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Port authority, local officials, business reps going to Washington

Dupps to promote water tower for Heath

Sunday, March 25, 2007

LORI WINCE

ThisWeek Staff Writer

Local officials and members of the Heath-Newark-Licking County Port Authority are traveling to Washington, D.C., March 28 to visit with area legislators.

"We'd like to thank them for their efforts on our behalf," said Rick Platt, executive director of the port authority.

Platt said officials also hope to let the legislators know how much of an effect local businesses have on the regional economy. His calculations show the companies where the Newark Air Force Base was employ 920 workers with an annual payroll of \$53-million.

Platt estimates the port authority, by working with businesses on the old base and with other projects in Licking County, has had an estimated \$225-million impact on the region.

Those making the Washington trip are Licking County Commissioner Tim Bubb, Heath Mayor Dan Dupps, port authority board member Fred Paul and representatives of The Boeing Co., Bionetics Corp. and BAE Systems.

"I hope to promote our city in general, and I want to promote a water tower for the 'mid-Ohio' area," Dupps said.

Heath is looking for funding to construct a water tower for the Mid-Ohio Industrial Park on the city's south side.

John Groff, chief of Heath's division of building and zoning, said there is a large company interested in opening a business to Heath that will need additional water. He said he could not mention a name because the company has not yet decided to locate in Heath.

There also is a need to increase water pressure in that area, Groff said, for potential development along Thornwood Drive.

Keith Alexander, Heath's auditor, said the project could cost up to \$1-million.



Tim Bubb



Dan Dupps

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"Blazers win DYA 11th-12th Grade Basketball Championship"

The Blazers capped an undefeated 12-0 season by defeating the Magic, 42-41, on a last second shot.



SUBMITTED BY:
JIM BOTTI
DUBLIN

"We're exploring grants," Alexander said.

Dupps said if the water tower is required as a condition of the new company moving in, the city will "do our very best to get it accomplished."

Platt said the trip is a way for local officials to "make sure we're on the mind of our delegation."

It's also a way to ensure that legislators are more knowledgeable about the area, in case there's an emergency need.

"You never know when a crisis may come up," Platt said. "We like to have regular contact with the delegations and their staff, so when something does come up, they can answer questions and they're familiar with the impact we're having."

He said legislators can help with funding issues, such as the one Heath is facing, and with work-force issues, for example.

"They can help open doors for our customers," Platt added. "We need to talk to them about our successes and to reiterate how important they are to our future success."

Cost of the annual trip comes from the port authority's budget.

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