

# Building Networks and Leadership

with women in rural communities



**Monthly Newsletter**

The Leadership  
Exchange

The Breakfast Club  
Webinar Series

Get Out The Vote  
Additional Resources

Women in the Spotlight  
Carla Metz

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# Leadership Exchange

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Rachel Juritsch and Erica Bjelland

In August, we had the exciting opportunity to have a very special guest join us during our Leadership Exchange Meeting (Zoom meeting of course!), Lieutenant Governor Peggy Flanagan. Here is a quick introduction to our speaker:

*Peggy Flanagan is a mom, an advocate, a member of the White Earth Band of Ojibwe, and Minnesota's 50th Lieutenant Governor. Her career is built on standing up for children, working families, communities of color and Indigenous communities, and Minnesotans who have historically been underserved and underrepresented.*

We were so honored to have had an hour of her time to talk with our group to answer these four questions around the mission of 100 Rural Women and what is going on in our current world and region:

- *What advice do you have for rural women interested in pursuing decision - making leadership roles or running for office?*
- *How do you think rural communities be more welcoming?*
- *Can you talk about how One Minnesota addresses equity and how it we can be a part of this initiative?*
- *A lot of women are experiencing anxiety/stress over school openings, childcare, mental health, economy etc... despite all of these concerns, what are the positive impacts you see coming out 2020?*

We cannot thank Lt. Governor Flanagan enough for giving her time and for being so open with the group. We all received such amazing insight into what it is like to be a woman in a leadership role and what it takes to achieve those dreams.



As we move forward with our Leadership Exchange, we would love for you all (yes, you reading this) to consider being involved in the future of 100 Rural Women and to help us think about what the future might look like. It takes all women to come together and lift one another up.

[Read the full article and watch the recording here.](#)

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## **Where Rural Women Get Their News**

### **Breakfast Club Webinar**

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Terri Foley

Access to news is changing in rural areas-- with fewer local newspapers, consolidations of media companies, and social media. Confidence in fair reporting and the free press are being questioned. This webinar discussed the impacts of these media changes during this time of COVID and polarization. 100 Rural Women was joined by, Heidi Holton, Telsa Mitchell, and Elissa B. Alzate, accomplished radio and print journalists along with a university professor to share their experiences and research in media. You can watch the recording [here](#).



# All About Voting

## Breakfast Club Webinar

Breanna Ohl

On July 30th we held our third webinar, All About Voting! This webinar series has been an opportunity for us to highlight rural women leaders, develop leadership skills, and network all virtually.

For this past webinar we had the amazing opportunity to hear from Jamie Ebert, the Executive Outreach Director and Scheduler for the Minnesota Secretary of State and from Patty O'Connor, who has worked and ran elections in Blue Earth County for 39 years. Both women were able to bring their diverse backgrounds in voting and elections to our webinar. Jamie and Patty answered questions about the impact of COVID-19 on elections, the need for election judges, and how/why you should vote absentee during this pandemic. We are incredibly grateful that they were willing to share their knowledge and passion with us. If you wanted to access any of these resources, learn more about our speakers, or watch the full webinar you can do so [here](#).



## Our Next Webinar - Rural Women, Family Care and COVID

Look for more information about our September webinar featuring a panel discussion on family care and how it disproportionately falls to women, particularly at this time of COVID. We will lift up how rural women are navigating and identify models and strategies to find balance to provide support. Let us know how you are dealing with the pressure of family care and send comments/questions to [teresa@100ruralwomen.org](mailto:teresa@100ruralwomen.org). Read more about this webinar [here](#).

## Additional Voting Resources

Hannah Lepper, Breanna Ohl



VOTING RESOURCES

This summer, Breanna Ohl and Hannah Lepper began work on 100 Rural Women's first Get Out the Vote and civic engagement initiative. While they were overwhelmed with the possibilities at first, they are very proud of the work they accomplished this summer. They built a section of the 100 Rural Women website dedicated to voting and providing accurate information about this year's elections, especially surrounding absentee voting. You can find these resources [here](#) or by clicking the button below. They hope to see that expand in the future to include resources about other forms of civic engagement. Breanna also started a small informational video series on 100 Rural Women social media accounts to spread more information to a wider audience.

Hannah and Breanna also helped develop a webinar that was part of our monthly webinar series, "All About Voting" described above. They both learned a lot this summer and are very thankful for this experience, and can't wait to see what the future of 100 Rural Women holds!

# Carla Mertz

## Iron Shoe Farm

Annemarie Harrah

“Food is comfort. Food is healing.”

-Carla Mertz



100 Rural Women intern, Jazlynne Smith (left) and Carla Mertz (right)

In July, 100 Rural Women had the privilege of sitting down with Carla Mertz, small business owner and founder of **Iron Shoe Farm** in Princeton, Minnesota. Growing microgreens and pasture raising all of their animals, this local farm prides itself on providing entirely chemical-free, antibiotic-free products raised humanely and sustainably.

“We lost ninety percent of our business during the first two hours after the coronavirus shutdown,” Carla recalls, when asked how the coronavirus pandemic has impacted her small business.



She was quick to adapt. That same day, **Iron Shoe farm** had a new online e-commerce **website** within hours to sell her products. And in the first two weeks, she had a record day in sales. Her website includes a “mobile pantry”, where she offers a variety of products including microgreens, spices, sauces, cheese, eggs, and a variety of meats and vegetables. The list goes on and includes offerings from many other farmers that Carla sells through her site.

Carla’s ability to persevere in times of crisis and adapt to meet the needs of the community while ensuring the public’s safety has proven to be crucial in her success as a small business owner. Carla continues her small farming business while advocating the importance of farmers coming together to help one another in sourcing local foods.



Her growing business can in part be attributed to the strong network she has cultivated over the years, as Carla says she has met many women farm-owners like herself. Carla asserts that there are many more women farm-owners than the public thinks, as there is still the lingering gender role of farming being seen as a man’s job. She looks forward to bringing stories of more local Minnesota farmers, butchers, and chefs to her community.

Check out Carla's Spotlight Profile [here](#). And be sure to check out her website and business [here](#).

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A day focused on issues important to womxn, and those who support gender justice and racial equity, in Minnesota.

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