

Leadership Summit Focuses on Iowa's Future

Strengthening community leadership was the focus of the Leaders of a Visionary Future for Iowa summit held on March 7 and 8. More than 100 participants attended the summit, which was cosponsored by Iowa State University Extension to Communities and the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED). Presenters shared ideas with Iowans on how to share resources and ideas to help community leaders.

The idea for the summit evolved as organizations throughout the state recognized the need to join forces. Cory Peterson, ISU Extension community development specialist in northwest Iowa, said the summit was held to strengthen local leadership programs by providing statewide information sources.

"We wanted to give community leaders an opportunity to form a network with other leaders across the state," Peterson said. "We also wanted them to be able to expand their skills and knowledge." Susan Judkins, Vision Iowa program coordinator for IDED, said several organizations were working on similar leadership missions and the summit helped collaborate those goals.

"We began to see the need to work together because we knew that local capacity was being built and we thought we could strengthen it if we could bring people together," Judkins said.

Judkins and Peterson coordinated the summit that showcased the combined efforts of several Iowa organizations. Speakers at the summit included Christie Vilsack, Iowa's first lady; James Autry, leadership speaker; Michael Gartner,



The Leadership Summit concluded with a panel discussion moderated by Jim Autry, author and leadership speaker, at the podium. The panel included (from left) Chuck Offenburger, writer-in-residence at Buena Vista University; Steve Padgitt, director of ISU Extension to Communities; Mary Lawyer, Iowa Department of Economic Development; David Oman, co-chair of Iowa 2010; Joe Tye, motivational speaker and author.

chair of Vision Iowa; Joe Tye, motivational speaker, and other experts.

The summit partners included the Iowa 2010 Strategic Planning Council, Iowa Agricultural Development Authority, Iowa Association of Business and Industry/

Leadership Iowa, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, Iowa Health System/The Center for Healthy Communities, Iowa Rural Development Council, Office of the Governor and Lt. Governor, Schneider Consulting Group and Wells Fargo.

Note from the Editor

Welcome...by Beverlyn Lundy Allen

Welcome to the first edition of the Leadership Partners newsletter. This newsletter is a way to promote dialogue among our readers as we focus on leadership in Iowa. The format will include sections on leadership programs, practices, profiles and partners. We want to share your stories, highlight your communities, profile your leaders and motivate others to take the leadership challenge.

Iowa needs to increase its leadership pool and Extension to Communities is up to that challenge. Our Leadership Partners for a Stronger Iowa program can help communities develop new leaders and improve existing leaders' skills using innovative approaches and tools. We have a variety of initiatives and partners that address the diverse needs of our many audiences in Iowa.

Leadership development is a means to strengthen and sustain communities. We work in partnership with local and state organizations in both the public and private sectors. Together we can increase leadership programming in our communities and promote a stronger Iowa.

Summit Session Topics Include Diversity and Creativity

Eddie Moore, Jr. said his family was surprised when he told them how much he enjoyed living in Iowa. Moore, director of the Office of Intercultural Life at Cornell College in Mount Vernon, grew up in Florida and spoke at the diversity and immigration session during the Leadership Summit held March 7. He told attendees that minorities are changing the texture of American culture and Iowans will soon see those changes.

“Diversity makes everyone’s life better,” Moore said and added, “America’s changing and we need to prepare Iowans for those changes.”

Moore was one of several speakers discussing Iowa’s changing future at the summit.

Bill Boon, retired Iowa State University professor of landscape architecture, gave pointers on how to creatively explore the day-to-day world. He said many of us are conditioned to think there is only one right answer, which limits our choices.

“Discovery consists of looking at the same thing and seeing something different,” Boon said.

Boon also emphasized that laughter increases production and creativity. He said laughter cuts to the issue and he recommended that people laugh at least five minutes a day.

The summit closed with a panel discussion about diversity in Iowa. Jim Autry,

author and leadership speaker, kicked off the discussion with a presentation about the community of work. He said it’s important for participants in organizations to believe in what they do.

“You can’t lead people where they don’t want to go,” Autry said. “You need to get people involved.”

The panel discussion that followed Autry’s presentation focused on the need to increase awareness of diversity issues in Iowa. The panel included Mary Lawyer, Iowa Department of Economic Development; Chuck Offenburger, writer-in-residence at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake; David Oman, co-chair of Iowa 2010 and director of government affairs for AT&T Broadband; Steve Padgitt, director of ISU Extension to Communities; and Joe Tye, motivational speaker and author.



Eddie Moore, Jr. and Rhonda Christensen, Buena Vista County Extension director, discuss diversity in Iowa. Moore spoke about diversity and immigration at the March summit.



Bill Boon, ISU professor of landscape architecture and creativity, spoke about creative vision or the act of viewing the world with a different perspective to find alternative solutions to problems.

Extension to Communities

Partners

- Chambers of Commerce
- AmeriCorps
- Iowa League of Municipalities
- United Way
- Iowa Department of Economic Development
- Governor’s Office
- Iowa Farm Bureau
- Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Citizens of Iowa

Programs

- Community Voices: Spanish Version
- Developing Dynamic Leaders
- Designing Community Leadership
- Governing Cities: A Leadership Toolbox
- Institute for Public Leadership: Three Branches of Iowa State Government
- Municipal Clerks Institute
- Nonprofit Management Institute
- Tomorrows Leaders Today: COPC Program

Community Voices Leadership Program.....by Betty Wells, ISU Extension Sociologist

The Community Voices leadership training program encourages community members to work together to identify and implement a vision for their community. The program incorporates classic community development principles in which participants define their needs, set priorities and develop action plans.

Community Voices was originally developed with Kellogg Foundation funding for African American and Native American communities in the southern United States. It complements the experience, interest, needs, and perspectives of minority communities. The program has been translated into Spanish and used with great success with Latino groups in Texas and Latin America.

The program is being piloted in Iowa's Latino communities. A train-the-trainer session was held in Ames on Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, 2000. Facilitators attending the training sessions included Lázaro Castillo and Gail Castillo from Hampton; Irene Muñoz, Cristina Palacios Hohn and Tom Quinn from Ottumwa; and Nadia Rodriguez, Jennifer Horner and Heidi



Lumbard from Red Oak. Amparo Isaza-Navarrete, the lead trainer, is Program Coordinator Special Populations at Prairie View A&M University in Prairie View, Texas. Jo Ann Kovar, Betty Wells and Steven Padgitt represented ISU Extension to Communities and Tonya Mjelde and David Hansen from MidAmerica International Agriculture Consortium (MIAC) also attended the sessions.

The training focused on building teamwork and hands-on leadership skills to allow facilitators to comfortably implement the Community Voices program in their communities.

The training in Ames was conducted in both Spanish and English. Community Voices will be presented in Spanish in pilot communities in Iowa. Seed money to support the pilot phase of Community Voices was provided by a grant for Increasing the Diversity of Community Development Society Chapters and an Excellence in Extension Innovative Program grant.

Nadia Rodriguez (blindfolded) and Irene Munoz participate in a visioning exercise at a Community Voices program held for leaders.

Leadership Graduate Encourages Others to Attend

Leader Profile

Dynamic Leadership classes have made a difference in Sue Smith's life. When asked about the classes she starts listing a number of items that have helped her in both her professional and community roles.



Sue Smith uses what she learned at the leadership classes in her position as a human resource manager at the United Bank of Iowa in Ida Grove and in her community work.

"It helped me understand what was expected of me when I took leadership roles," Smith said. "It also helped me put things into perspective when I deal with people. It helped me understand what motivates them."

Working with people is important in Smith's position as a human resource manager at the United Bank of Iowa in Ida Grove. The leadership classes gave her a better understanding of herself, which she says helped her better understand others. The course gave her the tools to be a better leader.

"When you are leading a group it's easy to get off course," Smith said. "If you are a leader you need to gently move toward the goal and stay on course."

Smith enjoyed the interactive learning format used by instructors. She said the eight-session class she attended in 1999 has been useful and she encourages others to take the course.

"Expect to have fun while you are learning," Smith said. "You get to know the participants and it's a great networking opportunity."

Developing Dynamic Leaders Contributes to Iowa's Future

Iowa needs leaders and Iowa State University Extension to Communities is working to fill that gap. The Developing Dynamic Leaders program was created to help current leaders sharpen their skills and new leaders acquire skills.

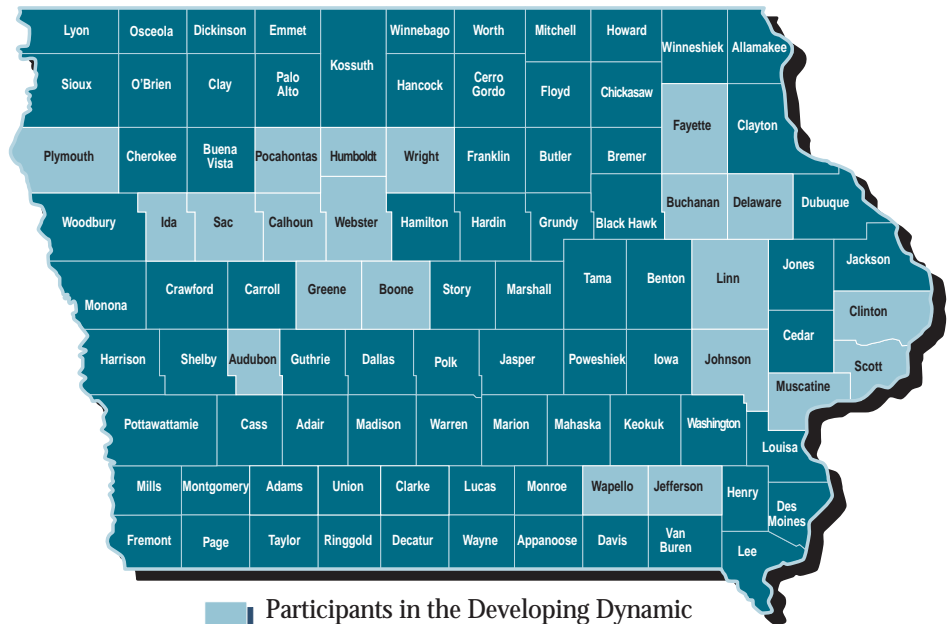
"There is a real leadership challenge brewing in Iowa," said Alan Vandehaar, community development field specialist for northwest Iowa. "This program helps both current and emerging leaders develop the skills and self-confidence to assume leadership roles in communities."

The program was developed to answer the call for more leaders in Iowa. Vandehaar worked with others to develop the six-session program and has found it effective in teaching skills to emerging leaders.

Research has shown that communities benefit when good leadership is in place. Although there are communities that have good leaders, there are also communities struggling to find volunteers. Steve Padgitt, ISU Extension to Communities director, said the key is giving people the tools to lead.

"Leadership is an important factor in community development," Padgitt said. "You need people working together toward a goal and you need leaders of all ages with a variety of skills."

The program sessions were developed from research-based instruction, proven



Participants in the Developing Dynamic Leaders program came from several counties.

leadership techniques and group interaction. Padgitt said leaders need to coordinate projects effectively and efficiently because today volunteers have less time and more commitments.

"Leadership is not just about giving orders, it's more about shared responsibility," Padgitt said.

More than 300 Iowans have participated in the Developing Dynamic Leaders program since its start in 1999. Vandehaar said feedback from those participants has been positive.

"People are telling us it's an excellent

program and 99 percent would recommend it to others," Vandehaar said. "Participants find it very useful in both their professional and community roles."

Organizers are evaluating the program's impact by keeping in touch with those who have taken the leadership classes. The goal is to assess how the program impacts communities.

Organizations interested in delivering the program to area residents should contact Beverlynn Lundy Allen at (515) 294-6481 or fax her at (515) 294-0592 or visit our Web site at www.extension.iastate.edu/leadership/.

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For detailed information visit <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/>