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OU group seeks ideas on future use of A-Plant

by G. Sam Piatt

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PIKETON — An Ohio University group engaged in a project to work on what the future use of the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant site will be once the cleanup of the site is done is seeking comments on the matter from the public.

One public meeting is scheduled for March 17 at the Scioto County Welcome Center in Portsmouth as part of the kick-off for the project, dubbed PORTSFuture, according to Marsha Lewis.

Lewis, with the Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs, said meetings are planned throughout the year.

She recently spoke to farm bureau members from Scioto, Pike and

Jackson-Vinton counties gathered at the OSU Endeavor Center at Piketon, giving the background on the U.S. Department of Energy's Portsmouth facility and explaining the purpose of the project and the role of Ohio University in it.

The purpose of the PORTSFuture Vision Project, she said, is to engage as many community members and organizations as possible to learn about the community's long-term vision of the site.

The DOE in December awarded a \$1.9 million grant for this purpose to the Voinovich School, said Loretta Aversa, public affairs director at DOE's Portsmouth/Paducah Project Office in Lexington, Ky.

The money is to fund efforts of project teams led by Ohio University to interact with several outside groups and DOE to come up with consensus solutions to technical problems related to clean-up of the site, and in finding a future use for the site.

These groups include national laboratories and other universities. Also involved is the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, state regulatory agencies, and the public.

The DOE said it will use the project teams' technical expertise to assess and implement cost-effective technologies and methods that could speed up safe clean-up and reduce risk at the site.

The meeting at the Welcome Center in Portsmouth is set for 5:30 to 8 p.m. March 17.

Another of the public kick-off meetings is set for the same time frame March 15 at the PACCAR Medical Education Center in Chillicothe.

Lewis said residents of Jackson, Pike, Ross and Scioto counties are invited to participate by becoming a member of a "Visioning Team, hosting a meeting in

the community, or sharing ideas and opinions on the project's website:
portsfuture.com.

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