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FAIRFIELD JOBS & ECONOMY

## \$1.7M road widening benefits development, city says

### Several businesses have added jobs, expanded in Fairfield industrial corridor.

By Eric Robinette

**FAIRFIELD** — The city will invest nearly \$1 million in improvements to Seward Road, one of its main industrial corridors that has been a boon for adding new jobs.

Several businesses, including Western States, OCS Intellitrak and Takumi Stamping, have recently spurred development along the half-mile stretch of roadway.

"It takes a lot of careful planning to spur that development," said Tim Bachman, Fairfield's director of development services.

Construction to widen the middle section of Seward Road, from Port Union to Symmes roads, will begin in May, according to City Engineer Ben Mann.

The section of Seward between Port Union and Symmes/Union Centre will be open to local traffic only after June 3 for approximately 60 days. The project entails adding a dual left-turn lane down the center of the road and a shoulder, Bachman said.

"We have all kinds of industrial rooftops there so (the widening) is needed," Bachman said.

The widening will also improve safety in that area, he said. Semi-trucks will have more room to make turns along the road often used as a bypass to the redesigned Ohio 4 bypass.

Most of the work is expected to be complete by Sept. 3, with all work complete by October.

Total construction costs are estimated at \$1.7 million. Grants from the Ohio Public Works Commission for \$750,000 and a Community Development Block Grant for \$150,430 will help fund the project.

Seward Road between Ohio 4 and Port Union Road was widened in the 1990s. The section between Symmes and Tylersville Road was widened in the mid-2000s, and that section led to the development of Takumi Stamping, which brought in 300 jobs with a total annual payroll of \$8.7 million in 2008.

Western States is relocating 67 jobs to Fairfield from Hamilton and is building a new facility in the corridor. The company will also add 25 additional jobs.

Intellitrak, which manufactures overhead conveyor systems, has brought in 25 new jobs to the city, having moved in late last year.

The pending construction “frees up traffic going either way, and that’s good for us,” said Andy Herzog, an engineering manager for Intellitrak.

The key to development in that area was the addition of sewer lines about 25 years ago, said Greg Kathman, the city’s economic development manager.

“When the sewer lines were put in that area, the roads were not wide enough to accommodate the traffic,” he said.

“We’re setting the stage to get the necessary ingredients in the ground,” Bachman said.

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The road widening between Symmes and Tylersville did NOT lead to the development of Takumi Stamping and 300 new jobs. Takumi Stamping has been in Fairfield for 12 years, starting in 2001 at its original location, 8945 Seward Road between Port Union and Symmes, until 2010 when it moved the existing operation to 8585 Seward Road-- its current location, which is between Symmes and Tylersville. While the road widening was certainly instrumental in the development of the new construction there, no jobs were brought in as a result.

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