



RUSSELL COUNTY LEADERSHIP



Russell Area Chamber
of Commerce



**Russell
Development, Inc.**

What is Russell County Leadership?

Russell County Leadership is an intense leadership program aimed at developing emerging community and business leaders in the Russell County Area. A variety of challenges—environmental, economic, and political—are unfolding and will continue to test rural communities. Strong, progressive leaders, with a broad base of knowledge, will be necessary to help steward communities and industries as decisions are made. Russell County Leadership coaches and empowers the next generation of rising stars to lead within rural communities, ensuring a bright and sustainable future. Each class is comprised of 6 to 8 individuals typically in the beginning stages of their career that have demonstrated leadership ability and an appetite for both personal and professional growth.



History of Russell County

In 1865, the Butterfield Overland Dispatch established a short-lived station named Fossil Creek Station along its route from Atchison, Kansas to Denver near the site of modern Russell. In 1867, the Kansas Pacific Railway reached the area and built its own station, also named Fossil Creek, later just Fossil, north of the Butterfield station. That same year, the Kansas Legislature established the surrounding area as Russell County. In April 1871 Russell was founded by the "Northwestern Colony" from Ripon, Wisconsin. At this time Fossil Station was renamed Russell. The colony of seventy men, women and children were looking for warmer winters, a new life and better future. Several structures are on the National Registry of Historical Places were built by these colonists. They did not arrive by wagon train, but by the Kansas Pacific Railroad. They lived in boxcars while homes were being built.

The American character of the Pioneer is illuminated in a letter written by Benjamin Pratt, the colony's president creating a colony: "If you have energy and some means and desire to live in an industrious, moral and temperate community and can contribute something in character and influence toward boiling up such a community, we shall greatly welcome you to our colony. If your purpose to hang around and grumble at real and imaginary difficulties, to favor the introduction of whiskey saloons and gambling dens and other sources of idleness, vice and misery, we do not want you"

In 1872 Russell was incorporated and named the provisional county seat after a two-year dispute with neighboring Bunker Hill, it became the permanent county seat in 1874. In 1876, Volga Germans, mostly from the area around Saratov and Samara in Russia, began settling in and around Russell.

The first discovery oil well in Russell County was drilled west of Russell in 1923. An oil boom ensued and lasted through the 1930s, attracting settlers from Oklahoma and Texas. Petroleum production became a staple of the local economy.

Russell came to national attention in the mid-1990s as the hometown of U.S. Senators Bob Dole and Arlen Specter when both men campaigned for the U.S. presidency. Dole was born and raised in Russell, and it remained his official place of residence throughout his political career.





1889 Russell County Map

"If you have energy and some means and desire to live in an industrious, moral and temperate community and can contribute something in character and influence toward boiling up such a community, we shall greatly welcome you to our colony. If your purpose is to hang around and grumble at real and imaginary difficulties, to favor the introduction of whiskey saloons and gambling dens and other sources of idleness, vice and misery, we do not want you"

Benjamin Pratt

President of Northwestern Colony | Ripon, Wisconsin

(Founding Colony of Russell, 1871)



Challenges in Russell County



Declining Population



Housing Shortage



Declining Enrollment



Lack of Adequate Childcare Facilities



Water Sourcing Challenges & Depleting Ogallala Aquifer



Lack of Diversified Economic Drivers

Frequently Asked Questions

Who are we looking for?

- Leaders who have an appetite for growth and making a positive impact in their community through their work in government, business, volunteerism, or advocacy.

Who administrates Russell County Leadership?

- RCL is administered by Russell Development, Inc. A 501c3 organization focused upon significant and sustainable economic development within the Russell Community.
- RCL is financially managed by Russell Celebrations, Inc. 501c3
- RCL is operationally supported by our community organization partners, Russell Area Chamber of Commerce and Russell Main Street, Inc.

What are we aiming to accomplish through our program?

- Improve leadership and communication skills through professional development sessions
- Increased understanding of the City and County legislative process
- Preparation for possible public service through involvement in campaigns and holding of public office
- Exploration of successful industry in the Russell County Area
- Discovery of new and emerging business opportunities in our region
- Increased awareness of critical issues for Russell County



Frequently Asked Questions

What level of time commitment is associated with RCL?

- Genesis Seminar for Class I will begin in August and meet once a month until Graduation in April. We do not have a December seminar due to complexity of schedules surrounding the holidays.
- RCL class members can anticipate one full, uninterrupted day per seminar. Seminars typically begin at 7:30am and we try to be finished by 6:00pm. Digital breaks will be scheduled throughout the seminar for class members to check calls/emails/texts.

How much does the program cost?

- The tuition for RCL is \$300 per class member. This cost includes refreshments & meals at each seminar session. As well as transportation for the traveling seminar.

Where do I submit my RCL Application?

- Completed applications may be submitted to the Russell Area Chamber of Commerce or electronically to: andrew@agrileadinc.com or russellkschamber@gmail.com
- We are working to build a website where applications may be accessed and submitted

Where will RCL take place?

- Seminars are split between classroom-type setting and traveling throughout the county to visit different businesses & communities.
- Classroom sessions are typically held in a conference room, hosted by a variety of our business partner-sponsors in the Russell Area.



Frequently Asked Questions

What do I need to do to be prepared at each seminar?

- Upon acceptance into the program, class members will be given a Russell County Leadership notebook and nametag. It is expected that RCL class members wear their nametag at each seminar as well as participate in active notetaking.
- Breakfast pastries & coffee will be provided at the beginning of each seminar.
- Lunch will also be provided at each seminar as well as bottled water and refreshments throughout the day.

Who leads each seminar?

- YOU! Each seminar, 2 RCL class members will be selected to serve as Chair and Scribe for the seminar. Of course, Administrators of our program will be present and leading the day as well, but the thought is that just as class members lead various organizational and professional meetings, it is the chair's responsibility to facilitate the day.
- Chair - Facilitate the day's activities in a smooth and efficient manner – welcoming their fellow class members, sharing any key announcements about the day's activities, introducing speakers and guests, facilitating the Q&A sections of the itinerary, providing words of gratitude to speakers, guests, tour hosts, etc. Above all, a chair's challenge is to "set the tone," for an enjoyable, educational and smoothly run day during an RCL seminar.
- Scribe - Whether it is for class members to review five years down the road, share with RCL stakeholders the value of RCL or as a tool of reflection as class members grow throughout their RCL experience, there is great value in capturing key insights, learnings, observations, epiphanies, and images. As scribe, let your creative juices flow as you capture each day of your class's experience.
- Scribes do not need to capture every word of the day like a court reporter or treat this as if they are writing minutes from a board meeting but, rather, should gather highlights and key observations to "paint a picture" of the experiences and learnings. Scribes are asked to share final highlights, photos, videos, etc. with the RCL facilitators within the week immediately following the seminar day they captured. Each scribe's style and viewpoint will be unique ... and that is good.



Funding Russell County Leadership

Contributions to the Russell County Leadership Program may be tax deductible; Gifts can be made directly to Russell Celebrations Inc. Contributors may also choose to support a specific seminar or class experience. They may contribute as a Graduation Banquet Host Sponsor (\$1,000), Seminar Underwriter (\$750), or Meal Sponsor (\$250). Note: Any contribution greater than \$1,500 will include (1) tuition credit to be applied to individual of contributor's choosing.



Sponsorship Levels

Pioneer	Trailblazer	Innovator	Visionary
\$1 to \$199	\$200 to \$599	\$600 to \$1,000	\$1,500+



Interested in Getting Involved?



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