare facilities awarded created 1,590 new childcare spots across the state.

I now have handed off the program to a dedicated staff to administer. In addition, during the most recent session, the legislature infused an additional \$12,500,000 into the program.

*My RLND experience has taught me that there are initiatives that need to have someone just start the momentum. I knew that this program was going to have an immense impact on North Dakota and its citizens, so I needed to guarantee that it was going to be successful. – Kerri Kraft*

## One Application Project – Funding for Infrastructure in ND (FIND)

**Kylee Merkel**, Business Banker, Bank of North Dakota, Bismarck



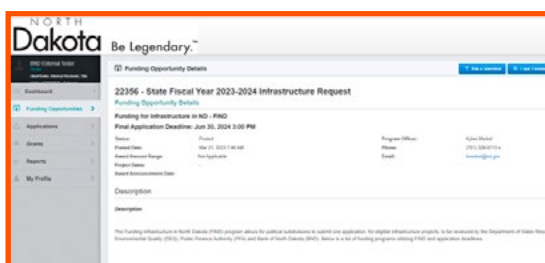
**The project:** My project was to streamline the process for political subdivisions to access state funding sources for their infrastructure needs.

**The impact:** Prior to the creation of the Funding for Infrastructure in North Dakota (FIND) portal, political subdivisions and their consulting engineers had to complete numerous applications to the varying state agencies to access their grant and loan funds. This also created a lack of collaboration among state agencies.

The process for establishing the portal required efforts from numerous state agencies. After much collaboration, the portal was designed, tested and gradually rolled out to users of the system.

The portal has been live since late Summer 2021 and has received hundreds of applications. Today, the simplified process of applying for state infrastructure funding sources has been well received. The effort required of political subdivisions has been reduced, and state agencies have an increased level of understanding and collaboration among themselves.

*The RLND experience (although longer than expected) has been an incredible opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. The people we were able to meet and places we were able to visit have added unique connections and experiences that far exceed the classroom. – Kylee Merkel*





## Lead Local-Hybrid

**Sue Milender**, Extension Agent, NDSU Extension – Barnes County, Valley City



**The project:** The Lead Local program, sponsored by North Dakota State University (NDSU) Extension, teaches participants about ethics, parliamentary procedure and conflict resolution to help them develop the skills and confidence to serve on

boards and committees effectively. Currently, finding enough people to serve on organizational boards is challenging. North Dakota has nearly 7,000 boards, councils, and committees, which means that one out of every 13 adult residents would need to serve in a leadership role.

**The impact:** Recruiting people to serve on a board in a rural area is even more challenging. If someone is serving on one board, they are probably on a few other boards as well. So, this training impacts many boards through a single person.

Nearly 250 people from 528 ND organizations, 39 of them agriculture-related, have attended Lead Local. Many participants report that their boards have saved at least an hour of meeting time due to meetings being run more efficiently. If all 528 organizations in ND saved an hour a month, that would be a yearly savings of \$160,934. A hybrid version of Lead Local may allow more people to attend the training. The hybrid version uses Moodle for engaging online and on-demand lessons to complement face-to-face meetings that allow for networking, problem-solving and brainstorming. The hybrid Lead Local program has been created and is awaiting a firm launch date.

*I am committed to meeting the educational needs of my county and state by understanding and proactively responding to issues in my rural community. Barnes County is devoted to agriculture, and Valley City is the epitome of rural North Dakota. Currently, rural life is in the throes of change. We have a dynamic landscape that did not exist a few decades ago, and we need to learn ways to participate actively in this change. Rural communities must have skilled leaders who will empower our citizens to grow, thrive and realize their potential. I am committed to helping strengthen my community by providing effective leadership and followership. RLND helped me become a stronger leader and communicator and enhanced my network of other leaders. – Sue Milender*

## Project Pickleball

**Eric Muller**, Manager, Total Ag Industries, Hillsboro



**The project:** For my RLND project, I fixed up the old outdoor basketball court and turned it into a pickleball court for my town of Hillsboro.

**The impact:** Pickleball has grown quite a bit in popularity over the last few years in Hillsboro, and the only place it was available was the high school gymnasium, which was not always open or had events going on. Having an outdoor pickleball court is great for Hillsboro as it gives anyone access to play whenever they would like in the summer. Being the court is on school grounds the school had paid employees on the job, but all of my time was volunteered.

*My RLND experience has been nothing short of amazing. I have learned so much about myself and leadership, got to see places and experience things that I probably wouldn't have otherwise, and even made some lifelong friends along the way. I would highly recommend RLND to anyone who is looking for a way to better themselves. – Eric Muller*





## The Longest Table: One Community – Hundreds of Conversations – Endless Possibilities

**Andrea Nelson**, Director, Sheyenne Valley Community Foundation, Valley City



**The project:** The Longest Table, a community event held August 5, 2021, featured a continuous 400-foot table on Central Avenue in Valley City. Its purpose was to promote positive dialogue, empower ideas and create a more vibrant community.

**The impact:** This event brought together nearly 300 residents who engaged in facilitated conversations fostering strong connections, exchanging stories and sharing innovative ideas for community development all while sharing a meal together. Before and after the conversations, attendees completed surveys to gather valuable data about our community, focusing on amenities, engagement, image and quality of life. The Sheyenne Valley Community Foundation took pride in organizing The Longest Table, with the generous support of volunteers and sponsors, including the Valley City Barnes County Development Corporation, which utilized funds from their Bush Prize for Community Innovation. Additionally, Valley City State University and Valley City Public Schools played instrumental roles in making this community event a success.

As a testament to the event's impact, the Sheyenne Valley Community Foundation offered Innovative Microgrants to support ideas generated from The Longest Table. This grassroots approach empowered community members to turn their conversations into tangible actions that ultimately enhance our community's vibrancy.

For more details, results and photos, visit [www.vclongesttable.org](http://www.vclongesttable.org).

*Participating in the Rural Leadership North Dakota program has been a transformative experience for me. I have learned invaluable skills, gained lasting connections and had several amazing experiences that have empowered me to make a meaningful difference in my community. – Andrea Nelson*

## Farm Credit Services Mandan (FCSM) Connecting Communities 5K (CC5K)

**Becky Peterson**, Director of Marketing and Services, Farm Credit Services of Mandan, Mandan



**The project:** Because no group observes Earth Day as often as farmers and ranchers, Farm Credit Services Mandan (FCSM) sponsored a Connecting Communities 5K (CC5K). This event is a healthy rural activity

to improve agriculture's image through Ag Day's and Earth Day's mutual missions to nourish the environment and people's health while connecting communities.

**The impact:** A 5K run, trail hike or pasture walk was encouraged in local areas between March 21 (National Ag Day) and April 22 (Earth Day).

All registration fees were donated to the local food bank of their choice through the Great Plains Food Bank distribution program. In 2021, 126 participants raised \$2,000; in 2022, 170 participants raised \$2,800; and in 2023, 260 participants raised more than \$5,000 for 26 local food banks.

*My RLND experience has connected me to some great rural leaders, companies and communities. It reaffirmed my belief in our state, the ag industry and North Dakota's quality of life. RLND also taught me to be more resilient and the value of being an ongoing learner and promoter of our state and its business climate, education and people.*

– Becky Peterson







## Friendship Gardens and Community Orchard

**Fayme Stringer Henry**, Homeless Families Case Manager, GF Homes, Grand Forks



**The project:** I pursued this community orchard project because I am a strong advocate for food justice and food sovereignty and believe that foraging is a viable and socially acceptable form of finding nutrient-dense and culturally appropriate food supports. I am working

on gaining my Extension Master Gardener certification and plan to use this project and an urban pollinator garden with labels in Anishinaabe language, as well as a garden for the food pantry at my job, as volunteer hours.

**The impact:** This project was a way to make my community as inclusive as possible, as the raised bed gardens are accessible for people with mobility issues. Our goal is ultimately to have a sensory-friendly space for people with special needs to access nature and build friendships. Having seasonally available fruits accessible by anyone is a throwback to when tribal communities were living in harmony with nature in this area. I would like to have Anishinaabe names listed on each of the varieties of fruits.

We have had several groups volunteer over the last several years, most helped with the main planting.

This project was supported by a variety of financial resources, but we are now moving toward a partnership with the local Blue Zones Project Food Policy Committee. The future includes adding some Walking Moais and adding the local foraging-friendly fruit trees into a publicly accessible database map on <https://fallingfruit.org/>. The public orchard also will have a Tool Share component. I would ultimately love to develop the project into something with competitive employment opportunities for special needs and at-risk or marginalized populations.

# RLND Class IX Community Service



## JANUARY 2020

All Saint's Episcopal Church Community Meal Service and Cleanup - Minot

## MARCH 2022

Delivered Meals to Homeless Individuals (with KY Leaders) - Washington, DC

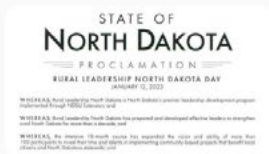


## JUNE 2022

Appetite For Change Urban Farm and Cleanup Project - Minneapolis, MN

## NOVEMBER 2022

Raise The Woof Animal Rescue Tiny Tie Blankets and Donation - Dickinson



## JANUARY 2023

Catering Donation to Food Pantry after Legislative Social - Bismarck

## MARCH 2023

Northlands Rescue Mission Backpack Lunches Program - Grand Forks



## JUNE 2023

Chahinkapa Zoo Park, Buildings, and Gardens Cleanup - Wahpeton

*You are never too small to make a difference.*

Greta Thunberg



# Council Members 2019-2023

RLND Council members are individuals who volunteer to serve up to three three-year terms. Council members' responsibilities include providing direction, creating policies and procedures, advocating for the program, maintaining appropriate fiscal policies and assisting with class selection. RLND Council members are individuals who "walk the talk" of leadership through their service to the RLND program.



**Cory McCaskey**  
Chair  
Owner,  
Business Buddy  
Killdeer, ND  
RLND Class V



**Jon Erickson**  
Producer/Rancher  
Minot, ND



**Brady Pelton**  
Vice President and  
General Counsel,  
North Dakota  
Petroleum Council  
Bismarck, ND



**Erica Johnsrud**  
Vice Chair  
McKenzie County  
Auditor/Treasurer,  
Wattford City, ND  
RLND Class VII



**Lynette Flage**  
Associate Director,  
NDSU Extension  
Fargo, ND



**Scott Peterson**  
Deputy Director,  
ND Game and Fish  
Department  
Bismarck, ND



**Jean Henning**  
Secretary/Treasurer  
Executive Director,  
North Dakota Corn  
Council  
Fargo, ND



**Pete Hanebutt**  
Director of Public  
Policy,  
North Dakota Farm  
Bureau  
Bismarck, ND



**Scott Ressler**  
Environmental  
Services Director,  
North Dakota  
Stockmen's  
Association  
Mandan, ND



**Kasey Bitz**  
Owner,  
Bitz Farms  
LaMoure, ND  
RLND Class VIII



**Carrie Johnson**  
Assistant Director,  
NDSU Extension  
Fargo, ND



**JoAnn Rodenbiker**  
Co-Owner,  
Lil' Prairie Greenhouse  
Rock Lake, ND



**Mitch Coulter**  
Northarvest Bean  
Growers Association  
Fargo, ND



**Barry Medd**  
Grand Forks, ND  
Past Chair



**Kristi Schultz**  
Instructional Designer  
| Learning and  
Development |  
Human Resources,  
Border States  
Fargo, ND  
RLND Class VII



**Jayme Davis**  
Program Director,  
Native Governance  
Center  
Turtle Mountain Nation  
RLND Class VII



**Mary Mertens**  
Member Relations  
Specialist,  
North Dakota Farmers  
Union  
Fargo, ND  
RLND Class VI



**Jeni Strand**  
EVP Human  
Resources,  
AgCountry Farm Credit  
Services  
Fargo, ND



**Josh Demorrett**  
Director,  
State Government  
Affairs  
ConocoPhillips  
Bismarck, ND

**Former RLND Council members:** Keith Bjerke, Tom Bodine, Chris Boerboom, Tim Bryan, Julie Burgum, DC Coston, Jerry Doan, Myron Eighthy, Steve Edwardson, Carol Goodman, Paul Govig, Terry Goerger, Al Gustin, Jody Hauge, Maynard Helgaas, Dennis Hill, Dale Ihry, John Jacobson, April Jepson, Mark Johnson, Deborah Kantrud, Greg Lardy, Craig Larson, Janel Lee, Dan Lund, Michelle McMormack, Ken Miller, Vicki Monsen, Pamela Mustand, Connie Nicholas, Lynette Nieuwsma, Michal O'Keefe, Allan Orwick, Kayla Pulvermacher, Scott Rising, Connie Sprynczynatyk, Scott Stofferahn, Ryan Taylor, Keith Trego, Kathy Tweeten, Gene Veeder, John Warner, Dan Wogsland



# Contributors

The organizations, businesses and individuals listed have graciously contributed to the RLND program from October 2019 to September 2023. 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 across the state. We greatly appreciate all of their generous contributions!

We've made every effort to list the names correctly. In the event we have made an error or omitted a contributor, please contact the RLND office.

## ■ Leader Corps Members

### **Visionary – \$50,000+**

Michael and Kathleen O'Keeffe Endowed Gift for Tuition Scholarships\*

### **Innovator – \$20,000+**

### **Benefactor – \$10,000+**

CHS Foundation

Marie Moody Fragodt Trust Endowed Gift to Rural Leadership \*

### **Leader Corp Investor – \$5,000+**

Farm Credit Services across North Dakota Rural Leadership North Dakota Alumni Association\*

### **Sponsor – \$2,500+**

Charlie Sorenson Farm

### **Member – \$1,000+**

Basin Electric Power Cooperative

Cory McCaskey\*

Dacotah Bank

Lynette and Lon Flage\*

Town & Country Credit Union

## ■ Program Contributions

### **\$500+**

Bank North

Bob and Linda Christman\*

Chris Meier, Wells Fargo Private Wealth Financial Advisor

Cloverdale

CoBank

Columbia Grain International

First Western Bank

Killoran Trucking

Minnkota Power

Moore Engineering

National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation

ND Pork Council

Slope Electric

Tyler Van Bruggen, Farmers Union Insurance

Verendrye Electric

### **\$200+**

Capital Electric Cooperative

Barry Medd\*

Bell Bank

Birdsall Grain & Seed LLC

Dakota Heritage Bank of North Dakota

Erica Johnsrud\*

Farm Credit Services of ND

Glachatt Seed/Matt Danuser

Grand Forks CVB

Grieger Sales and Service

Kathleen and Howard Tweeten\*

Marie Hvidsten\*

Minot Area Chamber of Commerce

Minot Area Development Corporation

Minot Convention and Visitor Bureau

Lovas Farms

ProSeed Inc.

Rahr Malting

RLND Alumni (Grand Forks region): Julie

Gemmil, Class VII; Jeanna Smalladen,

Class VII; Dawn Jarolimek, Class I; Jason

Lindell, Class VII; Lynnell Simonson

Popowski, Class II.

SRT Communications, Inc.

Total Ag Industries

United Community Bank

Vision Bank

### **\$100+**

Capital Electric Cooperative

Dakota Dynamics

Donald and Connie Longmuir

JoAnn Rodenbiker

Matt Danuser\*

Mary Mertens

Melissa McHenry\*

Percy Blake\*

Timothy Nowatzki\*

Tom and Linda Jones

Trudy Ruland\*

### **\$99 and under**

Halstad Phone Company

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## ■ Class IX Tuition Sponsors

Tuition Sponsors are individuals and businesses who sponsored tuition for participants of RLND Class IX.

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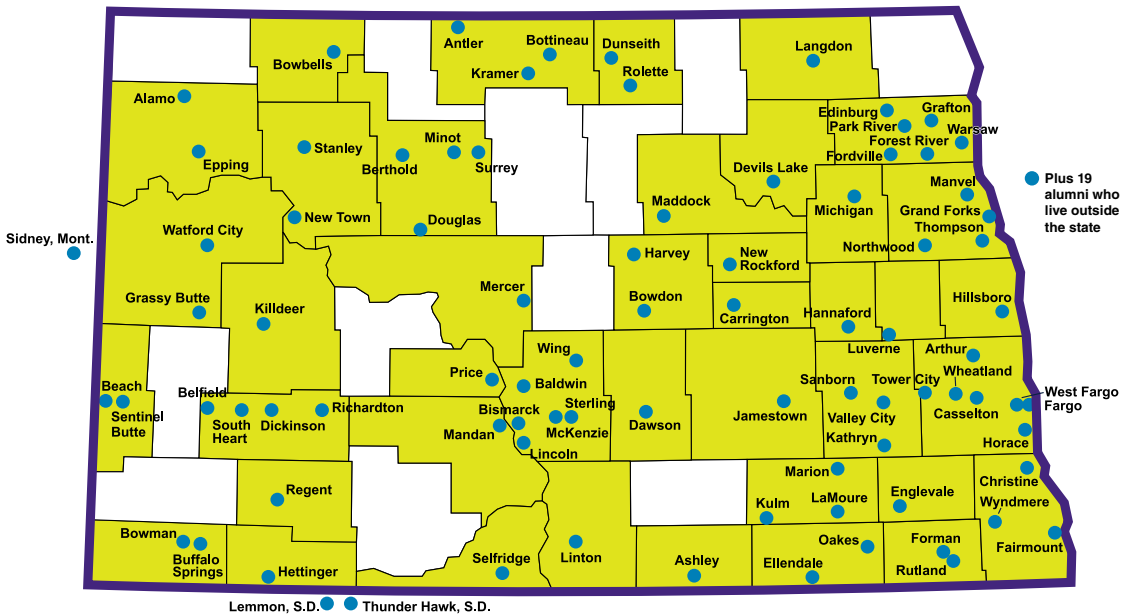
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# RLND Alumni 2003-2023

The RLND alumni map highlights the communities and counties where RLND alumni are currently located in North Dakota. The alumni include Class I to Class IX. The goal of the RLND program is to have an RLND graduate in every community in every county in North Dakota.



## RLND Staff



**Christy Stenseth**  
RLND Administrative Assistant

Christy Stenseth is the driving force behind Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) seminars and events. She is committed to fostering a vibrant learning community and crafting unforgettable moments for all involved. With her attention to detail and knack for organization, she is the architect of memorable and transformative experiences. Christy earned her B.S. in English and Secondary Education with a minor in Social and Behavioral Sciences from the University of Mary. Christy enjoys cruising and making memories with her family and her three dogs.



**Katie Tyler**  
RLND Program Director

Katie Tyler is dedicated to shaping the future of North Dakota. She currently holds the position of Rural Leadership North Dakota Program Director and North Dakota State University Extension Specialist which allows her to nurture leadership talent and collaborate with inspirational leaders statewide. She strives to leave a mark on the landscape of North Dakota, fueling sustainable growth, networking and relationship building, and inclusive leadership practices. Beyond her professional endeavors, Katie finds inspiration in exploring the world through her travels, discovering the stories and experiences that shape our collective history. Fascinated by the lessons that history can teach us, Katie harbors a particular fascination for the 1918 Flu Pandemic. Through her extensive reading and research, Katie gains invaluable insights into the profound impact of pandemics on society, forging connections between past events and contemporary challenges. Katie holds a Master of Science degree in Educational Leadership and a Ph.D. in Education, Health, and Behavior Studies from the University of North Dakota.



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