Twenty-one participants came together on April 3rd at the North Central Research Extension Center in Minot for the RLND Ward County Community Leadership Workshop on Working Together to Improve Quality of Life. The workshop was organized through the Ward County Extension Office Staff and the Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) Program. Steering committee members included Gail Slinde and Paige Brummund with the Ward County Extension Office; Lori Scharmer, NDSU Extension Interim Family Economics Specialist; Cassidy Kersten, RLND Class V participant and SRT Communications Director and Marie Hvidsten, RLND Program Director.

Workshop participants experienced the Futures Game right away in the morning. The Futures Game is a scenario based game that engages people in thinking about the future of a community and the different scenarios that can take place based on your decisions. David Lehman, NDSU Extension Manufacturing Specialist, facilitated the Futures Game.

Participants watched the Abilene Paradox DVD next. The Abilene Paradox is about groups reaching decisions that no one, or very few, in the group supports and why this phenomenon happens.

After lunch the group participated in a process to collect ideas from people called the Carousel process. Group members formed smaller groups that shared ideas on six different topics relating to community life.

Next a panel of community speakers shared their strategies for working together to get things done in a community/organization. Speakers included Ryan Taylor, former ND state senator and gubernatorial candidate; Alan Lee, Mayor of Berthold; and Randy Hauck, Assistant Manager Verendrye Electric Cooperative. Panel members had many excellent strategies for participants on how to work together to get things done including the need for good communication; the need for passionate people to work hard on projects; and the need to ask people to work on a team with you – otherwise you will burn out.

The workshop ended with participants discussing what action they could take on an initiative they were passionate about.