

**NEWS RELEASE****For Immediate Release  
April 19, 2010****Agricultural Leaders Study Northern Ontario Challenges and Opportunities**

Sudbury, ON – Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) Class 13 participated in their fifth seminar in Sudbury, Ontario from April 11 to 14, 2010. The agenda was focused on assessing, understanding, and dealing with challenges facing communities and businesses in Northern Ontario.

John Rodriguez, Mayor of Greater Sudbury, welcomed the class and provided insight on the development of his city over three plus decades of growth, change and visioning for the future. It quickly became apparent to the class that the journey they were embarking on for the next few days would be an emotional one. By examples presented, they would learn that when you are looking to make change, you must start with where you want to end up, and then address all the steps in between in order to get there. From the issues Sudbury faced and addressed in the 1970's with respect to industry and environment, to the 1980's and key visioning for the future, the decisions made have shaped the landscape of the economic sector today including: highways and transportation; universities; first rate hospitals and medical facilities; and science learning centres. Rodriguez shared that if you want to build a successful community, you must create a place where people want to live, work, and play.

Other guest speakers focused on industry in Northern Ontario and the agricultural community, including: Mary Ellen Norry Car of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs; David Froot, FedNor; Scott Merrifield, FedNor; and Dave Lewington, Eat Local Sudbury Co-op and Vice President of the National Farmers Union.

Stig Puschel formerly of FedNor, facilitated a tour to Manitoulin Island including a visit with local First Nation's leaders at the Ojibwe Cultural Foundation in M'Chigeeng. The visit was an emotional one for the class and left many feeling more in touch with past and current aboriginal life as the group took part in a spiritual smudging welcome ceremony. A presentation by renowned artist and film maker Dr. Shirley Cheechoo and a viewing of her film "Silent Tears" gave insight to aboriginal culture, spiritual beliefs and challenges. Dawn Mahdabee, Waubetek, spoke about leadership and innovation in the aboriginal communities. A traditional aboriginal feast including wild game was served for lunch.

The group also took the opportunity to visit the "Big Nickel" while in Sudbury, for a firsthand look into the history and evolution of mining technology through the years.

Andy Sherwood of Progressive Training led the class through a day of time management and professionalism. This workshop focused on computer program management with an emphasis on organization and professionalism through email, voicemail and calendar management.

The class took a deeper look into the operation and formation of community organizations and the boards that govern them. Gayle Valeriote, Manager of Training & Consultation with the Volunteer Centre of Guelph, Ontario led the class through a study and discussion on assessing how to attract the right individuals for various board positions and becoming engaged team for success.

The Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) is an executive development program for men and women in Ontario to further develop their leadership skills and work to shape the future of the agri-food sector and rural communities. AALP is a program of the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI). Class 13 next heads south in July for a ten day study tour of Ohio, Pennsylvania and Washington D.C.

- 30 -

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