



LEWIS & CLARK
 INTO THE UNKNOWN,
 JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY
 BY FCC SERVICES™

Custom Lewis & Clark Experiences

Shared experiences help forge stronger bonds and create a common language for future communication. Two Farm Credit organizations – Compeer Financial and AgCountry Farm Credit Services – sought these results by working with FCC Services to create dedicated Lewis & Clark Experience programs for their boards and senior leadership teams, and both have realized positive results.

The *Lewis & Clark Experience: Into the Unknown* is an experiential learning program that explores the leadership lessons from the pivotal exploration mission of the West and offers participants insights into leading their own organizations while facing a changing marketplace and future uncertainties.

“While the specifics of the challenges are different, there are parallels between what the Lewis & Clark expedition faced and today’s business environment,” says Leslie Hilton, Vice President of Governance/Board Development. “The lessons from Lewis & Clark demonstrate that leadership, flexibility and ingenuity are essential for success, as are collaboration and communication.”

Compeer planned its Lewis & Clark Experience as it neared the one-year anniversary of the three-association merger that created the new organization in 2017. In advance of the program, CEO Rod Hebrink met with both Leslie and the program facilitators to discuss Compeer’s challenges and the themes he wanted to explore during the two-and-one-half day program that would then be discussed further in a later planning session. The shared experience itself was also a goal.

“Going through the Lewis & Clark Experience together strengthened the teamwork and bonds within our board and management team, and allowed the discussions to veer off in directions specific to our challenges and our focus areas, which isn’t appropriate when participants come from multiple organizations,” says Rod. “It’s important that we provide opportunities for the board to interact outside board meetings to expand the connections that make governing more effective. It’s also a reminder to all of our leadership of the importance of challenging ourselves and being willing to try new things, for both the individual and the organization.”

AgCountry also sought the leadership lessons embedded in The Lewis & Clark Experience as well as the shared experience and common language that would come from a dedicated program involving its board and senior leadership team. The organization also added a half-day strategic planning session, facilitated by FCC Services, where the leadership lessons were applied.

“The value of an experience like this shared as a group is more than the sum of the parts. You create synergies that carry on after the program,” says Marc Knisely, AgCountry CEO. “Having a dedicated program for our team paid dividends right away because we were able to take some of the key messages and lessons learned during the Lewis & Clark program and incorporate them immediately into our strategic planning.”

Both Rod and Marc believe that other Farm Credit organizations could reap the benefits of a dedicated Lewis & Clark Experience program.

“This approach provides a tremendous opportunity to take advantage of the leadership lessons as a core team, and especially for new CEOs, help build their leadership teams and their relationship with their boards,” says Marc.