

**PRIORITIZATION
OF
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS**

2010-2011

In our ten county region, OMEGA works with the local planning and economic development offices for prioritization of projects for EDA funding consideration. OMEGA's director, staff, and CEDS Committee ranks projects based upon overall impact and benefit to the region. Such factors as private job creation and or retention, community distress, and evidence of matching funds are used in this process. OMEGA then works with the project applicant to develop the final application to be submitted to potential funding sources. Projects on this list are no longer given numerical priorities, since projects progress at different rates. Each project listed has significant merit.

The top priority projects for the OMEGA region for the 201-11 period are as follows:

- A. Wireless Proposal for Ohio Appalachia (All OMEGA Counties and 22 others)
- B. Columbiana County Energy Conversion Site Improvements (Columbiana County)
- C. Zane State College - Cambridge Center Expansion (Guernsey County)
- D. Guernsey County Home Technology Park (Guernsey County)
- E. Atwood Water Treatment Plant Project

(a) The Wireless Proposal for Ohio Appalachia is an outgrowth of the Connecting Appalachia Middle Mile project. It seeks to find opportunities to find funding on an area by area basis to complete the ongoing efforts of the NTIA project. It is roughly estimated that \$200,000. of investment will be required for each area served.

(b) The Columbiana County Port Authority requires infrastructure improvements estimated at 55 million dollars. Total project costs to establish the coal-to-liquid fuel conversion plant is set at 3.7 billion dollars. The plant would employ 200-300 persons. It would lead to an increase in mining jobs in the area. The plant would be located near Wellsville.

(c) The Zane State College Cambridge Campus expansion project addresses the labor market need for additional workforce preparation and workforce development in the region. The project will expand the College's capacity by adding a new education and training facility connected to the existing Training Center, located in the D.O. Hall Business Center in Guernsey County. The estimated cost is \$9.6 million.

(d) The Guernsey County Technology Park will be located on County Home Road. The 405-acre site is owned by the county, but requires water, sewer, and road improvements, which are estimated to cost \$2.5 million. Two existing industrial parks are full. The Technology Park is needed so the location can become a regional job creator.

(e) Muskingum Watershed has been working hard to keep Atwood Lake Resort & Conference Center a viable part of the Carroll County economy. Partnering with local elected officials, USDA's Rural Development, the Ohio Department of Development, Kent State University Tuscarawas, several potential health and wellness providers, private investors, and a nationally known and successful resort consultant, a plan has been proposed that would add to the Resort a chronic illness/wellness center, university educational and business development programs, state of the art corporate conferencing capabilities, a new learn to golf facility, and affordable residential developments. This plan would not only retain the approximately 150 existing resort jobs, but in addition, would create approximately 30 jobs at an average annual salary of \$40,000 in the new wellness center, and 3 – 5 jobs at an annual salary of \$35,000 through the establishment of Kent State's presence at the facility. These new components of the Atwood Resort Business Model may in turn spur additional developments to further bolster the economy and employment in the Atwood and Carroll County area. USDA Rural Development and the Ohio Department of Development have already committed almost \$1,000,000 in grant funding for the project, while Kent State has committed \$250,000. Approximately \$5,000,000 in private investment is being secured as well.

Minutes of the OMEGA CEDS Committee
Submitted by Edward Tester, OMEGA staff

On December 21, 2011 the OMEGA CEDS Committee voted to establish the enclosed list of priority projects. Six of seven members cast votes, all six voted in the affirmative. This list now becomes part of *the OMEGA 2010-11 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy*. The following Ohio counties are part of the OMEGA CEDS: Belmont, Carroll, Columbiana, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Muskingum, and Tuscarawas.