

Rural Leadership North Dakota is looking for participants for its 2013-2015 class, which begins in November. If you want to improve your organization, business, farm or ranch operation, or community, the North Dakota State University Extension Service's Rural Leadership North Dakota (RLND) program can help. RLND is an 18-month leadership development program that consists of in-state seminars with experts on topics such as leadership development, agriculture and economic development; tours of agricultural and community businesses; trips to Washington, D.C., and Minneapolis to meet with agricultural, business and government leaders; and an international study tour to learn about international agricultural and community issues. Participants learn leadership skills, such as thinking critically and creatively, communicating effectively and managing conflict. They also learn about agricultural and rural policy, the agricultural economy and future trends that could affect North Dakota, finding innovative ways to fund local and regional development projects, marketing, civic engagement, the value of coalitions and partnerships, industry and community advocacy, and how to work with the state Legislature.

"RLND is a once-in-a-lifetime experience," says Beach City Auditor Kim Nunberg, an alumnus of the program's 2005-07 class. "Over the course of two years, you develop a deep professional connection with the other participants, which is invaluable."

A major focus of the program is giving participants opportunities to make use of what they've learned to improve their operation, business, organization, community or region. Nunberg is among 95 people from 57 communities in 36 counties who have participated in RLND since it began in November 2003.

The tuition for the RLND program is \$3,750. That covers all meals, hotels and travel expenses such as buses during in-state seminars and airfares to out-of-state seminars. Participants are responsible for their travel costs to the in-state seminars and points of departure for the out-of-state seminars. The deadline to apply to join the class of 2013-15 is June 15th. Applicants must have been a state resident for at least a year and be able to attend all of the seminars. For more information, or a copy of the application, visit RLND's website at <http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/rlnd> or contact the Extension office at 701-524-2253 or e-mail Alicia at alicia.harstad@ndsu.edu. NDSU is an equal opportunity institution.