

Leadership class builds well-rounded residents

Written by Deb Egenberger

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Deadline approaching to request applications.

There's always something to learn about yourself and the place you live, whether you've been there all your life or you're a transplant to the region.

Dawson Area Development's Leadership 2010-11 encourages individuals to hone their leadership skills while learning what makes Dawson County tick.

"It's all about building effective leaders," said Deb Jensen, DAD's leadership coordinator. "This is something for people coming into a new job or folks who have been here forever."

DAD was formed in 1989 and leadership classes started shortly after in 1992.

Since then, groups of 18-25 people have taken the journey of personal growth.

"You come out of it a more well-rounded, better informed person," Jensen said.

The personal development program involves 10 day-long sessions conducted monthly from September to May.

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Each month takes a different focus:

September—Program introduction: Learn about yourself and your classmates along with effective leadership skills; discuss county history; learn parliamentary procedure.

October—Quality of Life: Visit all three of the county's largest communities to see what each has to offer.

November—Government/Energy: After attending a county and city government meeting, talk with lawmakers on local, county and state level; listen to speakers from energy sources and tour the ethanol plant in Lexington.

December—Education: Spend the morning in a public school and hear from officials of Central Community College and the University of Nebraska,

January—Health and Human Services: Visit county hospitals as well as Red Cross, Mid-Nebraska Community Action and a shelter.

February—Business and Industry: Tour major industrial employers in all three towns and discuss economic development with the county's leaders.

March—Agriculture: See the county's farms and ranches first-hand.

April—Legal/Law Enforcement—Participate in a law enforcement ride-along, tour the jail and learn about the county's legal system.

May—Becoming a leader: Encouraging participants to become active community leaders.

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Class members will also be asked to decide on a major project they can accomplish together. Jensen said the last class put together the hero flights for World War II veterans to visit the memorial in Washington, DC.

In addition, participants will go on a water tour beginning at Lake McConaughy and they will visit the state penitentiary and Nebraska Legislature.

“This is designed for people of every age group,” Jensen said. “I think you gain a whole new perspective of the county and the people in it.”