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## Foreign trade zone discussed

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SOME UPDATES were given during the Belmont County Commissioners' meeting on Wednesday morning, as well as the opening of two bids for upcoming county projects.

Port Authority Director Larry Merry spoke briefly about the possibility of Belmont County's participation in a project to make the Ohio Valley a foreign trade zone, saying that, although the topic has been on the table for a while, no definitive action will be taken until they have the knowledge that all parties involved will benefit.

"It's in the education process," Merry said. "We're exploring the advantages of it. We need to look at it closely, and we're continuing to study what businesses might benefit from it."

Merry added that two grants are available for the project, should the county decide to move ahead with it.

"If we choose to move forward, it's going to take an expenditure," Commissioner Mark Thomas said. "We want to make sure that any expenditure for this project will be well spent. We don't want a project just sitting on the shelf, providing no economic development. That's why we're moving slowly with it."

In other county business, the commissioners opened bids for two projects.

The first bid opened at 11:30 a.m. for the county engineer's project to supply and install bridge beams on Barton-Blaine Road.

Engineer Fred Bennett said that the bridge needs replaced so that they can eventually replace a larger bridge in Barton this summer.

Two bids were accepted for the project estimated by Bennett at \$37,500.

Carr Concrete Corp. put in a bid of \$35,423; United Precast Inc. put in a bid at \$40,075.

The second bid opened at 11:45 a.m.; seven bids were received for the Sanitary Sewer District Furnishing Waterline Pipe project.

The bids placed included: James M. Cox Company Inc. at \$45,080; Victory White Waterworks at \$43,955; National Road Utility Supply Inc. at \$44,380; Ferguson Waterworks at \$43,960; Totterdale Brothers Supply at \$45,500; H.D. Supply Waterworks at \$45,500; and Pipelines Inc. at \$44,940.

The commissioners, following an executive session, also approved the hiring of Rebecca Snyder as Billing Clerk I for the Belmont County Sewer District at the rate of \$8.50 per hour effective May 5. Snyder will be subject to the standard 120-day probationary period.

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