

# The Update

Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association

SUMMER 2021

## Zach Suddarth, LEAD Class XVIII



Zach Suddarth, LEAD Class XVIII.

A little background on myself. I have been married to my wife, Lori, since August of 1987. We have three grown sons. Wyatt (fiancé, Alexa) is a Mechanical Engineer at HDR in Omaha. Jarrett (Mycah) is a Certified Financial Planner at Teckmeyer Financial Services in Lincoln. Grant (Regina) works in the IT Department of Farm Credit Services of America in Omaha.

I grew up in the Rising City area and graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a BS in Agronomy. I currently supervise the Farm Management Department for Cornerstone Bank, headquartered in York, starting my employment there in May of 1988. I have been an active member of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers at the state and national levels since 1989. I also served on the Alumni Board of Directors at UNL's College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources. Locally, I am a member of the First United Methodist Church and the York Sunrise Sertoma Club. Every once in a while, you might even catch Lori and I playing a round of golf at the York Country Club!

I had known several people involved with the Nebraska LEAD Program and others who sat on the Board of Directors. A good friend and co-worker, Kendell Holthus was a member of LEAD Class XV. Basically, Kendell told me that I NEEDED to apply and that I would never regret the decision. I had known others from the York area that had participated in the LEAD Program as well. Finally realizing that there was never going to be a "perfect" time, I decided to apply in the summer of 1998.

I was a member of LEAD Class XVIII (1998-2000). As all of you know, the entirety of participating in the Nebraska LEAD Program is a "most memorable" experience. For me personally, when I reflect on my LEAD experience, I always find myself going back to the people that made the experience exciting and worthwhile. By being selected as a member of LEAD Class XVIII, I had the opportunity to reconnect with college friends and even a high school acquaintance. We all found that through our professional experiences we had actually matured a little and in essence became different people (while keeping our same personalities)! Dr. Allen Blezek was obviously an excellent leader and mentor to all of us. The various seminars all held valuable learning and growth experiences, all because of the people involved.

If you know of someone who is interested in the program, I would encourage them to talk to all of their friends that have been past participants. Every Nebraska LEAD participant through the years remembers and cares about the experiences of the program that were most important to them. Most of all, the best advice I can give is "Just Do It"! There is never going to be a perfect time, as we are all busy but for most, the perfect time is now.

## President's Message

### Discipline and Execution in the Whirlwind



*Matt Dolch, LEAD XXXIII.*

Greetings, Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association!

As we head into the months ahead, I couldn't be more excited to return to a "normal" summer. With this excitement comes an appreciation for larger crowds, restaurant dining, spending time with family and friends, and in-person Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association board meetings. As I have mentioned before, I am proud to represent this organization and the leaders that it continues to build and develop each year. We have been very focused in staying connected with and supporting LEAD Alumni members while navigating the waters of virtual connectivity.

In reflection over the past year, I believe our environment provided many opportunities to learn and develop as leaders. Are we focused on what is truly important? How can we balance personal and professional demands more effectively? Is a mixed ration of virtual and in-person meetings the new "normal"? I

certainly don't have all the answers but find value in considering the questions. I extend a special thank you and appreciation toward the work of Pat Heyen in navigating the uncertainty around our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Travel Study Seminar and Nancy Eberle for coordinating the efforts to plan our 2021 Ag Adventure Tour. Regrettably, these two events were unable to happen this year due to travel restrictions, but I am confident they will be back and stronger than ever in 2022!

I spent the last several weeks reading *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*. It provides excellent perspective that applies not only to business but to our personal lives as well. Discipline 1: Focus on the Wildly Important (Goals). It is easy to be sucked into the whirlwind of life, saying yes to many things without focus on what is most important. Focusing on less so that you can achieve more! The other discipline that I will highlight is Discipline 3: Keep a Compelling Scoreboard. This is all about engagement. In essence, the highest level of performance and the highest level of engagement comes from knowing the score, who is winning and losing. For example, the scoreboard could be the number of LEAD activities attended, number of active alumni members or how many LEAD candidates you have recruited in your home community. These are just a few of the key focus areas that are critical to our success.

Other key updates from our Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association includes the Every LEAD Fellow Has a Story Series. We have added a link for you to nominate outstanding LEAD alums for a short interview highlighting their LEAD experience on our website at: [www.neleadalumni.com](http://www.neleadalumni.com). We have received very positive feedback from this initiative and look forward to continued production of these stories to share with current, past, and prospective LEAD fellows.

Thank you for your local representation of the Nebraska LEAD Program and Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association. If you are not current on membership, I would encourage you to visit our webpage and renew your annual membership or secure your lifetime membership. You are the lifeblood of the program and critically important in carrying on the legacy and traditions of our program.

I look forward to seeing each of you on Tuesday, August 31st at the Nebraska State Fair LEAD Reception. Safe travels and all the best to you and your family this summer.

## Nancy's Notes



*Nancy Eberle, Executive Secretary*

Happy Summer everyone! I hope you are enjoying your expanded “freedom” to get out and about this season. Unfortunately it did not work out well for us in planning the Ag Adventure Tour or the international travel study to Ireland. Things are opening up, but very, very slowly and people are still hesitant to “get together in groups”. In case you are not aware, both the Ag Adventure Tour for 2021 and our travel plans to Ireland had to be cancelled again. One of these days, things will really get back to normal and we can plan accordingly!

We are looking forward to our State Fair reception and hope to see many of you there. The invite is included with this newsletter. Mark your calendar and try to attend! The State Fair Board is advertising a “full fair” for this summer. It looks like we are moving forward, at least with that event.

I do want to take this opportunity to thank our President, Matt Dolch, who has tirelessly kept us together, at least virtually, for the past 1 1/2 years. It hasn't always been easy, or exactly what we had originally planned, but our annual conference, virtual board meetings and other types of outreach have carried on, much of it due to his efforts. Thanks Matt for all you do!

See you at the fair, and until then . . . . LEAD on . . . .

### REQUEST FOR MEMBERSHIP



*Tim Graff*

Greetings, fellow alumni!

The pandemic has caused all of us to make changes in our everyday lives. Your alumni officer team and board has done an amazing job to continue the mission of the Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association despite having to shut down most of our activities. Just the same, the Association is active and continues its leadership presence.

How can you help? Please continue your membership as a dues paid member of the LEAD Alumni.

We are looking forward to having LEAD XXXVII host our annual in-person conference this coming January. To assist with that effort, the board extends to the class start-up funds to kick off their efforts. We continue our presence on social media and through our web site. Plus, we continue to publish four newsletters to update on activities of the Association. These all require funds to continue. While we have an investment portfolio that earns dividends and interest that helps, your continued membership is vital to our organization.

So as your ‘money man,’ please continue your dues paid membership or consider becoming a life-time member of your Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association. Thank you.

Hello Alum!

Due to COVID19, the LEAD Alumni has had to cancel our August 18-29th, 2021 International Travel Study Seminar to Ireland. Ireland and Northern Ireland are continuing to require a quarantine of 14 days upon entry into their countries. This would be an impossible hurdle for our group to follow and still enjoy and complete our study seminar.

Hopefully, in the future, we will be able plan another seminar to Ireland, and actually make it there.



We are busy planning the August 2022, Summer National Travel Study Seminar. We hope to announce the destination and begin registration in September 2021. We have a great working itinerary, and are getting it finalized. We will be exploring an area that has a vast amount of agriculture and agribusiness interests. We will have the opportunity to see some beautiful scenery and enjoy an adventure or two.

2023 will bring our next International Travel Study Seminar, and we will be traveling in February/March of 2023. Where will we travel? What is our destination? What will we learn?

I hope you are as excited about the next travel destination as I am. It should be a wonderful seminar to bring us out of the COVID slump.



*Pat Heyen, National and International Travel Study Coordinator*

Future travel announcements - the announcement of Travel Study Seminars doesn't always coincide with the quarterly newsletters, although information is placed in the very next newsletter. If you want to know when National and International destinations are announced, watch the NE LEAD Alumni Facebook page and the Alumni website. Announcements and registration information are posted to both these sites as soon as the destination and dates are selected. Each destination will have a limited number of travelers that we can take with us, so if you are considering traveling with the Alumni, please check out the website, and Facebook page, as well as future newsletters.

LEAD Alumni Website - <http://www.neleadalumni.com/>

Facebook page - NE LEAD Alumni Association - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Leadalumni/>



*Nebraska*  
**LEAD**  
*Program*

Nebraska Agricultural Leadership Council

**And The Nebraska LEAD Alumni Assn.**

**August 31, 2021, 5:30-7:30 pm**



## **Nebraska State Fair LEAD Reception**

If you are planning to come to the Nebraska State Fair this summer, consider coming on August 31. We are planning a get together in the VIP room - above the Five Points Show arena from 5:30 to 7:30 pm. Please join us! Snacks and Cash Bar will be provided.

Hosts: NE LEAD Alumni Board of Directors  
Terry Hejny, Director, Nebraska LEAD Program

If you do plan to be at the Fair, please let Nancy know via e-mail at [neberle@mainstaycomm.net](mailto:neberle@mainstaycomm.net) -- we want to make sure we have enough "snacks"

# The Update

Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association  
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Please order no later than June 25!

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our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/Leadalumni>  
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Please remember to submit important  
Nebraska LEAD Alumni news to:

Nebraska LEAD Alumni Association  
Nancy Eberle  
520 Road 20  
Bradshaw, NE 68319  
neberle@mainstaycomm.net

### NETWORK!

Keep the spirit of the  
Nebraska LEAD  
Program ALIVE!

## Update

Update is the official newsletter  
of the Nebraska LEAD Alumni  
Association. The purpose of  
the publication is to keep you, a  
vital part of the LEAD network,  
linked with fellow alumni!