

RLND Watford City Short Course Program

The situation

The RLND Program is an 18-month program and not accessible to some North Dakotans due to the length.

Extension response

A decision was made to offer a shorter version of the RLND Program. The Jamestown region piloted the short course program in 2009. An evaluation was conducted of the pilot participants. Based on the evaluation results changes were made to the Watford City Short Course experience. One change was adding an orientation session to help participants learn about short course expectations and fellow short course participants. The Watford City Short Course Program was five, five-hour sessions rather than the four, five-hour sessions in Jamestown. Watford City sessions were held in February, March and April 2010.

Another change was regarding how participants selected their project. The Jamestown Short Course participants were assigned a project. Watford City participants were able to select their own individual project or join in with other participants in a group project. We found participants had a greater level of ownership in the project idea when they selected their own project.

Impacts

The RLND Watford City Short Course produced the following impacts:

- Seventeen participants from three communities (Watford City, Stanley and Dickinson) participated in the short course program.
- Employees from 10 different businesses and organizations gained leadership knowledge, skills, and practice as they created new community networks.
- Knowledge increased an average of 39% on 24 objectives covered in the five five-hour sessions.
- Short course steering committee members included four RLND alumni, two McKenzie Co. Extension staff and the McKenzie Co. Economic Development Executive Director.

- Nine Watford City community members were presenters at one of the five sessions.
- Short course participants started 15 projects during their 10 week short course experience including community garden, wellness center, social networking for citizens, affordable housing initiative.



Watford City Short Course participants and Steering Committee

Feedback

Short course participants shared the following comments about their experiences in the program:

"The short course helped to motivate me to become more involved in my community."

"It helped me be more aware of my self-talk and personality differences at work and in other boards and committees I'm already involved with."

"The short course gave me permission to work on a project I had thought about for a long time."

"I've begun to work with other new people in the community as we begin our project."

Contact

Marie Hvidsten, Ed.D.
Rural Leadership Specialist
NDSU Dept. 7390
PO Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108
701-231-5640
marie.hvidsten@ndsu.edu