

the News-Times

4Blackford County moves to next stage

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By Melissa Banter
Blackford County News-Times Correspondent

It is the end of one stage, and the beginning of another for members of the 4Blackford County group.

A congregation of people met to discuss the past vision and action plan that has been developing for the last several months.

Even though a lot of work has been completed on the project, much more work has yet to begin.

"Getting into the end zone is the toughest part of the game. We are 75 percent of the way," said Jim Dittoe of Winning Communities, who is responsible for assisting the group with this opportunity.

The action plan that will begin to be set into place will include a Blackford County Leadership Academy, where leaders in the community may take courses in leadership, a program entitled *One Book One Community*, which will encourage the people of Blackford County to share a chosen book, and a Gateway Project, which will include unity committee combining and sharing ideas for all the festivals in the county, establishing a brand identity, and erecting signage at the "gates" of each city and at the county. An application for an implementation grant has been submitted.

"We hope to hear some time next week about the grant," said Dittoe.

After the action plan was briefly reviewed, guests were asked to sign a "Declaration of Commitment," committing the community to the success and completion of the 4Blackford County Plan.

Members were also encouraged to sign up for the seven goal areas: County-wide Communications, Community Development, Economic Development, Image and Beautification, Life Long Learning, Recreation and Leisure and Social Service Issues.

Anyone wishing to participate in these goal areas may contact the Hartford City Chamber of Commerce, 111 N. High St., Hartford City, IN 47348; phone number (765) 348-1905.



Blackford County Schools Superintendent Dr. Gerald Chabot signs the "Declaration of Commitment," pledging his commitment to the 4Blackford County Vision and Action Plan that has been developed. Chabot has spoken about his involvement with *One Book, One Community* in the past. (NT Photo by Melissa Banter)