

FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2006

# New tax for Liberty workers

## 1.5% levy on paychecks to fund I-75 interchange

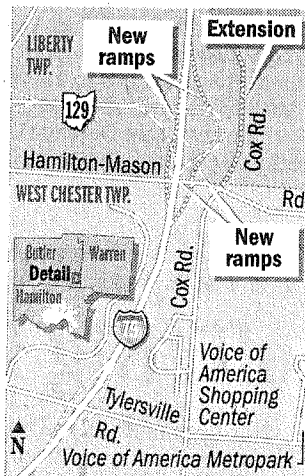
By Jennifer Edwards  
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**LIBERTY TWP.** - A 1.5 percent earnings tax will be taken from the paychecks of hundreds of workers in a 528-acre area of this fast-growing Butler County community starting Oct. 1.

Proceeds from the special taxation area, called a joint economic development district, will help pay for and maintain the planned \$50 million Liberty interchange off Interstate 75. Butler County commissioners approved the district Thursday.

The district would generate \$5 million to \$6 million a year by 2025, assuming that all the land is developed into businesses and the economy stays strong, township leaders say.

The district includes dozens of businesses near the interchange, including a stretch of commercial properties along Cincinnati-Dayton Road at Ohio 129. It also includes projected development.



The Enquirer/Mike Nyerges

Liberty Township officials had to scale back the tax district from its original 687 acres after some land and business owners refused to join. That move will reduce the tax district's proceeds by about \$2 million a year.

Carole Johnson, owner of Bethany Grocery, says the tax district isn't fair.

## Tax: Ramps to cost 1.5% of paychecks

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She noted that other, larger employers - such as the Lakota school district - were left out of the district.

Township officials have said the school district is not a business, and that is why it was excluded. Township Administrator Dina Minneci said Thursday that some of the township's other large employers are included.

For example, Kroger's new store just north of Ohio 129 on Cincinnati-Dayton Road will have up to 300 workers affected, she said.

To set up the tax district fast, Liberty officials had to form it with only the land from property owners that agreed to pay.

But it was revealed Thursday that the township is considering a ballot issue for sometime next year that could allow the township to collect the income tax from employees in the district even if property and business owners disagree.

The soonest such a measure would hit a ballot would be next spring, Trustee Christine Maticic said.

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