

Blackford County to Develop Strategic Plan

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Blackford County in east central Indiana is asking residents to take part in a planning process aimed at developing a strategic economic development plan for future growth of the region.

The first community meeting is scheduled for September 15 in Hartford City.

Source: Inside INdiana Business

Press Release

Blackford County, Ind. – September 2, 2005 — The community of Blackford County in eastern central Indiana is gearing up to create a vision plan with specific goals for its future. A grant from the Lilly Endowment, administered by the Indiana Association of United Ways, has enabled the community to initiate a new vision and action planning process, coined 4 Blackford County. The mission of 4 Blackford County is to improve the quality of life in Blackford County, to increase the pride of current residents and to entice new people and businesses to live and work there. An appointed community steering committee, along with vision plan facilitator Jim Dittoe of Winning Communities, Inc., will lead the planning process.

“As our community continues to grow and change, it is very important that we need to develop a consensus about the future,” said Ted Leas of Pacesetter Bank, who is co-chairing the steering committee with Mark Townsend, immediate Past President of the Blackford United Way.

Members of the steering committee invite all Blackford County residents to participate in this strategic planning process, starting with its first scheduled community meeting on Thursday, September 15 at 7:00 p.m. Other scheduled meetings for community participation are Tuesday, September 27 at 7:00 p.m., Saturday, October 15 from 8:00 a.m. until noon, and Thursday, November 10 at 7:00 p.m. All meetings will be held at the Lake Placid Conference Center, 397 S 200 E. in Hartford City.

Information obtained from citizens, focus groups, surveys, individual interviews and previous studies and plans will contribute to the plan. The planning process will examine the assets, challenges and opportunities of the county, and the completed plan will include a community mission and vision, measurable objectives, and a report with detailed recommendations. This report includes a timetable, costs and resources needed, and the appropriate groups or organizations that will be responsible for achieving the measurable objectives. The entire planning process will take approximately three months.

“After the goals and objectives are created, it is very important to develop an action plan to accomplish the findings,” said Mark Townsend, co-chairman of the Blackford County steering committee. “We do not want this to be a study that will sit on the shelf, but a roadmap for the future of Blackford County.”

Following the development of the plan, a grant will be sought in 2006 for the implementation of one or more of a related group of specific objectives. Eventually, Blackford County hopes to receive the designation of “Certified Winning Community” by the Community Banker’s Association of Indiana. This certification indicates that the community has made substantial progress toward the goals outlined in the vision plan. Blackford County hopes to experience such tangible results by the end of 2006.

About Winning Communities:

Winning Communities is a community planning consulting company that has facilitated numerous community vision and action plans for Indiana cities, towns and counties. Jim Dittoe, President of Winning Communities, Inc., has been building community progress in Indiana for more than 30 years. For more information about Winning Communities, contact Jim Dittoe at (317) 402-0524 or email winningcomm@aol.com.

Source: Winning Communities Inc.