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## Group seeks one name for corridor

Columbus to Pittsburgh committee suggests calling road 161 through Ohio section

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HANOVER -- A drive from Columbus to Steubenville takes a motorist on one continuous highway identified by three state routes and three U.S. routes.

The Columbus to Pittsburgh Corridor Committee approved a resolution Friday asking the Ohio Department of Transportation to establish one route number to cover the entire Ohio section of the corridor.

The resolution did not suggest a route number, but committee members had some consensus that Ohio 161 would be the logical route to overlay the 120-mile section because the state route simply ends on the corridor, while other routes go elsewhere.

Representatives of the seven counties along the corridor met Friday at Longaberger Golf Course, continuing their quest to make the 160-mile Columbus-to-Pittsburgh corridor a four-lane, limited access, divided highway.

Once the Licking County section is complete, all that remains will be a 10-mile stretch from Dresden to Coshocton, a 28-mile new highway connecting Newcomerstown and Cadiz and a 3-mile section between Cadiz and Hopedale.

There was no opposition at the meeting to using Ohio 161 as the name for the overlay route, keeping in place all other routes joining and leaving the corridor.

Karl Newman, deputy director of ODOT District 5, told the committee, "We're willing to listen to anything. It's not uncommon (to have multiple route names for a corridor). They're all over the nation.

"We'll look at what's legal and what we can do and what we're able to do."

Extending the route name beyond Ohio would be unlikely, some committee members said, because the corridor will not become an interstate nor a U.S. route for the entire stretch.

The corridor could, however, be known by a name in addition to a route number. The Columbus-to-Pittsburgh Corridor was one idea.

"There is some marketing appeal to naming a corridor like this for tourism and easy explanation," said David Brenner, co-chairman of the committee.

Bill Lozier, deputy engineer for Licking County, said the committee needs to make sure all counties are OK with calling it Ohio 161 before the committee suggests a number.

"They don't know what Ohio 161 is out east, and we need to be unified when we go to ODOT," Lozier said.

Ohio 161 ends south of Alexandria in Licking County where Ohio 37 joins the corridor briefly in connecting Johnstown and Lancaster. The corridor then becomes Ohio 16 in Granville.

Newman also said he's not sure how people in the eastern part of Ohio would feel about the whole corridor being called Ohio 161.

The corridor becomes U.S. 36 near Coshocton, then U.S. 250 near Uhrichsville and U.S. 22 from Cadiz to Pittsburgh.

Greg Gurney, the ODOT District 11 planning administrator, said he would not be opposed to the entire stretch being called Ohio 161, as well as the other routes it already is named.

"I think any collaborative effort to get a single route name would be beneficial to everybody," Gurney said. "It almost certainly will have to be a state route (number)."

Licking County Commissioner Doug Smith said the commissioners support the effort from a safety standpoint, as well as for travel, tourism and economic benefit.

"It's very difficult for our 911 dispatchers to take a cell call from an individual who witnessed an accident they believe is on 161, and it's not," Smith said.

A recent emergency caller gave the wrong road for a car crash that occurred between Alexandria and Granville, initially sending paramedics to the wrong location.

## Additional Facts

### DRESDEN TO COSHOCTON

T.J. Justice, executive director of the Coshocton Port Authority and co-chairman of the Columbus to Pittsburgh Corridor Committee, reported Rep. Zack Space, D-Dover, secured \$400,000 toward the \$5.2 million needed for environment and design work to make the 9-mile stretch from Dresden to Coshocton a four-lane highway.

The appropriation still needs the approval of the U.S. Senate and the president's signature. If total funding were available today, construction would not begin until 2013, at the earliest, Justice said.

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