

Leadership Vermillion County Focuses on Government

The Leadership Vermillion County Class spent the day at the Statehouse on February 17 in preparation for their upcoming session on local government. The group met at 6:30 a.m. to board the bus for the trip to Indianapolis and spent the day meeting with many of our elected officials. The group was greeted after arrival by Senator Phil Boots who spoke to them about a bill he was discussing in committee concerning education and incentive funding for specific areas that are hard to recruit. He provide state lapel pins for the group.

The next meeting for the class was with Representative Alan Morrison. He spoke to the group about the overall state budget and road funding and the need to invest in our infrastructure and how that could be funded. The Leadership class sat in the committee meeting held for Representative Morrison and Senator Ford to hear the bill they authored concerning regulation of internet gaming.

The next stop was a Lt. Governor Sue Ellspermann's office. She discussed the importance of our county to work towards a regional mindset and begin working more closely with Vigo and our surrounding counties through initiatives like Regional Cities. She encouraged the group to get involved with the Hometown Collaborative Initiative and spoke fondly about her hometowns positive involvement and that many positive results including the YMCA being built during the national economic downturn.

The class then met with Speaker of the House Brian Bosma. He discussed the three main goals he was hoping for progress on being about: education (specifically ISTEP testing discontinuation), the drug epidemic – especially heroin use, and road funding. He answered questions from the group regarding charter schools.

The team had lunch with Senator Boots followed by an extensive tour of the Statehouse. They ended the day with Lobbyist Lesa Dietrick, IceMiller, who spoke to the group about how bills get passed and the role of a lobbyist.

About the Leadership program

The Leadership program consists of 11, four-hour sessions spread over the course of six months, with an optional one-day trip to the Indiana Statehouse. The program is geared towards individuals who want to make a difference in their communities. They learn about their own leadership abilities, the county, current community issues and how to get involved and become leaders in their communities.

The program was originally developed by Dr. Janet Ayres, recently retired from the Department of Agriculture Economics, Purdue University, with the intent that it complement the existing community leadership programs in Indiana and foster new leadership development programs in communities where none exist.