



Delaware County Commissioners

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Delaware County Announces Plans for Jon Peterson Memorial Plaza

POWELL, Ohio — At their annual State of the County event today, the Delaware County Board of Commissioners announced plans to rename and dedicate a portion of its main campus in honor of late County Treasurer Jon Peterson.

Peterson, who passed away unexpectedly Oct. 10, 2019, had been a longtime public servant, serving in elected and appointed positions in Delaware County and Franklin County and as a State Representative. He also was the pastor of Zion United Church of Christ in Delaware.

“We have been trying to think of a fitting way to honor his memory and have found one — the pedestrian pavilion between the Hayes Building and the Courthouse will be named and dedicated as the Jon Peterson Memorial Plaza,” Commissioner Gary Merrell told the nearly 200 people in attendance at the Columbus Zoo & Aquarium’s Africa Events Center. The Plaza is located between 117 and 145 North Union streets in downtown Delaware.

“This beautiful space has become a real gathering spot for our employees,” Merrell added, “and the windows of the Treasurer’s Office overlook it.”

The dedication ceremony will be held Tuesday, May 5 at 2 p.m. Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, a former Delaware County official and longtime friend of Peterson, is expected to participate as well.

The State of the County event also showcased Delaware County’s continued strong growth with Commissioner Jeff Benton sharing news about several economic development initiatives, including the county’s support of plans to develop the Delaware County Fairgrounds into “a premier fairground and entertainment destination” in the state.

“The Little Brown Jug brings attention to the Fairgrounds every September,” Benton said, “but our plans for the future will bring attention to the entire Fairgrounds all year.”

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In her remarks, Commissioner Barb Lewis spotlighted three community collaborations that are already yielding positive results for the County: the Delaware County Housing Coalition, which has brought together numerous organizations to tackle problems with housing affordability and discrimination; the Delaware County Pre-Hospital Care System Advisory Board, which is rebuilding relationships among providers of emergency medical services in the County; and the Stepping Up Initiative.

Stepping Up, Lewis explained, “provides proper recovery treatment and healing for non-violent offenders with mental health challenges.”

One of the Initiative’s pilot programs already has reduced the rate of jail inmates returning to incarceration from 58% to 32%, Lewis added.

“It’s a win-win for [inmates], their families and the county’s taxpayers,” Lewis said, “by reducing the costs of incarceration.”

The Commissioners also unveiled several short videos that highlighted the people of Delaware County government and what they do.

“We felt that video is a very effective way to reach the public and help them better understand the wide variety of services that county governments provide,” said Jane Hawes, the County’s Director of Communications. The videos are available for viewing on the County’s website at <https://co.delaware.oh.us/state-of-the-county-2020/>.

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