



Civil rights leader of 1960s sets Valley stop

By [Peter H. Milliken](#)

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milliken@vindy.com

YOUNGSTOWN

A top national leader in the 1960s civil-rights movement will address city high-school students this month.

U.S. Rep. John Lewis, D-5th, of Atlanta, will speak to an assembly of students at 10 a.m. Oct. 18 at East High School.

The assembly will be for students from East, Chaney and the Youngstown Early College High schools, and it will not be open to the public.

Lewis will discuss his experiences in the civil rights movement and his commitment to nonviolence.

Later that day, the 71-year-old congressman will speak at a Cleveland Legal Aid Society banquet.

Lewis is coming to Youngstown at the invitation of Mahoning Valley Sojourn to the Past, an organization that sponsors a 10-day annual trip for Youngstown city high school students to sites of key 1960s civil-rights marches in Southern states and to meet movement leaders, such as Lewis.

Penny Wells, director of Sojourn, announced Lewis' appearance at Thursday's meeting of the Mahoning County commissioners.

Lewis, who was recognized as one of the nation's "Big Six" civil rights leaders, was chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee from 1963 to 1966.

Lewis was a planner and the youngest speaker at the August 1963 Washington, D.C., rally, where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his historic "I Have a Dream" speech.

On "Bloody Sunday," March 7, 1965, Lewis led more than 600 civil-rights marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala., where police fired tear gas and mounted state troopers charged into the crowd, beating the marchers with night sticks and fracturing Lewis' skull.

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Having been elected to Atlanta City Council in 1981, Lewis has been a congressman since 1987.

The commissioners issued to Wells and three East High School students a proclamation Thursday in recognition of the first week in October as Youngstown Sojourn Nonviolence Week.

"The words we use and the violence that continues in the city of Youngstown needs to change, and you guys are taking the first step to make sure it does change," John A. McNally IV, chairman of the commissioners, told the students.

In other action, the commissioners awarded a \$74,410 contract to RMS & Co. of Berlin Center to build an embankment with a culvert under a deteriorating bridge that carries State Line Road over a former railroad line.

The bridge will remain, but the embankment and culvert will fill the space under it, said Marilyn Kenner, chief deputy county engineer.

Trucks delivering garbage to the Carbon-Limestone landfill in Poland Township use the bridge. They'll be detoured around it for a week in October as construction is occurring.

, said Richard A. Marsico, county engineer.

The railroad, which carried limestone from an Essroc quarry in Poland Township to an Essroc processing plant in Bessemer, Pa., was abandoned several years ago, and the track has been removed.