

NEWSLETTER



Now recruiting Class V Associates

The Russell County Leadership program wants you to join us for our January Linking with Leadership event. This event is meant to connect with all of our associates that have been through the program and ask questions while gaining insight in to what to expect if you are interested in joining our next Class in August. We are excited to connect and share with more leaders in Russell County. If you are interested or know someone who is interested in joining or hearing more about it encourage them to come and connect!

Projects & Paths for Russell County

We kicked off our first seminar of 2026 with an in-depth look at what drives economic development in Russell County and the priorities guiding future growth. Key focus areas included business retention, expanding housing opportunities, and promoting local businesses and attractions.

Associates participated in an open and candid conversation with Economic Development Director Michael Parsons, gaining firsthand insight into current initiatives while also addressing and clarifying information that has been circulating within the community. Michael shared both the challenges and opportunities facing Russell County, along with his perspective on how the county can capitalize on its strengths.

The discussion sparked thoughtful dialogue among associates, highlighting their concerns as well as the opportunities they see for continued growth and progress. Conversations also explored the county's tax structure and the significant investment the Economic Development Office makes in supporting community organizations and local projects.



Forward Movement - New Housing

To conclude the day, associates toured the new Flintwood senior housing development for a private discussion and facility walkthrough. As some of the first to view the nearly completed project, associates were impressed by the quality and design of the space. Callie Miller, Executive Director of Housing Opportunities Inc, shared insight into the development process and how the housing will operate. With only eight units remaining, Flintwood is a beautiful and valuable addition to the community—be sure to watch for the upcoming ribbon cutting to see it firsthand.



Rooted in Russell- Business Owner Insights

Dr. Tyrel Somers and his wife, Jessica, Russell residents and committed community investors, shared their motivation for reinvesting locally. They discussed the challenges of revitalizing historic downtown properties and highlighted their vision for creating meaningful spaces that benefit and bring value to the community. Following the Somers, associates enjoyed lunch at Klema Apple Market, where owner Jon Birk shared the creative, out-of-the-box strategies required to operate a successful rural grocery store. He also introduced The Lawft, the family's downtown Russell Airbnb, and associates were impressed by the thoughtfully revitalized historic space and its contribution to downtown redevelopment. The associates enjoyed the cozy space for their discussion on the 13 Ways to Kill Your Community book chapters addressing Shop Elsewhere, Don't Attract Business and Ignore Outsiders.

Thank you to our sponsors, hosts and speakers! Your investment in the future of Russell County is appreciated. Your Class IV associates will be on the road to our state capital in their next seminar in February. Stay tuned!