

Road connects Fairfield, West Chester

TID starts talks on new projects

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Guest speakers at the Union Centre Boulevard Extension grand opening on Monday drove home a specific message about the new \$8 million connector - not only will it link Fairfield and West Chester Township, it will also will be an impetus for economic development in outer lying communities.

That is because the 1.7-mile former Symmes road extension project provides direct access to Interstate 75. The Butler County Transportation Improvement District project runs from Ohio 747 to Seward Road - where Symmes Road picks up - and is estimated to bring into the surrounding communities about 5,000 to 6,000 jobs, officials said.

"I've never seen (a project) with the complexities this one had ... There was really a resolve to make this happen," said Art Pizzano, Fairfield city manager. Fairfield contributed \$5 million to the project, while the county funded \$2 million and West Chester Township contributed \$1 million, also allocating 15 acres for wetlands.

"Projects like this are far and few between," Pizzano said. In light of the 600 acres primed for development, to which the new road now provides access, Dave Tacosik, West Chester Township Board of Trustees president, said there now exists the potential for unlimited commerce.

"Because it's a regional powerhouse for development," he said "And when you travel this new road, we do not want you to see where West Chester ends and Fairfield begins." Many generations will continue to benefit from the new road, said Greg Wilkens, county engineer, "from the jobs this

Wilkens credited project manager Scott Harris for pushing the project forward and for acting as liaison between residents and officials. He also thanked Schumacher Dugan Construction, Inc. and private citizens for donating more than 77 percent of the project's right of way. After the ceremony and a luncheon, the TID Board met for its regularly scheduled meeting.

Much discussion centered on two proposed TID projects - the construction of an extension of Bobmeyer Road, from Gilmore Road east, to intersect with Ohio By-pass 4, and widening of the bypass. All board members agreed that moving forward with both projects is key in keeping with the whole intent of the Union Centre Boulevard extension.

Mike Samoviski, TID executive director, said Butler County Regional Airport officials are eager to see the road expansion project get started. "They are enthusiastic about it, because it will provide much improved access to the airport," he said, adding that about 50 acres of airport land designated for a cross wind runway are no longer needed for that purpose and may prove fruitful for development.

Board member Ed Shelton added that the By-pass 4 widening proposal is imperative to any accessory development planning around the new Union Centre Boulevard extension. "By-pass 4 has got to be widened at some point," he said. "We need to meet soon and talk about that."

County Commissioner Michael Fox also attended the meeting and agreed with members' assessments, particularly regarding

creates out here."

the airport. "That's an asset we need to develop and make a centerpiece," he said. "And the funding streams appear to be in reach."