

# Council questioned, praised

## Several pieces of legislation approved

By **DAVE GOSSETT**  
Staff writer

STEUBENVILLE — City Council approved several pieces of legislation Tuesday before listening to words of praise and questions from city residents.

April was declared National Child Abuse Prevention Month in the city as 6th Ward Councilman David Lalich encouraged “everyone to pray for the parents of abused children because they need our prayers. We should remember the children and pray for the abusive parents to realize what they have done and are doing to their kids.”

John Rodesh, administrator of Jefferson County Department of Job and Family Services, Children Services Division, thanked council for the resolution and said the help from the city health department, fire department and police department “is very important in our work to prevent child abuse cases.

Council also approved two housing-related pieces of legislation and heard the first reading for an ordinance that could see an electronic billboard installed on state Route 7.

The first of three readings for the ordinance to rezone property in the

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Dave Gossett

### SAYING

**FAREWELL** — Ed Florak, interim director of Progress Alliance, talked to Steubenville City Council Tuesday saying he is ready to step down from his temporary job and return to retirement. Florak said Progress Alliance soon will have a new director in place but he declined to reveal the name of the final candidate.

# Alliance

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to meet May 20.

The group has been searching for a Progress Alliance director since the resignation of Tom Bayuzik in December. There were more than 40 initial applicants and the field was narrowed down by sorting through resumes, phone calls to candidates and some in-person interviews. The CIC board oversees operations of Progress Alliance.

Ed Florak retired president of Jefferson Community College, has been serving as interim director. Prior to an executive session to discuss the hiring of a new director, he told the CIC board, "Thanks for asking me to serve as interim director. I am anxiously awaiting the decision to offer the job to a person."

Blake kidded Florak, "You're not off the hook just yet."

During the meeting, the group discussed a report carried in the Pittsburgh Business Times and other sister business publications about the Columbus to Pittsburgh highway corridor group.

The concept, being pushed by a group involving representatives of seven counties, including Jefferson and Harrison, is to complete a partially built four-lane highway link across the eastern half of the state, providing an alternative to driving on heavily traveled Interstate 70 and providing a more direct highway link between Pittsburgh and Columbus than that found by using I-70 and I-79 from Washington, Pa.

Progress Alliance has been involved in supporting the project, which has been spearheaded by a former Director Rick Platt, who is executive director of the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority. Platt had discussed the highway when he was executive director of Progress Alliance several years ago.

The trustees took issue with comments by state Rep. John Domenick, D-Smithfield, reported in the story. Domenick is quoted in the Business Times as saying that the section of highway that runs along Tappan Lake in Harrison County is "a major obstacle. How do you go around Tappan without spending a bundle?"

Platt testified to a state Senate transportation committee last week, and Florak delivered copies of Platt's testimony to the board.

When contacted in Columbus Tuesday evening, Domenick reiterated that he has been and remains a supporter of the project.

"What I meant was that this is an obstacle, but we

will overcome it, like many others," he said.

Florak said the concept for the highway would not take it along the current alignment of U.S. Route 250, which runs literally through sections of Tappan Lake.

"It would take a more direct route from New Comerstown to Cadiz between the Tappan and Clendenning lakes," he said.

Florak said the possible alignment would shave miles off the route, which is 42 miles from Cadiz to New Comerstown running through the Tappan region on Route 250.

"We need to be sure to publicize that route between New Comerstown and Cadiz," he said.

The four-lane link that would be studied under a federal budget set-aside is on the completion of about 28 miles of highway.

Florak said the business newspaper's report shows there is resistance to the project. The story notes one state representative, Larry Flowers of Canal Winchester, said the Franklin County delegation in the General Assembly is focused on Central Ohio highway issues, including a \$1 billion reconstruction of the I-70/I-71 split in central Columbus.

Flowers said in the story that the Columbus to Pittsburgh link is years away from happening.

Florak said lobbying and pressure have to be maintained to get the state to show interest in the highway.

"They'll spend \$1 billion to renovate I-90 and I-71 in Cleveland and not even be concerned about it," he said.

The Pittsburgh Business Times is holding a "Corridors of Opportunities" program at St. Florian Hall in Wintersville on June 12. The event will bring real estate, site selection and business executives to Jefferson County to hear and see what opportunities exist here. It's the first time the news magazine is taking the show out of Western Pennsylvania.

Florak said Lt. Gov. Lee Fisher has turned down an invitation to be a presenter at the event, but there are other state officials being considered. He also asked for a local member for the panel.

The group tabled a request to give support to Gov. Ted Strickland's "Building Ohio Jobs" initiative until final details of the proposed \$1.7 billion spending package are hammered out in the state Legislature.

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