

# THE GERKEN COMPANIES

Gerken Materials Inc., Gerken Paving Inc., Gerken Asphalt Paving Inc., Gerken Leasing Company, Ltd.,  
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December 18, 2008

Senator Sherrod Brown  
455 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Brown,

As President and CEO of Gerken Paving, Inc., I have a unique perspective of the positive impact infrastructure provides to communities and regions. A high quality transportation system is recognized by all as essential to the prosperity of our country. Without a highly efficient transportation system, we cannot move our goods efficiently and lose our ability to compete with our foreign competitors and their low-cost labor. Through my many years of running and growing a transportation-based business, I have developed a keen sense of those projects that have the potential to stimulate economic growth. The US 24 "Fort to Port" project is one such example and I strongly see the proposed Maumee River Crossing Project in Napoleon as also having such potential for the City of Napoleon, especially in light of the industrial linkages the River Crossing will provide between the new US 24 and Napoleon's business centers.

The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials has a list of 3,109 "ready to go" highway projects that could break ground within 90 days of passage of a federal infrastructure stimulus package. While the river crossing project cannot be ready within this tight timeframe, it is essential that northwest Ohio be prepared with projects over the next couple of years that can both stimulate long-term job creation through our local engineering, construction and supplier businesses but also stimulate long-term job retention/creation by supporting the local and northwest region's economy. The Maumee River Crossing Project is just such a proposal.

Completion of this project is essential to connect Napoleon's two industrial areas which are separated by the Maumee River. We believe that this project will allow for the continued employment growth of the Campbell Soup Manufacturing Plant (Campbell's largest facility) as well as provide better access for Campbell's traffic to reach their customers via new U.S. 24. A second crossing will also improve public safety, reduce traffic congestion, and decrease response time in emergency situations. Because of all this I support the efforts to build a new bridge and I ask for your support in doing the same.

Sincerely,

Brent Gerken  
President and CEO  
THE GERKEN COMPANIES