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Columbus-Pittsburgh Corridor Steering Committee Still Hard at Work

Thursday, September 25, 2008 8:19 AM
Lauren Bindley



[Steering Committee Co-Chair David Brenner](#)



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The Columbus-Pittsburgh Corridor Steering Committee met in Cadiz last week to discuss the corridor's recent progress and what work still needs to be done.

David Brenner, Co-Chair of the Steering Committee, talks a little bit about the 160-mile highway.

"Well, the Columbus-Pittsburgh Corridor represents a partially completed highway between the cities of Columbus and Pittsburgh. It is one of the few city highways where we have an absence of an interstate connecting those two cities, or a limited access highway."

Brenner says the point of this effort is to make travel between the two cities faster and easier.

"To make it a limited access highway, meaning it's four-lanes, it has interchanges, it eliminates stop lights and things of that nature...which tend to constrict transportation along that area."

Brenner says the committee was formed in 2007.

"We took representatives from both the public sector as well as the private sector, drew up bylaws and we have one representative from each of the six counties along this corridor. One representative is an elected official, or from the public sector, and one individual, such as myself, is from the business community."

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Brenner says the committee's goal was to complete five major improvement projects on sections of State Route 161, State Route 16, State Route 250 and U.S. Route 22 between Columbus and the Ohio/West Virginia/ Pennsylvania border.

One project...which includes the 1-270/S.R. 161/S.R. 16 interchange...has already been completed and the expansion of State Route 161 between New Albany and Granville is expected to be finished in 2009.

Brenner says the corridor would bring about many opportunities.

"We think that by improving that highway, it will improve the economic opportunities available in that area. It will also dovetail nicely with rail transportation on a rail line that already exists in that area. So, it truly can be a multi-modal system, meaning that you can move both raw materials and people along that area and open up that corridor for additional business and living opportunities."

Brenner goes into more detail about the work that has already been completed.

"Some of our first steps have been to secure studies for the various areas requiring completion. We have been successful in doing that in the Newcomerstown area, where that has occurred, or is occurring. We have also been pushing to get the next phases leading to construction of an interchange at the Cherry Valley Road and State Route 16 area."

Brenner says the major resistance at this point is funding, 'where is the money going to come from?'

So, that's the focus of the committee's next move.

"Our next step, literally, is to invite some folks with financing expertise to our Steering Committee to say 'help us find some creative solutions' so we can then present those to the Department of Transportation legislators, or whoever is in a position to act on those recommendations."

Brenner says the committee has agreed to continue working hard until the entire project is finished...or 'until the last mile of concrete is poured.'

On a side note, he says the Steering Committee is holding a candidate forum this Friday.

"We have at least five candidates confirmed thus far that will be speaking. Our intent is not only to enlist their support, but to find out their position about supporting transportation issues in general...whether it be along the corridor or throughout the state of Ohio."

The forum will start at 10 a.m. at the Raven's Glenn Winery on U.S. Highway 36 in West Lafayette.

For more information about the Columbus-Pittsburgh Corridor, log onto www.ColumbusPittsburghCorridor.com.

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