



Mercer County: Better Together

Success through collaboration.

#MCBT

MCBT Joins Forces with Looser-Flake to Educate Residents, Share Benefits of Collaboration

Mercer County, IL – August 1st, 2018 – Mercer County: Better Together (MCBT) recently teamed up with the Looser-Flake Charitable Foundation to educate residents on the histories of each entity, the relationship between them and what lies ahead. Held at the Hamlet-Perryton Presbyterian Church Hall, the July 30th session helped residents understand how their communities benefit from the work of both entities and offered an opportunity to clarify misconceptions.

"There has been confusion around the relationship between the Looser-Flake Charitable Foundation and Mercer County: Better Together," said Joy village trustee Don Wilken. "It's clear now that they are separate entities that have worked together in the past and may again in the future if they share a common vision towards a particular project."

North Henderson Village President Carol Rogers added, "I was happy to see people at the session who have not yet been involved with MCBT. Informing more people at each step is key."

The session featured a joint presentation by MCBT Executive Director Kyle McEwen and Looser-Flake Foundation Charitable Foundation Administrator Kelly Thompson, followed by a Q&A session.

"I was glad to see so many people come out to learn more," said Thompson. "I'm always moved at how many people in Mercer County contribute to their community. I wanted to share with participants how the Looser-Flake Charitable Foundation works and how resident input through MCBT helps the Foundation's trustees."

The session also detailed the two current grant programs offered by the Looser-Flake Charitable Foundation. One surrounds technological needs in school districts which serve Mercer County residents; another involves revitalization projects at public parks and recreation facilities in Mercer County. Each of these funding opportunities became a reality as a direct result of the MCBT countywide planning process.

MCBT is serving as the collaborative entity for the parks and recreation grant program, which provides a financial incentive for collaboration among, rather than competition between, local communities and entities. As all eleven Mercer County population centers are participating in the program, up to \$150,000 will be available to support projects at public parks and recreation facilities across the county. MCBT is currently working with communities and entities countywide to package project needs into one collaborative application.

"The information gathered by MCBT helps to prioritize grant opportunities offered by the Looser-Flake Charitable Foundation, in line with its mission to address economic development and cultural and educational opportunities in Mercer County," added Thompson.

In total, session participants represented nine of Mercer County's eleven population centers.

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