

NEWS

OHIO RAIL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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Major Projects Get ORDC Approval

- **“Green” Ethanol Facility For Harrison County**
- **Big Rail Upgrades for Marion Industrial Center**

(Columbus) – A Harrison County rail line that’s been unused for over 25 years will get major track upgrades to serve a first-ever “green” ethanol production facility in Ohio. ORDC Commissioners have approved a \$700,000 dollar grant and loan package that will help rehabilitate the remaining 7.2 miles of the 12.7 mile Georgetown Branch rail line with new ballast, cross-ties, grade crossings and heavier steel rails.

The rail line upgrades will help enable the planned \$71-million dollar Harrison Ethanol Facility, which is very close to breaking ground on 276 acres at the site of the former Consolidate Coal mine near Georgetown. But ethanol fuel production is only part an almost completely sustainable operation that includes:

- **Recycling of the “distiller’s grain” from the ethanol production as cattle feed**
- **A 10-thousand head beef cattle and 2,000 dairy cattle operation that will consume some of the distiller’s grain and provide meat and dairy products for profit. The remaining distiller’s grain will also be sold for profit as cattle feed.**
- **Ohio’s first and largest anaerobic digester that will recycle the cattle manure into methane gas, carbon dioxide and fertilizer for profit**
- **Use the methane gas to generate electricity to be sold on the statewide power grid for profit**
- **Adaptively re-uses a former coal mining facility with minimal impact on the environment or neighbors**

(more)

The facility is also expected to create:

- **107 new production jobs**
- **60 related trucking jobs**
- **1,290 annual carloads of freight (corn, ethanol fuel and cattle feed), with the possible expansion up to 3,800 carloads as the business grows**
- **A major new market for grain sales for Ohio farmers**

“This is a great example of what government and the private sector can do to not only generate economic development and jobs in a part of Ohio that badly needs both”, says ORDC Executive Director Jim Seney, “but also enables an almost completely sustainable fuel production and agricultural facility that is good for the environment and quality of life in Ohio.”

The facility is expected to break ground later in the first-quarter of 2006.

In another decision, ORDC Commissioners also approved a grant and loan package for major track and other rail facility upgrades for the Marion Industrial Center (MIC). The improvements will enable the MIC to become a significant intermodal freight center in a joint operation between MIC, the CSX Railroad and a national trucking firm which is now negotiating a deal with the MIC. Trains averaging 100 trailer-loads of freight on flat cars will make East-West trips six days a week between Kansas City, Missouri and Marion. It will also allow for the eventual development of the MIC into an intermodal shipping and distribution facility for shipping freight containers.

Upgrades will include:

- **Replacement of World War Two era light-weight rails with modern 130-pound rail to accommodate heavier freight cars and locomotives**
- **New rail switches**
- **New on-site grade crossing equipment**
- **Reducing sharp track curves to accommodate heavier, longer rail cars and locomotives**
- **Assist purchase of lift cranes to handle intermodal trailers and containers**

MIC officials also say the upgrades will enable at least ten new jobs and provide a new and better transportation option for both servicing existing business in and around Marion, but also attracting new business and jobs.

In other business, ORDC Commissioners approved the extension of loan payment terms with the Columbiana County Port Authority for improvements to the former Youngstown & Southern Railroad line, now being operated by the Ohio & Pennsylvania Railroad (a subsidiary of the

Ohio Central Railroad). The extension will allow the Port Authority and the railroad to apply for a Federal Railroad Administration *Railroad Rehabilitation and Improvement Financing* (RRIF) loan, the proceeds from which will allow the pay down of the ORDC loans and longer term financing of much-needed track improvements. The railroad itself has already put over \$4.5 million of its own funds into major track and equipment improvements and is now serving two major shippers on the line and continuing efforts to attract new shipping business.

Commissioners also extended a funding agreement on the former Grand River Line, a two-mile long, branch line that runs between the CSX mainline at Painesville and Lake Erie at Grand River. The line had been abandoned by the CSX. ORDC last year provided initial funding for the Coshocton-based Ohio Central Railroad to lease the line and develop rail business from several potential customers at Grand River, including a lime and cement plant. The extension of funding will continue that effort.

(The Ohio Rail Development Commission is an independent agency operating within the Ohio Department of Transportation. ORDC is responsible for economic development through the improvement and expansion of passenger and freight rail service, railroad grade crossing safety and rail travel & tourism issues. For more information about what ORDC does for Ohio, visit our website at <http://www.dot.state.oh.us/ohiorail/>)