

Granting a second life

\$3.5 million grant to be used on old Thomson site

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CIRCLEVILLE - A \$3.5 million grant from the Ohio Department of Development will be used to breathe new life into the old Thomson RCA site, according to officials who gathered Friday for the announcement of the award.

The grant is part of \$29.9 million in Job Ready Site grants and \$4.6 million in roadwork funding announced Friday by the Ohio Department of Development and will be used to improve the infrastructure necessary for future development at the site.

Dubbed Pickaway Progress Park, the 200-acre site to the south and east of Walmart along U.S. Route 23 will be improved to accommodate businesses in any industry with the extension of utilities and expansion of roadways into the current site, according to Lisa Patt-



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Holding the Job Ready Site sign are Circleville Mayor Chuck Taylor, Patt-McDaniel, and Nate Green, P3 director.

McDaniel, director of the Ohio Department of Development.

"This is an investment I believe will be the stepping stones to long-term economic development and prosperity," she said. "Pickaway Progress Park is large enough to accommodate even the largest businesses, which is why we are developing a site that can accommodate 2.5 million square feet of industrial and manufacturing space and 400,000 square feet of mixed-

use facilities right here."

The grant is the culmination of more than five years of efforts by the Pickaway Progress Partnership (P3) along with the county commissioners, the city of Circleville and Industrial Realty Group, the property owners, to develop the site that formerly housed the RCA plant and more than 1,200 jobs in Pickaway County.

"This is exactly what we do at P3, what we're doing here today," Jay Wippel, president of

the Pickaway County Commissioners, told the crowd who gathered at the site Friday. "Now we can be competitive in the future, and this development will help all businesses in the area."

Wippel said he liked the mixed-industry approach to the future growth of the site, which will allow the county to rely not only on the "big whale" businesses but the "little fish" as well.

"It's been a great team effort, and I'm privileged to be a part of this team," he said.

Ray Pryor, state representative, echoed Wippel's sentiments Friday and spoke of the impact Pickaway County suffered at loss of the 1,200 RCA jobs.

"We all know how devastating it is to lose that number of jobs, but we also know we can count on P3 to market this site," Pryor said. "And I'm sure the state will continue to be a partner in this project, too. They're not going to give away \$3.5 million and then sit idle. They'll be back."

Pickaway County originally asked for about \$5 million in Job Ready Site funding but scaled that request back to \$3.5 million for the second round of applications earlier this year.

The grant requires about \$1 million in matching funds, which Green said will be paid by IRG Circleville as owners of the site.

Actual construction work to improve the site's infrastructure likely will begin in the spring of 2011, according to IRG.



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"This is an investment I believe will be the stepping stone to long-term economic development and prosperity," said Lisa Patt-McDaniel, director of the Ohio Department of Development.