

**SDARL Class VI
Seminar 1 Report
Chamberlain, SD ~ Cedar Shore Resort
Nov. 20-21, 2010**

SDARL Class VI participants and their spouses came together from across South Dakota for Seminar 1 held at Cedar Shore Resort near Chamberlain, SD. The primary focus of this session was an Introduction to SDARL, a Leadership Assessment/Inventory, and getting to know each other.

Executive Dan Gee welcomed the group to Chamberlain and got them excited by explaining what was to come. He introduced his wife, Rae Jean, who will be helping with the program.

Program Director, Michelle Robbins and alumni, discussed a few of her experiences as a Class III member and assured them that their feelings of uncertainty were to be expected and completely normal.

Dan and Michelle then reviewed the guidelines of the program with the class and explained their expectations of class members. This included a general overview of what members should expect. Policies and procedures were explained, as were duties and responsibilities of members.

Each class member introduced themselves by giving a short summary of where they live, what they do and which issue facing agriculture in South Dakota they are most passionate about.

That evening Class VI members and their spouses were joined by 60 new SDARL friends and alumni for a Saturday evening banquet that was sponsored by the SDARL Alumni Association. President Bill Slovek served as Master of Ceremonies for the evening. Many Class VI members commented about the strong showing of support by the alumni and that it only excited them more about being in the program.

Matt Johnson talked to the group in an entertaining yet thoughtful way about what he went through as a member and how scared he was at the first seminar. He encouraged them to not give up and that an experience of a lifetime was before them.

Denny Everson gave a wonderful presentation that included his thoughts and forecasts for the immediate economy and where ag fits into it all. Class members enjoyed this information, making them even more excited about the learning that was about to come.

Since graduation in February, the SDARL Alumni Association has gained another nine lifetime members, taking that total to 46. New nametags were handed out to seven of them who were in attendance. Those members include Frank Bloom, Ed Briggs, Ray Epp, Matt Johnson, Jason Mischel, Jim Nielsen, Bill Slovek and Doug Wevik.

Jason Mischel, purchaser of the original oil painting completed at Class V's graduation, displayed the prints that have now been made and are available for purchase. Proceeds are going to go to the new SDARL Endowment Fund/Foundation. Many alumni took him up on his offer that night.

Sunday began with a workshop for spouses to better prepare them for what they and their spouse are getting into. Lori Cope, Darrin Olson and Sheila Prins, all spouses of former class members, each gave their own ideas on how to best cope at home when unforeseen things such as ice storms and blizzards happen. They laughed as they recalled funny stories and shared how they themselves grew through their spouses' involvement. They encouraged spouses to lean on each other and to become involved in the whole process. They reminded them it is something to be shared with your spouse.

The rest of the morning was spent in a presentation entitled "Understanding Personal Strength in Relating to Others" given by Dan Oedekoven, Class IV, and Debra Dodson, Class V. This exercise profiled personality style and gave participants and their spouses a better understanding of how to deal with others of like, as well as different, personalities. Group discussion and interaction was also an important part of their presentation, as it gave the members an opportunity to learn more about their own personalities. Many made comments about how they never thought of this before and how helpful they could see it being.

Seminar 1 concluded with members feeling a sense of relief and pride in being selected to Class VI. Classmates and spouses alike departed Chamberlain early afternoon with some new friends and a sense of excitement about what was to come.