



Building and Achieving Your Community Vision

Winning Communities Teams Up with Best-selling Author to Inspire Success in Small Communities

Economic Development Specialist and Boomtown, USA Author Jack Schultz to Speak at Blackford County Community Planning Retreat

Blackford County and Indianapolis, Indiana – October 21, 2005 — Community planning firm Winning Communities has joined forces with best selling author Jack Schultz to offer the residents of Blackford County, Indiana ways to find success and improve the community. Schultz, an economic development leader who has sold more than 16,000 copies of his book, *Boomtown, USA: The 7 ½ Keys to Big Success in Small Towns*, will give a special presentation to residents, statewide media and state government officials on Thursday, October 27, 2005 at a community retreat held at the Lake Placid Conference Center, 397 S 200 E. in Hartford City. The community planning retreat will offer Blackford County residents the opportunity to shape their community's future.

“The national media ignores the positive things that are occurring in small town America, but it is the can-do spirit of the smaller communities such as Blackford County that are changing the state of Indiana and this country,” said Schultz.

A grant from the Lilly Endowment, administered by the Indiana Association of United Ways, has enabled Blackford County to initiate a new vision and action planning process, coined 4 Blackford County, 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. Vision plan facilitator Jim Dittoe of Winning Communities, Inc. is leading the 4 Blackford County planning team, along with an appointed steering committee. The community retreat is one of several community meetings involved in the four-month planning process.

The evening will commence with a complimentary buffet dinner at 5:30 p.m., followed by guest speaker Jack Schultz at 6 p.m. After the guest presentation until approximately 9 p.m., Winning Communities will facilitate a community retreat session for Blackford County. During this process, breakout sessions will commence and residents will help to establish written goals and measurable objectives identified as important to Blackford County. These goal areas include:

- Community development
- County-wide communications
- Economic development
- Image and beautification
- Life-long learning
- Recreation and leisure
- Social service issues



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Blackford County hopes to become the fourth community to be designated a “Certified Winning Community,” a process created by Winning Communities and endorsed by the Community Banker’s Association of Indiana. This certification indicates that the community has not only created a vision and action plan but has made substantial progress toward the goals outlined in the plan.

“I have been impressed with the determination and spirit of the people of Blackford County, because they already have their sleeves rolled up and are ready for action,” said Jim Dittoe, president of Winning Communities, Inc. “The visionary process is most valuable for Blackford County because it is not a study, but an action plan. We have had more than 100 people from throughout Blackford County who have generated specific ideas from identified goal areas, which we will flesh out during this process so that practical results will occur.”

The Thursday, October 27 dinner, presentation and retreat is open to all residents of Blackford County, statewide media and state government officials. To make a reservation to attend the event, please contact the Hartford City Chamber of Commerce at 765-348-1905 by Tuesday, October 25.

About Winning Communities:

Winning Communities is a community planning consulting company that has facilitated numerous community vision and action plans for Indiana’s cities, towns and counties. Jim Dittoe, President of Winning Communities, Inc., has been building community progress in Indiana for more than 30 years. The Certified Winning Communities program is open to any county, city or town that seeks to create a vision and action plan for its future success. For more information about Winning Communities, contact Jim Dittoe at (317) 402-0524 or email winningcomm@aol.com.

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