

The Western Star



The board overseeing the port authority would not, however, be given power to levy taxes, Warren County Commissioner Pat South said.

The port authority would be instrumental in creating a business corridor along Interstate 75 and bringing new jobs to the community, officials said. State law gives port authorities the power to provide some incentives to businesses, including issuing tax-exempt bonds.

"It's another economic development tool and creative in financing projects and will not be funded by taxpayer dollars," Coyner said.

Attorney J. Donald Mottley and county economic development director Kimm Coyner said the port authority is essential to managing growth.

"Warren County is a growing county and has a lot of potential to attract new business potential because of growth pressures.

The port authority will be modeled after the Dayton-Montgomery, Butler, and Hamilton county port authorities and would cost Warren County taxpayers up to \$20,000 for the start up.

Commissioner Pat South said "seed" money will likely come from the Warren County Visitor and Convention Bureau, which expects to see a boost in lodging taxes since the Great Wolf Lodge opened in December next to the Kings Island amusement park.

Warren County officials began discussing a port authority after the city of Mason made plans to build a sports complex last year and then established a port authority this year, Commissioner Pat South said.

"We want to try to recruit new industry, new tourist attractions and industries that would strengthen the economy across Warren County," South said.

The port authority would be run by a nine-member board appointed by the county commissioners. Coyner said she is considering candidates for the board and hopes the board will be formed by the end of December.

Coyner and South said establishing the board will be worth every penny.

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