

Delta Leadership Institute Graduates 6 Tennessee Leaders Poised to Support Economic Development Efforts

Graduates join alumni network of 500 trained community leaders

PADUCAH, Ky. – The Delta Regional Authority (DRA) congratulates six new Tennessee graduates of the Delta Leadership Institute (DLI) Executive Academy who now have the tools to support DRA’s efforts to create jobs, build communities, and improve lives across west Tennessee and the Delta region.

The six graduates completed the year-long DLI Executive Academy, a training program that brings together public, private, and nonprofit-sector leaders from each of the eight states served by DRA. The program equips participants with the tools, experiences and networks that will help them create new economic opportunities in Delta communities as well as support the growth of the region’s economy.

“DLI is an important tool to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of economic development efforts in the Delta region,” **DRA Chairman Chris Caldwell said.** “We are investing in these Tennessee leaders who are ready to help us and our partners contribute to job growth for Delta residents.”

The graduates participated in six training sessions over the past year to educate them on the regional and local economic and community development tools that are working for Delta communities to spark ideas that can be implemented in their own communities.

“I want to congratulate the six Tennessee graduates of the Delta Leadership Institute,” **Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development Commissioner Bob Rolfe said.** “The individuals graduating from this program are strong community leaders that encompass what our state has to offer. I look forward to seeing these six graduates take what they have learned through this intensive program and use it to their advantage to create an even better living and working environment for the members of their communities.”

The Tennessee graduates are:

- **Gwyn Fisher, Memphis | Regional Director, Tennessee Department of Economic & Community Development**
- **Lindsay Frilling, Union City | CEO, Obion County Joint Economic Development Council**
- **Rob Goad, Martin | Project Management/Grant Writer, Northwest Tennessee Development District**
- **Gwendolyn Kilpatrick, Mason | Mayor, Town of Mason**
- **Lori Nolen, Huntingdon | Executive Director, The Dixie Carter Performing Arts Center**
- **Theresa Woodard, Cordova | Owner, TWMed Consulting, LLC**

“My involvement with Delta Leadership Institute was amazing! Our field experiences in the various states provided first hand learning opportunities to see how other communities have pulled together to overcome adversity and grow stronger.” Says Frilling. “Ultimately, it is all about diversity and collaboration, utilizing our most valuable resource – people.”

DLI fellows learn from local, regional and national experts in infrastructure and transportation, small business and entrepreneurship, workforce training, public health and other fields necessary for economic growth in the Delta region.

Since 2005, DLI's Executive Academy has enhanced the leadership skills, policy knowledge and networks of community members in the Delta region. After graduation, the Tennessee graduates become members of the Delta Leadership Network, which includes more than 500 community leaders who understand the importance of regional collaboration, resource sharing and innovative thinking.

DLI is a program of DRA in partnership with three institutions of higher education in the Delta region: The University of Alabama, Arkansas State University-Jonesboro and the University of Louisiana Monroe.

About the Delta Regional Authority

The Delta Regional Authority is a federal-state partnership created by Congress in 2000 to help create jobs, build communities, and improve lives through strategic investments in economic development in 252 counties and parishes across eight states. DRA has invested more than \$185 million into more than 1,100 projects. Overall, DRA investments have helped create and retain more than 55,000 jobs, train nearly 45,000 workers to advance in the 21st Century, and deliver sewer and water improvements to more than 238,000 residents and businesses.