

Journal News

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2005

GOVERNMENT

Camp Timberhill now a done deal

FAIRFIELD TOWNSHIP
— The Butler County Transportation Improvement District made the purchase of Camp Timberhill a done deal Friday.

The Great Rivers Girl Scout Council, which almost backed out of the deal in August for a residential developer, sold the 57-acre camp in Fairfield Township to the TID for \$1,602,076, said John Fonner, executive director of the TID. Then, the TID immediately traded the camp with Butler County MetroParks for 18 acres of park space at Ronald Reagan Voice of Freedom Park. The 18 acres is needed for the Liberty Interchange project to connect Interstate 75 and Ohio 129 with Hamilton-Mason Road.

By Dec. 7, the TID plans to sell to a commercial developer a portion of the land it has acquired for the project and pay back a \$1.65 million advance from the county Board of Commissioners, Fonner said.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2005

TID close to completing land buy

3-way deal makes way for highway interchange project

By Chris Dumond
Butler County Bureau

HAMILTON — The Camp Timber Hill saga may come to an end this week as the Butler County Transportation Improvement District is scheduled to close on the purchase of the Girl Scout camp.

John Fomner, director of the TID, said Monday that the sale is scheduled to be finalized Friday, with the TID buying the 57-acre camp in Fairfield Township for

about \$1.6 million. The TID is expected to simultaneously trade that land for about 15 acres of Butler County MetroParks property near Interstate 75. The MetroParks land is needed to build the Liberty Interchange.

The complicated land deal became even more complex in August when several months into the purchase contract, the Great Rivers Girl Scout council balked at selling the camp to the TID fearing it would not get needed regulatory approval and would have trouble financing the project. Butler County commissioners then advanced the purchase price to the TID while both groups agreed they were still bound by the contract.

The TID is expected to refund the money to the county by selling part of the 15 acres not needed for right-of-way to a commercial developer.

In other business, the TID approved a resolution in support of Issue 1 and another to loan \$20,000 to the Butler County Port Authority.

Warren County Engineer Neil Tunison said Issue 1, a \$2 billion bond issue to come before voters in the November election, will be vital in getting state funding for local transportation projects.

Part of the issue would provide \$1.35 billion to renew Ohio Public Works funding over 10 years. Tunison said that funding brings about

\$9 million per year to fund infrastructure projects in Butler, Warren, Clermont and Clinton counties.

Another part of the issue would provide \$150 million over seven years in state funding for a program to develop potential business sites.

"I think as we look at the extension of (Ohio) 63 and trying to attract additional businesses on the other side of the river in the Trenton area, the job-ready sites program will be a real benefit to the county," Fomner said.

TID trustees voted to lend \$20,000 to the port authority to round out funding for an \$80,000 project to install an electric switch on siding serving the Symmes Industrial Park in southern Hamilton.

The project is expected to bring more reliable railroad service to three companies at the park. Fomner said rail company CSX Transportation will refund the cost of the improvements on a per-car basis. He said he expects the TID money to be refunded within three years.

"This is probably just the beginning of long relationship with CSX and some of the railroads," TID Trustee and Hamilton Councilman Ed Shelton said. "Hopefully, and that is one big hopefully, we will have a better working relationship with the railroads now."

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