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RLND Class VI Seminar 10 Update

Leading in a Changing World by John Samdahl
Devils Lake, ND

June 2015

Eighteen months ago marked the first seminar of Rural Leadership North Dakota class VI. Eighteen people from across the state met, many for the first time, in Bismarck for the beginning of the RLND experience. The seminars brought us quite some distance, both in miles and experiences, leading us to our tenth and final seminar held in Devils Lake on June 24 -26th 2015.

Our focus for the Devils Lake seminar was change, more specifically, leading in a changing world. Leadership is entirely dynamic. As you lead and use a direction, you may find it works, but if you don't adapt, you will find it may only work for so long. Katie Munion, Dale Carnegie Business Group of ND, taught our group about how to lead change effectively. Much of her topic focused on what it takes to lead, and what it takes to fail at leadership! She took us through a series of scenarios and topics on what to watch for, and what to do to be a good leader.

Devils Lake was a great setting for the "Change" seminar. As the level of Devils Lake has risen over the past two decades, it has presented numerous challenges. Leaders in the Devils Lake drainage basin are challenged with the task of solving the problems it creates. We were able to have a few of these leaders join us in a panel discussion. Jeff Frith (Board Manager of the Joint Water Resource Board), Dan Webster (Local Producer), and Bill Hodus (Ramsey County Extension Agent) took part in explaining their part in the process and just how the lake has affected them both personally and professionally.

Eric Asmundstad joined our group at the Ranch Steakhouse. Eric is an area producer, as well as former president of the

North Dakota Farm Bureau. Eric is one of many directly affected by flood waters. He spent countless days trying to reach and motivate politicians to take action. Eric's speech also focused on using Devils Lake as an example of such a huge issue that affected a lot of people over a long duration of time, and disbelief that it would keep impacting more and more.

As part of Day two, Marie gave the group a short presentation on diversity. Inclusions Insights by Steve Robbins was her course material. Marie did a great job focusing on stereotypes, lazy brains, and unintentional intolerance. If we don't understand diversity, we would really struggle with successful leadership!



Camp Grafton

Tours around Devils Lake began at Fort Totten Historical Site, moving on to Camp Grafton, and finishing up at Summers Manufacturing. Each of these sites had a great story. Fort Totten showed us the history of the region. Camp Grafton focused on changing military training and techniques, and Summers Manufacturing gave us a glimpse of how agribusiness has adapted and what it plans to focus on for the future change.

Finishing out the day, the group had a great meal at the Woodland Resort and a cruise on the lake with pontoons. Terry Borstad, another local producer, joined the group on the lake to give a tour of the area. It was great to have Terry's knowledge of the lake. It is difficult to realize how much the lake has changed.

Wrapping up the seminar, the group did a short tour of the "World Café". This process focuses on facilitating a meeting, setting up the room, and developing a soothing atmosphere. The group also took some time to reflect on our RLND experience and just how we will pay it forward.



RLND Class VI