

25th Reflections on 2007-2008

Wisconsin Rural Leadership Program 25th Anniversary

2007-2008

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Most of us take time to take stock at year's end. We reflect on where we have been over the past year, where we are now, and where we hope to be in the future.

No doubt 2008 is an historic year – from our national politics to worldwide economic changes. Our choices this year will influence the years to come. Our early founders took a risk investing in this leadership concept, taking a long view, looking forward to the future. In good times and bad, WRLP produces leaders to take on Wisconsin challenges.

There is no denying the news. The reality of what is happening economically must be acknowledged. The current financial pain is real for many. Predictions of recession and its impact on everyone's finances are fueling concerns across the spectrum of American society.

Yet, there is so much for WRLP to be THANKFUL for in this past year.

- Group XII experienced India as their International Seminar,
 - ❖ Challenged themselves to Find Common Ground during the Diversity Seminar
 - ❖ Met in Minocqua for their Environmental Issues Seminar and
 - ❖ Later in July graduated during the WRLP Legacy of Leadership Celebration
- Group XIII started their WRLP journey with Orientation,
 - ❖ Their first seminar focused on State Government,
 - ❖ They gathered for their Leadership Seminar in Trego, and then the
 - ❖ Urban Issues Seminar in Milwaukee.
- Group II alumni gathered for their 20-year reunion
- Gerald Campbell was presented with the 2008 Russ O'Harrow Award for Outstanding Service
- Our alumni continue to fill the news with their leadership efforts

- The 2008 Outstanding Alumni Award presented to George Johnson (VI). Others recognized: Daphne Holterman (III), Ruth Lindegarde (VIII), Norm Monsen (VII), and Marty Stanton (IX),
 - Over 200 people opened our 25th anniversary year of "Celebrating Silver – Going for Gold" in the WI Dells at our gala event on Nov 1.
 - New WRLP video created – view on YouTube – <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWujTT5GD7Q>
 - Special 25th anniversary Russ O'Harrow Awards for Outstanding Service presented to Mary Maier and Asye Somersan
- Visit our website to see and read more, www.uwex.edu/ces/wrlp

In the spirit of thanks, we would like to acknowledge and thank all of you who personally contributed your gifts this past year: your knowledge, candor, time, resources, food, expertise, commitment, and financial support.

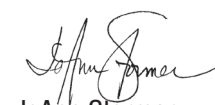
The generosity of WRLP supporters is an amazing tribute to our shared ideals and collective ability to transform society through our leadership work. As you know, WRLP operates on a gift economy. When you make an investment in the work of WRLP, you're perpetuating your own values and the WRLP values – to our mission of developing leaders to strengthen communities.

With deep gratitude, thank you for supporting WRLP.

Respectfully,



Sarah Halstead (X)
Board President



JoAnn Stormer
Executive Director

Investing in Wisconsin Leadership

The Wisconsin Rural Leadership Program is a public-private educational partnership administered through the University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension. The primary sources of WRLP income comes through UW-Extension, Participant Fees, the State of Wisconsin and Community Resources/Individual Donors. Over the life of WRLP, this stream of support has remained but the levels have changed dramatically.

EARLY YEARS. WRLP was initiated through a grant funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. After that, the bulk of WRLP funds came through the University of Wisconsin Extension and participant fees. (See 1983 on bar graph.) With a great deal of wisdom and foresight the early board of directors established an endowment fund to help ensure the long term future of WRLP.

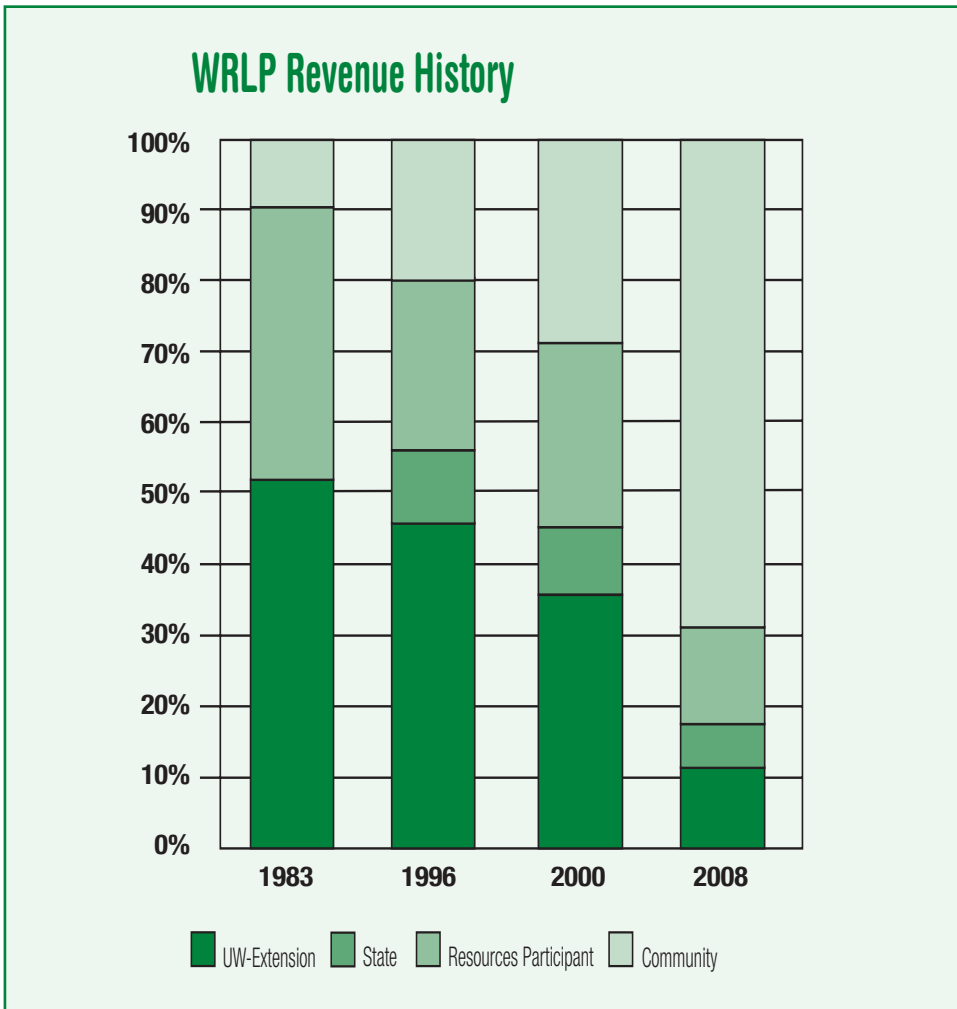
MIDDLE YEARS. Beginning in 2000 along with the rising costs of education, combined with growing demands from other state agencies, the financial equation for WRLP was altering. The funding from UW Extension was decreasing. This resulted in a major shift in WRLP's funding mix. (See 2000 on bar graph.)

WRLP responded in several ways to meet this funding challenge. From 1983-1999, WRLP's Executive Director led the program on a part-time basis – one director for each group of participants. In 1999, WRLP hired its first full-time director to preside over the development of the curriculum, implement seminars, as well as perform administrative and resource development functions. This caused program resources to double. Yet at the same time there was an additional challenge of rising program costs. The next step was made in 2005 when the board expanded the staff to include a person dedicated fulltime to resource development. WRLP has already seen an increase in the private support due to this staff position.

TODAY. Currently 65% to 70% of WRLP's annual operating budget comes through the support of individuals, foundations and corporations. Our investors and partners enable WRLP to develop leaders for communities, men and women who are decision-makers and problem-solvers for communities throughout Wisconsin. Today, more than ever, the public-private partnership that began WRLP in 1984 continues to play a critical role.

As the funding ratio changed over the past two decades, WRLP has been challenged to find more and more community resources – people, organizations, businesses, etc. – who realize that developing leaders is good for Wisconsin communities. The payoff is huge compared to the initial investment. We are grateful that our contributors understand this. We expect this trend will continue.

Challenges can be either stumbling blocks or stepping stones. It's a matter of how you look at them. Over the years, WRLP has continued to drill down deep to create lasting relationships with our supporters. Often, these relationships have led us down new paths to either participant sponsors or mission & vision partners. They have acted as stepping stones. Yet, we must continue to drill deeper. We always want to share the value of WRLP to our Wisconsin citizens and communities-at-large. As alumni and friends, you can be a part of this in specific ways. You are our "friend-raisers," either acting as a living example of what WRLP has produced as a leader or how our leadership investors take a stand for leadership development in a civil society.



Here's how your gift can make a difference:

- **Annual unrestricted gifts** to the Emerging Leaders Fund are the primary source of monies that provide the WRLP leadership training experience. This our greatest need. We consider you as a Mission & Vision partner of this fund and a key player in developing the future leaders of Wisconsin. Think about what a "dollar a day" can do. Or, how about a multiple of "25 for 25 years?"
- **Seminar sponsorships** provide you the opportunity to co-market your organization and align it with the WRLP brand of leadership training that produces results. We recognize you through our newsletter and press

releases, on our program materials and website, linking your company as a leadership sponsor. Sponsorship can be done at many levels and also carries with it other privileges. Ask us about how we can help position your business with others.

- A gift to our **endowment** is the gift that keeps on giving. You can be assured that the process of creating "statesmanlike leaders" will be carried on for a longtime.
- A **planned gift** provides for sound fiscal planning for you and WRLP.
- Your gift of time as a **volunteer** connected with a seminar, friend-raising or fund-raising, or opening new doors for WRLP's future is priceless.

- **In-kind items** are routinely needed and are directly used in WRLP program delivery.
- Ideas about **additional relationships** we might develop with organizations, corporations, individuals, or other funding sources are welcome. Please take the time to share that community resource lead with us. Your associations could become our affiliations, too.

WRLP is as relevant today as it was on the first day of the first seminar of the first Group 25 years ago. Be a part of our friend-raising team as we add more stepping stones as either Participant Sponsors or Mission & Vision partners. Be a part of building our legacy of leadership.

Thanks to Our Donors

Your generous support of WRLP makes our leadership development training possible. Your renewed support is just as important. As you read about what has been accomplished here, remember that more needs to be done so that we can maintain and upgrade WRLP leadership development options. Every gift creates a new leader and every gift makes a difference. Thank you!

MISSION SPONSORS

The following donors are committed to our mission of "developing leaders to strengthen communities."

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25 Years of WRLP

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Doug Mueller

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T.B. Sheldon Theatre
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The following donors provided tuition assistance to Group XII-XIII Fellows

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Mark Lisitza
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Nemitz Cranberry Co., Inc.
Richard Pavelski
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Gerry & David Traczyk
United Community Center, Inc
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Margaret & Tom Burlingham
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin

Sandra & Dennis Cihlar
James & Patricia Clifford
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Dave & Kimberly Daniels
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Roger Williams

HONOR ROLL

These individuals and organizations have given \$5,000 or more cumulatively and are a part of the WRLP Permanent Honor Roll. Thank you!

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