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Sprucing Up Brown Street

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Brown Street from Irving Avenue on the University of Dayton's southern border to near Miami Valley Hospital will get a facelift with fewer driving lanes, mid-block crosswalks, street trees and landscaping, dedicated bike lanes and a continuous left-turn lane.

Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland announced the plans today, June 4, at Tech Town on Monument Avenue with a $950,000 roadwork development grant to the city of Dayton for improvements to the Dayton Aerospace and Aviation Hub of Innovation and Opportunity.

"The state's additional investment within the Dayton aerospace hub demonstrates our continued commitment to work collaboratively with the region to spur economic development opportunities," Strickland said. "These infrastructure improvements will play a significant role in new company formation within the hub, while at the same time support the existing area businesses, Miami Valley Hospital and Dayton's vibrant academic community."

City officials said construction could start in mid-summer 2011 and is expected to take about a year.

It will be the first phase of a project to improve the corridor from the University of Dayton to Tech Town on Monument Avenue and make it more pedestrian-friendly.

"It's good were doing projects like this to show not only the region and the state, but world, that we are a leader," Dayton Mayor Gary Leitzell said. "We have to market Dayton in the next 18 months to show we are the next Seattle, Portland or Denver."

Today's award is the largest for the hub established last September. Strickland announced a $250,000 seed grant for the hub in January. The hub, led by the University of Dayton in partnership with the city of Dayton, Montgomery County, the Dayton Development Coalition and CityWide Development Corp., among others, have raised $350,000 to match the state's ante.

Since then, hub officials have established a controlling board and interviewed candidates for a hub director, according to John Leland, director of the University of Dayton Research Institute and hub controlling board chair.

Strickland designated the Dayton region as home to the state's first hub of innovation — the Ohio Aerospace Hub of Innovation and Opportunity. The aerospace hub designation acknowledged the region's long-standing status as a leader in aerospace and aviation and the University of Dayton Research Institute's success in aerospace-related research and technology-based economic development. Last September, Strickland also lauded the Dayton area's intellectual power, work force, research capabilities, business community and local leadership.

Ohio hubs, part of the Ohio Department of Development's strategic plan for economic development, are designed to leverage Ohio's regional assets and drive long-term economic growth in the state. The state will offer resources to improve physical space and foster new business investment, including entrepreneurial and productivity assistance, capital access and technology development. To be designated an Ohio hub, a region must identify core strengths and develop a strategic plan for urban and regional development.

The University is second in the nation among all colleges and universities for materials research, which is a major component of today's aviation research. It leads the state-funded Wright Center of Innovation and the Institute for the Development and Commercialization of Advanced Sensors Technologies (IDCAST), which has reported the creation of more than 256 high-tech, high-wage jobs since its inception nearly three years ago. The University is also home to the Ladar and Optical Communications Institute that, like IDCAST, also works with industry on technology for aerospace applications.

The University of Dayton is a top-tier national research university and among the nation's top 10 Catholic universities.

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