

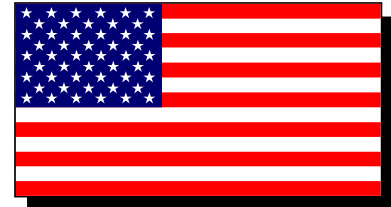
REGIONAL REVIEW

Volume 1, Issue 1

Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson
Metropolitan Planning Commission

February 2003

BRIDGE PROJECT PLACED ON THE HANDS OF THE COMMUNITY



United We Stand Let Freedom Ring

BRIDGE HISTORY

- In ancient times and among primitive peoples a log was thrown across a stream, or two vines or woven fibrous ropes (the upper for a handhold and the lower for a footwalk) were thrown across, to serve as a bridge.
- Today, there are six basic modern bridge forms: the beam, the truss, the arch, the cantilever, the cable-stay, and the suspension.

On January 15, Edwards and Kelcey Engineers of Cincinnati, Ohio formally stated their recommendations and conclusions for the construction of a new bridge crossing in the BHI region. Two of the three bridges in the region are approaching 100 years, and the unsettling issue has dominated transportation discussions since the mid-1990's.

While the consultant recommended the construction of two network bridges with a first priority south of Wellsburg, he emphasized

the underutilization of the Veterans Memorial Bridge and suggested a package of \$7 million improvements to reverse network flaws. Without these access and redesign improvements, he cautioned the benefits of a new bridge would be lost. He estimated the cost for a four-lane bridge crossing at \$50 million.



“We now place our professional recommendation in the hands of the Advisory Committee and the general public. BHI's network of bridges and roads is continually challenged to create opportunities and maximize dollars of investment. The recommendation in front of you squarely hits the mark on these counts,” so stated Jack Pflum, Project Coordinator for Edwards and Kelcey, at the long awaited recommendation meeting for the bridge study.

Over the next four months, two advisory committees will consider the consultant's study and provide a recommendation to BHI's Policy Board in May. More detailed information may be found through BHI's web site at www.bhjmpc.org.

Assumptions and Recommendation

Assumptions:

- ✓ The Ft. Steuben and Market Street bridges will not be in service by 2020.
- ✓ The BHI Policy Board, the 72 member adopting arm for the BHI region, will accept, reject or alter the consultant recommendation in May.

Steps for Success:

Step 1. Construct essential access projects to better utilize the Veterans Memorial Bridge

- ✓ Realign and improve intersection to Half-Moon Industrial Park in the City of Weirton at Birch and Freedom Way.
- ✓ Realign and widen the intersection of Freedom Way at Main Street in the City of Weirton.
- ✓ Widen Freedom Way between Birch Drive and Main Street to three lanes in the City of Weirton.
- ✓ Improve and widen University Boulevard and Dean Martin Boulevard intersection in the City of Steubenville.

Step 2. Prepare studies to establish a bridge location south of Wellsburg.

Step 3. Prepare studies to establish a bridge to connect West Virginia Route 2 with the City of Steubenville at Washington Street.

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**BHJ METROPOLITAN
PLANNING COMMISSION
OFFICERS**

Norman Schwertfeger, Jr., Chairman
Adam Scurti, Vice Chairman
Chuck Svokas, Treasurer
George Cattrell, Secretary

STAFF

John C. Brown, PhD., AICP
Executive Director
Email: jbrown@bhjmpc.org

Joan E. Beatty, Finance Manager
Email: jbeatty@bhjmpc.org

Doris Davis
Economic Development Specialist
Email: ddavis@bhjmpc.org

Mary Moore, Receptionist
Email: mmoore@bhjmpc.org

Greg Nodurft, Engineer Technician
Email: gnodurft@bhjmpc.org

Michael J. Paprocki
Transportation Study Director
Email: mikepap@bhjmpc.org

Shawn Price
Senior Engineering Technician
Email: sprice@bhjmpc.org

Linda Taylor
Office Manager/Rideshare
Email: ltaylor@bhjmpc.org

Barb Zimnox
Community Development Specialist
Email: bzimnox@bhjmpc.org

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BHJ Regional Review
124 North 4th Street Second Floor
Stuebenville OH 43952-2796
Ohio: (740) 282-3685
WV: (304) 797-9666
Fax: (740) 282-1821
Email: bhjmpc@bhjmpc.org
Website: www.bhjmpc.org

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



On June 2003, the Brooke-Hancock-Jefferson Metropolitan Planning Commission will be 35 years old. Established through national legislation for a forum to create communication, cooperation and collaboration, we value the importance of regional consensus building for a stronger economy.

While the three county region and its 27 incorporated areas face many unique challenges, the call for economic diversification is ever present and at the forefront of most regional discussion. In 1980, 52% of all jobs in the region were concentrated in the manufacturing sector. In 1997, due to the mechanization of steel production and increased international competition, this percentage dropped to the mid 30's. Between 1990 and 2000, the three county

metropolitan areas averaged a 0.8% annual loss in population, the lowest growth rate for a metro area in the U.S.

These are tough challenges which require realistic solutions. Concepts such as "build it and they will come" or "let's wait for the return of steel" are tested and failed approaches. BHJ's leadership, along with its many partners, recognizes this circumstance.

BHJ's calling card has been physical infrastructure investment. From road development to water and sewer planning to planning priorities and seeking dollars to bring these investments to reality, BHJ has and will continue to have a presence. This building block effort brings positive change. Projects like the Wal-Mart Distribution Center in Island Creek Township would not have occurred without: (1) a Veterans Bridge; (2) the U.S. 22 Bypass; (3) an upcoming \$3.9 million entry road improvement on State Route 43; and (4) U.S. Economic Development Administration funding for sewer at the adjacent Jefferson County Industrial Park.

A new forefront for BHJ is brownfield development and entrepreneurship. Our once vibrant industrial properties, whether contaminated or perceived as such, need to be retrofitted to the needs of the 21st century. Located near already existing investments such as roads and utilities, brownfields are a bottom line, least costly consideration. In the case of entrepreneurship, if 70% of all new jobs are created from small new business, then investments like incubators and start-up programs will bring a rate of return worth considering.

While BHJ looks forward to another 35 years of service to the region, we recognize these are important and potentially opportunistic times. With the strength of our many partners, we stand ready to create a future of job diversification and strategic investment.

John Brown
jbrown@bhjmpc.org

ECONOMIC GROWTH RELATED TO STEEL CRISIS, HIGHWAY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE

By Congressman Ted Strickland

These are challenging times for those of us who are concerned with economic development. The job boom of the 1990's is over, unemployment levels are stubbornly hovering around 6%, corporate misdeeds and the threat of war are making investors skittish and the domestic steel industry is still on the ropes. In our region, economic growth will depend in large part on the resolution of the steel crisis and the development of highway and telecommunications infrastructure.

In Congress, there are currently two fronts in the battle to save the domestic steel industry. First, the Section 201 tariffs imposed by President Bush last year must remain effective and must not be watered down by a myriad of exemptions. The Congressional Steel Caucus, of which I am a member, must keep the pressure on the Administration to ensure these tariffs are meaningful.



retirees receive the health benefits they were promised. I am taking part in this effort as a cosponsor of the Steel Revitalization Act.

Investing federal dollars in the development of highway and telecommunications infrastructure would stimulate this sluggish economy in at least three ways. First, investments in infrastructure put people to work immediately and provide a short-term economic boost.

Second, to promote greater efficiency in our domestic steel industry, Congress must help to relieve companies of the legacy costs that are barriers to their long-term health. This effort will also guarantee that

Second, highway infrastructure improvements open our region to new kinds of business and help to diversify our economic base.

Third, telecommunications infrastructure improves the education of our students, the competitiveness of our businesses and the overall attractiveness of our region. Highway and telecommunications infrastructure improvements are long-term investments that will yield benefits long after the current economic downturn is just a memory. I am committed to working for this kind of economic stimulus - one that will both produce jobs immediately and provide benefits far into the future.

I welcome your thoughts and comments about economic development in the Ohio Valley. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 1-888-706-1833.

BHJ HOSTS ANNUAL OPEN HOUSE

The annual open house was held Friday, January 31 at the BHJ office. This event is a time to introduce new members to staff, board members and associates of the agency. It also affords the opportunity to informally get to know each other and see first hand what BHJ is accomplishing.



More than 60 people attended this



year's open house. Among those present were elected officials, local bankers and consultants, area business associates and members of educational institutions.

The event was catered by The Rose by Clara's Catering.

BHJ ELECTS NEW OFFICERS FOR 2003



Norm Schwertfeger presents outgoing chairman, Domenick Mucci, with a plaque

Outgoing BHJ Chairman Domenick Mucci passed the gavel to the newly elected chairman, Norm Schwertfeger, Brooke County Commissioner, at the reorganization meeting on January 22, 2003. Other officers elected were: Adam Scurti, vice chairman, (Jefferson County); Chuck Svokas, secretary (Hancock County) and George Cattrell, treasurer (Jefferson County).

Chairman Schwertfeger announced his Executive Committee appointments with officers being the same as the Full Commission. There was a unanimous vote to change the Executive Committee meetings from monthly to bi-monthly.

BHJ WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

The new city manager for Steubenville, Fred H. Hays, brings a high level of expertise to his position having served in the city management profession for over 15 years. Prior to coming to Steubenville, Mr. Hays was a local government consultant and college instructor in government in Gainesville, Florida.



Fred Hays

A native of Texas, Mr. Hays received his Master of Arts in Public Administration from the University of Houston. He also holds a Bachelor of Arts from Texas Tech University.

Mr. Hays has been active in many professional and civic organizations. He currently holds membership in the International City/County Management Association

where he has served on various committees. He has also served as a board member of the State City/County Management Association. His civic memberships include Boys' Club of America, as well as the United Way.

Mr. Hays is a member of the BHJ Full Commission and has been appointed to the Executive Committee for 2003.

Another newcomer to BHJ is Norma Tarr, the first woman to be elected commissioner in Brooke County's history. Commissioner



Norma Tarr

Tarr is well known in the region having been a magistrate for 23 years. She was first elected in 1977 and served in that capacity locally until the West Virginia Supreme Court appointed her to traveling status, a position she held for three years.

The Commissioner has a long history of service to

the community. Prior to running for office, she organized the first federated Democratic Women's Club in Brooke County and served on the Democratic Executive Committee for both the county and state.

Commissioner Tarr said she decided to run for office because she felt the experience she gained as a magistrate gave her insight to the needs of the people of Brooke County. Two areas of importance to her are bringing more industry to the area and working towards a new bridge being built south of Wellsburg. She also stated she intends to devote full time to the Commission.

Dr. Thomas Graham, a Toronto native, recently took office as a Jefferson County commissioner and is also a new member of the BHJ Full Commission. He is a sociologist and professor at the Franciscan University in Steubenville. Previously, he worked at Weirton Steel for eight years.

Dr. Graham is an active member of the community. He has served on the boards of Jefferson Behavioral Health System, Toronto Schools and Jefferson County Joint Vocational School. He served the Safety Director for the city of Toronto for a period five years overseeing the police and fire departments.



Thomas Graham

Concern for the future of Jefferson County prompted Dr. Graham to run for commissioner. He said, "I feel the future of Jefferson County is at stake. Too many of our young people have to leave to find decent paying jobs." One of his goals is to find ways to further economic development to bring jobs into the county and thereby keep the youth.

Another issue of immediate concern is the \$6 million health care deficit facing the county. The commissioner stated, "This is money that has to be recovered, and there is no easy answer."

However, Dr. Graham does see some positive action going on. He said there is talk going on with business interested in Jefferson County. In fact, a marketing analysis of the area will be done. As Dr. Graham stated, "There is hope for the future. It's just a slow process."

TRANSPORTATION FACT

According to the study *Freight Impacts on Ohio's Roadway System* (October 2002), prepared by the Ohio Department of Transportation, "the majority of Ohio's freight is moved by trucks over the state's roadways. Trucks carry 60% by weight and 74 percent by value of all the freight shipped and received by Ohio business and industry."

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHT: BEECH BOTTOM

Located in southern Brooke County, West Virginia, the Village of Beech Bottom is a quiet community rich in history and opportunity. In the early 1700's, people were drawn to the area to take advantage



of the rich land for farming and the opportunities the Ohio River afforded them for industry.

According to a book compiled by Gwen Hubbard on the history of the village, boats traveling from Pittsburgh to New Orleans would stop at the Beech Bottom landing for wood to use in the steam engines. Beech Bottom had one of the first one mile race tracks making it a popular source of entertainment. With the arrival of the steel mill, came more housing and a company store. Transportation improved with the arrival of the streetcar.

Through the years, the town grew, and on November 17, 1953, the village was incorporated. Then, in 1992, Paul Phillips, a former coun-

cilman, was elected mayor. He had a vision for the community and presented the idea of annexation. However, it wasn't until February, 1999, with the village facing bankruptcy, that the process was complete.

Annexation brought many improvements. Increased population brought opportunities to apply for grant program for various projects such as a new roof for the city building. The village paid for street lighting for Route 2 and within the town. Each house has been given a number for 911 emergency calls and to make it easier to receive UPS deliveries. The streets have all been named rather than being referred to as "Stop 48" or "Stop 49" as they were called in the days of the streetcars.

Mayor Phillips is enthusiastic about the future of Beech Bottom. The opportunities for growth available so many years ago are still there. In fact, Waldorf Distributors will be relocating to Beech Bottom with construction to start by



Susan and Mayor Paul Phillips

spring. There are 100+ acres of land along the riverfront that could be further developed. If the area is chosen for a new bridge, Mayor Phillips sees endless possibilities. Speaking for himself, as well as the village council, the mayor said, "We just want to build our town. We want to have the best little town on the river."

For more information about Beech Bottom, contact Susan Phillips, village recorder, at the mayor's office (304-394-5545).

BHJ SUBMITS APPLICATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

BHJ received confirmation they have been selected to submit a final proposal for a brownfields assessment grant for \$200,000.

One of the criteria used to evaluate an application is the extent to which a project reduces threats to the health and welfare of children, pregnant women, minorities, low income populations or other sensitive groups. Local governments may use up to 10% of the grant to monitor population health effects or enforce institutional controls. Once approval is official, health issues that will be studied include cancer, asthma and birth defects.

The remaining funds will be used to inventory and characterize those sites recognized as brownfields, conduct planning and

community involvement to increase public awareness and strategically build working relationships with current property owners.

On March 5, 2003, the Brownfields Task Force will hold a workshop session in preparation for a public meeting to be held in mid-March. For further information, contact Doris Davis, BHJ Economic Development Specialist at (740) 282-3685.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, OHIO!

Ohio will be 200 on March 1. Since 1995 the Ohio Bicentennial Commission has been busy making plans for the event. Each of Ohio's 88 counties is involved in the Bicentennial celebration with more than 450 projects planned all over the state. Examples of three of those projects can or will be found in Jefferson County.

Scott Hagan, an Ohio artist, was commissioned to paint the bicentennial logo on one barn in each county. Nearly 2,000 barn owners volunteered their barns for painting. Local honors went to a barn located on State Route 213. The barn, owned by Mary Grafton, was the 79th barn to be painted over the course of the last five years.



The Ohio Historical Markers project is actually the continuation of a program started in 1953. Currently, there are approximately 600 markers in place. Jefferson County's marker can be found on the corner of North Fourth Street and Franklin Avenue in Steubenville. Dedicated June 7, 2002, the marker honors Dean Martin, considered by many to be the city's most famous citizen.

Each county will also be a recipient of a large commemorative Bicentennial bell. The bells will be made on-site over a period of two days by the Verdin Company from Cincinnati. Jefferson County's bell casting and dedication will take place June 21-22 coinciding with the Old Fort Steuben Festival.

For more information on Ohio's Bicentennial plans, you can access their website at www.ohio200.org. Additional information for Jefferson County activities may be obtained by contacting the Steubenville Convention and Visitors Bureau at (740) 283-4935 or visiting their office located at 501 Washington Street.

SPRING 2003 REGIONAL EVENTS

Feb 28- March 2	Weirton Chamber of Commerce Home and Garden Exposition Serbian Cultural Center, Weirton, WV	Friday: 5-8:30 Saturday/Sunday: All Day
March 4	BHJ Executive Committee BHJ Office	Noon
March 5	U.S. EDA Satellite Telecast: "Brownfields: Market-Based Solutions for Rehabilitation." Call BHJ for details.	3:00 (Registration: 2:45)
March 12	BHJ Regional Bridge Study—Advisory Committee Meeting Wellsburg Fire Station, 12th Street	1:30-3:00
March 14-16	Jefferson County Chamber Home Exposition St. John Arena, Steubenville	Friday: 5-7 Saturday: All Day Sunday: 12-5:00
March 19	BHJ Technical Advisory Committee Full Commission	10:30 a.m. Noon
April 18	Office Closed—Good Friday Holiday	
May 6	BHJ Executive Committee	Noon
May 21	BHJ Technical Advisory Committee Full Commission	10:30 a.m. Noon

TRAVEL FROM COLUMBUS TO PITTSBURGH MAY

by John Brown, Executive Director

On February 10th, twenty-five regional dignitaries met to kick-start an estimated \$300 million and 28 mile road link between Cadiz and Newcomerstown, Ohio. Organized by the Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce and Progress Alliance, this investment would offer a future option to the beyond capacity I-70 corridor between Washington, D. C. and Columbus. While the link is not physically located in Jefferson County, Chamber Executive Director Dom Mucci stated, "This new and parallel option to I-70 will open a new Pittsburgh to Columbus corridor. It means jobs. Communities such as Steubenville, Cadiz, Newcomerstown, Coshocton, Newark and New Albany have much to gain from this investment."

Myron Pakush, District Deputy Director for the Ohio Department of Transportation in New Philadelphia, cautioned those attending that these are difficult financial times. ODOT, through the guidance of its Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC), will spend no more than \$300 million in any one year for total state road investment. The projected cost

and time for completion is challenging.

Item	Cost	Time
Hiring of consultant	---	9 Months
Environment Impact Study	\$7 million	3 Years
Design	\$17 million	4 Years
Construction	\$200 million	3 Years

Congressman Bob Ney stated his predecessor, Doug Applegate, recognized the impact of this new corridor in the mid-80's and earmarked start-up dollars for feasibility work. "Seventy-five percent of this 100 mile corridor is already complete. To realize this opportunity, I encourage you to drive the finished four-lane corridor between Newark and Newcomerstown."



Proposed Columbus to Pittsburgh Corridor

In upcoming months, this group will hold four regional meetings to gather local support. The group will petition the placement of the project on ODOT's 30 year transportation improvement plan, Access Ohio.

BUSINESS INCUBATORS POSITIVE

With the steel crisis and downward swing of local economy, new avenues of economic development must be explored for the tri-county area. Members of the Brooke Hancock Business Incubator Task Force are addressing this issue. In July, 2002, BHJ in cooperation with the Business Development Corporation of the Northern Panhandle (BDC) applied for and received a \$1,000 grant from the National Business Incubation Association/Appalachian Regional Commission. This money was used to hire a mentor, Linda Clark, to educate the group on the start-up and management of business incubators.

The primary goal of a business incubator is to facilitate economic development by improving the entrepreneurial base of an area. This is not a new concept. Batavia, New York was the site of the first identifiable business incubator in 1959. With 20 incubators in operation by 1984, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) began strongly promoting incubator development, and the number rose rapidly. In 1984, the National Business Incubation Association, a pri-

vate membership organization of incubator developers and managers, was launched with an initial membership of 40. Today it has grown to almost 800 members.

There are 550 business incubators in the United States alone. Since 1986, it is reported new incubators have been opening at the rate of about one a week. A proven economic development tool, it is estimated that there are more than 8,000 startup firms housed in incubators and another 4,500 entrepreneurial ventures currently operating on their own. It is also interesting to note over 80 percent of firms that were started through an incubator are still in operation.

The Task Force believes this program can make a positive impact in the region and is aggressively searching for funds for a business incubator feasibility study. A grant application requesting \$40-50,000 will be submitted to the Economic Development Administration, and other avenues of funding are being explored.



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Editor: Linda Taylor
Regional Review
BHJ Metropolitan Planning Commission
124 North Fourth Street Second Floor
Steubenville, OH 43952
740-282-3685
www.bhjmpc.org

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Related Web Sites

Appalachian Regional Commission
www.arc.gov

Brooke Pioneer Trail Assoc. Inc
www.brookepioneertrail.org

**Business Development Corporation of the
Northern Panhandle**
www.bhbdc.org

CHANGE, Inc.
www.changeinc.org

City of Steubenville
www.ci.steubenville.oh.us

Hancock County Convention and Visitors Bureau
www.hancockcvb.com

Jefferson County Chamber of Commerce
www.jeffersoncountychamber.com

Ohio Department of Transportation
www.dot.state.oh.us

Progress Alliance
www.alliance2000.org

State of Ohio Government Information
www.state.oh.us

State of West Virginia Government Info.
www.state.wv.us

State Route 2 & Interstate 68 Authority
www.route2andi68.com

U.S. Census Bureau
www.census.gov

U.S. Department of Transportation
www.dot.gov

Village of Wintersville
www.wintersville.net

Weirton Chamber of Commerce
www.weirtonchamber.com

Weirton Steel Corp.
www.weirton.com

West Virginia Department of Transportation
www.wvdot.com

West Virginia Development Office
www.wvdo.org