

NEWS

OHIO RAIL DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ORDC Commissioners & Staff Approve \$1.2 Million in Grants & Loan for Rail Projects That Retain & Create Jobs *Commissioners Also Authorize Chairman to Enter Into Negotiations for New ORDC Executive Director*

(Columbus) -- 205 new jobs created and 286 jobs retained in Ohio. That's the projected return on the investment of over \$1.2 million in Ohio Rail Development Commission grants and a loan in a broad range of rail projects around Ohio.

Perhaps the biggest project approved by ORDC Commissioners was a grant and loan package totaling \$925,000 that will assist the Village of Leipsic in Putnam County to expand the existing 2,300-acre "Iron Highway" Industrial Park to over 7,000 acres and enable service to the park by three railroads. Coupled with an over \$3.4 million Ohio Department of Development grant, this leveraging of funds will also enable the construction of the planned Poet Ethanol Plant, which will create 42 new jobs and up to 5,000 new carloads of freight each year.

According to Village officials, it is the largest such industrial park East of the Mississippi to be served by three railroads: CSX, Norfolk Southern and the Indiana & Ohio railroads.

In an ORDC staff-approved project, two major employers in the City of Greenville in Darke County will benefit from a single rail spur project to be funded by leveraging a \$100,000 ORDC grant with funds from the City of Greenville, RJ Corman Railroad and the Dayton Development Coalition.

The newly funded lead track to Spartech (a plastics company) and the planned Andersons Marathon Ethanol Plant will generate 2,500 carloads of freight annually on what was formerly a marginally-used freight rail line. 35 new jobs will be created at the ethanol plant and Spartech will not only retain 90 jobs, but create 100 new jobs. The project also opens up 75 new acres for commercial development.

A good example of good return on a seemingly small investment was a staff-approved grant of \$48,570 dollars for a rail spur into the Tuscarawas County Port Authority-owned "Southern Gateway Business Park". The project, near Gnadenuhuten, will bring a much-needed rail connection for Plymouth Foam Company (a plastics company) and will allow the company to preserve 76 jobs and create 20 new jobs with average wages of \$10 an hour. It also opens up the industrial park for more rail-oriented business development.

Commissioners approved a \$200,000 grant to match an over \$3.2 million commitment by Fulton Railroad Company LTD to enable a major trans-loading facility on the Ohio River at Cincinnati. The 7-acre site will allow trans-loading an expected 1.2-million tons of raw steel products (pig iron) from barges to rail and on to steel mills.

The facility will save the Ohio steel industry an estimated \$1.2 million to \$1.8-million annually in shipping costs and generate 2,500 new carloads of freight and eliminate an estimate 15,000 truck trips off of Cincinnati area highways. The project will also create 8 new jobs.

Details on the remaining projects are available on the ORDC website under the agenda postings.

ORDC Commissioners voted to enter into negotiations with Michael Bradley for Executive Director of ORDC. If negotiations are successful, Bradley, who currently serves as Director of Planning for the Central Ohio Transit Authority, will fill the position left open by the retirement last August of long-time Executive Director Jim Seney.

(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/>)