

Where are you going, Rush County?

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4Community planning process hosts community meeting

According to Ralph Waldo Emerson, ideas rule the world. Area business leaders and community members gathered this week with the intent to let ideas rule the community.

A community meeting for the 4Community planning process was held Wednesday at the Rush County Schools Administrative Office, 330 W. Eighth Street, Rushville.

The Rush County United Fund led the process, along with the partners who make up the steering committee: the City of Rushville, Rush County, the Rush County Economic and Development Corporation, the Rush County Chamber of Commerce, the Rush County Community Foundation and Rush Memorial Hospital.

The Rush County Leadership Academy, class of 2006, provided research and survey assistance. They completed a preliminary analysis of opinions and categorized them in nine different goal areas. They also completed a review of existing plans and surveys that were contained in a report distributed to those present.

People in attendance were asked to join one of the groups established as a result of the responses from previous community surveys stating their ideas of the issues confronting Rushville.

The goal areas are: Arts, Recreation and Leisure; Community Development; Countywide Communications and Coordination; Economic Development; Image and Beautification; Infrastructure; Lifelong Learning; Social Services; and Technology.

Jim Dittoe of Winning Communities, Inc. facilitated Wednesday evening's process.

"There are five 'C's' to a winning community," he said. "Change, challenge, concern, commitment and the championship when you've reached your goals."

The room broke apart into small groups and filled out forms with their ideas for challenges, opportunities and various aspects of Rush County. Discussion was then shared with the entire group. After the discussion, Dittoe addressed the ideas.

"Where do we want to go and how do we get there?" he said. "The best way, of course, is together. This is your community."

Dittoe also addressed concerns that group members felt somewhat overwhelmed by the task at hand.

"It's easy to get frustrated and say 'we're never going to get there,'" he said. "But only you can control your destiny. There are 92 counties in the state and 92 counties facing the same problems, so you're not alone."

There will be a follow-up action planning team meeting to establish details of how things get accomplished, who is responsible and a timetable for action and resources needed.

The date for completion of the project is the end of June.

The Steering Committee will then submit an implementation grant for the funding for one or more related projects to the Indiana Association of United Ways.