

COMMUNITY

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PORTAGE COUNTY

Future of Kent courthouse considered

City officials, commissioners meet to discuss options, collaborative effort pledged

By Colin McEwen
Record-Courier staff writer

The future of the current courthouse in Kent is in question. The location, size and construction of the new building are also unknown.

What is certain, however, is a new courthouse will be a cooperative effort after all the specifics are agreed upon.

Officials from the city of Kent, the courts and the Portage County commissioners met with an architect in executive session Thursday at the commissioners meeting to discuss working together to move the project forward.

The entities included in the pre-

liminary discussions are the city of Kent, Portage County and Kent State University.

Since it was a closed-door meeting, possible locations for a new courthouse were not disclosed, but a Portage County Municipal Court statute notes the Kent branch must stay within the boundaries of the city of Kent.

In the last several years, County Municipal Court judges have complained about the condition of the building at 214 S. Water St., noting crowded clerk offices, lack of basement record storage and a lack of paint, dirty and worn carpeting.

In an effort to save costs, the three entities may work together to

build a new courthouse.

Kent City Manager Dave Ruller said he is eager to move forward with the discussions.

"This was the first chance we had to talk about (a joint venture)," he said. "This is a good way to save money — we're going to continue the conversation."

Commissioner Chris Smeiles said the joint effort could save as much as \$2 million.

"We could save money by working together," he said. "In the long term, we could share the cost of operation, which would also save us money."

Commissioner Maureen Frederick said in addition to the cost savings, a new courthouse is much-

needed.

"Anytime you combine your efforts, you should save money," she said. "We're anxious to have an adequate working space for the court and its employees."

Portage County Clerk of Courts Linda Fankhauser agreed, adding that many of the employees of the Kent courthouse are crammed in tight spaces.

"People like it when governments cooperate," she said. "I think it's a great idea, I just hope it won't take too long."

Fankhauser said the county courts have saved \$1.1 million to contribute to the project since 2006, when the courts implemented the "special

projects fund" obtained through an additional \$20 court cost.

In 2004, the county commissioned a space evaluation of the municipal court building by Hasenstab Architects Inc., Akron, and David L. Sommers, Architects, Kent. The study noted the crowded offices and space for court clerk, lack of waiting and meeting areas for defendants, and a lack of long-term parking for people with business at the courthouse.

Fankhauser said a new courthouse would improve working conditions.

"We've outgrown the place so much that it's unbelievable," she said.

TALLMADGE ROAD BRIDGE OPENS



Lisa Scalfaro/Record-Courier

The Tallmadge Road bridge over Breakneck Creek in Rootstown recently reopened. The span closed late last year for the construction of a replacement. The new bridge was built by F. J. Schirack, Inc. for \$967,089, funded in part by a federal highway grant and a state public works grant. Standing on the bridge are, from left, Chuck Keiper, Portage County commissioner; Michael A. Marozzi, Portage County engineer; Bonnie Howe, Rootstown Township trustee; Chris Smeiles, Portage County commissioner; Maureen Frederick, Portage County commissioner; and Kathleen Chandler, state representative.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Colleges discuss economic value

KSU, Cleveland Institute of Art, music school report to council

Three speakers from Kent State University, the Cleveland Institute of Art and Cleveland Institute of Music touted their institutions' economic value to the region at the recent quarterly meeting of The Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education.

John Crawford, associate dean in KSU's College of the Arts, discussed the KSU School of Fashion Design and Merchandising's role in Fashion Week Cleveland, an event at which 400 people — including KSU stu-

dents and alumni — demonstrated the fashion talent in Northeastern Ohio. KSU has also gained national recognition for developing and researching liquid crystals in fashion, as well as for its museum, Porthouse Theater, downtown art gallery and partnerships with Blossom Music Center.

Mari Hulick, associate professor and chairwoman of the communication design department at the Cleveland Institute of Art, presented information on the "District of Design at

Playhouse Square," part of the redevelopment of the Euclid Avenue corridor in Cleveland, while Eric Bower, vice president and chief operating officer at the Cleveland Institute of Music, provided copies of the recent economic impact study commissioned by Cleveland Institute of Music in connection with its expansion and construction of its state-of-the-art performance space, Mixon Hall.

"Northeast Ohio is the proud home of world-class

higher education arts institutions," said Ann Womer Benjamin, NOCHE executive director and former state representative. "NOCHE is thrilled to promote these colleges to prospective students and to be able to quantify the positive economic impact that these programs have on our region."

NOCHE's mission is to mobilize the business and higher education communities in a 14-county region for collective action that advances regional economic development.

KSU

\$250,000 to fund Upward Bound project

High schoolers experience college through program

By Dave O'Brien
Record-Courier staff writer

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown announced Thursday his office obtained \$250,000 in U.S. Department of Education funds to help continue the work of the Upward Bound programs at Kent State University, and an additional nearly \$300,000 for the same programs operated by the University of Akron.

The money will help provide summer projects designed to simulate a college-going experience, tutoring, academic assistance, access to cultural events, mentoring programs, core curriculum instruction and personal and academic counseling, Brown's office announced.

KSU supports three Upward Bound programs, said Geraldine Hayes-Nelson, associate dean of undergraduate studies. These in turn serve Ravenna High School, Theodore Roosevelt High School in Kent and high schools in Lorain, Stark, Summit and Trumbull counties, she said.

The programs are geared toward high school students who plan to be the first generation of their families to attend college, Hayes-Nelson said. The program began at KSU in 1973 as part of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and incorporates mentoring, service learning and community service projects, she said.

Brown spoke to a group of Upward Bound students several years ago before he was elected to the U.S. Senate, Hayes-Nelson said. Even then "he was supporting and encouraging kids to go to college," she said, and later helped prevent cuts to the program's funding.

Dana Lawless-Andric, coordinator of the math and science program, said she coordinates 50 students in ninth grade through 12th grade who apply to the specialized program. Six-week summer programs include participation in "rigorous academics" including units in architecture, chemistry and physics, she said.

Students also participate in science fairs, meet math and science professionals such as Timken Co. researchers and engineers and in March traveled to North Carolina to visit that state's Research Triangle, including Duke University, the University of North Carolina and North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State University.

"We're very excited," Lawless-Andric said. "It's been great because we've been funded since 1999. These programs have a long history of success, and a lot of that success comes from the support of Senator Brown and Senator (George) Voinovich, too. They're making an investment in the students and in their future."

PORTAGE COUNTY

KSU, Hiram College get funding in announcement

State education and development officials announced on Thursday a number of multi-million dollar initiatives for Kent State University and Hiram College, including scholarships, strategic scientific programs and innovative economic development projects.

KSU is the lead institution on a \$2 million Choose Ohio First Scholarship program designed to train Northeastern Ohio's future biomedical and biotechnology workforce. The program will provide hundreds of scholarships for students studying at all eight of the campuses in KSU's eight-campus system, as well as more at Cuyahoga Community College, Lakeland

Community College, Lorain Community College and Stark State College of Technology.

The program will integrate undergraduate and graduate education through joint research projects, build on KSU's biomedical research and technology and help fulfill the goals of the University System of Ohio's 10-year master plan. The initiative addresses both the needs of students and the demands of Ohio companies for a skilled and adaptable workforce. It also provides for a pipeline to encourage middle and high school-age students to spark their interest in science and science careers.

Hiram College is part of the \$2 million Choose Ohio

First Engaged Scholarship Program in Bioscience and Healthcare. Lead institution Cleveland State University will partner with Hiram, Baldwin Wallace College, Case Western Reserve University, Tri-C, BioEnterprise, the Cleveland Clinic Foundation and JumpStart to attract and graduate more than 430 STEM students in a five-year period.

KSU also was announced as a partner in a \$5 million state grant received by Alpha Micron Inc. of Kent. The Third Frontier grant, from an engineering and physical sciences research and commercialization program, is a three-year award for adaptive window technology involving KSU and NASA.

MARS HONORED



Meryl A. Orlando, Ph.D., clinical psychologist at Summit Psychological Associates, Inc., presents the Citizen Recognition Award to Field High School junior Benjamin Mars. For the past seven years, Benjamin has donated his birthday money to the American Red Cross, assisting tsunami victims in India and hurricane victims in Louisiana and Mississippi. His monetary donations have purchased wheelchairs for eight individuals.

Sidewalk movie planned in Kent

The first of three Sidewalk Cinemas scheduled for this summer begins tonight in downtown Kent's Home Savings Plaza with a showing of the film "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" at 9:30 p.m.

The screening is free and open to the public as part of the Downtown Innovative Community Events 2008 schedule sponsored by Standing Rock Cultural Arts. A complete schedule of this year's DICE schedule is available online at www.standingrock.net.

Open house set for Paris fire

PARIS — The township fire department will hold an open house Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The event will include a visit from MedFlight, "jaws of life" demonstrations and other activities.