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Diversity

Schools are reimbursed for all free and reduced meals that are received by their students. This money comes from the federal government. For 2009-2010, on average, schools will be reimbursed \$2.68 for free lunches and \$2.28 for reduced priced lunches. They are also reimbursed \$0.25 for every meal that is paid in full by a child. These rates do change every year based on National Average Payment Factors and Federal Maximum Reimbursement Rates. According to the the Food and Research Action Center, federal spending for the National School Lunch Program totaled \$7.4 billion in the fiscal year 2006.

During the 2006-2007 school year, it was estimated that 30.5 million children had participated in the NSLP from almost 100,000 educational institutions across the United States. Unless the NSLP is being grossly abused by unqualified parents, the number of poverty level families is growing at an alarming rate.

There has been much effort expended recently in an attempt to educate Cleveland citizens to the benefits of the new social engineering theory called diversity. Diversity and tolerance has been heralded as a panacea to alleviate all social problems associated with ethnicity. Racial tension can be a difficult nut to crack so local religious, business and political leaders embrace diversity as a way to solve what is essentially a trait of human nature without addressing fundamentals. They are trying to use it as a shortcut to social utopia.

I think it is a mistake to attempt to coerce the indigenous population into believing that everyone else's culture should be embraced before one's own. Diversity swings in both directions usually with the newcomer accepting the host's traditions or at least trying to fit in.

I believe it is natural for groups of immigrants to band together for support. This has happened throughout the world with every ethnic group and there is nothing wrong with that. It would be nice if it wasn't so, but I think it is the truth. Diversity is an idyllic state, but it can only be achieved with the willing cooperation of everyone involved. Diversity cannot be forced on one group because force defeats the object. People cannot be coerced into accepting diversity for the public good when the public doesn't want it. People cannot be shamed into accepting diversity when they feel no shame in protecting their own culture. Diversity must be embraced by all parties unconditionally for it to work and quite frankly, it is not being embraced, by any ethnic group. It goes against human nature. We

feel comfortable amongst our own kind, with our own customs. Cultures always separate to some extent. It is the natural way. The people in Cleveland that are pushing diversity seem to be confusing customs with racial tension. Attempting to indoctrinate through public forums and in our schools is unlikely to bring people together. It is probable that it will offend and create rifts that hinder acceptance.

I am an immigrant from England. My attraction to this United States was for the uniqueness of its personal freedoms. To me as a newcomer, America was a wondrous place and the last thing I wanted was for it to resemble England. Admittedly, I did not like everything about it, some things like open racial prejudice, by both black and white made me uncomfortable, just as racial prejudice in

England did. But I was a guest in this country so it was for me to adapt to my adopted country's customs, not the other way around. After more than 25 years here, my family still honors a few British customs, but they are almost totally assimilated into American culture. Retaining my British heritage is important but pales in importance to embracing the American way. No one in this country tried to force me to accept American culture or give up my British heritage. No one tried to shame me or coerce me into being anything other than who I was, and wanted to be. I am now an American, period. That is what America is about. That is true diversity. A natural acceptance, or a natural rejection. True diversity without guilt or force.

If my neighbor dislikes Chinese people, the French

or English people, it is his choice. If he prefers to be in the company of Africans or Australians, that is his choice as an American and I respect that. However, Cleveland's leaders have other plans for my neighbor. They believe forced or coerced diversity, with the added shame of being labeled a racist if he doesn't embrace it, will convince him to forgo his personal nature and customs for what they believe is the common good. They believe it will make America and Cleveland a better place. They are dictating their social ideas on the rest of us and that is un-American.

What is wrong with making Cleveland a better place by having those who settle here naturally assimilate and become American and embrace Cleveland's culture? It worked for me and my family.

That's what I think. What do you think?

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IDB Discuss Plans for Wacker, Interchange, and Existing Industry Expansions

by Tonya Brantley

The Bradley County / Cleveland Industrial Development Board (IDB) held their first meeting of the new year on January 19, 2010. The following are highlights from that meeting.

Doug Berry, Vice President of Economic Development updated the board on old business items including Wacker and Whirlpool. Chamber of Commerce President, Gary Farlow reported that Wacker is still on schedule and has been on schedule and had been working on their project in Germany where they are building a similar facility. According to Farlow, Wacker's engineering project team has now been freed up from the Germany project to start working on the one in Bradley County. Farlow also indicated that several changes have been made in regards to the location of the access road. It is going to be

moved over more to the eastern property line and then through part of Olin Chemical's property. The reason for the move is so the access road would not be going directly through the Wacker property for security reasons.

Wacker has also been successful in getting eligibility for a \$128 million Federal alternative tax credit as part of the stimulus package. Farlow mentioned that the tax credit is also another stimulant to get Wacker to move the project a little quicker. In order to get the tax credit, Wacker has to have all of their construction permits in place by the end of the year. "There is a need for speed now to get all of these permits in place. Hopefully by the end of this year Wacker will be breaking ground and start grading the site. The plan is if all goes well, the building construction should start mid-year next year," said Farlow.

Berry reported that

Whirlpool has submitted an additional run of equipment that will be part of the payment in lieu of taxes agreement for completion of the transfer of assets from the Oxford, Mississippi facility into the Cleveland operations. In addition to that, Berry indicated Whirlpool is working very diligently with the consolidation of some of their facilities and operations and have already sold their call center located behind the Museum Center.

Berry reported that TVA has been in the process of working with a site consultant on the development of a database site, sites that are suitable for data center operations or a major computer operations center. TVA is interested in a 75 to 100 acre site with broadband availability and redundancy of fiber optics, among other criteria. Berry indicated that approximately 100 acres may be made available to the IDB for use as a potential technology park or business

park. The area is privately held and part of a larger tract on the North end of town near the retail centers off of Paul Huff Parkway.

Berry updated the board on industrial sites indicating appraisal work is continuing and he has been initiating dialog with property owners on APD-40 and hopes to have additional information on the status of acquiring property and entering into agreements with the owners. Berry said, "At this point in time we are essentially down to two sites in the area of I-75 and APD-40. By the next board meeting, I should have some qualifications reviews in place for engineering and design consultants to assist us with the preliminary cost analysis and development analysis for the properties. Our goal is to have those things complete so that we can have some budgeting together to step in line with the county and city budgeting processes and be in the position where we can move

forward with the acquisition of property in the next fiscal year."

Berry gave an update on prospect activity indicating that the IDB has had very strong dialogs with existing industries, each of which has or will include a meeting with State officials in Nashville to make them aware of the potential for the expansions of these companies in the tens of millions of dollars for either one. According to Berry, this is a good indicator that Cleveland's recession is starting to move toward a recovery. Berry said, "The good news is that we are not going to be losing jobs with new capitol investment. The bottom line philosophy is that they will spend their time bringing new products, expand investment and stabilize the workforce."

In regards to the interchange, Farlow mentioned that the State has thrown them a little bit of a curve, stating "We're trying to fig-

ure out whether the original commitment letter on the access road is adequate to satisfy the Federal Highway Administration. The Federal Highway Administration and the State are doing an environmental assessment of all those projects, the new interchange and the Exit 20 interchange. As part of that environmental review, one of the questions that came up was frontage roads and making sure they are building an interchange that actually connects to something. Previously we were told that we just need to make sure we have the funding in place for the South side and the local interstate connector. Now they are asking about the North side and we are trying to sort out whether the original letter that was sent is a sufficient commitment. We are asking TDOT to give us a copy of what the comments were from the Federal Highway Administration so we know how to respond to that.

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