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# Blackford County Progress 2009



*Supplement to The News Times April 30, 2009*

*Thank you for letting us serve you!*



# Fincannon: “We put the FORD in BlackFord County”

Since September 1985, Fincannon Ford Mercury has been servicing Blackford County. The dealership staff’s friendly service and the years of experience of the sales and service technicians have made them a well respected business in Blackford County.

One of their sales staff members, Max Selvey, starting sell-

ing Fords on his birthday in 1956, which is why he says he will always remember that day. After 53 years of selling Fords, Selvey stated, “There has never been a day that I woke up not wanting to go to work. I love this job.”

Matt Fincannon, new vehicle sales manager, commented, “Not everybody like myself gets an

opportunity to work with someone like Max who has over 50 years of Ford experience. It is a privilege to work with him.”

Service manager, Robert Adamson, has been with Fincannon Ford for six years. He has four experienced and certified technicians with two technicians being senior master certified. Denny Leist and

Dave Walters are the senior master certified technicians. Allen Roush and Junior Morgan are also certified technicians with Gary DeLong as parts manager and Zach Rahschulte as their detailer.

Office manager Brenda Hutchison has been employed at Fincannon’s more than 20 years. Another office worker is Patti

Osborn, title clerk.

The building that now houses Fincannon Ford Mercury has been the home of past car dealers, Crankshaw Motors, Trauring Motors, and Hartford Motors.

Matt stated, “The people are fantastic to work with here in the county. It’s a wonderful area to do business in. I have smile every day coming in to work.”



Robert Adamson, service mgr., Zach Rahschulte, detailer, Dave Watters, tech., Allen Roush, tech., Denny Leist, tech., JR Morgan, tech., Gary DeLong, parts mgr.

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**Brenda Hutchison,**  
office mgr.



**Max Selvey,**  
Sales



**Rick Sizelove,**  
used car mgr.



**Matt Fincannon**



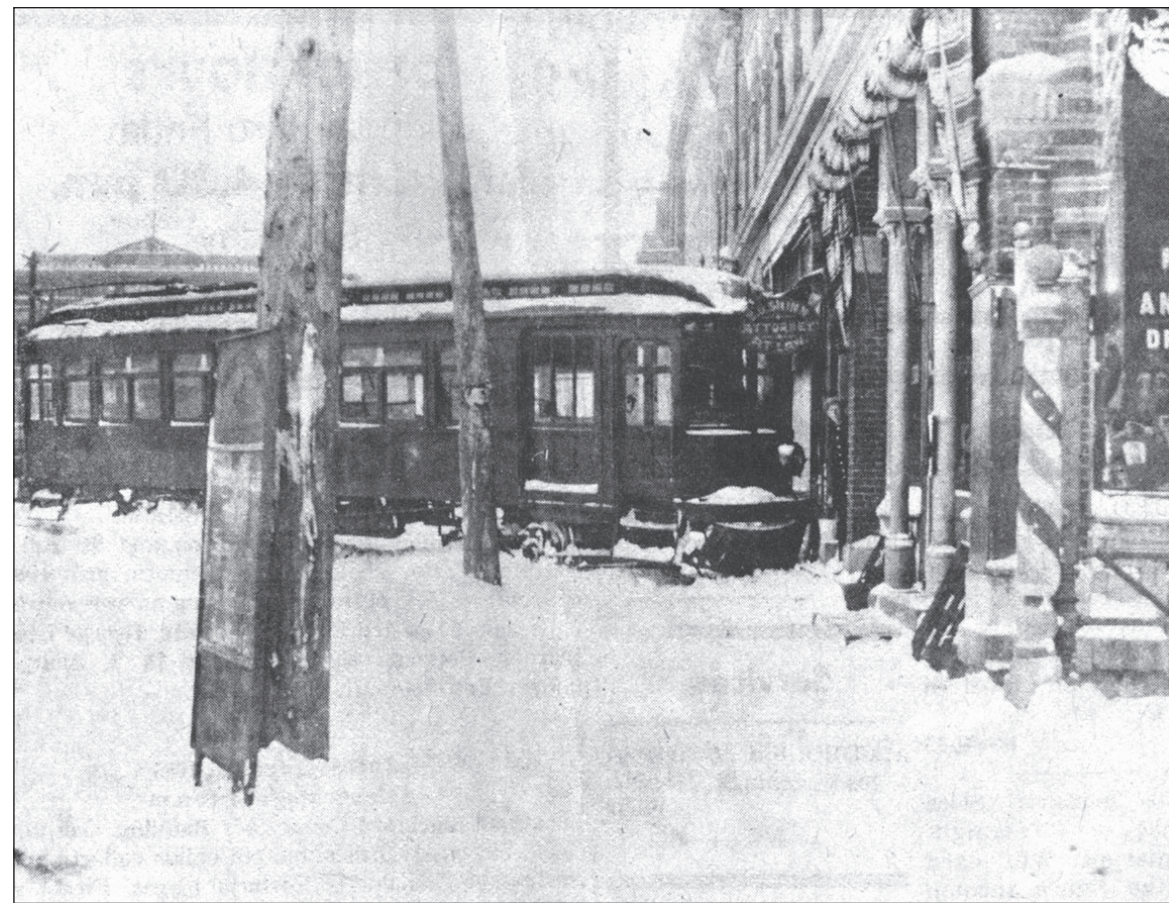
**Patti Osborn,**  
title clerk



**Stan Bourff,**  
general mgr.



Hess Grocery (top photo) on South Jefferson Street, Hartford City, in the 1940’s was well known in the community. The remains of the store were torn down in 2008.



The Interurban (photo to right) from a 1980s News Times has been replaced by LifeStream’s New InterUrban service, which provides rides for rural residents in East Central Indiana. LifeStream, headquartered in Yorktown, helps people with independent living options. The New InterUrban transportation system involves 28 vehicles that operate in Delaware, Madison, Grant, Blackford, Jay, Randolph and Henry counties. The New InterUrban provides more than 1 million passenger miles each year for individuals. People of all ages are eligible to ride.



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## Merchants of ALL grains

# First ‘courthouse’ was an oak tree, followed by log cabin

The Blackford County Courthouse which dominates the Hartford City Courthouse Square Historic District dedicated in 2008, is not the original. The current courthouse is the third and the second at that location. A courthouse made of brick, and only 40 feet by 40 feet, was built in 1894, and before that, a log cabin served the courts.

In the early days, after the legislature ordered the creation of Blackford County in 1838, no one was in any hurry to establish a system of courts. The first court session was held at a private home, the Andrew Boggs residence. Court was held under a large oak tree. The bailiff, Frederick Beal, had a pocket full of rocks to ward off any intruders.

In 1841, commissioners ordered a “hewed log house, 25 feet square, 2 story of common height.” It had a 3-foot stone foundation.

Most of the population was in the southwest part of the county, according to a history of Blackford County, Indiana, published by the Blackford County Historical Society. The original courthouse was on 40 acres southwest of town, owned by John Trimble and James Russey and was not near the center of the county where the courthouse now stands.

Because of donations of land and cash, it was agreed the second courthouse should be built in Hartford City, and a brick structure was begun in 1844. The first court sessions were held there in 1845, even though the Courthouse was not quite finished. It cost \$5,600 to build. William Bolinger and William Martin cut the stone and laid the brick, according to the history book.

This brick courthouse was used but apparently was not maintained, since in 1893 a Judge Custer of the 48th Judicial Circuit Court condemned the courtroom and refused to come hear pleas until commissioners provided a new room. They used the Opera House until a new Courthouse could be arranged.

Commissioners put out the call for a new Courthouse that would be fire-proof and made completely of stone. Seven bidders provided bids that were all too high. On June 8, 1893 they accepted plans from Marion archi-

fects LaBelle and French, who had never planned a courthouse before. They promised to save money by using local glass instead of French plate glass, using less ornamentation, and by bringing concrete from Portland instead of from Louisville. This cut \$3,100 off the price and the current Courthouse was built for less than \$100,000. It was financed by 20-year bonds. The clock alone cost \$2,000.

This “new” courthouse is the one that now stands. It is made of Amherst Blue stone, a material still in use today. The architecture is Romanesque. The main structure is 71 by 126 feet, and the tower is 165 feet high.

The floors are laid in tile and the walls have marble wainscoting. The clock was lit for the first time in 1895 using temporary wiring that snaked into the county building’s windows from the outside of the tower.



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# Blackford Community Hospital growing as valuable local asset

Blackford Community Hospital has made technology a focus over the last year with significant upgrades in the areas of radiology, cardiology and surgery.

“We’re all aware of how rapidly technology changes,” said Steve West, President and CEO, Blackford Community Hospital. “Healthcare is perhaps the best illustration of how quickly technology advances and what a difference it can make.”

One area where technology is making a difference at Blackford Community Hospital is in the area of medical imaging. The hospital now has a 16 Slice CT Scanner that provides physicians with diagnostic pictures that gives them an even more detailed look at any problem areas. Images doctors obtain from a CT Scan can eliminate the need for other more invasive testing.

In cardiac areas, BCH upgraded their cardiac monitoring equipment to provide caregivers a more detailed view of a patient’s heart activity with every beat.

The Surgical areas at BCH also saw upgrades in several areas. New equipment for laparoscopic surgeries provides surgeons with the tools to perform more surgeries using minimally invasive techniques. By utilizing the available laparoscopic technologies, patients have a smaller incision which results in a shorter recovery period.

Also in surgery, in the area of gastrointestinal procedures, like colonoscopies, BCH now has high definition technology in place. The HDTV signal used at BCH is designed to produce 1080 lines of resolution, which more than doubles the number of scan lines used by conventional systems, and offers doctors a very high level of detail and color. The new technology is specifically designed for use with human tissue, the result, in addition to shorter procedure times, is a clear view of very small capillary patterns allowing physicians to better visualize areas of possible concern.

On January 1 of this year, BCH became an official Clarian Health Partner, joining the same health system as Ball Memorial Hospital and IU, Methodist and Riley hospitals.

“Our partnership with Clarian has the potential to be very positive not only for the hospital but for the community as well,” West said.

“In terms of technology, as a part of Clarian, our local community will be that much closer to the implementation of future medical advancements such as electronic medical records. Meaning BCH will continue to be equipped with the latest medical technology in order to provide the best healthcare to our community.”

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www.blackfordcommunityhospital.org



## Blackford Community Hospital

A Clarian Health Partner

# Blackford County makes plans to measure, review economic progress

By Rob Cleveland  
BCEDC Executive Director

“Achievement without planning is called luck. Few of us benefit from good fortune, but many of us count on it.”

In the last month, these words were spoken by a site selector who works for a world-renowned company as he spoke to an assembled group of economic development professionals. This site selector’s words only reinforced the positive direction we’re moving in Blackford County.

We are currently working on a large planning project that focuses on the economic development efforts throughout the County. We are in the process of applying for an OCRA (Office of

Community and Rural Affairs) Planning Grant that will supply the county with a detailed direction of our economic pursuits.

The Economic Development Strategic Plan will result in realistic goals and objectives as well as future expenses and sources of funding for Blackford County. Additionally, the Strategic Plan will provide a measurement for the county’s progress with a clear set of benchmarks and review.

Immediately following the approval of the Strategic Plan grant, the County hopes to apply for another OCRA Planning grant. This grant will allow the County to update the Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is extremely important because it is an all-encompassing plan

and will focus on the future land usage in Blackford County

The Comprehensive plan will include: objectives for future development, policy recommendations for land usage, and recommendations on public utilities, places, land and structures.

The Blackford County Comprehensive Plan was last written in 1974, and we can all agree that the world has changed dramatically over the last 35 years.

Our County’s future success is highly dependent on both the Comprehensive Plan and the Economic Development Strategic Plan. The most important aspect of both plans is that they are highly dependent on community input.

While these plans may contain

ideas from Mayor Whitesell and Mayor McPherson, the County Commissioners, City Councils and the Economic Development Office, the plans will each be community visions. The plans will allow many Blackford County residents to come forward and take leadership of the direction of the County.

Currently, the hottest trend in economic development is chasing the “green” industry. Blackford County is already in a favorable position to capitalize on this trend with the recent announcement that Brevini USA will be moving its headquarters to Muncie. With the additions of Brevini USA and Brevini Wind, the “green” wave is heading directly to East Central Indiana.

Additionally, another hot trend appears to be communities who are looking to remove themselves from the manufacturing sector. Blackford County is not one of those counties.

It’s important for us to not lose focus during the current economic downturn. The residents of Blackford County excel in manufacturing and it is something we should take pride in. Despite a few recent plant closures, we still have many high-quality manufacturing facilities in Blackford County. We will use this strength to capitalize on the manufacturing opportunities that the “green” industry provides.

As the push for renewable energy grows, so does the need for companies to work together

[Continued on page five.]

# Huggins Auto: oldest family owned business

Jess Huggins, Sr. first began doing business in 1946 after returning from military service to Hartford City. He started out on High Street where the laundromat is now located by selling and repairing used cars. He also spent some time building race cars out of automobiles he obtained from local residents and transforming them.

After 15 years in business Huggins bought a new building and added a showroom. The business is still in that location with daughter Pat and her husband Bill Eppard officially became owners of the business in 1971 so her parents could retire. Pat has been an active part of the Huggins Auto Sales nearly all her life and her husband Bill has been in the business for 51 years.

Pat and Bill are still owners and actively involved in running Huggins Auto Sales along with Scott Confer, general manager with 25 years of experience at Huggins Auto Sales. Dustin George, has been at Huggins for

12 years with the last six in sales.

The service department consists of Jim Sheron with 17 years experience and Rex Drennen with 11 years of experience. Both are Chrysler trained ASE certified master technicians. Confer commented on his service department, “We do everything from changing oil to rebuilding engines and transmissions. We specialize in Chrysler, Jeep, and Dodge and we have the latest state of the art diagnostic equipment for these vehicles and the experienced technicians to do a professional job.”

After 63 years as a family owned and operated business in Blackford County, what is the key to their success? Confer stated, “We give all of our customers one-on-one service. We take care of our customers from the time of the sale and throughout their vehicle ownership experience. In our small community word of mouth travels fast so our 63 years in business speaks for itself.”



Jess Huggins, Sr., started Huggins Auto in 1946 on N. High St. Huggins Auto Sales has received the Five Star award from Chrysler every year since the early 1990’s when the award was first presented. Chrysler gives this award to outstanding dealers.



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Southside kindergarten student Tyler Brown prepared to be videotaped as a finalist in the Reading Rainbow Writers competition.

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# Blackford Community Hospital



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[www.blackfordcommunityhospital.org](http://www.blackfordcommunityhospital.org)

# County makes plans

[Continued from page four.] and find ways to reduce costs while reducing their carbon footprint.

In recent months, the BCEDC has been working with environmental engineers who are dedicated to improving waste streams around the country.

Because of the push to renewable energy, there are many opportunities to reuse waste such as wood, plastics and paper. Several companies in Blackford County are poised to take advantage of these opportunities and become stronger, more diversified businesses.

All too often, the perception of a community is far worse among the residents of that community than the perception of those outside the community.

Blackford County residents should take pride in their suc-

cesses and their strengths. At the risk of missing many positive aspects of the County, it is important to note that:

- There is an incredibly active and charity-minded business core that supports the County and its residents.
- The Blackford County School system has dedicated leaders who understand the need to adjust the way we are educating our children.
- Kiwanis, Rotary, and the Bruin Boosters are just a few of the groups that raise thousands of dollars that directly benefit Blackford County's youth.
- Hartford City's Downtown Revitalization group, the Chambers of Commerce, the Demolition Coalition, 4 Blackford County and the 4H Fair Board are all groups whose

Rob Cleveland, the new executive director of the Blackford County Economic Development Corporation, hit the ground running with plans to move the county forward.



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# Hartford City community.

## Water Works Department

Front row: Joe Pennington,  
Kevin Hall and Ron Thomas

Back row: Jeremy Huffman and  
Chad Speidel

## Wastewater Treatment Dept.

Waine Ritenour - Sewage Supervisor

Gene Meadows  
Nicole Fortner  
Gregg Jones  
Steve Farling  
Rick Rice  
Jerry Wyatt  
Travis Williamson

## Dept. of Public Works

Allen Bell - Street Commissioner  
Bill Bacon  
Jeffrey Thomas  
Dewayne Maddox  
Mark Cooper  
Eli Coulter  
Steve Howard  
Jerry Shady  
Bill West Jr  
Chad Sullivan  
Brian Stimpson  
Bret Mahan

## Police Department

Matt Felver - Police Chief  
Greg Bonewit  
Bill Meyer  
Doug Beckley  
Scott Mealey  
Stephen Hurd  
Billy Owens  
Mark McKissack  
Dustin Tarr  
Adam Lamotte  
Sam Tarleton

## Police Department Cont.

Erik Hawk  
Sheila Murrell - Secretary  
Denise Bacon - Ordinance  
Nikki Grider-Office  
Dago - Police Dog

## Fire Department

Bret Murray - Fire Chief  
Ron Parrott  
Joe Ervin  
Ron Kreischer  
Rick Sluder  
Clifton Rinker  
Rob Hess

## City Hall

Janet Gilland - City Clerk Treasurer  
Christy Terhune - Deputy Clerk  
Treasurer  
Karen Avery - Payroll Clerk  
Carolyn Beckley - Utility Clerk  
Misty Teer - Mayor's Secretary  
Dennis Whitesell - Mayor  
Dave Bennett - Re-Development  
Director  
Susie Mcdonald-Janitor

## Board of Works

Pat Dee  
Dennis Whitesell  
Scott Confer

## City Council

Scott Confer - District 1  
Dustin George - District 2  
Jimmy Lytle - District 3  
Bill Hess - District 4  
John Adams - At-Large

## Mayor

Dennis Whitesell



# Montpelier still a vibrant community

By Renda Heyerly

The Montpelier Chamber of Commerce has always been very active in many aspects of promoting Montpelier.

The group had its beginnings with several business persons that called themselves the "Boosters" sometime in the late 30's. A couple business you may be familiar with them bringing to this area are Montpelier Glove and Pacesetter Bank.

By early 1950 the articles were written to make it the Montpelier Chamber of Commerce. Currently they are involved in promoting Montpelier with articles in the paper, keeping downtown beautiful and encouraging people to shop and buy locally to keep our current businesses here

and thriving.

Currently we are looking at a project that would freshen up the southeast corner of downtown at Main Street and SR 18.

Montpelier Chamber was responsible for getting our most photographed citizen on National TV this month. The Big Indian was used in the introduction to a National TV show "Parks and Recreation" which brought some attention to our little town.

There is a lot of pride in Montpelier and it shows by the way we take care of our town. Flowers are planted and well taken care of by volunteers. Our streets are beautiful this time of year with the ornamental pears in bloom along Main Street heading south.

The Chamber is actively working with Blackford County Economic Development Corp. Executive Director Rob Cleveland to do what we can to bring new business here.

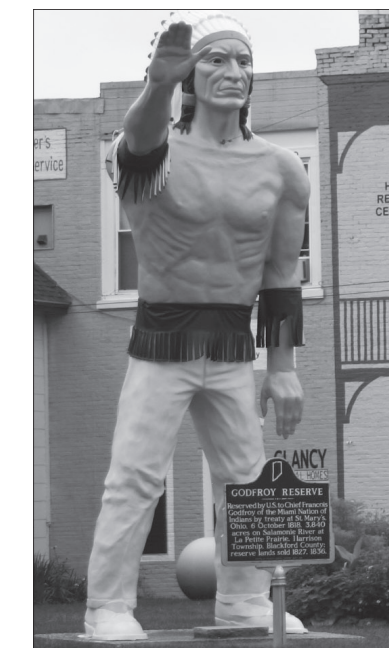
Montpelier is a vital, vibrant small town that has much to offer. Our niche is Small Town America: A place where you can still feel safe walking the streets and letting your children play at a local park; a place where you know your neighbor and help them when you have the opportunity.

We all celebrate the birth of a child or grandchild and mourn a death. If you have a need, your friends are there to help however they can. Many benefits and bake sales are held each year to help a friend in need

Volunteerism is alive and strong and evident in our many clubs and organizations that help people in our community as well as those far away. The Montpelier Lions Club, Tri County Helping Hands, Montpelier Ministerial Society and Kiwanis are a few who do a great deal for this community. We have a local food pantry and used clothing is offered to those in need.

For a small town Montpelier has a great deal to offer. Housing here is less expensive than the surrounding area and I always tell people you can get more house for your buck in Montpelier than any place around.

We are a little town but a vibrant community looking to grow and stay very much alive. We are always looking for ways to grow our city.



This large statue in downtown Montpelier is a landmark for local residents and is getting national exposure on a television sitcom.

## Montpelier Chamber of Commerce



**Thank You,  
for your continued support**  
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