

North Dakota youth, lend your voice to the future of energy and agriculture interests

Recruitment is underway for a youth advisory council to provide voice, insight and vision to North Dakota's energy and agricultural interests. Three of the state's largest associations -- The Lignite Energy Council, the North Dakota Farm Bureau and the North Dakota Petroleum Council -- are partnering on the project.

Interested North Dakota students -- in grades 7-11 -- are encouraged to sign up at www.NextGenND.com. The students' commitment is for seven months (September through April.)

The deadline for signing up is June 15, 2019. Selection of 15 students across the state will occur in July and a survey will be sent to the participants to determine their interests, methods of meeting online or in person and to set up tours of farms, mines, power plants and refineries.

The connection between agriculture and energy is becoming more apparent. Fertilizers are made with fossil fuels. Cars -- that formerly ran on fossil fuels -- are now running on ethanol blends and electricity. As these trends continue, research and development projects at the state's universities will be making further breakthroughs.

The NextGen ND project will allow students to both learn and have input about North Dakota's future as industry groups work together to provide food and energy for coming generations.

During the seven-month program, the students will be asked to participate in at least three different meetings -- either in person or by online conferences. During these meetings, they will be briefed on current information, allowed to ask questions and then give feedback.

Representatives of the three industries -- agriculture, oil and coal -- will each pick five students who they feel will provide the best input into the challenges facing their industries. Participants will be picked on commitment, leadership and communication skills.

Participation in NextGen ND will give students the opportunity to learn how to advocate and lead on a statewide level to impact the state's future in a positive way.

The North Dakota Farm Bureau advocates for farmers and ranchers. The Petroleum Council provides governmental affairs support for the nearly 500 companies engaged in the oil and gas industry in North Dakota. The primary goal of the Lignite Energy Council is to maintain viable lignite coal industry and enhance development of the region's lignite coal resources for use in generating electricity, synthetic natural gas and valuable byproducts.