

Changes coming to Union County

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Road work is being done at the U.S. Route 33 exit and state Route 161/Post Road near Industrial Parkway.

Gary Budzak | The Gazette

PLAIN CITY — Intel isn't the only company bringing manufacturing to the central Ohio area.

In May, Velocys Inc. announced it had signed a 15-year lease for a \$10 million, 52,000-square-foot facility to produce alternative fuel cells for jet engines and turbines off of Warner Road in Jerome Township (Union County). An American subsidiary of U.K.-based Velocys LLC, the company already employs 15 in Plain City. Assembly is currently being done in Alabama, but that will change once the new facility is up.

"President Biden recently noted the importance of developing sustainable aviation fuels as a key national security matter," said Brian Cody, Velocys vice president, in a press release. "Expanding our R&D and production capacity in Central Ohio is essential to our company's long-term growth in this space, and we couldn't be more excited to break ground on this new facility."

The company said its synthetic drop-in fuel "has lower sulfur oxide, nitrogen oxide and particulate matter emissions" than traditional fossil-based jet fuel. It is also "hiring for roles in engineering, operations, chemistry and technical services."

"Velocys' expansion in Jerome Township is a perfect example of the kind of private sector partnerships that we've worked hard to attract," said Tim Hanley, Union County administrator, in the release. "We're thrilled to welcome a company whose technology service offering has such a tremendous environmental impact into our thriving community of advanced manufacturing companies."

The Ohio Department of Transportation currently is at work on a couple of projects near Velocys. Nightly lane restrictions at U.S. Route 33 eastbound and westbound between U.S. Route 36 and U.S. Route 42, as well as Mitchell-DeWitt Road and state Route 161, should be wrapping up.

However, SR 161 eastbound and westbound at U.S. 33 was reduced to one lane earlier this month and will continue through June 2025, ODOT said in its most recent weekly construction update for Union County. And starting this week, "traffic will need to use the Eiterman Road roundabout to access" Post Road/SR 161 eastbound and the U.S. 33 eastbound ramp.

With more than 62,000 residents, Union County is the second-fastest growing county in Ohio, behind Delaware County. The county prides itself for being one of the world's most advanced Connected Vehicle Environments. Jerome Township is Union County's fastest growing township. Plain City is in both Union and Madison counties.