

Leadership Jackson Hole



Lower Valley Energy hosts a session in their boardroom on energy and the environment.

Situation

Community leaders, by virtue of the positions they've taken within their community, are often called upon to address dramatic and unpredictable issues affected by decisions made on the regional, national and international stage. If communities are to create a high quality of life locally to compete successfully within the global, social, political and economic realities, they must invest in the development of their citizens.

Since 2005, Leadership Jackson Hole has been a major UW Extension program in Teton County. Leadership Jackson Hole is conducted monthly, September through May, and utilizes the EVOLVE model (Extension Volunteer Organization for Leadership, Vitality and Enterprise). EVOLVE provides civic education to foster an understanding of the processes of community decision making; to increase knowledge of the community, its structures, history, conditions and issues; and to develop skills such as problem solving, working with groups, dealing with conflict and collaboration.

The curriculum is a blend of issues, theory, and skills, plus board visits and public hearings, and a trip to the Wyoming state legislative session. Community-based experiences include on-site visits with various businesses, organizations and agencies to learn about their vision, mission, leadership, history, long-term goals, challenges, funding, and the benefits of doing business in Teton County.

Fifty-two applications were received for the 2015–16 Leadership Jackson Hole, and 25 individuals were selected to participate.

Impact

A group project is a component of the EVOLVE model. It is designed to allow the group to select a community need and to develop a project or program to address the need. This Leadership Jackson Hole class identified "Take a Seat JH," a community project that enables businesses and individuals to provide benches around Jackson Hole.

Twenty-four participants completed the course requirements. A Google survey conducted six months after the completion of the 2015–16 program yielded the following results:

- 93% of the participants reported Leadership Jackson Hole enabled them to build and enhance relationships within their businesses and organizations.
- 100% reported participating in Leadership Jackson Hole encouraged them to build and enhance relationships within the community.
- 79% reported taking on leadership roles since participating in Leadership Jackson Hole.
- 100% indicated Leadership Jackson Hole increased their understanding of issues, economics, and resources in Jackson Hole.

Participants made the following statements when asked how Leadership Jackson Hole impacted their leadership skills:

"I'm more confident and have better communication skills."

"I have better knowledge of the community resources and the issues impacting our community."

"I have applied lessons presented directly into my management practice"

"LJH helped open my eyes to the integrated ways a community must live together in order to be successful. It helped me gain perspective on sectors of the economy, government, and social networks to which I would never have had access. It opened my eyes to the collaborative nature of community leadership, and how my actions impact my world as a whole."

"I think of my time in Leadership Jackson Hole as one of the greatest experiences I've had in Jackson Hole, and I'm deeply grateful for the opportunity to have joined such a community."

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