



GOVERNOR'S
EMPOWER RURAL IOWA
INITIATIVE

Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative
Growing Rural Iowa Task Force Meeting
Youth Inn, Iowa State Fairgrounds
Des Moines, Iowa

Monday, August 12, 2019
1:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call:

Present:	Lt. Governor Gregg	Sandy Ehrig	James Hoelscher
	Ron Reischl	Emily Schmitt	Janae Jenison
	Rick Young	Philip Jones	Ashley Moyer
	Christian Lutz	Whitney Baethke	Caleb Knutson
	Rob Denson	Kathy Anderson	

2. Approval of Minutes

Draft minutes from the July 2nd meeting had been previously distributed for review. Rob Denson motioned to approve the minutes and Janae Jenison seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

3. Welcoming remarks from Lt .Gov. Gregg

The Lt. Governor thanked the Iowa Rural Development Council, The Bill Menner Group, Barker Companies, and the Blue Ribbon Foundation for sponsoring today's meetings and reception. Provided an overview of the day which is to include individual meetings for all task forces, a joint lunch and an afternoon reception at Jake's Club in the Jacobson Building at 5:00. The State Fair was chosen as a central location and very representative of rural Iowa. Informed members there will be more time this fall then last year to work on next steps and provided a review of the meeting agenda.

The first charge of this task force is determining how to make leadership concrete. Will need to hyperfocus on what we want rural leaders to know. This is a nexus of the housing and leadership task forces. Should we focus on individuals or communities, or both? The second charge is to explore creative placemaking.

4. Co-Chair Sandy Ehrig remarks

Sandy thanked sponsors and members and the Lt. Governor for the ongoing partnership with the IRDC. Informed members there has been some transition in task force leaders. With the retirement of Sue Cosner, Jim Thompson has taken over the Investing task force and James Hoelscher has taken the leadership role for this task force. Let members know that plans are well underway for the 2020 Iowa Rural Summit which will be held April 29 – May 1 at the Hotel Kirkwood on the Kirkwood community college campus to showcase value the community college network brings to rural Iowa. Will incorporate field trips to surrounding communities. Also, as Center for Rural Community Revitalization program manager, Liesl has been appointed as an ex-officio member of the IRDC leadership team.

5. “This is Iowa” Briefing - Jacque Matsen, IEDA

Jacque provided an overview of the new “This is Iowa” campaign which uses tourism attributes to draw people and businesses to the state. Campaign was based on research performed on the perceptions and motivation of people to move, and how to reach those who may be thinking of moving. The survey was taken by people primarily outside of Iowa.

6. Rural Innovation Grants Update - Liesl Seabert, IEDA

Each task force has \$100,000 to grant for innovative, scalable, replicable programs. Rules will need to be written and approved, which takes about three months. Hoping to have them written by early October, with a launch at the 2020 Iowa Rural Summit. Content will be broad, looking at big ideas that are creative and non-traditional. May not necessarily be tied to housing, broadband, or leadership. In the process of putting a subcommittee together and to help review rules. A draft of rules will go out to all task force members.

7. Panel – Leadership Programs in Iowa

James facilitated panel on past on current programs panelists had attended or assisted with and looked at strengths and weaknesses.

Ashley Moyer, Indian Hills Community College - L.E.A.P Academy:

Discussed the LEAP Academy (Leadership, Empowerment, Achievement, Progress) was a youth leadership program geared towards high school students. Students enter the program in the spring semester of Junior year through fall of Senior year and in summer they would work on service projects. Focused on things like ethics in leadership, conflict resolution, problem solving. They didn't do a lot on community leadership and she would change that if program was still on going.

Challenges: Funding, but they were able to get business sponsored. College provided staff time. The high schools in the region chose participants who had leadership characteristics. In hindsight, she would look to those that really wanted to stay in community.

Kristi Ray, Mt. Pleasant Chamber: ISU Ext. Leading Communities Chamber leadership program:

Leading Communities partners community familiarization with leadership. The morning sessions focus on leadership skills and the afternoon is spent on the community. First time both components have come together. Starts in October runs through May, once per month.

Strength: Focuses on the community. Taught participants responsibility for community. Looks at leadership from a community standpoint.

Weaknesses: ISU Extension teaches along with people from Des Moines. Would like a community person to teach so they can provide local info. Expensive for small communities (now \$8,000). Finding a way to keep program costs reasonable would be helpful.

- Sharon Haselhoff: Legacy of Heroines - Carrie Chapman Catt Center:

Was in first class in 1996, now a donor. Confidence builder. Students receive scholarships from former alum and other. Don't need to be political science major to attend. Field trips, dinners with speakers, workshops to build on strengths and weaknesses, grant writing, readiness for job interviews; public speaking; networking skill building.

Weakness: Not enough students involved – limited by scholarships. Would be nice to have representation from all counties.

- Alyson Stork-Fleming - ABI Leadership Iowa:

Issues awareness program, 40 students across Iowa, 2 days per month for 8 months. Topics include government, economic development, healthcare, education. Goal is to educate, inspire, grow, network and to take what was learned back to communities.

Strengths: Vast network of people you meet, participants as well as speakers, and other businesses. Brings together people with different backgrounds. She now knows experts in many different areas to go to for expertise. She didn't know how much she didn't know about Iowa. Has deepened her love of Iowa.

- Marissa Lockwood - Municipal Professionals Academy

Iowa State Extension program offering training for community leaders, city administrators and city clerks. Takes place over three days in May. Teaches how city leaders can encourage citizen involvement, and the leaders can learn from each other. She is also a mentor for Iowa League of Cities and visits other communities to teach new city leaders. Sessions that they attend focus on training for council members on running day-to-day issues, city ordinances, policies, priorities, working with citizens.

Key strengths: Value in networking; legislative updates, anything they can learn and take back to the community. Get sessions that are job specific, but also how to get residents involved with programs – ownership. Weaknesses: Cost of program plus time out of office and travel costs are an issue always.

Questions to panelists:

Q: Where should the task force focus – on individuals or networking and familiarization of other organizations

Alyson: Networking with other communities for learning. Look at people who you don't think might be leaders. Look at the people who might be volunteers – not necessarily the people who are running the community.

Ashley: Combination of leadership fundamentals and community education. The fundamentals would be about the same, but the community aspects could be vastly different. Rural towns don't have staff that would know about things like CDBG.

Kristi: Her challenge is the transition between older and younger. Need to be able to transition people out of leadership for fresh ideas. She has young people ready to lead, we need to be able to pull them up.

Sharon: We should have students at board meetings, so they are part of the community process.

Q: Do we focus on a couple of people in every community or focus on 20 or so to train and then go out?

Ashley: Groups of people. Trying to build momentum needs a group voice not a single person . Thinks there are ways to group areas together.

Marissa: Group. Too hard with a single voice to gain momentum.

Kristi: They have a county program with about 15 participants each year. Group is easier route to take. They make sure they visit each town.

Alyson: Could have a couple of people from a community or county to meet with other people from other community and counties. A combo group and individual.

Sharon: 99 counties – have one good idea from each county to share.

Q: All programs a bit different. Is there one topic that stands out?

Marissa: XYZ – conversation on how different generations are going to have to work together.

Kristi: ISU Diversity training – how to handle that in a community. From the community side – fortunate to be the home of Mt. Pleasant corrections. Take classes into facility

Ashley: Regarding the youth program, this could be an opportunity for the community service program. Not a lot of guidelines so have had some very cool things come out of it.

Alyson: Government session of Leadership Iowa. Access and info on things like how to run for council, school board, etc. Also have an interactive session answering questions as a newly elected Senator and how you ran on what promises and how to vote.

Sharon: Public speaking and networking. Getting the opportunity to know public speakers.

Q: What did you want to try but faced the most opposition?

Marissa: I come back to the community with ideas and buy trying to get community involvement is her biggest issue.

Q: There are a lot of people can't travel for training. How do we scale programs at the county level? Thinks we are taking this to population that is already busy so need to bring program to them.

Marissa – yes, one-on-one interaction via technology is good, but you won't get the same connection. If they aren't willing to put in the commitment, are they really the best leader?

Ashley: There are systems available such as the community colleges so we should be able to get curriculum figured out and then it could be delivered more locally.

Kristi: We are also fortunate to have ISU Extension and use that office to full potential.

Q: Anything you wished you'd learned that didn't get covered?

Kristi: Find commitment to run for council or something but no completion.

Sharon: Reaching out to past participants as prospective donors. She reached out when she was ready. Need a way to keep program at front of mind.

8. Task force discussion and Q & A – None

9. Public comment - None

10. Wrap up and next steps

The Lt. Governor commented that members have a lot to think about. Decisions like focusing on Individuals or a subset of a community; pluses and minutes; are there programs we can scale? Challenged members to come to next meeting with specific thoughts on what we want a rural leader to learn, as well as how creative placemaking can be part of the picture. Reminded members about the 5:00 reception.

Next meeting will be held on September 18th in Manning. Details to come.

11. Adjourn:

Emily motioned to adjourn, and Philip seconded. All aye.