THE SPIGOT

from the NORTH DAKOTA RURAL WATER SYSTEMS ASSOCIATION

NDRWSA Hosts Leadership Retreat

By Lisa Schatz

The Rough Rider Hotel and Conference Center located in Medora, hosted the North Dakota Rural Water Systems Association's (NDRWSA) Leadership Retreat in July. More than 100 people attended the event to participate in informational sessions presented by seasoned leaders throughout North Dakota. Board members, rural water managers, and operators took note of policy and procedural changes being implemented not only within their communities, but throughout the state. Presenters from several branches of government as well as rural water managers addressed the group with various topics of discussion.

Alison Ritter of the North Dakota Industrial Commission's Department of Mineral Resources discussed water needs throughout the phases of oil development. As the demand for water increases, so does the demand for instruction, education, and information. Following Ritter's presentation was Kris Roberts with the North Dakota Department of Health with a presentation on spill response emergency management. While the potential for contaminant spills is eminent, the response/emergency team remains diligent in accessing areas for harmful chemical exposure. Gene Veeder of McKenzie County Economic Development presented, "Planning for the Boom." Veeder says that as communities are expanding at a rapid rate, planning, preparation, and development are key components for a robust economy. Senate Majority Leader Rich Wardner gave the day's final presentation. Wardner encouraged attendees to get involved and have a voice in the vision for water in North Dakota.

On the second day of the retreat, Danita Tysver of the Stark Development Corporation gave the presentation, "Stark County: An Economic Melting Pot." The Corporation's mission is to assist southwest North Dakota by facilitating quality business opportunities and quality of place. The next speaker was Bruce Emmil of the National Energy Center of Excellence at Bismarck State College (BSC). Emmil discussed the Water and Wastewater Technology Certificate Program

NDRWSA Vice President Jon Nelson gave an update on the progression and development of rural water districts.

available through BSC. Emmil said that as the need for certified water and wastewater operators continues, the opportunities within the water industry remain endless. Mike Hove of the North Dakota State Water Commission discussed the Commission's industrial water depot use and telemetry pilot study. The primary responsibility of the State Water Commission is to provide effective management of North Dakota's water resources.

Mary Massad of Southwest Water Authority, Jaret Wirtz of the Western Area Water Supply Authority, and Jon Nelson, vice president of NDRWSA, updated their colleagues on the progression and development in and around the districts they

represent. Although rural water managers are often faced with new challenges, the goal to provide potable water to all citizens remains imperative.

The retreat was not all work and no play. Attendees had an opportunity to golf Bully Pulpit Golf Course, which was ranked one of America's 100 greatest public golf courses. NDRWSA congratulates the winning golf scramble team made up of Bill Link, Cory Chorne, Terry Boehm, and Jerry Blomeke. NDRWSA would also like to give a special thank you to AE2S for sponsoring this well-attended event.

After the work was done, attendees had the opportunity to visit the attractions historic Medora has to offer. The picturesque Badlands and roaming elk were among the topics of discussion as dinner was being served at the Tjaden Terrace. The opportunity to attend the "Greatest Show in the West," the Medora Musical, was considered to be the "icing on the cake."

"On behalf of the board of directors and NDRWSA staff, I would like to thank our sponsors for their generosity and dedication to promoting leadership training for rural water systems," says NDRWSA Executive Director Eric Volk. "They make events like this possible."

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