

Business First of Columbus - November 19, 2007

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COLUMBUS BUSINESS FIRST

Monday, November 19, 2007

\$1M for area projects awaiting approval

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A new federal transportation and housing appropriations bill could bring more than \$1 million to two Central Ohio projects.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown secured funding for a Columbus nonprofit and **Rickenbacker International Airport** in the Transportation, **Housing and Urban Development**, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, a bill that was passed Nov. 14 in the House of Representatives and awaits Senate approval.

Brown spokeswoman Bethany Lesser said the Senate, headed into session again Dec. 3, is expected to pass the bill but President Bush has issued a veto warning, calling its \$105.6 billion price tag too high.

If Bush signs the bill after Senate approval, Starr Commonwealth would receive \$544,000 for renovations. The organization, a boarding school for delinquent, special-needs and sexually abused children with branches in Ohio and Michigan, would use the funding for its Columbus facility, one of two in the state.

Rickenbacker would use \$500,000 in funding for engineering studies on a proposed connector road linking Route 23 and Interstate 71 with the airport and a rail facility under construction.

Lesser said Brown also pushed for the \$200 million in HUD Housing Counseling program funding, which would be allocated to nonprofits working with struggling subprime borrowers. With Ohio as one of the states with the highest foreclosure rate in the nation, Lesser said area nonprofits would see funding.

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