



FORD-IROQUOIS FARM BUREAU LEADERSHIP LINKUP MEETINGS



We hosted a series of Leadership Link Up meetings the first week of March, providing members with an opportunity to connect with board leadership, hear updates on agricultural developments and discuss issues impacting their farming operations.

The meetings were organized by district and held at three locations across the county to make attendance more convenient for members. District 1 met on March 4th at Beans & Barley Brews; District 2 gathered March 5th at Heather’s Kitchen and District 3 concluded the series March 6th at Cissna Park Family Restaurant

A presentation from Luciano Dias with Incobrasa Industries provided an update on the company’s expansion project and what it means for the local agricultural community. Attendees also received information about current programs available to farmers through the Farm Service Agency, presented by Melissa Anderson from the Iroquois County FSA office.

In addition to the presentations, members were encouraged to share concerns and discuss challenges they are currently facing on their operations. The meetings served as an opportunity for open conversation between Farm Bureau leadership and members about issues impacting local agriculture.



FORD-IROQUOIS BUREAU ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The accomplishments of the Ford-Iroquois Farm Bureau were celebrated at their 54th annual meeting on March 12th at the Farm Bureau office in Gilman.

Board President, Clinton Charles, thanked the members for their involvement and support throughout the year on all successful programs and the board for their hard work on the many changes that have taken place this year. One big accomplishment for the year includes the board completing a Strategic Planning session which is the first one to take place since 2019.

A bylaw amendment to add the Young Leader Chairman as a director on the board with full voting rights was passed.

The election of the Directors took place with the following directors elected: Lynne Brown of Danforth, Michael Hemp of Beaverville, Aimee Chandler of Onarga, Donald Ulfers of Gibson City, Jeff Thomas of Onarga, Robert Lindgren of Loda, Rick Merkle of Cissna Park, Robert Buhs of Gibson City and Edward Dubrick of Cissna Park.

Following the annual meeting, the Board elected officer for 2026. The results are: President-Clinton Charles, Vice President-Rick Merkle, Secretary-Bob Lindgren and Treasurer-Don Ulfers.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT

In an effort to elevate rural communities, Illinois Farm Bureau partnered with county Farm Bureaus (CFBs) to award 30 Rural Development Grants totaling \$120,000 to support local efforts across the state, including projects in Ford County.

Of the grants awarded, nine are addressing rural emergency services’ needs, and 21 are projects focused on supporting community and economic development or enhancing quality of life.

Gibson City Restoration Association was one of the lucky winners. Through the Ford-Iroquois FB, we received a \$4,000 grant to support the restoration of the historic Burwell Building in Gibson City. The building was purchased by the Gibson City Restoration Association in 2021 and is in the center of the business district.

If you would like to learn more about this project or the Rural Development Grant program, please contact our office at 815-265-4712.

YOUNG LEADERS BAGS TOURNEY



The Young Leaders hosted a Cornhole Tournament on March 20th. We had a great turnout at Hanson Family Shop in Clifton with about 20 participants! The group competed in a round robin tournament with a major showdown at the end. Zach Gerling and Cale Rollins took first place!

Our next meeting will be after planting season. Young Leaders is a group of 18-35 year olds with an interest in agriculture. New members are always welcome.