

Bill Marine, Kroger, Werner's receive top honors from chamber of commerce

Daniels touts ballot issue at annual chamber meeting

By GARY HUFFENBERGER
Staff Writer

The area state representative Thursday talked up a ballot issue that would provide \$50 million annually for a decade to help provide high-tech and high-paying jobs in high-growth industries.

State Rep. David Daniels [R-86th House District] made his remarks at the annual meeting of the Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce, held at the Expo Center on the county fairground.

During the program, three awards were also presented: Small Business Achievement — Werner's eatery businesses; Large Business Achievement — Kroger; and Business Leader — Bill Marine.

A member of the House of Representatives' Economic Development & Technology Committee, Daniels said the \$500 million bond issue on the November ballot, if approved, will provide a "sustained" stream of funds for technology grants. It would help the state improve its ability to compete "in important technological sectors," he said.



News Journal photo/Gary Huffenberger

Honored at Thursday's annual gathering of the Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce membership were, left to right, auto dealer Bill Marine, Wilmington Kroger manager Mel Nicholas, and Barb and Rich Werner of Werner's Pork House and Werner's downtown restaurant.

Of the bond initiative, Daniels said "competitor states in the nation are making these same investments and Ohio must do the same."

The legislator said the \$50 million

annual injection, along with private investment, "could well generate in excess of \$1 billion worth of new

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investments" in Ohio.

The measure is needed, he said, to help Ohio move into "the new economy."

Daniels said Ohio's productivity is among the best in the U.S. but "we lack an environment where productivity works on a parallel track with intellectual capital to create new commercial products."

During the presentation of awards, Chamber of Commerce President Karen Haley said Rich and Barb Werner's food ventures began in 1991 after Rich had worked in the pork industry. They currently operate Werner's Pork House at the US 68/I-71 interchange, Werner's restaurant in downtown Wilmington, and also have a booth service at events such as the county fair along with catering for special occasions.

Kroger has been in Wilmington since 1924, said Haley, when it was located on Main Street. Since that time it has been on North South Street, moved to a new store on Sugartree Street in the early 1950s, and located at Wilmington Plaza Shopping Center in the early '60s. It was housed at the Meadow Park Shopping Center before the 2002 opening of a super Kroger in a refurbished Wilmington Plaza.

Bill Marine was the youngest Ford dealer in America when he opened his dealership in 1960, said Haley. In 1980, he expanded the dealership product lines and range of services to include Chrysler, Dodge and Jeep.

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