



## Director Leadership Conference



Effective governance by a strong and qualified board of directors is essential for the success of any business. For Farm Credit and ag cooperatives, whose boards primarily consist of members who may have little governance experience, professional development and training play crucial roles in ensuring they're prepared for the in-depth discussions and important decisions that need to be made.

FCC Services' annual Director Leadership Conference is designed to support directors' continuing education in governance best practices, explore key, emerging issues, as well as expose them to directors from across the Farm Credit System to learn how other organizations are managing through their shared challenges.

"Our overall goal is to help organizations improve their governance practices, and to help directors build the skills they need to fulfill their fiduciary responsibilities," says Joette Cross, Director of Event Management at FCC Services. "For some associations, the Director Leadership Conference is a continuation of the education their directors receive through the Premier Governance Series, for others it's a separate, less formalized and structured training opportunity."

In building the Directors Leadership Conference program each year, Joette taps into subject matter expertise in governance at FCC Services and across the System, considers industry trends, and takes into account conference evaluations from previous years as well as the needs and interests expressed by



Farm Credit directors and leaders throughout the year. A combination of professional speakers and System experts deliver a range of insightful presentations for both the general session and the breakout sessions, which offer a deeper dive into committee-specific topics such as Audit and Risk Management.

“For new directors, the amount of information that’s delivered in a very short time is a truly valuable asset as they start to gain and build their understanding of their fiduciary role in their organization,” says Joette. “For more experienced directors, the conference offers education on current trends and issues so they can continue to lead their organization in the face of the changing business and economic environment.”

Many organizations send their board members to the conference year after year, finding benefit in the new content that’s delivered around current trends and events. Golden State Farm Credit is one such organization, sending its entire board to the conference since the association was created through a merger three years ago. In addition to the education provided, bringing the full board together at a multiple-day, off-site event has helped solidify the new board.

“The conference has helped build camaraderie between the two boards through shared exposure to the sessions, and the quality, one-on-one discussion time amongst themselves,” says Fletcher Monroe, Golden State CEO. “They bring this back to the boardroom to elevate their discussions to higher level topics and with a commonality of theme.”

Fletcher, along with his senior leadership team, also attends the conference, joining other executive leaders from many other Farm Credit organizations who also attend with their directors.

“Having both our board and senior team attend the conference builds confidence, respect and teamwork between the board and management,” Fletcher says. “We believe it really positions management to understand and help the board as they discuss issues and set strategy, and if they have additional requests for information or training, we have the background to know or find what they need.”

Beyond the education provided through the formal sessions, the conference includes numerous opportunities for directors and senior leaders to interact and network with other leaders from across the System, sharing knowledge and insight and building relationships.

“I believe the value of the Directors Leadership Conference is not only in the quality of the speakers and the variety of topics, but also in hearing from other leaders within the System,” Fletcher says. “The peer-to-peer conversations about issues in different regions and about what their hot buttons are gives us a broader perspective that we can take back to Golden State and our strategic planning.”



The 2017 Director Leadership Conference: *Discerning Disruption* will take place November 14-16 at the Ritz-Carlton Amelia Island in Fernandina Beach, Florida. For more information or to register, go to <https://www.fccservices.com/conferences/director-leadership>.

[Click here](#) for a video preview of the Director Leadership Conference.