

Leadership El Dorado at Sly Park—Focus on Water Connections



It's all smiles from these Leadership El Dorado participants at the Sly Park Event Center. Front row from left: Kim Nethercott, Jesse Saich, Andrea Howard, Susan Zito, Laurel Brent-Bumb (County Chamber chief executive officer), Marjorie Sanborn, Lee Notaro, Pam Hagen. Back row: Craig Therkildsen, Randy Ehle, Richard Esposito, Michael Petersen.

On July 7, Class 4 of the Leadership El Dorado program gathered at EID's Sly Park Event Center on the edge of Jenkinson Lake for a lively discussion about leadership, water, and natural resources in El Dorado County. The group also participated in a surprise "emergency" that gave them a chance to put their leadership, response, and planning skills to use.

EID Board member George Osborne started the session, asking Class 4 members what they expect in a leader and then talking about the class's responses, ranging from "ethical" and "consistent" to "someone who listens." EID communications director Deanne Kloepfer traced the history of water and its ties to economic development in the county and also the story of EID—from the beginnings 85 years ago to the present day. Sly Park superintendant Cheri Jagggers pointed out the central role of water in the county's many outstanding recreation areas, including Sly Park and other facilities managed by EID.

Following a water question-and-answer exercise led by EID public information analyst Karen Cross, the class was interrupted by Cheri, with word that a fire had broken out on the other side of the lake in the middle of one of the park's fully booked campsites. This emergency, the class soon learned, was not real, but a staged situation to give them an opportunity to organize an appropriate response. Split into two groups, they received regular updates over the next half hour, challenging them to engage in flexible, proactive thinking to "stay ahead" of the fire, deal with evacuations, calm the crowds, control access, deliver materials and supplies, and the host of other details involved in responses to emergencies such as this. Reports from class members Randy Ehle and Pam Hagen clearly showed that both groups were successful in coming up with realistic solutions.

The El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce launched Leadership El Dorado in 2006, along with founding sponsors PG&E, AT&T, David Machado Enterprises, El Dorado County Office of Education, and EID. The program provides education and training to help build El Dorado County's future leaders and each year welcomes women and men from local agencies and businesses. Meeting the first Wednesday of each month, except December, participants focus on a wide-ranging curriculum. Along with water and natural resources, the topics include health care, local government, law enforcement, education, communications and media, economic development, agriculture, and tourism and film promotion.

"We are really looking forward to our fifth year, which begins in September," said Laurel Brent-Bumb, chief executive officer of the Chamber. "Applications are due July 30, and we encourage anyone who is interested in joining this exciting program to visit our website at www.eldoradocounty.org for additional information and the application forms. Or pick up the materials in our office at 543 Main Street in Placerville."

For more about the Sly Park Event Center and how you can reserve it for your company and personal events, go to the EID website and click on the Recreation link or call 530-644-2792. Online reservations can be made up to two years in advance.