



Planning Progress

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Thermostat Rebates Available

Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, The Board of Stark County Commissioners has been awarded an Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant. Through this grant a rebate program has been established for the purchasing of *programmable* thermostats. Stark County homeowners and small business owners are encouraged to purchase and install programmable thermostats to improve energy efficiency in their home or business.

Stark County Regional Planning Commission will provide a \$25 rebate to County residents (outside the City of Canton which was awarded a separate grant) and small business owners (5 or fewer employees) who show proof of purchasing a programmable thermostat starting March 1, 2010. The rebate is estimated to cover approximately half the cost of a moderately-priced thermostat. The program is limited to one rebate per household.



Successfully saving energy with a programmable thermostat is completely dependent on how it is programmed and operated. Heating and air-conditioning can be turned on according to a pre-set schedule. Through proper use of a programmable thermostat, a typical, single-family home can save about \$180 every year in energy costs. For more energy efficiency tips, or a rebate application, please visit our website at www.rpc.co.stark.oh.us or call Malia Watkins at 330-451-7405.

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Governmental Law Seminar



Dr. Alan Weinstein,
Cleveland State University

This year's Governmental Law Seminar, co-sponsored by RPC and the Stark County Prosecutor's Office, was held on February 20, 2010 at The Holiday Inn, Belden Village. The main speaker for this event was Dr. Alan Weinstein of Cleveland State University. His presentation, "Signs, Sex & God," examined the regulation of land uses protected by the First Amendment. Other speakers include: Lisa Barr, David Bridenstine, Deborah Dawson, Ross Rhodes, and Amy Sabino from the Prosecutor's office, Rachel Lewis, Cliff Meidlein, and Val Watson from RPC, Bryan Ashman - Cooper & Assoc., Todd Paulus - S.C. Health Department, and Vivianne Duffrin- S.C. Sheriff's Office. Sessions at the seminar covered topics such as zoning basics, nuisance abatement, sustainable development, fair housing and other legal issues. Over 100 people attended the event this year, including representatives from townships, cities and villages within Stark County as well as the general public.

General Session
of 2010 Governmental
Law Seminar



Annual Dinner

Approximately 125 guests gathered at Skyland Pines for this year's SCRPC's Annual Dinner. Fred Abousleman, Executive Director of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) in Washington D.C., was the guest speaker. NARC is responsible for advocacy, policy, technical assistance, events, services, and training for its members. Fred leads a professional staff in representing the interests of Metropolitan Planning Organizations and Regional Councils, large and small, urban and rural, across the country.

Abousleman holds Masters Degrees in Public Policy and Community and Regional Planning. He has managed several federal programs, had his work on planning and policy issues published, and has won numerous awards.

Abousleman's presentation was very interesting and covered many topics. He stated that infrastructure and redefining region and the regional economy were key. He discussed the current economic crisis and state of the nation with an estimate of 2.2 trillion dollars needed to repair the current infrastructure. Also mentioned was the workforce and how it's aging and becoming smaller. Water is a key issue as well. He said that peak water will have a greater economic effect than peak oil. Water supplies will be gone in certain regions unless something changes drastically. Fred also expressed that the next focus for the federal government is slated to be climate change. Other topics covered include: stimulus spending to date, transportation, green jobs, and energy. To view his entire presentation, visit our website at www.rpc.co.stark.oh.us.



Gratitude and appreciation were also expressed to Pamela Bossart, as RPC Vice-President Vince Marion presented her with a plaque for her leadership as president of the RPC during 2008-2009.



Commission members, staff, and guests once again enjoyed a wonderful meal followed by an attention-grabbing presentation.

Energy Saving Improvements for County Buildings

Stark County recently received a grant from the United States Department of Energy for making energy saving upgrades and improvements to the Jail, County Office Building, Court House, Dog Shelter and Administration Building facilities. The amount of the grant allocated for actual construction purposes is \$1,792,900 and it will be used for replacing such items as boilers, chillers, light fixtures, temperature control systems, HVAC units, windows and doors. The construction work is to be completed by December of 2012 in accordance with requirements of the grant.

On February 17th, the Stark County Board of Commissioners selected John Picard Architect, Inc. as the consulting firm to prepare the design drawings and specifications for the project. John Picard Architect, Inc. is located in Canton and was selected from 16 consulting firms who submitted letters of interest and qualifications for the project. Brenda Sarsany and Joe Underwood with RPC and Gary Rushe, head of the County's building maintenance department, evaluated the various qualifications submitted and conducted interviews with the top five rated firms to assist the Board in making their decision.

Design work has commenced on the project with much of the construction work planned for this year. Because of the different buildings and variety of work involved, the work will be accomplished through several separate bid packages and contractors in order to obtain the best possible pricing for the project. Brenda Sarsany will be handling the required reporting of information to the Department of Energy and Joe Underwood will be managing the consulting firm as well as the various construction contractors and inspection of their work.

Specialized Transportation Program (STP)



The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) provides federal funds for the purchase of equipment to support transportation services for the elderly and people with disabilities where existing transportation is unavailable, inappropriate, or insufficient. The Federal Transit Administration provides 80% of the cost of capital items; the remaining 20% must be provided by local funding, which may include transportation funding from other federal programs other than U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) programs or from DOT's Federal Lands Highway Program.

The Stark County Area Transportation Study (SCATS) adopted a resolution at its February meeting. The resolution recommends that Mercy Medical Center, receive \$46,800 for the purchase of a converted 15-passenger van. The scored application and resolution was forwarded to ODOT for final consideration.

Meet "Clawd" the Crayfish

The RPC's Public Involvement/Public Education (PIPE) Committee for storm water welcomes a new member to the community. Clawd, the Crayfish, is the new mascot for the program. He was "born" in the minds of the folks at the Plain Township Hall. The township held a contest for the students in Plain to name him. The winning entry submitted the name "Clawd." The mascot is responsible for representing the storm water program and informing the public on the importance of clean water and what they need to do to help keep our water clean and safe.



Rain Gardens

The P.I.P.E. Committee will be sponsoring a class on rain gardens. After the class, the attendees will go to a designated location and actually plant a rain garden with native plants. Watch for more details on this event soon. For more information on rain gardens, visit: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/water/wm/dsfm/shore/documents/rgmanual.pdf>.

Clean Water Facts

- 75 % of the earth is water.
- An average person in the U.S. may use up to 50 gallons of water each day. During medieval times, a person only used 5 gallons each day.
- There is the same amount of water on the planet as there was when the planet was formed. The water from your faucet could contain molecules that dinosaurs drank!
- Only 1% of the earth's water is drinkable.
- Storm water is the water flow that comes from rainfall or melting snow.
- Storm water is not treated before it enters our local waterways. YUK!
- Anything that gets washed down the storm sewer drains will end up in our local waterways. That's why only rain should go down the drain!
- Just turning off the tap when you brush your teeth will save 8 gallons of water!
- You will use less water if you take a shower instead of a bath.



Visit www.plaintownship.com/stormwater for all kinds of Clean Water Facts!



Housing Counseling



Recently, the Stark County Regional Planning Commission applied to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to become a HUD certified housing counseling agency. HUD certification would expand SCRPC's current housing counseling program which presently consists of pre- and post-purchase education workshops for qualified low-to-moderate income (LMI) participants of RPC's HOME down payment assistance program. The current counseling program was put into place in 2008 in response to the high levels of foreclosure seen county-wide. Since this time, SCRPC has had 32 participants in the homebuyer pre- and post-purchase education workshops. Currently 12 of those participants have gone on to purchase homes, none of which have gone through foreclosure.

The expansion of the current program will allow SCRPC to increase the level of service to qualifying residents within Stark County (outside the Cities of Canton and Massillon and the Village of Hills and Dales) by providing one-on-one housing counseling to clients specific to their housing needs in addition to the pre- and post-purchase education workshops presently offered. The Community Development Department at SCRPC administers the housing counseling program and strives to obtain two goals through providing housing counseling and homebuyer education. The first goal is to create positive housing opportunities for qualifying households in Stark County which allows an educated homebuyer to obtain the social and financial benefits that come along with homeownership. Secondly, SCRPC considers housing counseling and homebuyer education a significant portion of a comprehensive approach to improve the quality of the housing stock on a county-wide basis. For more information about SCRPC's housing counseling program please contact Dan Morganti, Community Development Planner at 330-451-7031.



NSP Acquisition-Rehab-Resale Update

The Stark County Regional Planning Commission is currently working to implement the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program (NSP) in Stark County (outside the Cities of Canton, Massillon and Alliance and the Village of Hills and Dales). Time is of the essence with this program as the entire allocation of NSP funding must be obligated to specific property addresses by September 30, 2010. A large portion of the Stark County NSP program is the acquisition-rehab-resale activity to which SCRPC has allocated \$1,902,660. Under this activity, SCRPC is working with local partners (two non-profit developers and one for-profit developer) to purchase, rehabilitate and resell vacant and foreclosed homes. The acquisition-rehab-resale activity is a crucial part the Stark County NSP program implementation because it provides great value in revitalizing neighborhoods by bringing once abandoned and foreclosed homes back to viability.

SCRPC partners have acquired and begun rehabilitation on seven properties, three of which are completed and currently on the market available for purchase. SCRPC, and its partners, intend to acquire, rehab and resell up to a total of fifteen properties through the NSP program. Qualified buyers can also get down payment assistance of up to 7% of the purchase price toward a NSP home. This assistance is in the form a 5-year, 0% interest, forgivable loan. A regularly updated listing of NSP homes can be found at <http://www.co.stark.oh.us/internet/docs/rpc/NSPHomesforSale.pdf>. For more information on the acquisition-rehab-resale activity, down payment assistance or the NSP program please call Dan Morganti, Community Development Planner, at 330-451-7031. The homes shown below are currently for sale through the NSP program:



617 Ironwood St. SW
Canton South
\$118,000



3223 Charlene Ave. SE
Canton South
\$104,900



500 East St.
Minerva
\$79,000

Upcoming Events

April

5	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
6	SCRPC	7:30 PM
26	SCATS	1:30 PM

May

3	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
4	SCRPC	7:30 PM
24	SCATS	1:30 PM

June

7	Subdivision Review	1:30 PM
8	SCRPC	7:30 PM
28	SCATS	1:30 PM

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