

Planning progress

April-June, 2006, Vol. 44, Issue 2

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RPC's Annual Dinner...a Good Time!

This year's Annual Dinner was informative as well as enjoyable. Speaker Sam Speck provided a comprehensive review of the functions of the various departments within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, and explained how they relate to local planning issues.

Speck is a native of Louisville, who graduated from Muskingum College and received his Master's and Doctoral degrees from Harvard University. He served as the Associate Director of FEMA under President Reagan and as a State Senator and State Representative. He returned to Muskingum College in 1988 to serve as its President, where he remained until 1999, when he became ODNR's Director.



Commission President Fred Abraham and Secretary Bob Sanderson



Bob Nau chats with Fred Abraham, David Hanselmann, and Sam Speck

Gratitude and appreciation were expressed to Mort DeHoff, as RPC Secretary Bob Sanderson presented him with a plaque for his leadership as president of the RPC during 2004-2005.

Plans are already underway for next year's annual event, which will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Regional Planning Commission. The time and place have been set for Friday, March 23, 2007, at Skyland Pines Rustic Lodge.

Governmental Law Seminar...a Success!



“Interesting,” “worthwhile,” and “glad I came” are words used to describe the Governmental Law Seminar held at the Holiday Inn in Jackson Township on February 25. Representatives from townships, cities and villages gave up their Saturday to hear sessions on zoning, economic development, drainage, planning, sunshine law, open meetings, public records, and forming a neighborhood crime watch.

David Freel, Executive Director of the Ohio Ethics Commission, held the attention of guests as he spoke during the opening session. Other presenters were from the Stark County Prosecutor’s Office and the Planning Commission, who co-sponsored the event.

Request to Redesignate Stark County as an Ozone Attainment Area

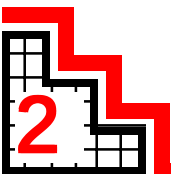
Throughout the history of the Clean Air Act, standards and measurements have changed as scientific knowledge increases and technology improves. In 1997, the U.S. EPA revised air quality standards for ozone from a one-hour standard to an eight-hour standard set at 0.08 parts per million (ppm).

This standard was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2001, and on April 15, 2004, the U.S. EPA designated Stark County as one of the 134 nonattainment areas for ozone. Since that time, several areas have been redesignated as being in attainment after meeting five criteria, among which is three years of air quality monitoring data showing attainment of the standard.

The Ohio EPA has recently completed a draft document, “Request for Redesignation...Stark County, Ohio”, that documents the air quality measurements for 2003, 2004, and 2005, and the other four criteria. Over the next several months, the Ohio EPA will be finalizing the draft and submitting it to the U.S. EPA seeking approval of the redesignation.

Projections for the future are even better, as they show increasingly improved air quality. As older automobiles are replaced with cleaner, more efficient models and emission standards are toughened on diesel engines, we can expect this trend to increase even though our population continues to grow and more vehicles are using our roads. Underscoring this are proposed U.S. EPA standards for controlling emissions on smaller engines (such as lawnmowers).

As automobile and truck exhaust becomes cleaner, other sources, as an overall percentage contributing to air pollution, increase even though overall pollution is less. At this time small engines are estimated to be responsible for up to 5% of emissions contributing to air pollution, while in 2020 they could account for 18%. This is due to automobile and truck exhaust becoming cleaner. It is estimated that pollution controls on small engines could not only reduce their emissions by one-third, but also improve their durability and operating efficiency.



Improving Stormwater Quality

According to Christine Todd Whitman, former Administrator of the U.S. EPA, "...water is the biggest environmental issue we face in the 21st Century in terms of both quality and quantity. In the 30 years since its passage, the Clean Water Act has dramatically increased the number of waterways that are once again safe for fishing and swimming. Despite this great progress in reducing water pollution, many of the nation's waters still do not meet water quality goals."

You may ask, "How can I, as an individual, do anything to improve the overall water quality problem?" Have you heard of stormwater runoff? Stormwater runoff occurs when precipitation from rain or snowmelt flows over the ground. Impervious surfaces like driveways, sidewalks, and streets prevent stormwater from naturally soaking into the ground. Why is this a problem? Stormwater can pick up debris, chemicals, dirt, and other pollutants and flow into a storm sewer system or directly to a lake, stream, river, wetland, or coastal water. Anything that enters a storm sewer system is discharged untreated into the waterbodies we use for swimming, fishing, and providing drinking water.

To keep the stormwater leaving your home or workplace clean, follow these simple guidelines; and remember, "only rain down the drain."

- Sweep up yard debris rather than hosing down areas. Compost or recycle yard waste when possible.
- Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly.
- Repair auto leaks.
- Dispose of household hazardous waste, used auto fluids (antifreeze, oil, etc.), and batteries at designated collection or recycling locations.
- Clean up after your pet.
- Use a commercial car wash or wash your car on a lawn or other unpaved surface.
- Clean paint brushes in a sink, not outdoors. Properly dispose of excess paints through a household hazardous waste collection program.
- Sweep up and properly dispose of construction debris like concrete and mortar.



Goal to Widen U.S. 30 Dies

“On January 12, 2006, the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) recommended the portion of Stark/Columbiana U.S. 30 east of S.R. 44 be dropped from Tier II.” Occasionally, a press release can, in its simplicity, be underwhelming. However, once its implications sink in, it has a much larger impact. What is TRAC? What is a Tier II list? Understanding these can result in a better appreciation of the impact resulting from the announced decision.

TRAC Explained. The TRAC was created by the Ohio General Assembly in 1997 to review, prioritize, and choose major new transportation projects in Ohio. A major project is defined as one costing more than \$5 million that reduces congestion, increases mobility, provides connectivity, or increases a region’s accessibility for economic development. Historically, the TRAC has about \$300 million to pay for projects each year after ODOT determines the funding needed to maintain the existing roadway system. The TRAC reviews projects on an annual basis and ranks them based on a number of criteria, including safety issues and economic development, usually prioritizing projects on the state and federal highway system.

Tiers Explained. While \$300 million is a large amount of money, building new highways and expanding capacity on existing highways require even larger amounts. This explains why the widening of Interstate 77 has been split into numerous phases over a ten-year period. Several examples of TRAC projects scheduled for future funding include \$230 million for a new innerbelt bridge and curve on I-71/90 in Cleveland and \$275 million to upgrade a portion of I-75 in Cincinnati (both in 2011). Large projects such as these illustrate why they must be scheduled over time.

In order to do this, the TRAC divides projects into two major categories, or tiers. Tier I projects are those for which construction funds are determined to be available and can proceed in their scheduled year. Tier II projects will likely receive construction funding at some point in the future, and preliminary planning, such as environmental reviews, can proceed.

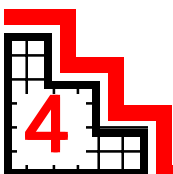
What Happened to U.S. 30? In 2004, the U.S. 30 project was divided into two projects: a 2.8 mile section from Trump Avenue bypassing East Canton and terminating at S.R. 44 (estimated cost \$60 million), and another extending from this point to S.R. 11 in Columbiana County (estimated to cost \$500 million).

During the most recent TRAC review it was determined that, due to the high project cost and low traffic volume, the latter project would not be likely to receive TRAC funding within the next ten years. Anticipated future growth in construction costs make this project even less attractive. Without the likelihood of construction funding, completing planning documents would waste funds, as they would need to be revised by the time construction could take place; hence the decision to drop the project from the Tier II list.

SCATS Policy Committee. At the SCATS Policy Committee meeting in March, the committee resolved to discuss with TRAC the possibility of a bypass around Minerva. Without the comprehensive improvements to U.S. 30 that the project would have accomplished, a number of communities will be seeking “spot” improvements. These include Minerva and communities in Columbiana County such as Lisbon and Hanoverton.

STOP!

Take time to check
out the new RPC
website @
www.rpc.co.stark.oh.us



“This is Jeopardy!”

The third annual “Recycling Jeopardy” district competition was held April 5 in Wayne County. The environmentally based competition was sponsored by the Stark-Tuscarawas-Wayne Joint Solid Waste Management District.

Area high school seniors submitted applications, recommendations, and essays, and were chosen based on their academic achievements, as well as their involvement at school and in the community.

Marlington High School’s Brian Hendricks won \$1500 for representing Stark County, and a \$1000 scholarship for placing third in the district competition. First place winner, Rhiannon Cook from Wayne County, earned a \$3000 scholarship, while second-place winner, Christine Shafer from Tuscarawas County,



Rhiannon Cook, Wayne; Christine Shafer, Tuscarawas; Brian Hendricks, Stark; Grant Springer, Wayne; Claire Green, Tuscarawas; Neel Parekh, Stark

walked away with a \$2000 scholarship. Each county had an alternate representative that received \$500.

The Coordinators and Education Specialists from all three counties

combined their efforts to successfully present this program. Their work on this project provides an excellent opportunity for high school seniors to receive money for their future educational endeavors.

2030 PLAN

Review the plan’s goals, objectives and strategies. How can they benefit your community? If you are interested in the RPC presenting an overview of the plan at one of your public meetings, please contact us.

Available at the RPC office - stop in or call 330-451-7389.

- Bound copies - \$25
- CDs - \$5
- Download on the RPC website, www.rpc.co.stark.oh.us



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What's INSIDE

TSP OPEN HOUSE APRIL 29
NEW RPC WEBSITE
U.S. 30 UPDATE

Upcoming EVENTS

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4	SCRPC	7:30 PM
24	SCATS	1:30 PM
27	Citizens' Advisory Council	1:30 PM

May

8	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
9	SCRPC	7:30 PM

June

5	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
6	SCRPC	7:30 PM
22	Citizens' Advisory Council	1:30 PM
26	SCATS	1:30 PM

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