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Libertyville provides boost for auto dealers

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BY ED COLLINS Special to the News-Sun

LIBERTYVILLE -- The Village Board authorized the creation of three special business incentive districts Tuesday night that will encourage local auto dealers to upgrade aging facilities and boost sagging car sales.

One district, as authorized under the Illinois Business District Act, will be formed on East Park Avenue (Route 176) near Liberty Lake. The other two will be formed on "auto row" on South Milwaukee Avenue.

The action follows two recent public hearings where no opposition was expressed.

Business retention and expansion within these auto corridors are key elements in the village's future economic development efforts.

John Spoden, the village's director of community development, said Libertyville relies significantly upon sales tax revenues from these auto dealers. Approximately 18 percent of the village's annual general revenues, or \$4.3 million, come from auto-related sales tax receipts, he indicated.

Spoden said many of the auto dealerships along auto row haven't changed much since they were built in the early 1970s.

He said many are now experiencing pressure from auto manufacturers to expand and upgrade their buildings due to increased competition and dynamic changes taking place within the industry.

With creation of the three districts, Spoden said, the dealerships now would be able to submit their redevelopment plans to the village based upon guidelines established for their business district. If their projects are approved, the village will provide financial assistance based upon an incentive criteria formula.

Spoden said this partnership incentive between the auto dealers and the village will be advantageous to both parties.