

COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Wilhelm Kern, Angie Palmer, Margaret I. Schilling, Roy G. Sabo

FIRST AMENDMENT

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

OUR OPINION

For safety’s sake, clearer road name is needed

There’s one simple solution to the numbers-soup mess that’s always confused motorists along the state routes connecting central Licking County to Columbus.

The entire Ohio 161/37/16 corridor from New Albany to Cherry Valley Road at the Granville-Newark border needs one dominant identifier once the expressway construction project wraps up in early 2010.

Motorists often incorrectly state what stretch of road they’re driving on when they call 911 to report a crash or emergency. That was certainly the case dur-

ing a major crash May 30 when responders were sent to Ohio 161 west of Alexandria rather than Ohio 37 west of Granville. One man later died, although it’s unknown if response times played a role.

Such delays are not acceptable in our modern world where cell-phone calls can help authorities respond with amazing speed.

We commend the Granville Fire Department for addressing this issue by developing a new response plan for the corridor and asking ODOT to erect more visible signs to alert motorists to

the changing route numbers, something the state appears willing to do. Chief Jeff Hussey also suggested placing mile markers often seen on limited-access highways.

Those are good ideas, but perhaps it would be best if the entire route was re-named I-670 as a logical extension of the Columbus interstate from downtown to Interstate 270 near Port Columbus International Airport. Or perhaps the 161 name should be extended all of the way to Newark, instead of terminating near Alexandria. Even a ceremonial name might prove better.

The bad news here is such name changes are decided by ODOT, which must adhere to federal rules for such matters. What might seem simple and obvious to most of us could get snared in bureaucracy.

A new name not only would improve safety, but also allow all of us to give easier to understand directions rather than telling visitors to ignore the signs and drive straight until you reach Newark.

Let’s not spend more than \$100 million on a new expressway and ignore a real safety and convenience issue.

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Male, Newark
About Me: Michael Shearer is managing editor of The Advocate & NewarkAdvocate.com. I also serve as online editor for the Newspaper Network of Central Ohio. I live in Newark with my wife and two sons.
You're most likely to see me around town at: The Advocate, youth fields or golf courses.
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The high school, college or pro sports teams I root for are: Buckeyes, Reds, Steelers and Jackets
I am passionate about: My job and family

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Managing Editor's blog

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So much for avoiding 161/37 confusion

Posted 7/31/2009 3:44 PM EDT

We ran an editorial a few weeks ago encouraging The Ohio Department of Transportation to avoid the numbers soup that comes with the route names along our new Columbus expressway.

As we feared, the first side of the second phase opened today with signs that simply make no sense for those who are visiting the area, the very people who need signs the most.



However, ODOT, at least for now, has done what we feared. Along the new eastbound lanes, there's a now a sign saying 161 ends here and Ohio 37 east straight. There's no sign telling you where Ohio 37 takes you, which is Lancaster, of course when you take the second upcoming exit and turn south. Makes perfect sense?

There needs to be another sign or an addendum that tells you go straight for Ohio 16, Granville and Newark.

It's not a huge deal, but some communities have fought nasty battles with ODOT over the years to get their communities on signs. I'm sure Zanesville would love to be on the I-270 signs in Columbus rather than Wheeling, W.Va.

For now, just tell new visitors to get on the freeway, ignore the signs and go straight until you see Granville or Newark.

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cynical1 wrote:

I agree it is a little vague, but if you are traveling somewhere unfamiliar, I would think using an Atlas, Google Maps or

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