

## Cuyahoga Commissioners to Support Pilot Merger of Fire Departments with \$75,000 Seven Communities Lead the Way in SW Cuyahoga County

The Cuyahoga County Commissioners awarded \$75,000 to Baldwin-Wallace College and the seven southwest communities looking to merge fire departments into a single Southwest Fire District.

The Cities of Berea, Brook Park, Brooklyn, Middleburg Heights, Olmsted Falls, Parma and Parma Heights have been studying such a merger with the help of BW. Now they are ready to take the next step.

Although communities throughout Cuyahoga County often team up to provide various safety services from mutual aid pacts, shared SWAT teams and joint training to combined dispatching, this merger would represent a landmark step when completed. The Commissioners are all too happy to support and encourage these community initiated efforts.

This comes at a time when local communities are in great need of fiscal assistance. Cuyahoga County, in addition has also provided communities in excess of \$350,000 to cover the first year costs of the revised solid waste disposal fees found in the newly minted Solid Waste Plan approved unanimously by Cuyahoga communities last year. The commissioners have also committed \$250,000 to the Northeast Ohio Sourcing Office for their joint-purchasing council of governments. It also follows the creation of the first office focused on regional issues in the nation, the Cuyahoga County Office of Government Services Coordination as well as the two-year effort of the Blue Ribbon Taskforce on Economic Development, now called CuyahogaNext advisors.

In all, since 2004, the Board of Cuyahoga County Commissioners has invested nearly \$1 million towards advancing regional cooperation in Cuyahoga County.