GOVERNMENT SPENDING

City gets grant to fix intersection

The 90/10 grant makes it possible for Fairfield to afford the improvement.

By Kelsey Cano
Staff Writer

FAIRFIELD — The City of Fairfield has received a $2.5 million grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation to upgrade and improve the Gilmore Road/Holden Boulevard/Ohio 4 intersection.

"It's one of the worst intersections we have in the city as far as accidents go," said Dave Butsch, public works director.

Bill Westerbeck, transportation director for Fairfield City Schools, has dealt with congestion at the intersection. Before the district eliminated busing for the senior high school this year, he said buses would "do everything we could to stay out of that intersection."

Only nine special education buses currently drop students off at the senior high school, which is just northeast of the intersection.

"I know traffic-wise, from the perspective of parents, it's a real mess," he said.

Butsch said his staff "took a long shot" and applied for a 90/10 grant, where the grant covers 90 percent of the road improvement project with a local match of 10 percent, or $250,000, and recently got word they received it.

The city may be able to cover its portion of the project through Ohio Public Works Commission dollars, so in essence, will pay zero toward the project, he said.

"It's about a $2.5 million project we wouldn't have financed otherwise," said Art Pizzano, city manager. "No one gets 90 percent. It's an indication of the times."

The project includes adding lanes on Holden Boulevard and Gilmore Road and a double left turn lane from Gilmore to Ohio 4, Butsch said.

The project is about four years out, Butsh said, and is estimated to be started in 2016. A BP gas station and an Acura dealership are off the intersection.

Traffic on Ohio 4 is stopped at the South Gilmore Road and Holden Boulevard. intersection Friday in Fairfield. The city of Fairfield has received a $2.5 million grant to fix problems at the busy intersection near Fairfield High School. STAFF PHOTO BY GARY STELZER