

County employee recaps Fly-In

By **RAYMOND L. SMITH**

Staff writer

WARREN — Trumbull County's assistant planning director said he left last week's Mahoning Valley Washington, D.C. Fly-in concerned about the future of Community Development Block Grant funding, yet hopeful northeast Ohio representatives will do what they can to secure funding for future projects.

Nicholas Coggins told Trumbull County commissioners during their weekly workshop Tuesday that the block grant program is not a portion of the federal budget.

"Every other year, we apply for a CDBG allocation of about \$600,000," Coggins said. "We received it in 2023 and we just applied for it for 2025."

This money has been used to provide funding to the sanitary engineer with residential engineering grants and the county engineer for critical engineering grants. The cities and municipalities receive help with revitalization grants and

local charities also are allocated portions of the CDBG grants for their projects.

"Losing these funds would be a huge hit to us," Coggins said. "It would be a lot of money we would not have if these funds are not awarded. There are a lot of sewer and road projects that would not go through if we don't get that funding."

"We were told CDBG is not being eliminated, but they are trying to clean up how the funding goes through," he said.

Coggins said if the federal funding is not continued after this budgetary process, the county and other local agencies that receive this money will have to wait and see if, and how, the state will allocate the portion of the money it provides to the program.

"The majority of the funds come from the federal government," he said.

He does not expect the federal cuts, if any, will affect the 2025 allocation of CDBG funds. They more likely will affect awards being applied for in 2026 and beyond.

On the first day of the Washington,

D.C. Fly-In, the Mahoning Valley delegation spoke to members of the U.S. House of Representatives and the next day spoke to members of the U.S. Senate.

Coggins said between 35 and 40 people from various companies were part of the Mahoning Valley delegation. There also were representatives from multiple cities and communities that sought audiences with members of the House and Senate.

"The representatives we were able to meet with told us their priorities and how they are trying to tackle issues we are facing," Coggins said. "There were people from local businesses that questioned the tariffs and how the tariffs are affecting them."

Coggins noted members of the U.S. House and Senate met with the local business leaders individually to find out ways they may be able to relieve pressure and help them during this period.

"I left the meetings feeling hopeful," he noted. "Some of the answers I got were not the ones I wanted, but I do believe they are working in our best interests."