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Vicites lobbies for infrastructure funding

By Amy Karpinsky, Herald-Standard
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As a way to further stress the need for funding for seven water and sewerage projects throughout Fayette County, Commissioner Vincent A. Vicites said he recently used his role in the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission to lobby for \$11 million of dedicated state funding.

Vicites and Fayette County Redevelopment Authority Executive Director Andrew French traveled to Pittsburgh recently to meet with senior level staff from the state Department of Community Development to discuss the need for the projects.

"It was a chance for us to talk about the projects in depth,"

Vicites said. He said the legislature puts the money into the capital budget, but the DCED is the arm of government that helps prioritize projects.

"Hopefully, it will be good," Vicites said of the outcome.

Vicites said the meeting was a follow up to one held last month in Harrisburg in which members of the SPC met with legislators and the governor's office to discuss projects from their respective areas. He said other individuals involved with various projects attended, including Menallen Township Supervisor Joe Petrucci, and engineers Terry McMillen and Bruce Chambers.

Last month, the Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce (GPCOC) hosted a trip to Harrisburg in collaboration with the SPC to discuss the region's Redevelopment Assistance Capital Program (RACP) projects. Trip attendees, who including Vicites, had the opportunity to educate legislators on

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the process that the SPC uses when selecting and prioritizing the regional economic development projects and to reinforce their approach.

On Friday, a list of 65 projects, representing nearly \$200 million in economic development activity for southwestern Pennsylvania has been presented to the state legislature as priorities for funding consideration.

The SPC compiled the regional list of priorities as the legislature is considering an increase in the capital debt ceiling. The SPC is the region's forum for collaboration, planning and public decision making. As the official Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the southwestern Pennsylvania counties as well as the City of Pittsburgh, SPC is responsible for planning and prioritizing the use of all state and federal transportation funds allocated to the region. The commission has the authority and responsibility to make decision affecting the 10-county region.

"All of the counties in southwestern Pennsylvania contribute to the region's workforce and vitality. It's refreshing to see a group that truly works together to promote Southwestern Pennsylvania with one voice," said state House Minority Leader H. William DeWeese, D-Waynesburg.

RACP projects are supported by the GPCOC and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Growth Alliance, a 10-county public-private partnership that advocates in Harrisburg and Washington for legislative and regulatory changes that will help promote economic development in southwestern Pennsylvania.

More than \$23 million is earmarked for projects in Fayette and Greene counties in the SPC priorities list.

Fayette County projects and their estimated cost that are on the list include:

Jennings Run Sewer Project, Fairchance Georges Joint Municipal Authority, Perry Area Sewage Project, National Pike Water Authority project and the Dunbar Borough/Township Sanitary Authority Sewage Project, each \$1 million; German Township Sewage Authority, \$4 million; and Dunbar Township Municipal Authority Sewer Project, \$2 million.

Greene County projects and their estimated cost that are on the SPC list include:

Greene County Community Center, \$2.2 million; Greene County Airport Business Park, \$5 million; Greene River Trail, phase three, \$1.125 million; Greene County Airport Business Park road, \$1 million; Meadow Ridge Business Park, \$1.335 million; and the Greene County Land Bank Resources, \$2 million.

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