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FAIRFIELD

Seward Road project nears completion

By Eric Robinette

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FAIRFIELD — Early next week, Seward Road is expected to open to traffic again, complete with new lanes and a smoother surface, courtesy of a \$1.2 million widening project, city officials said.

Seward Road runs through one of the city's business corridors, with the widening especially to benefit the heavy semi-truck traffic that runs along that street, said Ben Mann, the city engineer.

The project runs somewhat less than a mile from from Port Union to Symmes roads. It added dual left-turn lanes and widened the shoulders of Seward so that trucks could make turns more easily, he said.

"That area sees really heavy trucks all day long ... with the wider radius on the corners, it's safer for all the truck traffic," Mann said.

But that's not the only work that was done. The original project came in below the city's first estimates, so the middle section of the road was completely repaired and resurfaced also, because it had suffered considerable deterioration, Mann said. The process is called full-depth reclamation, which rebuilds worn-out asphalt pavements by recycling the existing roadway.

Because it makes the road easier to drive, the project was also attractive to businesses along Seward, said Tim Bachman the city's development director. Companies such as Pacific Manufacturing, OCS IntelliTrak, Western States and Takumi Stamping have all expanded or added jobs because of improvements to the infrastructure, officials said.

Representatives of Takumi and Pacific visited the sites in the summer and were pleased with the progress and the idea of improved traffic flow, Bachman said.

Some residents refer to Seward Road as the bypass to the Ohio 4 Bypass, which itself underwent a major widening and redesign, so Seward sees heavy traffic of all kinds, he said.

Funds from the Ohio Public Works Commission for \$750,000 and a Community Development Block Grant for \$150,430 helped fund the project.

Seward Road between Ohio 4 and Port Union Road was widened in the 1990s. The section between Symmes and Tylersville Road was widened in the mid-2000s, and that section led to the development of Takumi, which brought in 300 jobs with a total annual payroll of \$8.7 million in 2008.

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