

2007 a planning year for future industrial growth

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It appears 2007 may have been a planning year for businesses and industries in the City of Sidney and area villages. Expansions, renovations and relocation were also noted throughout the area.

Area leaders said it was a time of varying numbers. When one company would announce a relocation plan, another would expand. Staying even seemed to be the goal for many.

"From what I've seen, Shelby County is fortunate to have weathered the storm as far as jobs. In fact, I think we've done quite well," said Michael Dodds, Executive Director of the West Ohio Development Council (WODC).

During 2007, officials at Ross Casting & Innovation of Sidney announced plans for a new \$12 million manufacturing facility for this year on Kuther Road, Dodds said. A large expansion by Sidney Tool and Die was also noted.

In another major move, Ring Container Technologies of Sidney

began work to move their operations from Industrial Drive to a large section of the long-vacant former Monarch Building on Oak Avenue.

Dodds spoke of the new 130,000 square-foot manufacturing facility at Honda of America continuing to grow last year. Machinery will be installed by late summer.

Houghton Elevator announced plans to close their Sidney location and combine workforces elsewhere.

"There was no dramatic growth in employment for the area. We were approaching 300 new jobs, mostly in health care and manufacturing," Dodds stated.

In the retail arena, the grand openings of Culver's and Menard's, both along West Michigan Street, point to continued growth in that area of the city. An expansion of the Hampton Inn is telling of the anticipated growth around the intersection of Fair and Vandemark roads.

Last year, Lew Blackford, former WODC Executive Director, took the leadership role for the 62-acre land site

that has been proposed as the location for a possible new convention center and county fairgrounds on the southwest corner of the same intersection.

Information on the City of Sidney Web site (www.sidneyoh.com) reports the city ranks 12th on Site Selection Magazine's Top 100 Small Towns for new and expanded facilities in 2007. That compares to 20th in 2006.

City officials have annexed more than 250 acres of commercial and industrial land over the past year. City Manager Steve Stilwell announced the city's intention to hold a purchase option on 200 acres of land as part of the Ohio Job Ready Site program for prospective businesses.

In Jackson Center, Hawk Industrial relocated into the former Lacal Building on Washington Street at year's end, according to

Village Administrator Stephanie Ann Goff. She noted that J.C. Polymers recently opened in a Jerry Drive location to melt rubber into its original form for reuse.

Goff said the last acreage of the village's industrial park on the west side of the village has been sold to State Route 274 Investments. Plans are underway to provide utilities to the area.

The village also enhanced the northeast corner of Main and Pike streets to provide better off-street parking at the busy intersection.

Fort Loramie Village Administrator Tony Schmitmeyer reported a 1,200 square foot expansion of Partners in Recognition, 405 S. Main St. An insurance office for the Community Insurance Group also opened in the village last year.

Schmitmeyer said the

finalization of plans for additional industrial park land is near.

Russia Village Administrator Mike Busse said the plan to provide a \$5.9 million public water system in the village has been a top priority for some time. In 2007, village officials continued plans to expand the industrial park.

Francis Manufacturing of Russia recently finished a 30,000 square foot expansion.

Anna Village Administrator Jon Hulsmeyer reported a newly-formed company of Wells Brothers officials, DMAW, Inc., began plans to construct a panel shop next to the current Wells location at 105 Shue Drive.

Dodds said Lot-Ridge Rubber of Botkins moved into the Findlay Industries building in the village last year. The previous company had abandoned the facility several years ago.

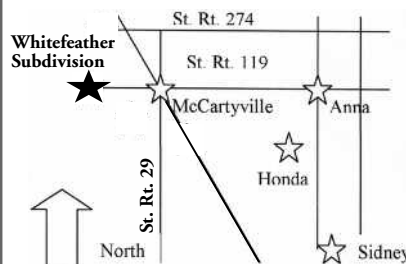


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