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Senate Activity Report

Clean Ohio Awards Half FY 2012 Revitalization Funds; Advocates Concerned Over Program's Future

The state has awarded about half of its brownfield revitalization funds for the fiscal year but the future revenue source for the program remains unsettled as JobsOhio takes control of the state's liquor profits.

The Clean Ohio Council approved more than \$27.5 million in revitalization grants for 15 brownfield cleanup projects that will allow for the reuse of commercial and industrial properties that are idle.

About \$25 million in funding remains for fiscal year 2012, which the Department of Development assures will be available for a Round 12 application cycle that comes to a close Jan. 20, spokeswoman Katie Sabatino said in an interview.

What happens to the popular program beyond that date, however, is a matter of concern for advocates and beneficiaries.

Joe Koncelik, an environmental attorney and former director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and Clean Ohio Council member, said he is "very concerned" about the future of the program that he described as not "broken."

"For the Clean Ohio Assistance Fund funding, from what I hear, is likely to run out in February because there's a rush of applications coming in right now," he said Tuesday. "That likely means by this spring we'll not have a Clean Ohio Program until funding is found, and given the number of projects over the time period, the number of years that this program has existed, it would be a horrible shame if the program didn't continue."

The revitalization program has issued \$350 million in commitments since 2001 using \$400 million in bonds approved for issue by voters in 2000 and 2008. Those bonds have been previously backed by liquor profits, but the biennial budget ([HB 153](#)) moved that funding source to the dominant facet of the state's development efforts, JobsOhio. (See [Gongwer Ohio Report, July 27, 2011](#))

[Sen. Michael Skindell](#) (D-Lakewood) had been vocal about the diversion of the liquor profits away from the program but said the Republican majority has refused to include him in discussions about the future of Clean Ohio.

"It's a program that the voters of Ohio have strongly supported in past elections and it has spurred economic development while at the same time preserving farmlands and cleaning up properties," he said Tuesday.

Ms. Sabatino said the administration has indicated the program will continue, although it has yet to identify an alternative source of funding. "I know they're actively working on it as we speak," she said.

Kasich spokesman Rob Nichols added, "Helping put brownfields back to work to create jobs is valuable and something Ohio will continue to do. As we transition from state-run job growth efforts to efforts run by the private-sector experts at JobsOhio, we're evaluating these programs to make sure we have the right tools to serve job creators and to make sure taxpayers are getting a good return on their investment."

Mr. Koncelik said he would not be confident in the program's future until new financial support is identified.

"You've got to find it first to be able to continue it, so as long as they don't find it and don't earmark a funding source, the program in my mind is in jeopardy, and No. 2, so what's the size of the funding?" he said.

The revitalization program provides reimbursements to communities working to clean up brownfield sites, and interest in the program has been high, DOD Community Services Division Chief William Murdock said.

"There's more demand than there is supply, and that's a really good sign," he said.

Mr. Koncelik said, however, the few projects that were denied funding in this round could multiply should the future financial source be smaller than the previous one.

"A new revenue source may dramatically cut down the available funding, and won't have as robust a program, not as many projects will happen," he said, adding it could be half a dozen or more projects that are rejected in future rounds.

"This program has so much value to our main cities in particular. ... These urban centers that obviously have had a lot of brownfields created due to the manufacture departure and we need to find ways to strengthen those urban cores. And this program probably above all others has found a way to attract development and businesses to stay within those urban centers."

The projects approved for funding by the council this month are expected to create and retain close to 1,280 jobs, the agency reported. They now await Controlling Board approval.

"The communities receiving Clean Ohio Funds will be able to take that first important step to redevelopment - ensuring sites are safe and ready for growth," Deputy Chief of the Office of Redevelopment Thea Walsh said in a release. "These investments will not only assist in finding new uses for old and underused properties, they will also support vital job creation efforts around the state."

The Round 11 Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund award recipients are:

- Akron, which will receive \$2.9 million to conduct demolition and remediation activities at the former Goodyear Power House property that will be redeveloped into commercial and industrial space including offices and tire manufacturing. The project will help retain 800 jobs.
- Cincinnati, which will receive \$662,922 to conduct acquisition, infrastructure, demolition, and remediation activities at the Calmege West Expansion Project property. Samuel Adams Brewery Company Ltd. will expand its operations onto the site and relocate its truck staging operations there to allow for expansion of its manufacturing facility. The project is expected to create 11 new jobs and retain 10 positions.
- Cleveland, which will receive \$2.99 million to conduct infrastructure, demolition, and remediation activities at the Miceli-Lograsso Development Company III Expansion property. Miceli will invest more than \$32 million to expand

its cheese manufacturing operations and other services there. The project is expected to create 50 jobs and retain 135 positions.

- Columbus, which will receive \$3 million to conduct infrastructure, demolition, and remediation activities at the former Timken site. The Strait and Lamp Group plans to expand its facilities and operations onto the property, creating six jobs and retaining 17 positions. Wagenbrenner Development plans to invest \$10 million to redevelop the remainder of the property into retail and warehouse buildings.
- Dayton, which will receive \$2.19 million to conduct acquisition, infrastructure, demolition, and remediation activities at the Goodwill Easter Seals Project property. Goodwill Miami Valley plans to invest \$10 million to redevelop the site into a new headquarters, creating 50 jobs and retaining 125 positions.
- Kent, which will receive \$1.34 million to conduct remediation activities at the Mogadore Road property and then include the site in the existing Atlantic and Great Western Technology Park development, creating a location for start-up and technology-oriented companies.
- Norwood, which will receive \$2.48 million to conduct infrastructure, demolition, and remediation activities at the former American Laundry property. Neyer Properties plans to invest \$8 million to redevelop the site into two buildings including an office and industrial flex space building and a medical office building. Sterling Research Group has committed to create 20 new jobs.
- Sandusky, which will receive \$1.09 million to conduct demolition and remediation activities at the former Apex Manufacturing property and then redevelop the site into commercial, office, or light industrial space.
- Toledo, which will receive \$865,700 to conduct acquisition, demolition, and remediation activities at the Plabell Rubber Company property and redevelop it into industrial space, residential units, and green space along Swan Creek. Rivereast Custom Cabinets Inc. plans to expand manufacturing operations onto the property and is expected to create five jobs and retain 25 positions.
- Toledo, which will receive \$1.5 million to conduct infrastructure, demolition, and remediation activities at the UpTown Signature Park property and then renovate the existing building into art studios and offices and create a new park in the city's Arts and Entertainment Village.
- Xenia, which will receive \$1.98 million to conduct demolition and remediation activities at the former Hooven and Allison Cordage Company property. Xenex BioFuels LLC plans to invest \$52 million to develop part of the site into a biofuels facility, creating 25 jobs.
- Youngstown, which will receive \$1.77 million to conduct demolition and remediation activities at the former Wean United facility and would like to redevelop the site into manufacturing or research and laboratory space for new environmental technologies.
- Cuyahoga County, which will receive \$2 million to conduct demolition and remediation activities at the Viking Hall Block property. Cleveland State University plans to redevelop the site into a mix-use facility with institutional, residential, commercial, and retail space.
- Hamilton County, which will receive \$1.24 million to conduct infrastructure, demolition, and remediation activities at the Lick Run - South Fairmount Neighborhood property. The property will become a storm water demonstration site with a bioretention and filtration feature as the major green infrastructure component. The site will also feature the reuse of existing historic light poles as part of a public art display.
- Miami County, which will receive \$1.4 million to conduct demolition and remediation activities at the Piqua Power Plant Waterfront property. The county, the city, and Piqua Improvement Corporation plan to redevelop the site into a waterfront park and trail along the Great Miami River.

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