

## I-75 link at least 19 years away

- The Rome City Commission is still backing the long-sought project.

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It's unlikely the link to I-75 will be built before 2036, but the Rome City Commission on Monday passed a resolution of support for the Rome-Cartersville Development Corridor.

"It says the road is really important, please build it before we die," Commissioner Wendy Davis explained with a wry smile.

The new road is slated as an extension of U.S. 411, running from its intersection with U.S. 41 in Bartow County to I-75 north of Cartersville. It replaces the 411 Connector project, which would have hit the interstate near Ga. 20.

The exact route hasn't been selected yet and construction funding isn't scheduled. Georgia Department of Transportation staffers told a group of Floyd and Bartow officials that it would take 19 years before the road is complete, "under a best-case scenario," Commissioner Craig McDaniel said.

The resolution — which will be sent to Gov. Nathan Deal, the GDOT director and the local legislative delegation — also will be signed by the Floyd County Commission and the Cave Spring City Council. McDaniel said a similar document will come from Bartow and Cartersville leaders.

"This corridor is vital to economic development in Northwest Georgia," he said.

Also on Monday, the City Commission honored Pfc. Brandon Pledger as the Rome Police Department's Officer of the Year for 2016.

Police Chief Denise Downer-McKinney said Pledger, who joined the force just over two years ago, was named Officer of the Month three times in 2016 and received the department's Life Saving Award.

Last year Pledger rendered emergency aid to a motorcyclist whose leg was severed in a wreck and applied a tourniquet that saved his life. He also took down a man threatening other officers with a machete, without using deadly force. And he led an effort to address criminal activity in several West Rome homeless encampments.

"What a life already," said Commissioner Sue Lee, before reading a proclamation recognizing his for "his good judgment, patience and continued dedication to the citizens of Rome and Floyd County."

**Commissioner Bill Collins also announced a collaboration with Rome City Schools to present a free Black History Month musical set for Feb. 27 at 6:30 p.m. in the city auditorium.**

Esther Vaughn, who's working with RCS on the project, said the whole community is invited to the production — which will showcase the diversity of the school system.

Of the system's 6,320 students, Vaughn said 35 percent are black, 32 percent Hispanic, 25 percent white, 3 percent Asian and 5 percent are of mixed race.

Commissioners also approved, in a 7 to 1 vote, a lease agreement to move the Watters Street recycling operation to Ira Levy's property at 412 Lavender Drive. Davis voted against the document, which does not require Levy to clean up his Paper Recovery property on East Sixth Street.

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Read this story online for a link to the Rome City Commission website.



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Rome City Commissioner Sue Lee (left) stands with Pfc. Brandon Pledger who was honored as the Rome Police Department's Officer of the Year for 2016.