

It is well documented in the Cleveland Plain Dealer and elsewhere that the battle for the future economic viability of our region is a difficult one. Manufacturing jobs are no longer the bedrock they traditionally provided. Where will our region turn to maintain our region's vitality and quality of life?

One of the most visible opportunities awaiting us is literally at our doorstep. One does not have to go far from any point in Lake County to land in our greatest natural resource: Lake Erie. Indeed, we are aptly named Lake County, because the very creation of Ohio's smallest and youngest county in 1840, depended upon acreage under Lake Erie to meet the criteria for becoming a county. It is therefore fitting that we celebrate our close relationship with the Lake, our greatest natural resource.

So what do State Route 2 noise walls have in common with Lake Erie?

- 1) Just as Lake Erie is responsible for the historical economic success of northeast Ohio, so SR2 is responsible for the tremendous growth of Lake County. State Route 2 carries more traffic than Interstate 90 and is our greatest transportation resource. Lake County Commissioner Dan Troy has dubbed SR2- "Lake County Main Street".
- 2) Just as Lake Erie suffered a decline in water quality from pollution, SR2 has shown the wear and tear of its 45 plus years of service. The new lanes, pavement, lighting and attractive new noise walls represent the rejuvenation of both of these great resources.
- 3) There is a geographic relationship to Lake Erie. The noise walls will be constructed on the north or Lake Erie side of State Route 2. Additionally, the noise walls mirror parts of the 26 mile Lake County shoreline.
- 4) Both the Lake County shoreline and the State Route 2 freeway are resources that require significant investments to maximize and revitalize them for the benefit of Lake County and Northeast Ohio.
- 5) The refurbishment of both of these resources will cost a lot and therefore requires a regional effort. The County Engineer lead the charge to obtain \$175 million in federal/state funding to revitalize SR2. The Lake County Coastal Planning Commission is promoting revitalization of our Lake Erie shoreline. Lake County now has a Coastal Development Plan with over \$120 million in priority marine recreational projects.

In Summary, isn't it fitting that we benefit our region by using our greatest transportation resource to promote our greatest natural resource?

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