

**PRESS RELEASE.....2 pages**

RE: Agriculture and Economic Development Seminar  
Contact: Sue Douglass, Exec, Dir. Bel.Co. DOD/CIC....740-695-9678

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

(St.Clairsville, OH) The Belmont County Department of Development Community Improvement Corporation (DOD/CIC ) along with the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) is sponsoring a local **seminar** promoting agriculture and farmland protection as significant ways to maintain and sustain economic development. Brian Williams, Farmland Policy Consultant for MORPC will present information and lead discussion at a session to be held, **Tuesday, NOVEMBER 23** in St.Clairsville . The seminar will run from 2:00-4:00pm in the theater of Ohio University Eastern. This is a free workshop open to general public in the tri-state region and areas.

The focus of the session is to underscore the vitality and viability of agriculture as economic development and to explore the diverse ways agriculture can be utilized to build and sustain markets, jobs, and business opportunities. With an emphasis on preservation of current farmlands, information will be presented to illustrate how land management, product processing, community planning, and reassessment of open spaces can become productive and financially sustainable business operations.

Attendees will learn what tools and programs are available for businesses including government resources, private land trusts, and new strategies for more creative applications of agriculture as business.

All local officials are encouraged to attend to learn more about policy development and the possible revenue streams agricultural assets can produce.

Anyone interested in agricultural land management, traditional farm production, food processing and supply chain services, or ready to consider any ag-related business possibility will benefit from the workshop.

“We live in an area where farms and farmland have a deep history, and where these assets remain as a renewable economy”, said Sue Douglass, Executive Director of the DOD/CIC. “Our opportunities to participate in the food chain are too important to ignore. The local assets we have in agriculture can be revisited to produce economic development we may have discounted previously”.

Williams is a veteran journalist who has researched and written extensively about agriculture. Before coming to MORPC, he spent 3 years as Ohio Field

Office Director for American Farmland trust. “Agriculture is economic development”, said Williams. “Land use and food assessments are just some of the interrelated parts of new business possibilities we are exploring.”

MORPC is a voluntary association of 47 local governments in central Ohio serving the region through planning, direct service, public policy information and innovative programming, and intergovernmental coordinating services in the areas of transportation, land use, energy conservation and environment housing. MORPC is in its 40<sup>th</sup> year and more information can be obtained at [www.morpc.org](http://www.morpc.org)

The seminar at OUE does not require reservations but attendees may call the DOD/CIC at 740-695-9678, for attendance confirmation and information or reach Williams at 614-233-4187 or [bwilliams@morpc.org](mailto:bwilliams@morpc.org)

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