

Note from the Editor

by Beverlyn Lundy Allen

Welcome! As you read the articles in this issue, we hope you appreciate the direction that Extension to Communities is taking in developing programs that call for dynamic, flexible, and visionary leaders.

We recently completed a review of the Extension to Communities program. Among the stakeholders with whom the external committee spoke, leadership was one of the top three programs mentioned. We thank you for the vote of confidence.

Extension to Communities will continue to serve its constituents with quality leadership programs and try even harder to provide educational opportunities for leaders to effectively guide the destiny of their communities in times of major change. To that end we want to highlight a few programs and groups working together, creating new ways to respond to exciting, yet challenging situations.

We encourage you to send in comments and share your leadership stories with us. The next issue of Leadership Partners will be Spring 2002. The deadline for submission is March 15, 2002.

Minority Leadership Program Rewarding for Participants

A sense of belonging is what participants took away with them after attending a multi-cultural leadership program in Sioux City.

Norma DeLaO, director of the New Iowans Center in Sioux City, said the program helped people understand the need to be involved in community activities. "The goal is to get more participation in the community through volunteer organizations or city government," DeLaO said. "Knowledge about the government and social service systems helped participants understand why things were done in a certain way in these organizations."

The eight-week leadership program was developed and coordinated by Alan Vandehaar, Iowa State University Extension community development specialist in Sioux City. He said the 16 participants were eager to learn.

"I've never had a more rewarding group to work with—they were so interested," Vandehaar said.

The participants also met several leaders from the community including the mayor, police chief, and congressional leaders.

"Meeting the actual decision makers gave them a sense of belonging they didn't have before," DeLaO said.

The group included Latino and Native American community members. All of the participants rated the program as 'excellent' or 'very good,' and would recommend the program to others. Ninety percent said they would like to participate in an advanced leadership class.

Jose Alverado, an attorney from Mexico, said the program should be expanded. Luis Marcos, who came from Guatemala in the late 1980s, said he found the information useful in his daily activities. "I've already used some of the materials to organize and run more effective meetings," Marcos said.

Vandehaar said support for the program is overwhelming and plans are in motion to offer another leadership series in November. Collaborators for the program include: ISU Extension to Communities, the New Iowans Center, Siouxland United Methodist Hispanic Ministry, and the Woodbury County Community Action Agency.



Participants in a minority leadership program met with community leaders during an eight-week program in Sioux City.

Governing Cities: A Leadership Toolbox

Local governmental leaders are working in a changing environment. Democratic theory states that the people will tell you what they want. Today, elected officials and city leaders are often trying to make decisions with little or no citizen input. That's why ISU Extension to Communities and the League of Iowa Cities have developed a pilot program called, "Governing Cities: A Leadership Toolbox."

In the new advanced leadership training program, Iowa citizens and elected officials discussed what would help them trust government more.

The purpose of the program is to help leaders reach out to community members. Classes for the program began in June 2000 and ended September 12, 2001. During the year, council members, city clerks, mayors, staff, and elected officials attended nine sessions held throughout Iowa. The 25 participants have learned how to work with other governmental

bodies, the media, and council members. In one session, Lois Wright Morton, ISU Department of Sociology, mapped viewpoints of citizens and elected officials to compare different and similar priorities. Both groups cited honesty and accountability as important factors in building trust. Citizens were most concerned about communication of facts, information and issues, and their responsibility to participate in government. Elected officials focused on staying connected to the people by being accountable, accessible, and available.

Paul Coates, ISU political science professor, said the program was set up to help leaders reach out to citizens and get feedback before problems occur.

"The leaders needed to understand where the citizens are at and that is why we teach them to use the media," Coates said. "The worst thing officials can do is lock the

media out because it exacerbates the problem. In fact, what they need to do is understand how the media works and how to get information out."

The sessions also covered topics that included handling conflict and controversy, developing effective decision making procedures, building confidence in government, influencing state policies, building ties with other units of local government, and building an effective governing team.

"This is very much a pilot project. We're trying to figure how well it worked in different cities because it probably won't be a one-size-fits-all. Each city has a performance team to evaluate their city," Coates said.

The League of Iowa Cities has committed to continue the program in 2002. The program details will be published at a later date.

Leadership Opportunities for Iowans

Environmental Leadership Institute

<http://www.ecoinfo.net/>

Institute for Servant Leadership

<http://www.servleader.org/>

Iowa Cattlemen's Association Beef Team Program

<http://iacattlemen.org/>

Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership Program

<http://www.iowacityarea.com/>

Iowa FFA Foundation

<http://www.ffaiafoundation.org/>

Iowa Future Business Leaders of America

<http://www.eagle-grove.k12.ia.us/Organizations/IAFBLA/IowaFBLApage1.html>

Iowa League of Cities

<http://www.iowaleague.org/home/>

Iowa Pork Producers Association

<http://www.iowapork.org/>

Iowa School Leadership Initiative

<http://www.sai-iowa.org/1199Report.html>

Iowa Starbase Leadership Conference

<http://www.iowastarbase.com/>

Iowa Soybean Association/ Iowa Corn Growers Association County Leadership Event

<http://www.iasoybeans.com/isamembr.htm>

Leadership Siouxland - Sioux City Political Education Institute - A Political Leadership Training Program

<http://www.siouxlandchamber.com/>

Rural/Community Economic Development Fund

<http://www.state.ia.us/government/ided/crd/index.html>

The Heartland Center for Leadership Development

<http://www.4w.com/heartland/>

Warren County Leadership Institute

<http://www.wcedc.com/leadership/>

Waterloo Community Leadership

http://www.waterloochamber.org/community_leadership.htm

Woods Quality Center

www.kirkwood.cc.ia.us/continuinged/woods/

National Youth Leadership Forum

<http://www.nylf.com/>

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Developing Dynamic Leaders

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/leadership/>

ISU Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance

<http://www.stuorg.iastate.edu/isufmla/>

Leadership ISU

<http://www.sac.iastate.edu/PowerofOne/ldr/sisu/ldr/sisu.html>

Leadership London

http://www.sac.iastate.edu/PowerofOne/London/leadership_london.htm

Leadership To Go

<http://www.sac.iastate.edu/PowerofOne/LeadershipToGo/ldr/stogo.htm>

Nonprofit Management Institute

<http://www.lifelearner.iastate.edu/noncredit.htm>

Shared Leadership for Institutional Change

<http://www.public.iastate.edu/~slic/frmain.htm>

NPMI Offers Training for Nonprofit Sector

Grant writing, financial principles, volunteer recruitment and human resource management are a few of the courses offered through the Nonprofit Management Institute (NPMI). Krishna Das, program coordinator for NPMI, said the program's flexibility and inexpensive courses are important to the nonprofit sector.

"Many of the nonprofits don't have a dime to send employees to workshops or semester-long courses," Das said. "Most of our courses are \$40, which is affordable."

Iowa State established the institute in 1999 in partnership with the United Way Management Assistance program. Participants can earn a continuing education certificate by completing any combination of classes, which will be held through March 2002.

"Anyone seeking professional development in the area of nonprofit management is invited to participate in these workshops," Das said. "People learn new skills and make connections, which is important because they learn from other people's experiences."

Lloyd Lockhart, business administrator for Bethesda Lutheran Church in Ames, participated in the program last year and was impressed.

"Sometimes you sign up for things and they are not what you expect. This class was well worth it," Lockhart said.

The institute incorporates various areas related to the nonprofit sector, including strategic planning, marketing, and fund-raising. The institute instructors include faculty and staff

members from Iowa State University, Drake University and the University of Iowa, as well as professionals from the corporate and nonprofit sectors.

For more information on the ISU/United Way Nonprofit Management Institute or to obtain a brochure and registration form, contact Tim Borich, ISU College of Design, (515) 294-0220; Krishna Das, ISU Extension, (515) 471-8650 or (319) 337-2145; or Maureen Reilly, United Way of Central Iowa, (515) 246-6524.

Leaders Important Link in Connecting Communities to Information Superhighway

Iowa's largest cable operator recently promised to spend \$300 million over the next three years to bring Iowa customers digital cable and high-speed Internet access. Mediacom Communications joins scores of other companies, large and small, that are helping Iowans enter the information superhighway.

The development raises questions about the effect on rural communities. A multidisciplinary team of Iowa State University researchers studied the potential of telecommunications technologies for use in community economic development. The team

conducted four case studies and surveys in nine broad sectors such as hospitals, libraries, and production agriculture.

Peter Korsching, a sociologist, says the research confirms the importance of "having all the right connections" in terms of infrastructure. It also suggests that other, nontechnical factors may be equally important. "The problems, challenges, and opportunities for communities are not tied to technology. They are tied to the people who live there," he says.

Korsching says communities that make the most of communications technologies are those where residents cooperate and provide leadership to get things done.

The researchers concluded viable rural communities will be those that identify ways telecommunications can be used to enhance existing capital and grow new capital. They noted that telecommunications are not the sole route to a revitalized local economy, but they do provide an important vehicle to move toward that destination.

How can this knowledge be increased in rural communities? One solution the researchers suggest is the application of telecommunications technologies to real local issues in the school curricula. What the students learn can be shared with other community members.

The Iowa State research is summarized in a book titled, "Having All the Right Connections: Telecommunications and Rural Vitality." The book was edited by Peter Korsching, Patricia Hipple, and Eric Abbott.



People are the biggest asset in helping rural communities benefit from cutting-edge telecommunications. Peter Korsching and Eric Abbott, two Iowa State University professors, have studied what local communities are doing to connect to the information superhighway.

Alumni Workshops Lead to Self-Discovery

By Linda Gorz
River Bend Association Member and TLT
Alumna

I have lived in River Bend for four years. Prior to that my life experiences have been pretty much middle-of-the-road, middle class. When I was invited to participate in the Tomorrow's Leaders Today (TLT) meetings, I did so without a clear expectation of what I would get out of them. I did hope to somehow "connect" better with those I live near.

It had been years since I'd been involved in classroom learning. But by the end of the first session, I knew that I would participate in follow-up sessions. The first group seemed to me to be introductory – we learned a lot, but we didn't do much.

The alumni group has given me a chance to take baby steps into the "doing." The meeting leaders helped us to formulate what issues we wanted to deal with. But more than that, they helped us "do" by teaching us how to structure and plan our session.

We all had good ideas, but to take ideas and make a program required much listening and openness. We practiced compromise and willingness to move in a direction that wasn't our first choice.

It required me, at least, to step out of my comfort zone and do some things that were new.

The results have been excellent. We designed a diversity workshop series that has been varied, interesting, hands-on, humorous, serious, and very deep. We dealt with diversity on the personality level – how we are different in how we approach life.



Norm Riggs, ISU Extension community development specialist, leads the class through a personality assessment exercise.



During the planning session, participants use different-colored dots to rank a list of suggested topics of interest. This helped them establish programming priorities.

We also explored diversity in a more theoretical way – looking at our mindset based on life experience and societal expectations. Our final meeting dealt with diversity as an experience as we listened to a panel of speakers discuss their lives as part of a subculture.

My only criticism would be that we have not had enough time together to share how these presentations have affected our inner selves. We have discovered things about ourselves that we didn't know were there, and that is good. We are better people for having been stretched to consider new ideas and see new solutions to complex diversity issues.

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