

## Motorist look forward to Liberty Interchange shaving time off drive

By Eric Schwartzberg Staff Writer

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**LIBERTY TWP.** — Liberty Twp. resident Trisha Zamarron, who travels Hamilton-Mason Road on her commute home each day, welcomes the construction starting on the Liberty Interchange project.

The first phase of the project, which started Thursday with a groundbreaking ceremony, will extend Cox Road from Hamilton-Mason Road north to the Green Crest Golf Course.

The project's three other phases include widening Hamilton-Mason Road between Cox Road and Butler-Warren Road to the east, construction of on-and-off ramps at Hamilton-Mason Road and I-75, and widening of Hamilton-Mason Road between I-75 and Cincinnati-Dayton Road to the west.

"It's very congested right here," Zamarron said. "If you have to travel on this road at rush hour in the evening, it gets backed up over (Interstate) 75."

Between 2003 and 2006, traffic on Hamilton-Mason between Cox Road and Cincinnati-Dayton Road nearly doubled to 15,880 vehicles per day, according to the engineer's office.

West Chester Twp. officials believe the project also will free up traffic on Tylersville Road. As of 2005, the last time a BCEO study was conducted, Tylersville Road east of Interstate 75 handled 50,970 vehicles per day. In 2006, Tylersville west of I-75 saw 28,420 vehicles per day.

The nearly half-mile extension of Cox Road, which will open up 600 acres of land to economic development, also will help road conditions in the area. Liberty Twp. officials expect it to be part of the region's growing medical corridor, including the Atrium Medical Center in Middletown, West Chester Medical Center and Children's Hospital Liberty Campus.

"Those acres being opened up is just invaluable to us," said Caroline McKinney, economic development director for Liberty Twp. "Right now, you can't access it. I'm already hearing it being compared to what happened at Union Centre."

The township's vision plan projects the area could also be a fit for business and hotel facilities, as well as mixed use retail that could include dining, entertainment and a lifestyle center.