



XPERIENCE | XPLORE | XPAND

the **X** *factor*


**Rural
Leadership**
NORTH DAKOTA
Advancing Leaders, Communities and Agriculture

NDSU

EXTENSION
RURAL LEADERSHIP NORTH DAKOTA

2023-2025
CLASS X SUMMARY



Greetings, and welcome to the Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) Class X Graduation Summary Booklet.

The mission of Rural Leadership North Dakota is to prepare and develop effective leaders who will strengthen our state. The members of Class X, consisting of fourteen outstanding individuals from across North Dakota, demonstrated this mission in action throughout their intensive 18-month journey. Their experience began in November 2023 and brought them across the state and around the world. Through seven in-state seminars, a regional seminar, a national seminar in Washington, D.C., and an international seminar in Ghana, participants were challenged to grow as individuals, collaborators, and community leaders. Along the way, they engaged with industry professionals, policy leaders, farmers, educators, innovators, and one another, exploring the intersections of people, place, and purpose.

CLASS X DISTINGUISHED ITSELF IN MANY WAYS:

- They became the first RLND class to travel to Ghana and step foot on African soil, expanding the program's global lens while exploring shared challenges and opportunities across cultures and continents.
- They collectively raised over \$60,000 in sponsorships, setting a new RLND record with 26% more support than any previous class. This remarkable effort significantly enhanced the program's financial sustainability and reach.
- They cultivated a class culture grounded in mutual respect, humor, and collaboration. By supporting one another through challenges and celebrating each other's growth, they demonstrated that leadership is not only about influence, but also about trust.

The depth and breadth of their experience are also captured in the data. A dedicated insert in this publication presents a visual overview of their impacts.

These accomplishments reflect more than statistics or milestones. They represent the experiences that shaped the individuals in Class X that challenged, inspired, and ultimately transformed their understanding of leadership and service.

Their motto, **Xperience, Xplore, Xpand**, captures both the spirit and the trajectory of this group. From exploring their personal leadership identities to expanding their impact across communities and industries, Class X approached every seminar, challenge, and opportunity with curiosity and courage. The phrase not only reflects their journey but also sets a tone for their continued contribution to North Dakota's rural future.

The leadership ripple effects of Class X are already evident, in their projects, partnerships, and personal growth. These individuals are not just graduates of a program; they are active contributors to North Dakota's future. Their stories reflect the strength of rural leadership when nurtured through deep connection, diverse experiences, and a shared commitment to making a difference.

To the families, friends, funders, alumni, communities, and organizations who supported this journey, thank you. Your investment in RLND makes this kind of transformational leadership development possible.

And to Class X: your legacy is just beginning.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Tyler". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large "K" and "T".

KATIE TYLER, PH.D.

Program Director

Rural Leadership North Dakota



Nearly 8,000 governmental units and nonprofit organizations across North Dakota rely on engaged leaders in counties, cities, townships and school districts. That means one in every 13 adults age 18 and older must step forward to serve in a leadership role. Strong leaders don't appear by chance. North Dakota needs dedicated, creative and visionary individuals to guide the aspirations and accomplishments of our organizations, communities and state.

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

Over the past 18 months, you, as members of RLND's Class X, have experienced personal development, acquired and enhanced your leadership skills, established a new professional network, and gained a wealth of new friends. You've become well-informed about important state, national and international issues, and you've undertaken projects to benefit your operation, business, organization, community or region. Your commitment and dedication were essential for your success.

It is my honor 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. But this graduation is not the end of your leadership journey—it marks the beginning of your next chapter. As alumni, new opportunities and responsibilities await you. With your talents and vision, you have both the chance—and perhaps the obligation—to help shape the future.

I look forward to seeing all that you will accomplish. Congratulations and best wishes!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Lardy". The script is fluid and cursive.

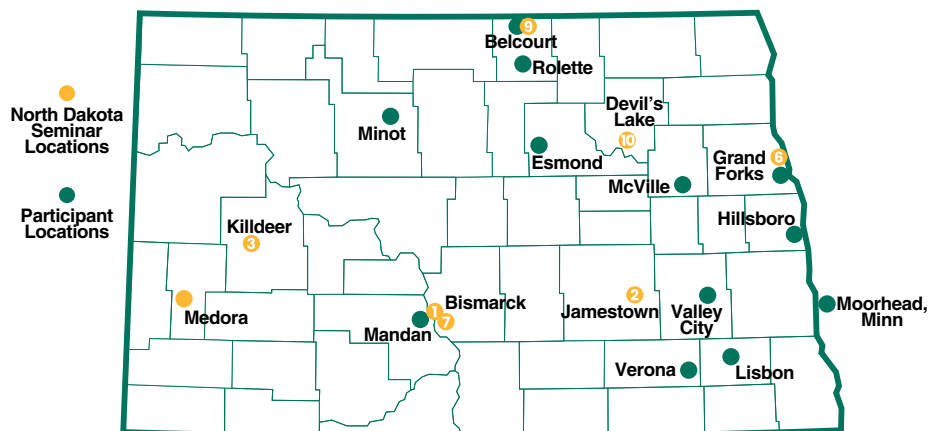
GREG LARDY, PH.D.

*Joe and Norma Peltier Vice President for Agriculture
North Dakota State University*





SEMINAR LOCATIONS & DATES



1 ORIENTATION TO THE RLND PROGRAM
November 15-18, 2023 | Bismarck, ND

2 PERSONAL LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
January 17-19, 2024 | Jamestown, ND
Oakes, ND

3 RURAL RESOURCES AND ISSUES
February 14-16, 2024 | Killdeer, ND

4 NATIONAL STUDY TOUR: TRENDS IN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL ISSUES
March 18-23, 2024 | Washington D.C.

RLND LEADERS ARE READERS: PASSION! 8 STEPS TO REIGNITE YOURS BY MARK J. LINDQUIST
Optional Online Book Study | May 2024

5 REGIONAL STUDY TOUR: AGRICULTURE AND RURAL ISSUES
June 24-28, 2024 | Minneapolis, MN

6 COMMUNICATION IN LEADERSHIP
November 20-22, 2024 | Grand Forks, ND

7 STATE LEADERSHIP WITHIN AGRICULTURE AND RURAL POLICIES
January 15-17, 2025 | Bismarck, ND

8 INTERNATIONAL STUDY TOUR
February 9-27, 2025 | Ghana

9 CRITICAL THINKING IN LEADERSHIP
March 26-28, 2025 | Belcourt, ND

RLND LEADERS ARE READERS: HIGH CONFLICT: WHY WE GET TRAPPED AND HOW WE GET OUT BY AMANDA RIPLEY
Optional Online Book Study | May 2025

10 CIVIC ENGAGEMENT/LOOKING AHEAD
June 25-27, 2025 | Devils Lake, ND

GRADUATION GALA
November 21, 2025 | Medora, ND

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:

DENISE ADDRESS

Director of Workforce Development
Heartview Foundation | Mandan

LULE NAAS

Owner/Consultant
Lule Naas Consulting, LLC | McVillie

KYLE KLAPPER

Director of Sales
Degelman Industries | Hillsboro

CHRISTIE JAEGER

Crop Insurance Adjuster
Pro Ag | Esmond

BARBARA MOTHERSHEAD

Market Leader
Starion Bank | Rolette

TRINITY NELSON

Resource Development Specialist
Barnes County Development Corporation | Valley City

EMILY PTACEK

Direct Marketing/Quality Control
Kustom Machine Inc. | Verona

A.J. ANDRESEN

Grain Operations Manager
Valley United Co-op | Hillsboro

GOVERNOR KELLY ARMSTRONG

ANNA ROSS

Family Engagement /
Communications Director
Belcourt School District | Belcourt

BRANDON BAITY

Executive Director
Indigenous Association | Moorhead, MN

KATIE TYLER

Program Director
NDSU; RLND

MELINDA GOODMAN

President
Full Tilt Marketing & Edible North Dakota | Minot

HEATHER SCHNEIDER

Chef/Owner
Joy Full Foods | Grand Forks

KATIE WENTZ

Program Coordinator
Aging in Community – NDSU Extension | Lisbon

HILDE VAN GIJSSEL

Professor of Science
Valley City State University | Valley City



OF LEADERSHIP

We came to Bismarck for our first seminar from every corner of North Dakota, producers and planners, educators and entrepreneurs, curious about what we could build together. Very quickly our RLND class found a rhythm and a compass that was leadership in the unknown:

the X Factor

It turned into a motto for Class X:

the X Factor:

XPERENCE | XPLORE | XPAND

It became the way we showed up for one another and for the places we serve.

XPERENCE. We led with presence: listening on shop floors and in council rooms, walking ranch roads and main streets. In Jamestown, Killdeer, Devils Lake, Grand Forks, and Belcourt, we delved into real issues like workforce and housing, water and energy, healthcare and succession. And we practiced the habits of everyday leadership: ask good questions, convene the right voices, act on what we learn.

XPLORE. We widened the lens beyond county lines. Minneapolis showed us how cooperatives, logistics, and cultural districts knit urban and rural economies together. In Washington, D.C., we sat where policy meets people, learning how data, story, and coalition turn priorities into progress. And in Ghana, a global classroom reframed resilience through cocoa research, feed and markets, heritage and entrepreneurship, reminding us that problems and possibilities face every community.

XPAND. With every seminar our skills, networks, and confidence grew. We sharpened communication with emotional intelligence and crucial conversations. We learned to map systems instead of silos. We measured success in relationships as much as results and made a shared commitment to multiply leadership: creating conditions where more people are invited, prepared, and empowered to lead.

This recap is not an ending, it is a look back so we can look forward. Each of us now carries an individual community project shaped by what we have experienced, where we have explored, and how we have expanded. Together we are ready for the next chapter: turning learning into local impact, turning cohorts into coalitions, and turning today's growth into tomorrow's opportunity; one community, one project, one new leader at a time.



AJ Andresen

GRAIN OPERATIONS MANAGER | VALLEY UNITED CO-OP
HILLSBORO, ND

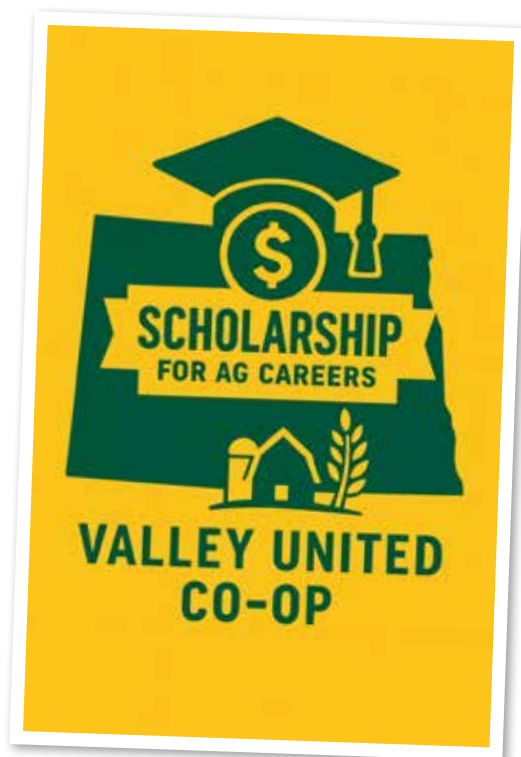
PROJECT SUMMARY

Valley United Scholarship tackles a growing workforce gap by encouraging local students to pursue agriculture degrees and return to careers with their hometown cooperative. The plan creates multiple scholarships for high school seniors, with selection criteria aligned to Valley United Co-op's

mission and values. A committee, supported by CEO Paul Coppin, marketing director Abby Adams, and Central Valley School, will set the budget, finalize application materials, promote the opportunity, review applications, and award funds, with an annual program review to refine impact. Key milestones include committee formation, criteria and budget approval, rollout through area schools, and the first awards cycle. Primary challenges are funding enough awards to reach all communities and ensuring applicants demonstrate genuine interest in agriculture careers. The long-term vision: build a reliable, homegrown talent pipeline for North Dakota's cooperative system.

Class Experience RLND has given me ample opportunities to develop professional skills that will carry me forward in my career.

Notable Leadership Role Vice Chairman of Traill County Economic Development Board



Denise Andress

TAAP DIRECTOR | HEARTVIEW FOUNDATION
MANDAN, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY

Let Me Tell Your Story is a podcast that explores the depth of the human experience through the voices of diverse individuals. Each episode highlights personal narratives that uncover what drives people, the challenges they've faced, and the mentors and passions that shaped their journey. Through thoughtful conversations and genuine reflections, the podcast captures the resilience, determination, and humanity of each storyteller, offering listeners both inspiration and connection. By shining a light on these transformative life moments, the series not only celebrates individual strength but also reveals the universal threads that unite us all. At its heart, Let Me Tell Your Story is an invitation to reflect, learn, and appreciate the complexity of the human spirit—one story at a time.

Class Experience Over the past 18 months in the Rural Leadership program, I have had the honor of learning alongside a diverse network of professionals from across North Dakota, gaining deep insight into the policies, challenges, and cultural strengths of rural and tribal communities, and expanding my global perspective through an unforgettable international experience in Ghana.

Notable Leadership Role Expansion of greater responsibility through my current position.



Through my rural leadership journey, I gained a deeper understanding of community, unity, and cultural perspectives in North Dakota. This experience strengthened my ability to appreciate diverse viewpoints and foster meaningful connections across the state.

Brandon Baity

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR | FARGO-MOORHEAD INDIGENOUS ASSOCIATION
MOORHEAD, MN

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Reciprocal Mutual Aid Network (RMAN) designs a community marketplace where people trade time, skills, and goods through a token-based system. Participants earn tokens by offering services like music lessons or childcare, and spend them on what they need, like home repairs or rides, removing cash barriers and honoring diverse abilities. The platform will launch as a web and mobile app built by a lean founding team and guided by church and nonprofit partners to ensure trust, safety, and early adoption. The year one milestones include incorporation, platform build, and pilot launch, followed by outreach to community groups to grow users and ambassadors. Beyond technology, the project emphasizes equitable access, transparent governance, and neighbor-to-neighbor resilience. By aligning volunteers, local organizations, and practical problem-solving, RMAN aims to expand economic participation, reduce isolation, and create a repeatable model of mutual aid that any North Dakota community can adopt.

Class Experience My class experience helped me make a lot of new connections and was very enlightening. I was able to learn about many topics, places, and ideas that I have never been exposed to before.

Notable leadership Role Board President of Prairie Rose Agricultural Institute for Research, Innovation, and Education



Melinda Goodman

PRESIDENT | FULLTILT MARKETING | MINOT, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY: CELEBRATING ND FOOD SYSTEM STORIES

Edible North Dakota is my way to merge two lifelong passions; North Dakota's food systems and storytelling, connecting people to their food. We spotlight the farmers, ranchers, bakers, brewers, and makers who nourish our communities, and explain the systems that move food from prairie to plate. Each issue blends beautiful photography, service journalism, and practical resources including seasonal recipes, where-to-buy guides, and producer spotlights—so readers can discover local businesses and the people behind them. By translating complex topics into accessible stories, Edible ND builds pride in place, strengthens local economies, and helps consumers make informed, delicious choices. In a world of polarized ideas, I love that food is a point of connection to share ideas.

Class Experience RLND helped me stretch as a leader. It let me rediscover North Dakota through others' eyes, and expanded my network into genuine, statewide friendships. It opened doors, perspectives, and possibilities I didn't know I needed.

Notable Leadership Role Humanities North Dakota; Board Member

Christie Jaeger

CROP INSURANCE ADJUSTER/FARMER | PRO AG/JAEGER FARMS
ESMOND, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY

I am often called on as a spokesperson for ag. In doing so, I recognize even greater opportunities to share the message of agriculture and family farm. I want to create a concise, photo-rich keynote that tells the story of a North Dakota family farm across the seasons, how food is grown today and who's behind it. As a farmer from north-central ND now working alongside her son and daughter-in-law, I partner with groups like NDFU and CommonGround to bridge the gap between producers and consumers and explain how modern practices keep food safe. I'm refining an engaging talk that blends humor, plain language, and visuals to make agriculture relatable. I'll consult experienced speakers, collaborate with family business partners on topics, and connect with community groups to book events. I hope to share this message on regional and national stages, helping policymakers and the public better understand rural communities and the vital role family farms and ranches play in North Dakota's economy and way of life.

Class Experience The agriculture issues and experiences proved so valuable to me on my RLND journey, however the connections I made within our class and with others we met along the way were unexpected and life changing.

Notable Leadership Role District 14 Democratic-NPL Committee Chair



Kyle Klapper

DIRECTOR OF U.S. SALES | DEGELMAN | HILLSBORO, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY

Hillsboro VFW revitalizes a small-town cornerstone by widening its appeal and engaging the next generation. Hillsboro's VFW membership skews older, and I plan to partner younger residents with longtime patrons to make the post a welcoming hub for all ages. The effort adds high-energy, low-barrier activities like chili cook-offs, games, and themed meal nights, while organizing volunteer service projects (cleanups, drives) that connect families, students, and veterans. Collaboration includes VFW leadership and local business owners to coordinate events, sponsorships, and in-kind support. Early milestones focused on community buy-in, event planning, and building rehab to improve usability, followed by a rotating menu of special meals and a signature Chili & Chocolate Contest. A key lesson has been navigating restrictions on gaming and state funds. Success is measured by new faces, fuller calendars, and stronger civic ties.

Class Experience RLND can offer a lot of things, Networking, insight, friendship, and experiences. These were the things that I took from this class.

Notable Leadership Role Before RLND, I served as the USA Sales Manager for Degelman and participated on one local board. Today, I'm the Executive USA for Degelman, actively involved in seven organizations, including serving as an unpaid consultant for the North American Custom Harvesters Association—and a proud new dad.



Barb Mothershead

BUSINESS BANKING OFFICER VP/ MARKET LEADER | STARION BANK
ROLETTE, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY: SUCCESSION SUCCESS

With ND's aging ag population there needs to be a practical bridge between today's producers and tomorrow's operators that includes, matchmaking, education, and certified guidance to keep working lands working.

Connecting for Success includes work towards a successor-matching and succession-planning platform inspired by Nebraska's "Land Link." The platform connects ranchers and farmers without heirs to motivated next-generation operators, creating practical pathways for continuity of operations and stewardship of working lands. Building on the original matchmaking concept efforts include a comprehensive "Succession Playbook" that outlines transition scenarios, legal and financial considerations, and step-by-step transition strategies. The playbook will anchor a series of educational seminars for producers, families, and lenders. To strengthen delivery and credibility, I'm also pursuing certification as a succession planner, positioning the project within existing rural finance networks. Together, these components aim to reduce barriers to entry, preserve family operations, and support resilient, sustainable rural communities.

Class Experience RLND has been transformative. Traveling across North Dakota broadened my understanding of our state and its communities, even if we couldn't visit them all. I've shared what I learned with the boards I serve and local groups, including presenting our Ghana trip to the Rolla Kiwanis and my son's sixth-grade class. Most valuable are the relationships.

Notable Leadership Role Chairman of the Rolla Community Endowment Fund Board



I regularly connect people I met on the road and with partners back home, strengthening a collaborative network that benefits our communities.

Lule Naas

OWNER/CONSULTANT | LULE NAAS CONSULTING, LLC | MCVILLE, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY: RURAL VISIBILITY RESOURCE GUIDE | SUPPORTING COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

The **Rural Visibility Resource Guide** empowers rural community champions with practical tools to strengthen their impact. Focused on increasing online visibility, the guide helps rural leaders understand how digital presence can attract visitors, support local businesses, and generate added dollars for communities. It provides simple, easy-to-use resources that maximize visibility through search engines, websites, social media, and other free or low-cost tools. The project will be piloted in Nelson County to test content, identify challenges, and refine resources. Key steps include creating the Playbook outline, populating topic-specific content, reviewing a draft with partners, launching the Playbook with community groups, and conducting follow-up evaluations to ensure effectiveness and sustainability.

Class Experience My RLND journey challenged me to grow, broadened my perspective, and inspired me to lead with purpose for future generations.

Notable Leadership Role McVillage Community Club Founder & Chair



Trinity Nelson

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT SPECIALIST | VALLEY CITY – BARNES COUNTY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
VALLEY CITY, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY: STUTSMAN-BARNES WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP COHORT

North Dakota has one of the greatest needs for leadership in the nation with research indicating one in every thirteen adults in the state must serve in a leadership role—whether on school boards, nonprofit boards, or local government—to sustain and strengthen our communities. With so many opportunities resting on a small population, the need to develop confident, skilled, and connected leaders is greater than ever.

The Stutsman-Barnes Women's Leadership Cohort, launching in 2026, is designed to help meet that need by cultivating and connecting women leaders across both counties. This five-session program, held from January through May, will bring together women from diverse industries to learn, grow, and collaborate through hands-on learning, mentorship, and community engagement. Participants will build meaningful networks, strengthen personal and professional skills, and explore practical ways to lead within their organizations and communities. Through a focus on networking, development, service, and regional impact, the program aims to empower participants to take on leadership roles with confidence and purpose. The goal of this program is to build future leadership capacity of our region—creating a ripple effect that will benefit local organizations, businesses, and communities for years to come.

Class Experience Rural Leadership North Dakota broadened my experience, expanded my network, and provided me with valuable tools to better serve in leadership roles.

Notable Leadership Role Chair of the Summer Nights on Central Event Committee



Emily Ptacek

DIRECT MARKETING/QUALITY CONTROL | KUSTOM MACHINE INC. | VERONA, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY

The goal of **The Rural Route to Modern Manufacturing** is to increase the interest in and pursuit of manufacturing-based careers in rural communities. By illustrating the unique pathways and lifestyles of community members who hold positions in manufacturing, we enable students to visualize what could be and get a better sense of not only what they want out of a career but how they want to live their everyday life. The community leaders' stories will demonstrate different paths can achieve the same goals, offering inspiration, guidance, and tangible examples of success in a student's hometown and rural community, exposing them to a career and lifestyle they might not have realized was possible.

Class Experience Rural leadership has provided opportunities to develop new skills and broader perspectives. By stretching the boundaries of my comfort zone, I have a greater self-awareness and increased resilience.

Notable Leadership Role Board Member, Oakes Enhancement Inc.



Anna Ross

ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR | TURTLE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
BELCOURT, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY

Roots of the Land strengthens North Dakota leadership by centering Indigenous history, perspectives, and contemporary contributions within Rural Leadership ND programming. Too often, Indigenous communities are overlooked or treated as separate from local development.

This project builds shared understanding as a prerequisite for equitable growth. I will create a culturally grounded curriculum aligned to RLND, then develop a training plan for current participants, future classes, alumni, and extension partners. A “train-the-trainer” model and facilitator roster, paired with community resource guides will enable delivery statewide and year-over-year. Collaboration is core, with partners such as Turtle Mountain College, RLND Indigenous alumni, tribal leadership, and the ND Indian Affairs Commission. Milestones include completing the curriculum by the end of Class X and deploying the training plan for Class XI and beyond, embedding inclusion as standard practice in ND leadership.

Class Experience My time in RLND has been amazing growing as a leader, traveling, learning, and meeting the best people. The friendships and networking are truly the highlight of this experience.

Notable Leadership Role ND Thrives Board

Heather Schneider

CHEF/OWNER | JOY FULL FOODS | GRAND FORKS, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY

My project combines my love for cooking and local foods by combining those passions to create recipes featuring North Dakota grown ingredients. The intent is to inspire people to try new foods grown right here in North Dakota. For example, we are one of the largest producers of lentils, a pulse crop that doesn't get much table time in our homes. As chef/owner of Joy Full Foods, I'm creating approachable, tasty recipes (e.g., Teriyaki Lentils with a how-to video) with clear nutrition messaging to show why pulses are affordable, healthy additions to everyday meals. I worked with the North Dakota Department of Agriculture to create a web series where we showcased practical “cook it tonight” recipes with cooking demos and step-by-step recipe cards so anyone can recreate the dish at home.

Class Experience As a member of RLND Class X I learned so much more than I could have ever imagined. Beyond the experts and leaders we met, it was my classmates that pushed me to think deeper and more openly.

Notable Leadership Role Member of the Blue Zones Project Grand Forks Steering & Leadership Committee



Hilde van Gijssel

PROFESSOR OF SCIENCE | VALLEY CITY STATE UNIVERSITY | VALLEY CITY, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY

The **Rainbow Safe House & Resource Center** is a suicide-prevention initiative for LGBTQIA+ youth and young adults in North Dakota. 2023 YRBS data show 15–25% of students question or identify as LGBTQIA+, with 600–3,200 at elevated suicide risk amid higher bullying and harmful rhetoric. The Center will offer a welcoming, judgment-free space to ask questions about gender and sexuality;

provide evidence-based information and referrals; connect youth with trusted, supportive adults; and, when needed, offer short-term safe refuge. Early priorities include compiling statewide resources, creating a support network within the North Dakota University System, and building partnerships with advocates, educators, health professionals, faith leaders, and parents. The project will formalize as a nonprofit with a board and a physical location in Valley City. Ultimate goal: reduce risk and save lives through access to trustworthy information and community support.

Class Experience Leadership starts with a good story! I am now better able to articulate leadership and my role in the process and, therefore, get more support to enable change.

Notable Leadership Role Bridges Arts Council/Community School of the Arts – Director, Treasurer and Grants management



Katie Wentz

AGING IN COMMUNITY PROJECT COORDINATOR | NDSU EXTENSION
LISBON, ND

PROJECT SUMMARY

Golden Threads connects Lisbon High School students with older adults to reduce loneliness, foster empathy and respect, and create community and connection across generations. The program pairs teens and older adults for monthly group activities; such as service projects, conversations, games, and other activities. Partners include Lisbon High School's FCCLA chapter and the Aging in Community Local Steering Committee. Key milestones have been both publicizing the project and recruiting participants. With outreach ongoing, we have also started to document group activities and lessons learned into a replicable toolkit for other Extension agents in the future. Golden Threads aims to build durable intergenerational friendships and offer a model rural communities can adopt.

Class Experience Rural Leadership North Dakota has been an invaluable experience. I have not only learned a lot about myself as a leader, colleague, and community member but also gained knowledge about our state, world, and rural communities.

Notable Leadership Role Master Trainer for Stepping On





THE X FACTOR IN ACTION



14

leaders

138

speakers

10

seminars

2

TedTalk speakers

44

domestic tours

120+

guests hosted



18

months

44

days

585

hotel nights

3

birthday parties

1

bachelor party



4

countries
(straddling a border and counting an airport)

231,384

international miles traveled

8

airports



158

meals



22

communities

69,565

domestic miles traveled

29,638

ND and MN miles driven



COUNTLESS AHA MOMENTS

NUMEROUS
gallons of
coffee and cold
beverages,
uncounted
pounds of
snacks

RLND COUNCIL MEMBERS | 2024 — 2025

RLND Council members are individuals who volunteer to serve a three-year term. Council members' responsibilities include providing direction, creating policies and procedures, advocating for the program, maintaining appropriate fiscal policies and assisting with class selection.



CORY MCCASKEY
Chair

Owner, Business Buddy
Killdeer, ND
RLND Class V



JON ERICKSON

Producer/Rancher
Minot, ND



SCOTT RESSLER

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



ERICA JOHNSRUD
Vice Chair

McKenzie County Auditor/
Treasurer
Watford City, ND
RLND Class VII



DANIEL GANNARELLI

Chief Revenue Officer
Theodore Roosevelt Medora
Foundation
Dickinson, ND



JOANN RODENBIKER

Co-Owner
Lil' Prairie Greenhouse
Rock Lake, ND



JAYME DAVIS
Secretary/Treasurer

ND State Representative &
Policy Specialist
Turtle Mountain Band of
Chippewa
RLND Class VII



HEIDIE HAUGO

Communications Director
ND Corn Council
West Fargo, ND



CHRIS SCHILKEN

Commissioner
ND Department of
Commerce
Glenburn, ND
RLND Class IV



NATHAN BERSEITH

Market Development
Bell Bank
Colfax, ND



LEVI JACOBSON

Wildlife Resource
Management Supervisor
ND Game and Fish
Bismarck, ND
RLND Class VII



KRISTI SCHULTZ

Learning and Development
Facilitator and Coach
Border States
Embsen, ND
RLND Class VII



KASEY BITZ

Owner
Bitz Farms
LaMoure, ND
RLND Class VIII



MARY MERTENS

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



EX OFFICIO

LYNETTE FLAGE

Associate Director
NDSU Extension
Fargo, ND



BRADY PELTON

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



CARRIE JOHNSON

Assistant Director
NDSU Extension
Fargo, ND

FORMER RLND COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Keith Bjerke, Tom Bodine, Chris Boerboom, Tim Bryan, Julie Burgum, DC Coston, Josh DeMorrett, Jerry Doan, Myron Eighmy, Steve Edwardson, Carol Goodman, Paul Govig, Terry Goerger, Al Gustin, Jody Hauge, Maynard Helgaas, Jean Henning, Dennis Hill, Dale Ihry, John Jacobson, April Jepson, Mark Johnson, Deborah Kantrud, Greg Lardy, Craig Larson, Janel Lee, Dan Lund, Michelle McMormack, Barry Medd, Ken Miller, Vicki Monsen, Pamela Musland, Connie Nicholas, Lynette Nieuwsma, Micahel O'Keeffe, Allan Orwick, Scott Peterson, Kayla Pulvermacher, Scott Rising, Connie Sprynczynatyk, Scott Stofferahn, Jeni Strand, Ryan Taylor, Keith Trego, Kathy Tweeten, Gene Veeder, John Warner, Dan Wogsland



LEADER CORPS MEMBERS

Benefactor ~ \$10,000+

- AgCountry Farm Credit Services
- CHS Foundation

Sponsor ~ \$2,500+

- RLND Alumni Association

Member ~ \$1,000+

- Bank of North Dakota
- Belcourt School District #7
- Robert Christman*
- Degelman Industries
- Dunn County Fair Association - High Plains Community Center
- Lynette and Lon Flage*
- Gowan Company
- Marie Hvidsten*
- KX News
- Allan and Sarah Johnson*
- ND Corn
- ND Ducks Unlimited

Program Contributions

\$500+

- AGT Foods
- American Crystal Sugar Company
- Dickey Rural Network
- Jacam
- Carrie Johnson*
- Erica Johnsrud*
- Anthony and Jodi Larson
- Lilac Lane Media
- Cory McCaskey*
- Northern Canola Growers Association

\$200+

- Black Leg Ranch
- Matt Danuser*
- Farmers & Merchants Bank
- Farmer's Union Lance Gulleson
- Melinda Goodman*
- Jaeger Farms Inc
- Maddock Opera House
- Barry Medd*
- Mothershead Ranch
- Lule Naas Consulting

\$100+

- Babb's Coffee House
- Brandon Baity*
- Bernie's
- Dairy Queen of Devils Lake
- Christie Jaeger*
- Kustom Machine Inc.
- JoAnn Rodenbiker*
- Turtle Mountain College
- Becky Peterson*

\$99 and under

- Denise and Ethan Andress*
- Lake Region State College
- Megan Myrdal*
- Annika Plummer*
- Anna Ross*
- Lynnell Simonson-Popowski*
- Christy Stenseth
- Marsha Van Laere*
- Katie Wentz*

We gratefully acknowledge several generous donors who contributed during RLND's Giving Day campaign but chose not to be listed by name.

**Denotes a contribution to the RLND NDSU Foundation endowed gifts or cash accounts, whether through a personal donation or participation in NDSU Giving Day.*

Investor ~ \$5,000+

- Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians
- XTO Energy, an Exxon Mobil Subsidiary

- ND Farmers Union
- OneOk
- Starion Bank - Rolla
- Touchstone Energy
- Katie Tyler*
- Valley United Co-op

- ND Water
- Otter Tail Power
- Starion Bank - Oakes
- Verendrye Electric

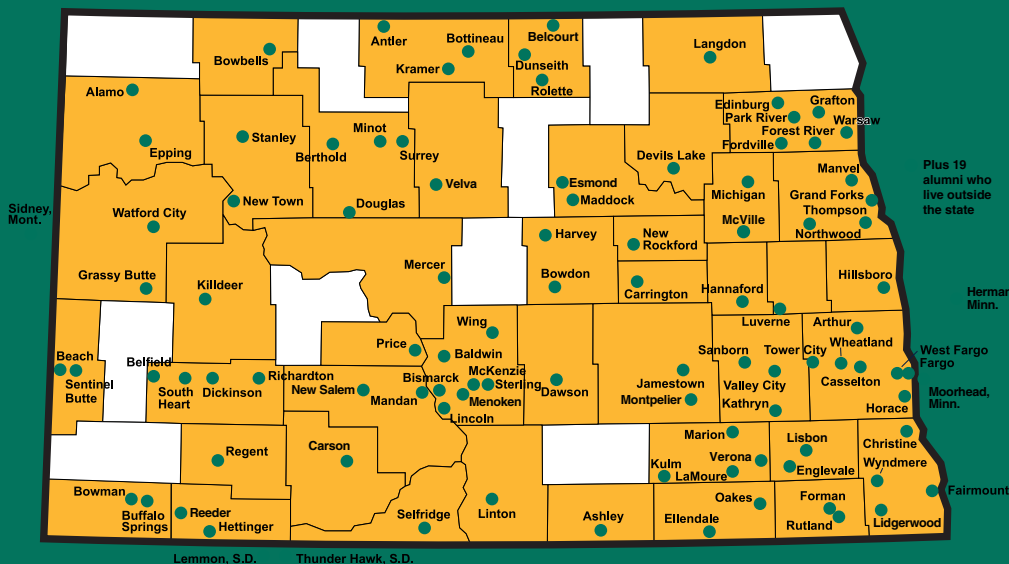
- ND Pork
- SRT Communications
- TMC AISES Organization
- TMCHS Gifted and Talented Program

CLASS X TUITION SPONSORS

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

- AgCountry Farm Credit Services
- Degelman Industries
- FullTilt Marketing
- Heartview Foundation
- Joy Full Foods
- Kustom Machine Inc.
- M25 Ministries
- Michael and Kathleen O'Keefe RLND Endowment Fund
- North Dakota Department of Commerce
- North Dakota Extension Aging in Community Program
- Pro Ag
- Starion Bank - Rolla
- Turtle Mountain Community College
- Valley City and Barnes County Development Corporation
- Valley City State University
- Valley United Co-op
- Western ND Area Health Education Center

RLND ALUMNI CLASS I - XI



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 XI. 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 organizer behind the scenes for Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) seminars and events. She is committed to fostering a learning community and crafting unforgettable moments. With her attention to detail and organizational skills, she helps to create 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. 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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