

ThisWeek OLENTANGY

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Construction begins on Columbia Gas line

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Construction began earlier this month on a gas distribution line that eventually will stretch from Genoa Township to Liberty Township, with a section passing under Hoover Reservoir.

According to Doug Flowers, a spokesman for Columbia Gas, construction began Aug. 8 on the east side of Hoover Reservoir in Genoa Township.

"We are on schedule for completion by early December," he said. "Most work has been concentrated on the east side of Hoover ... we're still in the very early stages of construction."

Bill Bird, a Genoa Township resident who opposed the gas company's plan, said he would continue

to keep an eye on the project, particularly because the pipeline will pass through his property.

Bird added that he is still against the gas line passing under Hoover Reservoir.

"You'd have to live up there to know what that's like. It's very peaceful," he said.

The Genoa Township trustees initially opposed plans for the gas line in 2004, when Columbia Gas sought an easement under the township bicycle trail. The board approved the easement request in April.

"We have had several ... 'in-the-field' meetings" between Columbia officials and township representatives, trustee John Riedly said, "and they've agreed to re-route certain sections that we felt were going to impede future development."

"I think they're really acting in good faith. Of course, the proof will be in the pudding. We will continue to monitor it," he said.

Kathy Remias, program coordinator with the Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, said her group will be watching the pipeline's progress in the Liberty Township area.

"From our standpoint, our hope is every effort will be made to protect the lower Olentangy watershed, and especially the section (north of Home Road) designated a state scenic river," Remias said.

Called the Northern Columbus Loop project, the entire pipeline will connect with existing pipelines and stretch 25 miles from College Road and Harlem Road on the east to Liberty Road and Powell Road on the west.