



Mercer County: Better Together

Success through collaboration.

#MCBT

MCBT Moves to Action Prioritization Phase of Planning Process

Mercer County, IL – October 13th, 2017 – Following six months of community forums, outreach and data gathering, Mercer County: Better Together (MCBT) is moving toward action prioritization. Since February MCBT has learned the values, hopes, concerns and ideas of nearly 500 county residents. Public feedback was used to build statements for each of Mercer County’s eleven population centers, then the county as a whole. These countywide statements are vital to the planning process, as they guide action steps for the future.

Using the *Community Heart & Soul* planning model ten countywide statements have been constructed, centered on feedback from all eleven Mercer County communities. Residents have provided hundreds of ideas for actions which would improve Mercer County; countywide statements will serve as the filter for these ideas in the vetting process. In order to ensure long-term impact of these countywide statements, MCBT will be conducting two different series of public sessions across Mercer County.

The *Change Over Time* sessions are designed to help residents understand how their community and county have changed, how they may continue to change, and how doing business differently may steer positive change in the future. MCBT Community Representatives or Steering Committee members will facilitate discussions at these sessions. They will use a framework to review how the statements express themselves in the county, then the group will brainstorm ideas for action that will grow or improve Mercer County. Finally, the group will prioritize the actions based on a set of criteria. Each *Change Over Time* session will address two countywide statements and last approximately 90 minutes. Two have already taken place, with three more to follow in the month of October.

Simultaneously, five *Action Planning Sessions* will be held across Mercer County. Each of these sessions will feature facilitated discussion on two countywide statements. Regional and local experts will be involved in these discussions, helping to clarify processes and identify opportunities for action on themes addressed.

“It’s crucial that we involve experts in our discussions,” says MCBT Project Coordinator Kyle McEwen. “They will help steer our efforts in the right direction and help ensure action steps are intentional, impactful and sustainable.”

Change Over Time and *Action Planning Sessions* will take place across Mercer County in the following weeks. Below is the list of dates, topic areas & times of these upcoming sessions.

Upcoming Change Over Time sessions (all begin at 6pm)

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| Tuesday, October 17 th | Recreation & Health/Wellness | Keithsburg 1 st Christian Church |
| Monday, October 23 rd | Natural Resources & Infrastructure | New Boston Fire Station |
| Tuesday, October 24 th | Education & Small Business | Sherrard Fire Station |

Action Planning Sessions

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| Wednesday, October 25 th | Recreation & Health/Wellness | New Windsor Presbyterian Church | 6pm |
| Wednesday, November 1 st | Festivals/Events & Historical Assets | Joy Fire Station | 6pm |
| Wednesday, November 8 th | Natural Resources & Infrastructure | North Henderson United Methodist Church | 6pm |
| Monday, November 13 th | Public Services & Leadership | Former Seaton Bank | 6pm |
| Wednesday, November 20 th | Education & Small Business | Boden Community Church | 10am |

If you would like more information on Mercer County: Better Together or this series of sessions, please contact Project Coordinator Kyle McEwen by phone at (309) 574-3123 or by email at kyle@mcbettertogether.org.
