

Mayor stresses progress in "State of the City" address

By GLORIA PLEVA KACIK

Contributing Writer

Mayor Bob Stefanik gave the annual North Royalton State of the City address at the March 24 Chamber of Commerce luncheon. Chamber President, Kevin Lynch introduced Stefanik to a group of more than eighty.

Stefanik started by noting that "we are working through the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression. Going in to 2009, this Administration was aware that the economy was worsening and we immediately instituted cut-backs and froze spending in non-essential areas." He said that income tax revenue, which is the city's largest source of income, had decreased in 2009 by 7%, compared to 2008. That equates to just under one million dollars. Also, interest income has decreased dramatically in the past year. Bad for deposits, but good for borrowing money. The city has made major adjustments in the 2010 budget, as was done in 2009. "Be assured, however, that the paramount concern of this administration is to continue to provide services to our residents at the very high levels that they are currently provided. The foundation of every decision that we are making is service to the residents," said Stefanik.

The state of the economy has caused the advancement of the town center to be extremely limited, said Stefanik. He said that the development of that area is expected to move forward when the economy recovers. (See Town Center article) He added that even with the economy being as it is, North Royalton continues to grow in the business and industrial areas. He spoke of the move to North Royalton from Cleveland Industrial Concrete and the expansion of May Industries and Royalton Architectural Fabrication, all which is happening at the York Road Industrial Park. He also announced that Laszeray Technologies is planning on a million dollar expansion. The city has also been assisting North Royalton Businesses with Storefront Renovation grants. Twenty-nine out of the thirty businesses that applied for this grant last year were approved, receiving, in total, about \$130,000 in grant money.

On the recreation front, the city has been successful in a joint venture with the Cleveland Metroparks in the acquisition of 82 acres that will be added to the Mill Stream Run Reservation, through the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund 1ne area, which includes wetlands and some endangered species of flora and fauna, will now be preserved.

Stefanik announced that the intersection of Rt. 82 and West 130 Street, the last of the North Royalton Rt. 82 intersections, is now under construction. He stated that the widening of Rt. 82 and York Road is currently on the State and Federal Transportation Improvement Plan and they will continue to work with officials to fully fund this project. He also noted that the city, to date, has been awarded half of the \$950,000 grant and 20-year, 0% loan of the \$2.4 million project of Bennett Road between Rt. 82 and Akins Road, through Issue I funding. "We remain confident our entire request will be funded within the next few months," said Stefanik. He also noted that in 2011, the Ohio Department of Transportation will be resurfacing State Road from Sprague Road, south, to the county line and Ridge Road from Rt. 82 to Boston Road.

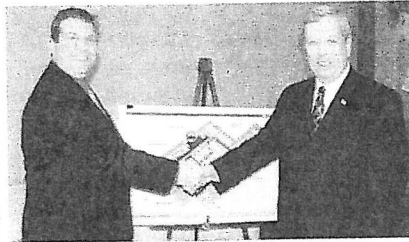
"We continue to aggressively address storm water issues in North Royalton," said Stefanik, noting that last year four major culvert projects were completed. "We will be continuing south to Bunker Road and south on Dublin Drive to the large retention basin located in that area."

He applauded the Engineering and Service Departments, as well as the Storm Water Division, listing a number of large projects that were completed last year. "The bottom line is, yes, in two short years we have made tremendous progress, but we understand there is more work to do and we will continue to attack this issue on every front."

Stefanik spoke of the enhancements that have taken place in the past two years. "With the assistance and cooperation of City Council, we have developed new baseball and soccer fields, we have acquired approximately 100 acres of pristine parklands, we have added new and expanded current businesses in our Industrial Park and we have managed to improve and maintain our infrastructure in these challenging economic times.

He continued on that note, saying that "in 2008, shortly after I took office, I reached out to representatives of the YMCA to see if there was interest in bringing the YMCA to North Royalton. We started from square one to develop a plan which would work, not only for the City, but also for the YMCA. After months and months of challenging negotiations, today I am proud and very excited to announce that the City of North Royalton has purchased the Avalon Event Center and has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Greater Cleveland YMCA to renovate and

expand the Avalon Center into a brand new 'state-of-the-art' regional YMCA facility. Year after year, in my eleven years as an elected official in North Royalton, residents have told me continuously that the one amenity the city lacks is a



YMCA's Gary Guzy with Mayor Bob Stefanik at the Chamber of Commerce March luncheon

recreation center. The YMCA will be much more than a recreation center. Today's YMCA includes community rooms, a teen center, childcare facilities, adventure guides, summer camp and many other exciting programs geared towards families and senior citizens...and we will accomplish all of this without raising taxes!" He thanked the representatives from the YMCA and acknowledged those who played a key role in making that wish a reality, including the support of City Council. He then introduced Jody Shy, YMCA Campaign Coordinator and Gary Guzy, Executive Director of the YMCA, Ridgewood branch. Both spoke of the work that has been done to bring this project into reality and what needs to be done to open the doors of the North Royalton YMCA. "With Bob Stefanik, we really got things going," said Guzy. "We are excited to see a 'Y' in North Royalton."

In closing, Stefanik reiterated the thought that he has previously stated: "My administration will not sit back and wait for good things to happen in North Royalton...we will work hard every day to make great things happen in North Royalton."

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