



Training brings diverse leaders together

May 8, 2017

The Northern Heritage Leadership Institute (NHLI) proudly graduated more than 40 participants from its brand new program on April 22. Inspired by the success of other leadership programs such as [Leadership New Mexico](#) and [Leadership Los Alamos](#), NHLI [began in January](#) and exceeded participation expectations.

“This effort was a direct result of our leadership summits with Los Alamos and (Lab Director Charlie) McMillan,” says organizer Christopher Madrid. “As identified in the meetings, our organizations need to work more effectively together, and this program did that.”

Held at the [Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area](#) headquarters in Alcalde, the program welcomed residents from Los Alamos, Rio Arriba, Santa Fe, and Taos counties and took place on four weekends through April. The diverse group included local government employees and individuals from the private sector.

“We explored the concept of the servant leader—that to be able to lead others you must first understand yourself,” Madrid says. “We learned about tools such as Myers and Briggs [personality test] and conflict resolution strategies. We crafted vision and mission statements, set goals and objectives, and used mind mapping to get ideas on the table.”

During the program, participants connected with community and state leaders and were given the resources and skills to be influential area leaders.

“Attending the Northern Heritage Leadership Institute Program was an enlightening experience,” says participant Rebecca Cordova. “After four months of getting to know other community leaders it was evident that the northern region of New Mexico is full of insightful leaders. The skill and knowledge gained during this initiative will benefit not only our work places but more importantly our communities for years to come as all attendees have made the commitment to continue sharing and giving back.”

Some projects the participants discussed pursuing after the program is over included improving the image of the Valley communities, and developing a community time bank for a non-monetary exchange of volunteer skills that match needs with resources.

Another major goal of [NHLI](#) was to “train the trainer”—in other words, to “develop our own ongoing program as a community,” Madrid explains. “There is a demand for leadership here. We’d like to identify some best practices from the training and tailor the training for short versions of NHLI for rural communities.”

From the Lab, Vangie Trujillo with Community Partnerships Office, Rebecca Cordova with Nuclear Process Infrastructure, Rosemary Maestas with Government Affairs, Sha-Marie Reid with Plasma Physics, and Robin Franke with Production Agency Quality Division Office completed the program.

With sponsorship from many committed community organizations (including Rio Arriba County, the City of Española, Northern New Mexico College, Northern Rio Grande National Heritage Area, [Rural Communities Assistance Corporation](#), Regional Development Corporation, and the Laboratory's Community Partnerships Office), NHLI is expected to happen again in 2018—and beyond.

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