

**PROCLAMATION
RURAL IMPACT COUNTY CHALLENGE**

WHEREAS, small towns and rural communities are home to millions of Americans and are a vibrant part of our nation's economy; and

WHEREAS, in 2014, approximately 1.4 million children in rural areas were poor and over 700,000 children lived in rural families with cash incomes that fell below half of the poverty line; and

WHEREAS, high rates of poverty have persisted for generations, including over 300 rural counties with poverty rates of over 20 percent in every Census since 1980; and

WHEREAS, investing in poor children and their families not only reduces poverty in the near term, but also improves children's education, health, and earnings outcomes later in life; and

WHEREAS, rural and tribal communities face distinct challenges, including limited access to critical services, fewer job prospects, and in some places, relative lack of institutional capacity; and

WHEREAS, no matter where they live, all families aspire for the cornerstones of economic security: a well-paying job, child care, a college education, health care, a home, and retirement; and

WHEREAS, Blair County and all counties recognize that a child's zip code should not determine her destiny, and that every child should have the opportunity to succeed; and

WHEREAS, The Blair County Bridges Network is a sub-committee of the Healthy Blair County Coalition. The Network has facilitated the growth and development of initiatives to educate the community on poverty, support mentoring efforts and bring stakeholders to the table to provide support and resources to agencies that touch those experiencing poverty; and

WHEREAS, through *The Rural Impact County Challenge*, the National Association of Counties and the White House Rural Council are encouraging public, private and nonprofit leaders to reduce the number of children living in poverty in rural areas;

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, THAT, WE, THE BLAIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, do hereby sign on to the Call to Action to reduce the number of children living in poverty, commit to sharing lessons learned with other counties in my state and across the country to support a national initiative and encourage all county officials, employees and residents to participate in *The Rural Impact County Challenge*. We resolve to utilize the resources available through *The Rural Impact County Challenge* to:

- Convene or draw on a diverse team of leaders and decision makers from multiple agencies committed to reducing the number of children and families in rural areas living in poverty.
- Develop a plan with measurable outcomes that improves access, participation, and/or impact of evidence-based and other promising practices in one or more of the following areas: early childhood education, nutrition, workforce development, and health and human services.
- Implement research-based approaches that advance the plan.
- Create a process to track progress using data and information systems, and to report on successes.

PASSED AND APPROVED in this 17th day of May, 2016.

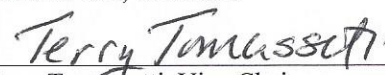
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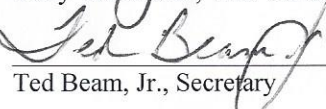

Helen P. Schmitt, County Administrator



**BLAIR COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:**


Bruce R. Erb, Chairman


Terry Tomassetti, Vice-Chairman


Ted Beam, Jr., Secretary