

AMC Leadership Cohort participants continue developing community-building skills

Building and sustaining successful teams was one of the latest topics learned and practiced at the AMC Leadership Cohort Program pilot project session #5 in Glenwood in February.

The cohort's participants learned about their personal style and preference when working as a team, learned how different team styles interact with and support other team styles, enhanced their knowledge of how teams evolve and function and developed strategies to enhance team effectiveness.

The AMC Leadership Cohort Program pilot project, in partnership with University of Minnesota Extension Service and Blandin Foundation, was initiated last October as a part of the Minnesota County Futures Project leadership development focus. This five county, seven-month leadership program for county employees strives to further develop leadership to successfully address issues in county government.

The general purpose of the cohort program is:

- To build leadership capacity within a county or group of counties to improve effectiveness of county government's delivery of services.
- To assist in creating team environments within and among communities.

The five counties involved in this pilot project are Clay, Otter Tail, Douglas, Stevens and Pope Counties. The teams from each county were chosen by each county with a mix of management and line staff – intentionally seeking those with leadership potential, regardless of their current job title.

The 30 cohort participants are developing a broader network of trusted people to call on for advice and information related to the challenges faced by communities. They also are gaining new perspectives by identifying and practicing alternative approaches for addressing opportunities and challenges as well as learning new skills to lead, manage and support regional issues.

County benefits of participating in the program include:

- Increased resource pool to help with issues
- Increased ways to successfully address critical issues
- More knowledgeable management and staff mobilizing resources and delivering services.

This Leadership Cohort group meets eight times from October 2006 – April 2007. The one-day sessions are held within the participants' region and rotate between participating counties. Learning involves in-class training and action, reflection and understanding, coaching and mentoring to develop leadership skills.

The cohort's first five session topics have included the business of county government, community diversity, visioning, understanding leadership, systems thinking, effective communication, understanding leadership styles and preferences, building and sustaining successful teams, facilitative leadership, and managing group dynamics.

As a part of the AMC 2007 Strategic Work Plan, two more leadership cohort groups will be formed across the state.

Stay tuned for updates about this exciting leadership cohort pilot project! Visit the AMC website to learn more about this project and other Futures Project activities at www.mncounties.org.

The Association of Minnesota Counties presents this program in partnership with:



BLANDIN FOUNDATION

Leadership Cohort Program Pilot Project

EFFECTIVE TEAMS / LESS EFFECTIVE TEAMS

List of characteristics of effective and less effective teams as identified in Session #5 (February 2007) by Leadership Cohort Program participants:

EFFECTIVE TEAMS	LESS EFFECTIVE TEAMS
Attentive	Absent
Creative thinking	Argumentative
Cooperative	Blaming
Collaborative	Bullying
Committed	Condescending
Communicates	Controlling
Compromise	Different agenda
Dedicated	Disengaged
Encouraging	Disrespectful
Enthusiasm	Doesn't want to be there
Equal participation	Dominating
Everyone has input	Easily Distracted
Focused	Fence Sitter
Goal oriented	Hidden agenda
Good attitude	Interrupting
Humorous	Intimidating
Interested	Loud mouth
Knowledgeable	Negative
Listens	No common goal
Open minded	Noncommittal
Organized	Non-listener
Positive	Own agenda
Respectful	Pessimist
Shares ideas	Power struggle
Shared power/ responsibility	Quick start / slow finish
Shares work	Saboteur
Stays on target	Self serving
Supportive	Stubborn
Treats others with respect	Too serious
Trustworthy	Unorganized
Motivated/ motivator	Withdrawn
Visionary	

Clay County



Practicing Teamwork approaches and effectiveness, the five counties in the AMC Leadership Cohort Program pilot project participated in a Team Challenge Activity. Each county cohort team was given the same supplies (newspaper, tape and rubber bands) and was instructed to discuss, plan and create something using only those supplies within eight minutes. The teams were judged on three criteria: height, strength and attractiveness. The county teams and their "creations" appear in these pictures.



Otter Tail County



Douglas County



Pope County



Stevens County