

Ohio Unemployment Drops to 7 Percent

Ohio's unemployment rate continued its downward trend, going from 7.2 percent in August to 7 percent in September, as the state shed 12,800 jobs over the month, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) said Friday.

ODJFS said nonfarm wage and salary employment went from a revised 5.19 million jobs in August to 5.18 million in September, while the number of workers unemployed in the state fell to 406,000 in September from 413,000 in August.

The state's unemployment rate continued to trend below the national rate, which was 7.8 percent for September. The state unemployment rate in September 2011 was 8.6 percent, while the national rate was 9 percent at that time.

According to ODFJS, Goods-producing industries, at 846,500, were down 8,100 from August. Manufacturing and construction lost 6,400 and 1,700 jobs respectively. Mining and logging remained constant over the month. The service-provider sector declined 4,700 over the month to 4,330,700. Job losses occurred in educational and health services (-3,900), government (-1,400), leisure and hospitality (-700), financial activities (-400), and other services (-200). Gains were seen in professional and business services (+1,500), information (+300), and trade, transportation, and utilities (+100).

From September 2011 to September 2012, nonagricultural wage and salary employment rose by 88,700. Service-providing industries added 71,600 jobs. The most significant gains occurred in educational and health services (+21,900), trade, transportation and utilities (+19,700), professional and business services (+15,200) and leisure and hospitality (+10,500). Also showing improvement were other services (+7,800), financial activities (+2,800), and information (+100). Over-the-year declines were posted in government (-6,400). Goods-producing industries increased 17,100. Manufacturing gained 16,300 jobs through increases in durable goods (+11,800) and nondurable goods (+4,500). Construction added 1,000 jobs. Mining and logging employment decreased 200.

Nationally, Ohio was one of 15 states that lost jobs over the month, ranking second in that category only to Michigan, which lost 13,000 jobs. Texas added the most jobs (+21,000), followed by Pennsylvania (+17,800) and the District of Columbia (+14,200).

The highest unemployment rate in the nation was in Nevada at 11.8 percent, followed by Rhode Island at 10.5 percent and California at 10.2 percent. North Dakota had the lowest rate at 3 percent.

Policy Matters Ohio released an analysis of the new state numbers, calling them a mixed message. While the household survey showed the lowest unemployment rate for Ohio in four years, it also showed the largest monthly drop in jobs since July 2009.

"While it is frustrating to job-watchers looking for trends in job growth, conflicting survey data are not unusual," said Hannah Halbert, policy liaison with Policy Matters Ohio. "The monthly numbers are always preliminary and subject to revision, so it is ill advised to make too much of month to month changes."

The group said the state job total has grown by 1.7 percent over the past year. At that rate of growth, it will take nearly three years for Ohio to return to pre-recession job levels.

"September's report is truly a hodgepodge of data," said Halbert. "The one thing that is clear from this month's report is that Ohio's economy is fragile and we remain a long way from full recovery. We need increased investment, not austerity, to restore our communities and grow good jobs."

Reacting to the jobs report, U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) put the blame on President Barack Obama.

"The loss of 12,800 Ohio jobs shows that the Obama economy is not performing where it needs to be. The slight drop in unemployment -- entirely caused by 20,000 Ohioans leaving the workforce -- shows that many jobless Ohioans have simply given up hope," he said in a statement. Portman has been advocating for Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney during the election.

Inner Suburbs, Bedroom Communities Seek 'Alternative Revenue' Ideas at Summit

Leaders from dozens of Ohio communities, many of them inner ring suburbs of the state's major cities, met at Capital University Friday to discuss ways to boost government revenue without going back to voters for a tax increase.

Bexley Mayor Ben Kessler, who organized the First Suburbs Alternative Revenue Summit, described his city's challenges to illustrate the problems of landlocked suburbs and bedroom communities. Even after winning voter approval to increase income taxes and decrease the tax credit for pay earned in other cities, Bexley still faced a sizable budget gap after the state slashed Local Government Fund payments and repealed the estate tax.

A cuts-only approach would curtail safety services to a degree the public wouldn't accept, Kessler said, so the city established an alternative revenue task force led by James Bowman, a JP Morgan executive.

"It seems that we're getting to that point that the voters, maybe, are going to turn some of these [tax increases] down if we don't come up with some other ideas," Bowman said.

Bowman laid out the strategies the task force is exploring, including digital advertising income, parking meters and speed cameras, which can be sold also as a safety issue because Bexley has multiple schools along its main thoroughfares

Most novel is the proposal for a "public safety fee" aimed at people who spend much of their day in Bexley but don't provide income or property tax revenue to fund police and other safety services. That largely translated into a fee on students, as Bexley see scores of them enter its boundaries regularly at Capital, Columbus School for Girls and a local Catholic high school, St. Charles.

The proposal isn't finalized and still would need to get past the city council, but Bowman said the task force is looking at a tiered fee structure that would cost about \$10 a month for a full-time Capital student.

Georgine Welo, mayor of the northeast Ohio city of South Euclid, said her city has been able to boost revenue by making sewer department employees available to fix home sewer backups for a fee. Also, she said the city's animal warden covers neighboring communities, providing enough work to occupy the warden's day and preventing other city services workers from being deputized to do animal control.

While alternative revenue was the nameplate topic Friday, shared services got at least equal time, partly because providing services to another city can also provide revenue to a community.

Controlling Board President Randy Cole, the Kasich administration's shared-services point man, discussed the recent "Beyond Boundaries" report from the administration. He urged local leaders to be creative in thinking about which services can be shared, and said the coming wave of baby boomer retirements will provide a window for using attrition to address staff reductions resulting from shared services.

Cole said the Kasich administration is developing legislative language for the upcoming FY14-15 budget to help facilitate health care consortia for political subdivisions.

Steve Campbell, director of regional growth initiatives for the city of Columbus, discussed recent collaborations between Columbus and neighboring communities on shared services as well as a cooperative approach to economic development.

Jill Miller Zimon, a Pepper Pike City Council member, discussed the work of the EfficientGovNetwork in northeast Ohio. She said one basic question for community's sharing services is how to make elected leaders and residents comfortable with the idea that someone else can perform a service as well as they can.

She said Pepper Pike leaders were able to solve lingering problems with a high-cost dispatch center by partnering with neighboring Beachwood because they were confident Beachwood had similar service expectations.

Jaime Sisto, president of project management company Taralogix, told summit attendees about the potential of community improvement corporations, which he said had vast, flexible authority under state law and freedom individual governments lack. He said they've been helpful in Central Ohio in addressing problems with tax delinquency and successor liability for environmental hazards that make blighted properties extremely undesirable for development.

Lavea Brachman, executive director of the Greater Ohio Policy Center, gave a presentation on Ohio's history of having more political subdivisions per capita than the average state, and discussed moves in places like Nashville, Louisville and Indianapolis to merge county and city governments.

House Campaigns Criticize Attack Mailers

The campaign arms for the Ohio House caucuses traded barbs Friday over mailers sent to Ohio voters attacking House candidates that the other side said went over the line

Stephanie Kunze, an Upper Arlington city councilwoman running as a Republican for the newly created 24th House District, held a press conference in Upper Arlington Friday morning with Reps. Cheryl Grossman (R-Grove City) and Anne Gonzales (R-Westerville), along with former Attorney General Betty Montgomery, to highlight attack pieces sent in her race against Upper Arlington teacher Maureen Reedy.

In particular, the lawmakers and Kunze pointed to one piece that pictured a woman vacuuming under the feet of a man sitting in a chair. They called it offensive to women, and said Democrats have taken their "War on Women" attack too far.

"In political campaigns, we all get negative ads," said Montgomery. "These mailers are particularly demeaning."

She charged that Democrats can't run on their record, adding that poverty rates for women are the highest "in two decades."

Grossman called the ad "a desperate political ploy by a desperate political party," while Gonzales said it pushes an "antiquated perception" of women who do nothing but stay at home. "Women have become a political pawn of the Ohio Democratic Party."

Kunze, who said she was a stay-at-home mom before winning a seat on council two and a half years ago, also complained about mailers that charged she was a career politician or highlighted the council's purchase of iPads that she said was using misinformation. She said as women, they should be supporting each other.

She said that she has become the most targeted candidate as far as mailers for the Statehouse races.

Mike Dittoe, who has been working for the campaign arm of the House Republican Caucus, said Republicans have only been attacking on votes and records. He said Democrats have been launching personal attacks.

But Democrats responded by highlighting an attack piece against Rep. Kathleen Clyde in the 75th House District race. The ad shows a phallic-shaped thermometer on the front with the words "Kathleen Clyde. Big government on the rise." The inside shows money erupting from the thermometer. The Democrats added that the previously mentioned ad denounced by the Republicans was a positive flier meant to show how far women have come in society.

"If these extremist politicians were really concerned, they would immediately denounce a mail piece sent by one of their candidates that suggests - through horribly offensive innuendo - that men are better at managing state finances than women. This anti-women message is absolutely wrong, but unfortunately it's just par for the course with the extreme, partisan priorities of the Ohio House Republican Caucus. The fact is, they have had an extreme agenda that attacks workers' rights, voting rights and women's rights, and House Republicans and the candidates who work for them will be held accountable on Election Day," Alex Youn, executive director of the Ohio House Democratic Caucus, said in a statement.

It isn't the first time the caucuses have clashed over mailers. The House Republican Caucus complained about ads in the 2010 cycle, including one that labeled former Rep. Todd Snitchler, now the chairman of the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, as a "rat." (See *The Hannah Report*, 9/22/10.)

Mail pieces also fill the agenda of the Ohio Elections Commission every election cycle over their truthfulness.

ODJFS, ODE Seek Feedback on New Early Learning Program Standards

The Ohio departments of job and family services (ODJFS) and education (ODE) are accepting comments on proposed new quality standards for child care providers and preschool operators. As part of Ohio's Race to the Top - Early Learning Challenge grant, the state is expanding the Step Up To Quality rating system for child care providers to include all state-funded programs.

Once finalized, the new standards will apply to programs in school districts, child care facilities and private homes funded either by ODJFS or ODE. According to a release from the departments, "The expansion will improve the quality of all early learning programs that serve children with high needs from birth to 5 years old."

The full text of the proposed standards can be found on the *Hannah News* website at www.hannah.com while comments can be posted online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/OhioSUTQProgramStandards>. The deadline for comments is Friday, Nov. 2.

"These draft program standards reflect the elements research shows makes a difference in the quality of early learning and development programs," said Acting Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael L. Sawyers. "The standards also draw attention to the importance of an appropriate curriculum aligned to Ohio's content standards, to ensure children are provided with experiences that will further their progress in all areas of development."

Child care and preschool programs will receive a rating of one to five stars depending on the program's ability to meet performance standards in each of four domains.

"These proposed Step Up To Quality standards will produce better outcomes for children because they will require teachers to be trained and qualified, will require frequent child assessments, and will reward evidence-based curricula and more comprehensive early education experiences," said ODJFS Director Michael Colbert. "The star rating system also helps guide parents to the highest quality programs."

The new Step Up To Quality measures will rate Ohio's early learning programs in four domains:

- **Learning and Development:** Is the program using research-based curricula aligned to Ohio's new early learning and development standards from birth to kindergarten entry?
- **Staff Qualifications and Professional Development:** Have administrators, teachers and assistant teachers obtained required credentials and ongoing professional development hours?
- **Administrative and Leadership Practices:** To what extent does the program adhere to an annual continuous improvement process?

- Family and Community Partnerships: How well does the program engage families and community partners to support children while they are enrolled in the program and as they transition into and out of the program?

ODJFS and ODE will implement the new standards beginning in July 2013. Participation for all publicly funded programs will be phased in and will be mandatory by 2020.

DODD Announces Priority Autism Programs Underway

John Martin, director of the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) announced Friday that work has begun on several projects supported by the \$1.3 million award from the Health Transformation Innovation Fund. (See *The Hannah Report*, 9/17/12.) The funds, which were initially announced at a press conference in September, support programs to improve outcomes for individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The announcement came at a morning meeting of Ohio's Interagency Work Group on Autism.

"With these funds, we're supporting some crucial programs for early autism diagnosis and intervention," Martin said. "The really neat thing about what we can accomplish is the direct impact each of these projects has for individuals and families. These funds will help us essentially blanket the state with better access for families to obtain an accurate diagnosis of autism and provide support to individuals for living a more social and inclusive life."

Autism is a complex neurological developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication, behavior and sensory challenges. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), autism affects one in every 88 children in the United States and is the fastest growing developmental disability in the nation.

Health Transformation Innovation Fund grants support programs to expand early intervention for Ohio's youngest children with ASD, and to improve employment outcomes for young adults with ASD. The programs and services are provided in collaboration with state agency partners, the Ohio Center for Autism and Low Incidence (OCALI), Ohio's county boards of developmental disabilities, and other medical and higher education professionals.

Specific programs and their goals are as follows:

- Autism Diagnostic Education Project (ADEP): ADEP trains pediatricians to correctly identify the early signs of autism. ADEP facilitates partnerships between community-based primary care practices and professionals providing early intervention and early childhood services to increase opportunities for children to receive timely and comprehensive evaluations. ADEP was originally piloted through funds from Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and administered by the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics. ADEP has formed these diagnostic partnerships in 30 counties across Ohio. The Health Transformation Funds will support the existing partnerships and will help expand services in resource poor regions of the state.

- Specialized Training for Early Intervention Professionals: Funds for this program will be used to train professionals in serving infants and toddlers in a play-based approach that nurtures the critical early parent/child relationship early in the child's development. The training is part of the Play and Language for Autistic Youngsters (P.L.A.Y.) Project, and will increase the expertise in the county boards of developmental disabilities' early intervention programs. These trained professionals will be better equipped to assist and empower families, encourage and nurture the child's social interaction, and ultimately increase the likelihood of the child enjoying a successful and inclusive life. Nearly 100 intervention specialists across 34 counties have received training and follow-up coaching. Funding will be used to reach at least 80 percent of the state over the next three years.

- The Governor's Employment First Executive Order challenges Ohio to increase the likelihood that youth with developmental disabilities successfully exit high school directly to community integrated employment. State funds will be used to launch a training series for stakeholders to further the understanding and implementation of Employment First. These training opportunities will allow for a diverse group of professionals and families to understand the importance of the critical years, beginning at age 14, during which adolescents prepare for life beyond high school. Growing the capacity of

trained professionals will result in increased awareness of the necessary components and skills development that will lead to integrated employment.

Clean Water Act Turns 40; What's Next for Water Protection in Ohio?

Thursday marked the 40th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act (CWA), which has been called one of the most important pieces of legislation to water conservation in U.S. history. The anniversary had many environmental groups across the country reflecting on the act's protections and the future of water conservation.

On Tuesday, the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) gathered representatives from environmental groups in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois to talk about the importance of the CWA and the possibility that those protections could be chipped away by members of Congress.

Hannah News talked to different environmental advocacy groups in Ohio and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to get an idea of what the CWA has meant for the Buckeye state and a glimpse into the possible challenges to water protection in the future.

Providing context to the CWA was Chris Abbruzzese, Ohio EPA spokesperson, who added that the agency will also celebrate its 40th anniversary next week Oct. 23.

"This is not a coincidence as, 40 years ago, the dead zone in Lake Erie and a fire on the Cuyahoga River were major factors in the creation of both," Abbruzzese explained. "Due to the Clean Water Act and Ohio EPA, waterways in our state are improving significantly. In fact, in the 1980s, just 21 percent of Ohio's large rivers met water quality standards while today, 89 percent meet water quality standards."

John Rumpler, senior attorney for Environment Ohio, agreed that the Cuyahoga River fire played a major role in catapulting the need for clean water protection into the national spotlight. He added that people must remember the history and reasons behind the creation of the CWA because policymakers are starting to present legislation that chips away at the protections afforded in the act.

That was a concern seconded by Kristy Meyer, Ohio Environmental Council's (OEC) director of Agricultural & Clean Water Programs. She said that in 2010 the U.S. House attached 41 riders in the budget bill that would "gut the Clean Water Act and gut the Clean Air Act." She said that these types of moves in Congress could take the country back to the days of the Cuyahoga River fire.

Lawmakers have argued that the conservation laws can create too much regulation and stunt economic and business growth. Some legislators have proposed putting states back in control of their standards and allow state policymakers to create their own regulations. Meyer said U.S. Rep. Bob Gibbs (R-Lakeville) was one of those legislators.

To Rumpler, that frame of thought was part of the problem back before 1972, which decreased the quality of water in the U.S.

"When you have states setting their own standards with no minimum standards to protect public health or the environment -- inevitably what you wind up with is a race to the bottom -- where states are desperately competing against each other to appease powerful corporate polluters that might want to locate there or threaten to leave," explained Rumpler. "By having a national standard -- a national minimum standard for clean water we cut that equation out."

Meyer added that strong environmental regulations do not deter business but actually helps spur job growth. She cited an example from Jeff Reutter with the Ohio Sea Grant who said that there were about 30 charter boat captains before the CWA now there are nearly 800. Meyer also said that more small businesses started to flourish around Lake Erie after the act passed.

Everyone agreed that the country has come a long way and many improvements have been accomplished with the help of protections listed in the CWA. However, they said that there is still more work to be done in order to continue raising water

quality standards. Jed Thorp, manager of the Sierra Club's Ohio Chapter, said that only 60 percent of Ohio's water bodies are fully protected by the CWA and the state must continue to work until that number reaches 100 percent.

Thorp added that the state has a good handle on the monitoring of point source pollution, industrial sources that flow into waterways. But he said that there is still room for improvement when it comes to urban and agricultural runoff. The city runoff is what flows into storm drains. The continuing concern with agricultural runoff is the nutrients like phosphorus and nitrogen that can end up creating Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB.)

All three environmental advocacy representatives stated that one of the biggest causes for concern is the possible impact of hydraulic fracturing, also known as fracking. They say that there are too many loopholes and exemptions to oil and gas companies looking to start shale gas development in Ohio.

"Because the fracking industry is exempt from a lot of the provisions of the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Clean Water Act -- that's a potential source of pollution that isn't properly addressed by the Clean Water Act as it stands right now," said Thorp.

Through the past 40 years, the Clean Water Act has played a major role in protecting U.S and Ohio waters while raising the quality of rivers, streams and lakes. There are legislators who hope to revise the laws and possibly give more control to the states. But with so many new challenges to water quality standards, environmental advocates say an attempt to making changes to the 40-year-old legislation could be the start of a slippery slope.

ODH, ODNR Warn of Prolific Tick

Hunters and outdoor enthusiasts are being warned to be on the lookout for a relatively new tick in Ohio, the blacklegged "deer" tick, which has the ability to transmit Lyme disease. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Division of Wildlife united Friday to spread awareness of the tick.

Blacklegged ticks were once considered rare in Ohio, but the state now has established populations in 26 counties; most populations are reportedly east of I-71 where deciduous forests are present. These small, dark ticks can remain active throughout the year, including the fall and winter when temperatures are above freezing. More information about identifying the tick is at www.bit.ly/OHTicks.

Unlike pets and humans, wild animals such as deer are not affected by the blacklegged tick and suffer no ill effects from Lyme disease. Additionally, Lyme disease cannot be transmitted by the consumption of venison. Hunters should remember that hunting and dressing deer may bring them into close contact with infected ticks. The agencies said people should be aware that composting deer hides may introduce the unwanted ticks in new areas.

According to the departments, everyone, especially hunters, should be aware of this new threat and take precautions to prevent tick attachment. To avoid contact hunters should spray outer clothing with a permethrin-based repellent then let it air dry. Once dry, the clothing produces no odor. Pants should be tucked into socks or boots and shirts into pants to keep ticks on the outside of clothing.

The ticks are difficult to spot on camouflage clothing. All clothing should be carefully inspected for small, dark, crawling ticks before entering vehicles and going indoors. Once indoors, thoroughly check for small, attached ticks, according to the departments.

ODH advises people to remove attached ticks as soon as they are discovered to reduce the risk of contracting tick-borne diseases. To safely remove ticks from themselves, hunting dogs, or deer, people should use tweezers or their fingers protected by rubber gloves. Grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull straight out with steady, even pressure. Do not use petroleum jelly, fingernail polish, alcohol, cigarettes, matches, or other similar methods to try to kill or force the tick to back out. These methods do not work, delay proper removal and may be dangerous, according to the agencies.

More information about the symptoms of Lyme disease is at www.cdc.gov/lyme.

OSHIIP Helps Navigate Options during Medicare Open Enrollment

Ohio Lt. Gov. and Department of Insurance Director Mary Taylor recently announced that the department's Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program (OSHIIP) is available to help people understand their coverage options during Medicare's annual open enrollment period, which is running now through Friday, Dec. 7.

Taylor also said the department has developed a new, downloadable guide to help consumers better understand Medicare so they can make confident and informed coverage decisions.

"More than 2 million Ohioans are currently enrolled in Medicare and I hope each one will utilize our OSHIIP program during this very important open enrollment period," Taylor said in a prepared statement. "OSHIIP is holding events in every county across the state, conducting one-on-one counseling sessions and taking phone calls to help you secure a plan that best meets your health care needs and budget."

Those with Medicare questions and in need of enrollment help, including financial assistance, can call OSHIIP at 1-800-686-1578, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., or Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Information, including specific plan details, is also available at www.medicare.gov.

In addition, OSHIIP is holding free "Medicare Check-up" events in every county during the enrollment period to help people review changes to Medicare and determine their best coverage option for 2013.

A special Medicare Check-up and Open Enrollment Toolkit is available at www.insurance.ohio.gov. The toolkit includes a list of plans, financial assistance information, a check-up events schedule, and the department's new Medicare guide. The publication addresses many topics, including when and how to apply for Medicare, understanding coverage and benefits and how MedSup works, and provides sample premium charts and a plan comparison worksheet. Individuals can also find OSHIIP on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OSHIIP.

During the annual enrollment, Medicare recipients can select one of several health coverage options: 1) Original Medicare paired with a stand-alone Part D prescription drug plan and perhaps a Medicare Supplement plan. 2) A Medicare Advantage Plan, which provides comprehensive health benefits including drug coverage. 3) Or, determine if their existing coverage will meet their health insurance needs for the upcoming year.

State Government Roundup

Youngest Case from Meningitis Outbreak Confirmed

An 11th fungal meningitis case was listed by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) on Friday. The outbreak started after the New England Compounding Center (NECC) recalled a batch of back injection medication that could be tainted.

Four Ohio health facilities received that recalled injection. Since the initial recall, NECC has recalled all of its products.

According to the ODH website, the latest person to be added to the list of confirmed cases is a 28-year-old female from Marion County. So far, she is the youngest person to contract the disease and the sixth from Marion County where two health facilities received and administered the recalled injection. The medication is typically used to treat back pain.

Nationally, there have been 271 confirmed cases from 16 states. Of those cases, 21 people have died.

SOS Proposes Electric Filing System for Business Services Forms

The Ohio Secretary of State's Office (SOS) has a few rule packages going before the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR) on Monday. The proposals revolve around the filing system for business services forms. The secretary of state's office wants to create an electric filing option.

According to the proposal sent to JCARR, the rule will "streamline the process of filing business services forms, which currently may be filed only in paper form, by mail or in person. In short, electronic filing will make the office more business-friendly."

The SOS office wants to implement provisions of the Ohio Revised Code that allows them to establish alternative filing procedures. One of those new procedures would require a person or entity that files the forms electronically to receive a combination of user name, password and electronic signature.

The entity filing the business services forms by an electronic transmission will receive immediate acknowledgment of a successful submission, according to the proposal. The final proposal explains how a person or entity can submit additional information to a business services form that was filed using the electronic format.

State Medical Board Names Interim Executive Director

The Ohio State Medical Board announced this week that Kimberly C. Anderson has been named interim executive director of the agency following the resignation of Richard Whitehouse.

Anderson currently serves as assistant executive director of investigations, compliance and enforcement for the medical board. Prior to joining the agency in 2007, she was chief legal counsel for the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. She has a law degree from Capital University Law School.

ODNR to Release 15K Pheasants Statewide

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Division of Wildlife will release thousands of pheasants at 28 public hunting areas this fall. More than 15,000 ring-necked pheasants are to be released.

Youth-only hunts will be held Oct. 20-21 and Oct. 27-28 prior to the statewide season, which begins Friday, Nov. 2.

Ring-necked pheasants will be released on Friday, Oct. 19 and Friday, Oct. 26 in anticipation of the small-game weekends for youth hunters. Hunters age 17 and younger can hunt statewide for rabbit, pheasant and all other legal game in season during two designated weekends, Oct. 20-21 and Oct. 27-28.

More pheasants will be released Friday, Nov. 1 in time for Ohio's small game hunting season beginning on Nov. 2. The final release of the fall is scheduled for the evening of Wednesday, Nov. 21 to increase pheasant hunting opportunities during the Thanksgiving holiday weekend.

Youth and regular pheasant hunting within the Ringneck Ridge Area in Sandusky County requires a free permit from the Sandusky County Park District. For more information regarding the issuance of these free hunting permits, contact the Sandusky County Park District Ranger Office at 419-334-4495 or 419-355-706.

Pheasant hunting season opens Nov. 2 and remains open through Jan. 6, 2013, with a daily bag limit of two rooster (male) birds. Statewide hunting hours are sunrise to sunset.

Campaign Corner

Ryan in Eastern Ohio; Biden in Northeast Ohio

The presidential campaigns released details on upcoming trips to Ohio by the vice presidential candidates in the coming day.

Republican Paul Ryan will be visiting Belmont on Saturday, speaking at a rally at Valley View Campgrounds, 43523 National Road. Doors for the event open at 10 a.m., with the program set to begin at 12:30 p.m.

Meanwhile, Vice President Joe Biden will be campaigning around Ohio Monday through Wednesday. Details on the Monday visits were released by the Obama campaign, showing that Biden will speak in Canton and Lorain. The Canton event will be held at the J. Babe Stearn Community Center Deuble Gymnasium, 2628 13th St. SW, with doors opening at 9:30 a.m. The Lorain event will be held at Lorain High School, 2270 E. 42nd St., with doors opening at 1:30 p.m.

Ohio media also reported that Biden will appear with President Barack Obama at an event in Dayton on Tuesday.

Endorsements

- The *Cincinnati Enquirer* endorsed Connie Pillich (D-Cincinnati) for the 28th Ohio House District.

Ohio Digest

Cardinal Health Invites Providers to Apply for Grants to Improve Patient Safety

The Cardinal Health Foundation has announced that, for the sixth consecutive year, it will award grant funding to help U.S., Canadian and Puerto Rican hospitals, health systems, community health clinics and other nonprofit health care institutions improve the efficiency and quality of patient care.

Cardinal Health Foundation E3 Grant Program applicants are encouraged to submit funding requests for projects that will improve medication safety, particularly as patients move from hospital environments to home and other health care settings; or for projects that will improve operating room (OR) safety through the use of the World Health Organization surgical safety checklist, which Cardinal said "has been proven to reduce surgical morbidity and mortality by providing a list of patient safety activities that must be completed by a surgery team before proceeding with a medical procedure."

In addition to receiving funding, grantees working on surgical errors will have access to coaching support from members of the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN). Grantees working on medication safety projects will have access to coaching and support from hospital pharmacy experts from the Cardinal Health Pharmacy Solutions team, who help hospitals across the country implement best practices related to medication safety and other hospital pharmacy initiatives.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to refer to the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's web-based Improvement Map for best practice ideas for improving medication safety. Those interested in applying for grants to improve OR safety should refer to the AORN website for best practice ideas. Prospective grantees may also find summaries from successful E3 Grant Program proposals on the Cardinal Health community website.

"We are encouraged at the strides in medication and OR safety that previous E3 grantees have made," Shelley Bird, chair of the Cardinal Health Foundation, said in a statement. "Past grant recipients have reported an 11:1 return on our investment, and hospitals report this funding helped them to reduce errors, length-of-stay, and readmissions. We are pleased to once again provide this funding."

Applications for E3 grants must be submitted on the Cardinal Health community website by Friday, Dec. 7.

The Cardinal Health Foundation will also host two webinars to review program criteria and provide prospective grantees the opportunity to ask questions about the E3 Grant Program application process.

The webinars will take place on Tuesday, Oct. 23 at 2 p.m. and Friday, Oct. 26 at 11 a.m. Additional information is available online at www.cardinalhealth.com/community under "apply for support."

Since the inception of the E3 Grant Program in 2008, the Cardinal Health Foundation has awarded 190 grants totaling more than \$5.25 million to improve the effectiveness, efficiency and excellence of health care nationwide.

Attorney General Opinion

To: Highland County Prosecuting Attorney

1. A competitive bid submitted to a county contracting authority under R.C. 307.86-.92 is an offer to enter into a public contract with the contracting authority at the specific price and terms stated in the bid.
2. A competitive sealed proposal submitted to a county contracting authority pursuant to R.C. 307.862 is an offer to enter into discussions and negotiations with the contracting authority for a public contract.
3. Pursuant to R.C. 307.862(C), information in a competitive sealed proposal submitted to a county contracting authority pursuant to R.C. 307.862 becomes a public record that must be made available for public inspection and copying under R.C. 149.43 after the contract is awarded, unless the information falls within one of the exceptions to the definition of the term "public record" set forth by R.C. 149.43(A)(1) and is redacted from the proposal by the contracting authority.
4. Pursuant to R.C. 307.87 and R.C. 307.88, information in a competitive bid submitted to a county contracting authority under R.C. 307.86-.92 becomes a public record that must be made available for public inspection and copying under R.C. 149.43 after the bid is opened by the contracting authority, unless the information falls within one of the exceptions to the definition of the term "public record" set forth in R.C. 149.43(A)(1) and is redacted from the bid by the contracting authority.

Judicial Actions

Supreme Court Adopts Revised Probate Forms

The Ohio Supreme Court has adopted rule amendments to revise probate court forms that concern appointing a guardian of an alleged incompetent and a name change application for an adult or a minor. (See *The Hannah Report*, 4/20/12.)

The amendments become effective Jan. 1, 2013.

Amendments to the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio cover Probate Forms 17.0, 21.0 and 21.2.

Revisions to form 17.0 (Application for Appointment of Guardian of Alleged Incompetent) add additional items of information for the benefit of the probate court and the proposed ward.

Revisions to forms 21.0 (Application for Change of Name of Adult) and 21.2 (Application for Change of Name of Minor) make them comply with HB86. This legislation prohibited a probate court from ordering a name change if the applicant was convicted, pleaded guilty to, or was adjudicated a delinquent child for having committed a sexually oriented offense or a child-victim oriented offense.

Amended rules are accessible on the Ohio Supreme Court website at <http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/RuleAmendments/Archive.aspx>.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS

The House adjourned until Wednesday, Oct. 24, 2012 at 9 a.m. (Nonvoting Session)

The Senate adjourned until Monday, Oct. 22, 2012 at 11 a.m. (Nonvoting Session)

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Friday, October 19, 2012

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine announced Thursday that agents with the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) collected a total of more than 30,000 marijuana plants in 2012. BCI agents work with local law enforcement agencies every year during the prime growing and harvesting season, April through October. The average marijuana plant can be processed and sold for a street value between \$1,000 and \$1,500. Higher quality plants can be sold for up to \$2,000, according to a statement from DeWine's office.

Attorney General Mike DeWine suggested a number of precautionary steps Ohioans can take while on the Internet in observance of October as National Cyber Security Awareness Month. According to his office, a recent study found that 90 percent don't feel completely safe online with respondents most worried about identity theft, malware and viruses, hacking of financial information, and online scams.

Attorney General Mike DeWine says his office's database of unsolved homicides will expand from hundreds to thousands of cold-case files because of strong interest from local law enforcement. "There are killers in Ohio who should be in prison, not in our neighborhoods, and we hope those who know about these crimes will take this new opportunity to come forward." The website database is available at www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/ohiounsolvedhomicides.

AUDITOR OF STATE

Substantial deficit balances at the village of Newcomerstown (Tuscarawas County) prompted Auditor of State (AOS) Dave Yost to place the village in a state of fiscal emergency. It joins 23 other units of local government currently in fiscal emergency, with the longest running designation belonging to the village of Manchester in Adams County, which has been in fiscal emergency for 15 years -- since September 1997.

BALLOT ISSUES

Proponents and opponents of Issue 2, a proposed constitutional amendment that would change the way Ohio draws its General Assembly and congressional district lines, met for a debate in Columbus Wednesday. The two sides agreed only on the fact that the current system needs reform. However, opponents do not believe Issue 2 is the proper vehicle for reform.

DEATH PENALTY

The Ohio Parole Board unanimously to recommend convicted murderer Brett Hartman be denied clemency. This is the third time the board has recommended against clemency. Hartman's request and the board's recommendation now go to Gov. John Kasich, who makes the final decision to grant or deny clemency. Hartman's execution is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 13.

EDUCATION

School districts saw their preliminary performance ratings from the state Wednesday as the Ohio Department of Education released additional data. Full report cards for districts are still on hold pending completion of Auditor Dave Yost's investigation of attendance data manipulation. This latest release included performance index and attendance rate information. Eleven districts drew the second lowest rating of "academic watch," including three of the Big 8 urban districts -- Dayton, Toledo and Youngstown.

Former Ohio Board of Regents Chancellor Eric Fingerhut met with city of Columbus leaders Thursday for the first in a series of presentations regarding the city's education system. Fingerhut said the city's goals for growth and economic development through Columbus2020 are necessarily predicated on a better school system, because recruiting professionals and businesses from elsewhere can only go so far.

Ohio is at the higher end of states for average student debt load upon completion of a bachelor's degree, with the typical graduate leaving school owing \$28,683, according to a new report from the Project on Student Debt. Though data were not listed for all institutions, among Ohio's public universities, Bowling Green State University's average debt load of \$33,083 was the highest. The \$19,199 borrowed by the average Cleveland State University graduate was the lowest.

ELECTIONS

Hannah News reviewed the eight court cases revolving around elections in Ohio. Many of the high-profile lawsuits such as *Obama For America V. Husted*, which calls for the allowance of early in-person voting on the three days before Election Day, have already been resolved. However, there are still some cases that are pending. Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) has said that the General Assembly may look at addressing some election issues during the lame duck session.

Another lawsuit was filed this week by a group of voting and prisoner rights advocates who claim the voting rights of people arrested the weekend before Election Day could be in jeopardy. The suit states that eligible voters who are jailed the weekend before Election Day could lose their voting rights because Ohio election law denies them the opportunity to vote by prohibiting them from applying for absentee ballots after noon on the Saturday before Election Day. This denial violates the Equal Protection and Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and the Seventeenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, according to the lawsuit.

ELECTIONS 2012

At the three week mark until Election Day, Secretary of State Jon Husted announced Wednesday that 1.4 million Ohioans have either already cast or requested an absentee ballot. According to an informal survey of the state's county boards of elections, more than 400,000 people have already cast their vote.

The Senate Democratic Caucus Wednesday formally asked Secretary of State Jon Husted and Attorney General Mike DeWine Wednesday to investigate conservative group "Truth the Vote," a group which seeks to prevent election fraud. The letter included stories saying the group has taken up questionable methods to combat fraud through its affiliated organization, the Ohio Voter Integrity Project.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and his November opponent, Treasurer Josh Mandel faced off in two debates this week, with both sticking close to their talking points in the first debate held Monday at the City Club in Cleveland and again on Thursday in Columbus. Both labeled their opponent as a career politician, with Brown saying Mandel can't be trusted and Mandel saying Brown is part of the problems in Washington, D.C. Brown touted his work on the auto industry bailout, the Affordable Care Act and fighting trade issues with China; Mandel discussed his opposition to Wall Street bank bailouts, sending foreign aid to countries that "harbor terrorists" and Medicare cuts.

Secretary of State Jon Husted wasted no time sticking to his pledge to have uniform voting rules, setting a schedule of in-person voting hours for the final three days before Election Day after the U.S. Supreme Court Tuesday rejected his appeal of a lower court ruling in *Obama for America v. Husted* ordering him to allow voters to cast ballots those three days. Husted had appealed to the highest court in the nation after U.S. District Court Judge Peter Economus and the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals ordered the state to restore in-person absentee voting to Saturday, Nov. 3, Sunday, Nov. 4, and Monday, Nov. 5. The courts said the state had not given a compelling reason for cutting off voting at 6 p.m. the Friday before Election Day under HB224 (Dovilla-Stinziano).

Late last week, the Senate Democratic Caucus filed a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in *Obama for America v. Husted*, asking it to deny Husted's appeal while attorneys general from 15 different states joined Husted in urging the U.S. Supreme Court to step in and preserve the authority of the states to run state elections.

The Ohio Elections Commission Probable Cause Panel found probable cause with one of two complaints from the Ohio Republican Party on statements from the pro-Issue 2 group, Voters First, at a hearing on Monday. The party had taken issue with a statement from the Voters First campaign that said "lobbyists, politicians and political insiders are prohibited from serving on the commission" and the panel, in a 4-0 vote, agreed. A second complaint was administratively dismissed. None of the issues raised by Voters First this time were moved along for a full hearing by the commission.

Several voting rights groups including Common Cause Ohio, Project Vote and Ohio Voices Tuesday criticized a recent directive issued by Secretary of State Jon Husted that prohibits county boards of elections (BOE) from contacting a voter by telephone or email if that voter makes a mistake on their absentee ballot identification envelope. Directive 2012-48 instructs county BOE staff to contact a voter only in writing by first class mail. That voter would then visit the BOE office to correct any errors. Husted's spokesperson said the directive is an effort for uniformity since a mailing address is the only piece of contact information that county boards of elections have on every voter.

The race between incumbents U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth) and U.S. Rep. Betty Sutton (D-Copley) -- redistricted into the same district -- is shaping up to be the most expensive one for U.S. House in this Ohio election cycle. Renacci reported about \$652,418 in contributions over the period spanning from July to September, and has spent more than \$1 million over the quarter. He reported more than \$1 million left in his campaign account. Sutton's totals were closer to \$600,000 in contributions, and she has more than \$1.2 million on hand. She has spent about \$285,050.

In other races, Geauga County Prosecutor Dave Joyce quickly showed his fundraising prowess after being a last-minute replacement for U.S. Rep. Steve LaTourette (R-Bainbridge) on the ballot. He reported a net \$507,189 in contributions, more than \$250,000 in expenditures, and has about \$278,449 cash on hand. His opponent, Democrat Dale Virgil Blanchard, reported no contributions or expenditures.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) reported that his campaign had raised more than \$5.4 million in the third quarter, with an average contribution size of \$54. Brown's opponent, Treasurer Josh Mandel, reported about \$4.5 million in contributions during the third quarter.

The Ohio AFL-CIO became the latest group to ask Clear Channel to change a controversial billboard in the Cleveland area that states voter fraud is a felony. A number of Cleveland-area politicians, including Sen. Nina Turner (D-Cleveland), claim the billboard is aimed at suppressing minority voters who may not know their rights. They have said the placement of the billboard is questionable.

The Rasmussen and Public Policy Polling (PPP) polls released over the weekend showed a slight lead for President Barack Obama over Republican Mitt Romney in Ohio, while differing on how wide of a lead U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) has over Treasurer Josh Mandel in his re-election race. Rasmussen Reports showed Obama with 48 percent compared to Romney's 47 percent, with 2 percent preferring another candidate and 3 percent undecided. In the U.S. Senate race, the Rasmussen poll showed Brown with a slight lead over Mandel, 47 percent to 46 percent. Meanwhile, PPP showed Obama with a 51 percent to 46 percent lead over Romney and in the U.S. Senate race, PPP showed Brown leading Mandel 49 percent to 42 percent, little changed from two weeks ago.

U.S. Rep. Steve Stivers (R-Columbus) announced Monday that his campaign raised \$415,000 in the third quarter of 2012. Overall, his campaign has more than \$580,000 cash on hand.

The Ohio Coal Association said Monday that it is joining other coal associations in Indiana, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and West Virginia to launch a billboard campaign attacking President Barack Obama for what they say are his anti-coal positions.

Hannah News highlighted the House District 21 race between incumbent Republican Mike Duffey (Worthington) and challenger Donna O'Connor. Duffey touted his success at passing four out of six bills he has introduced in the House with bipartisan support while O'Connor stressed her background as a veteran Dublin City Schools teacher.

ENERGY

Residential consumers can now avoid utility disconnection or restore their heating services under the Winter Reconnect Order which went into effect Oct. 15. The order, which was signed by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) for the 28th straight year, calls for a one-time payment of \$175. According to the commission, more than 316,000 people took advantage of the program last year. The option is available to consumers from now until April 15, 2013.

ENVIRONMENT

Two men are serving a sentence for illegally dumping material into a Clintonville-area ravine; their conviction was the result of a nearly four-year investigation led by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) and assisted by local authorities including the Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO). Jeffery A. Gardner Jr. and Andrew Eckstein pleaded guilty to throwing 56 five-gallon buckets, containing mostly paint materials, into the Walhalla Ravine.

FEDERAL

Monthly Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits for nearly 64 million Americans will increase 1.7 percent in 2013, the Social Security Administration (SSA) announced Tuesday. Based on the average monthly SS benefit of \$1,234 for retired workers and their dependents, the increase amounts to \$20.98 per month.

The U.S. Department of the Interior designated two Ohio sites as national landmarks on Wednesday: the Central Branch, National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers/Dayton Veterans Administration Home in Dayton which represents an evolution and shift in federal care for veterans starting in World War I (1917), and Dr. Robert and Anne Smith's house in Akron. Dr. Smith along with William Griffith Wilson, co-founded Alcoholics Anonymous, a global organization whose mission is to assist alcoholics in achieving and maintaining sobriety.

GAMING

The Ohio Casino Control Commission is preparing for the debut of Ohio's fourth and final casino, the Horseshoe Casino Cincinnati. The facility is set to open in the spring of 2013 although an official date has not been announced. Karen Huey, director of enforcement, said she could start interviews as early as next week for the lead gaming agent for that location.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

The nonvoting House session Wednesday included a message from House Speaker William Batchelder (R-Medina) announcing that Rep. Clayton Luckie (D-Dayton) was stripped of his committee assignments on the House Education and Insurance committees. The move had been pushed by House Democratic Leader Armond Budish (D-Beachwood.) Luckie was recently indicted on 49 charges including money laundering, theft in office and tampering with evidence.

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) Thursday approved a \$1 increase in the rates for the Statehouse Underground Parking Garage for nights and weekends. In addition, the group instituted a monthly night parking rate of \$110 covering the time period of 2 p.m. to 6 a.m. and all day on Saturday and Sunday. Starting Jan. 1, 2013, parking from 0-5 hours in the evening will be \$5 and \$6 for five to 12 hours. On the weekends, 0-5 hours will be \$5 and another \$1 for each additional five hours.

GOVERNOR

Gov. John Kasich is now taking applications from parties seeking to replace soon-to-retire Ohio Supreme Court Justice Evelyn Lundberg Stratton. The governor also named a seven-member panel of legal professionals to advise him on the selection process.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The Ohio Department of Health is working with local health officials to track and monitor the condition of patients around the state who received a recalled injection used for back pain. The New England Compounding Center (NECC) has recalled all

of its products after one product was found to be the source of an outbreak of fungal meningitis. As of Thursday, 10 Ohioans had contracted the disease; nationwide there are 257 confirmed cases resulting in 20 deaths.

Toledo's Zepf Center was the site Monday for the launch of Ohio's new Medicaid benefit, the health home, which will focus on coordinating mental and physical health care and work to boost the overall health of Ohio's Medicaid participants with serious and persistent mental illness (SPMI). The new benefit was announced by the Ohio Department of Mental Health (ODMH) in conjunction with the Office of Medical Assistance (Ohio Medicaid) and will be implemented in five Ohio counties -- Adams, Butler, Lawrence, Lucas and Scioto. The agencies said that the benefit delivered by community behavioral health providers will be available statewide within a year.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Thirteen state universities spelled out plans for students to complete 10 percent of their bachelor's degree programs in three years rather than four, following a requirement in the current state budget. They are required to provide similar plans for 60 percent of their programs by June 30, 2014. Many of the three-year "pathways" are predicated on freshmen starting their college careers with at least 30 credit hours under their belts from post-secondary programs, Advanced Placement testing or other means.

Kent State University (KSU) will officially open its May 4 Visitors Center on Saturday, Oct. 20, as part of the university's Homecoming celebration. On May 4, 1970, Kent State was placed in an international spotlight after a student protest against the Vietnam War and the presence of the Ohio National Guard on campus ended in tragedy with four students dead, one permanently paralyzed and eight others wounded. Funding for the center included contributions from the public, veterans groups, a \$300,000 grant from the National Endowment of the Humanities and \$667,000 from all 16 deans from every Kent State campus and college, "an expression of the university's national leadership role in promoting nonviolence and democratic values."

Ohio is one of the 12 states to receive funding from five national foundations supporting a multi-state initiative to help more students who have transferred from community colleges to four-year colleges and universities complete their associate degrees. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Helios Foundation, Kresge Foundation, Lumina Foundation and USA Funds have joined forces in the initiative, "Credit When It's Due: Recognizing the Value of the Quality Associate Degree."

The University of Toledo's Ritter Planetarium and Brooks Observatory is hosting "Tales of the Maya Skies" -- a 30-minute exploration of Mayan astronomy, art and culture -- from October through Dec. 21. Chabot Space & Science Center produced the program with an emphasis on Chichen Itza, billed as the "seventh wonder of the modern world."

The search committee charged with recommending the next University of Cincinnati president made its selection Monday. The committee voted to recommend Santa J. Ono, who is currently serving as interim UC president.

JUDICIAL

A unanimous Ohio Supreme Court Thursday ruled that the creation of the new Sandusky County Municipal Court in HB509 (Blair), the local government portion of the Mid-Biennium Review (MBR), is unconstitutional because it appointed judges and gave them one-year terms. The new court was originally proposed in HB433 (Damschroder) but later placed into HB509. The new court combined the Sandusky County courts of Clyde and Woodville into a single municipal court, with the part-time judges for the county courts replaced by a full-time judge. Now, elections for both those judgeships are on the November ballot.

The Ohio Supreme Court is accepting public comment until Nov. 13 on permanent rules for the operation of commercial dockets in Ohio. Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio 49-49.12 determine which courts can operate commercial dockets, training requirements for commercial docket judges, cases eligible and not eligible for commercial dockets, and how to offset the workload of judges assigned to commercial dockets, among other issues.

The Ohio Supreme Court announced Monday that it is seeking public comments on its reorganized and renumbered rules of practice that mirror the flow of a case before the Court. The reorganization presents a more logical ordering of the rules for

attorneys and self-represented litigants to help them locate filing requirements, according to Kristina Frost, clerk of the Court.

LIBRARIES

The State Library of Ohio has received a \$133,516 Connecting to Collections Implementation Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to fund a two-day "preservation boot camp" for library and museum staff. Partners include the Ohio Historical Society, Ohio Museums Association and institutional representatives from the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County, Follett House Museum, and Kennedy Museum of Art at Ohio University.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The 2012 acorn mast survey conducted at 38 Ohio wildlife areas showed an increase in production from the previous year, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) Division of Wildlife. The acorn mast nearly matched the banner year of 2010. The overall number of white oak trees producing acorns increased 36 percent from 2011, and the number of red oak trees producing acorns increased by 9 percent.

PEOPLE

Albert E. Dyckes, a longtime lobbyist for the Ohio Hospital Association (OHA) who retired as senior vice president in 1995, died Thursday, Oct. 11 at the age of 82. Dyckes had also served as a deputy director of the Ohio Department of Health and of the Mid-Ohio Health Planning Federation before joining OHA.

KnowledgeWorks founder and board director Chad Wick has been named to ACT Inc.'s Board of Trustees.

The Ohio Bailiffs and Court Officers Association elected the following officers for 2013-2014: Victoria Thurman, deputy bailiff for Cleveland Municipal Court, president; Ron Mellotte, bailiff with Greene County Common Pleas Court, first vice president; Jose Lozada, bailiff with Cleveland Municipal Court, second vice president; William Reddy, bailiff with Cleveland Municipal Court, third vice president; Brett Robertson, bailiff with Medina County Municipal Court, website officer; and Thomas Mulgrew, bailiff supervisor with Cleveland Municipal Court, secretary/treasurer.

The Ohio Bailiffs and Court Officers Association also recognized Dorianne Denard, a bailiff with Summit County Common Pleas Court, as Court Officer of the Year and presented Roger Landis, a bailiff with Fairfield County Municipal Court, with the Larry Lute Award as outstanding court officer. Thomas Chidester, chief court constable with Wood County Common Pleas Court, received the Justice Evelyn Lundberg Stratton Award.

Strategic Health Care announced Monday that Joe Russell, former legislative aide to State Rep. Barbara Sears (R-Sylvania), will join its consulting firm, effective Oct. 22, as the director of government affairs.

American Municipal Power Inc. (AMP) announced Tuesday the expansion of its legal team with the appointment of two deputy general counsels: Rachel Gerrick and Lisa McAlister.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Secretary of State Jon Husted said that 6,665 new entities filed to do business in Ohio in September 2012. These numbers are up compared to September 2011, when 6,143 new entities filed with the secretary of state.

UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio voted Wednesday to approve a utility bill payment plan for Ormet, an integrated aluminum producer and manufacturer. Ormet will pay off the October and November 2012 bills to AEP Ohio over the 12 months of 2014 and the first five months of 2015. Ormet cited several needs for relief including a declining market and the increased electricity rates due to the approval of AEP's electric security plan.

The PUCO also voted to approve the corporate separation plan for AEP's Ohio Power Company. It will transfer its generation assets, fuel and other generation-related assets to the new AEP Generation Company, which will plan, construct, own and operate the generation assets, according to the order.

The Home Energy Assistance Program's (HEAP) Winter Crisis Program will start helping eligible households Nov. 1. The program, which is administered by the Ohio Development Services Agency's Office of Community Assistance, provides help to qualified households that face the threat of utility disconnection, have a history of disconnection, or have less than a 10-day supply of bulk fuel. About 155,000 households were served by last season's program.

VETERANS

The families of 28 Ohio servicemen and women who died while serving their country in 2011 will be honored with the presentation of the Ohio Military Medal of Distinction during a joint session of the Ohio House and Senate on Thursday, Nov. 15. The joint session will begin at 11 a.m. in the House Chamber.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) announced Wednesday that eight people were convicted or pleaded guilty to fraud-related charges in September as a result of investigations by BWC's special investigations department (SID).

WORKFORCE

Policy Matters Ohio released a report Monday finding the fewest number of workers seeking federal help for trade-related job loss in six years. The report attributed the drop in Ohio workers and workplaces certified for the federal Trade Adjustment and Assistance (TAA) program to manufacturing growth and the shifting impact of trade.



Final Agenda

Monday, October 22, 2012

JOINT COMMITTEE ON AGENCY RULE REVIEW

Mon., Oct. 22, 2012, 1:30 PM, Senate Finance Hearing Room

**Saturday, October 20**

BELMONT - Vice President Paul Ryan will attend a "Victory Rally" at 12:30 p.m., Valley View Campgrounds, 43523 National Rd.

Monday, October 22

COLUMBUS – The Elder Abuse Commission meets at 9:30 a.m., Vern Riffe Center, 77 S. High St., 31st Floor, West B and C Conference Room.

WESTLAKE - U.S. Senate Candidate Josh Mandel holds a press conference to announce policy proposals at 10:30 a.m., Orthopedic Surgeons, 24723 Detroit Rd.

CANTON - Vice President Joe Biden will speak at a grassroots event at 11:30 a.m., J. Babe Stearn Community Center, 2628 13th St. SW, Deuble Gymnasium.

REYNOLDSBURG - The Board of Building Appeals meets at 12:30 p.m., Division of Industrial Compliance, 6606 Tussing Rd., Training Room 1.

COLUMBUS – The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review meets at 1:30 p.m., Ohio Statehouse, Senate Building, Finance Hearing Room.

LORAIN - Vice President Joe Biden will speak at a grassroots event at 3 p.m., Lorain High School, 2270 East 42nd St.

COLUMBUS - The Licensure and standards committees of the Ohio Educator Standards Board meet at 6 p.m., Quest Business Center, 8405 Pulsar Place.

Tuesday, October 23

REYNOLDSBURG - The Board of Building Appeals meets at 8 a.m., Division of Industrial Compliance, 6606 Tussing Rd., Training Room 1.

COLUMBUS - The Ohio Educator Standards Board meets at 9 a.m., Quest Business Center, 8405 Pulsar Place.

COLUMBUS - The Waterways Safety Council holds its regular quarterly meeting at 10 a.m., Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources, 2045 Morse Rd., Building A.

COLUMBUS – The Third Frontier Commission meets at 10 a.m., TechColumbus, 1275 Kinnear Rd.

COLUMBUS - The Unemployment Compensation Review Commission meets at 12:30 p.m., 4020 E. 5th Ave., Room M148.

Wednesday, October 24

COLUMBUS - The Unemployment Compensation Review Commission meets at 10 a.m., 4020 E. 5th Ave., Room M148.

COLUMBUS – The Columbus Metropolitan Club hosts “School to Prison Pipeline” at 12 p.m., Columbus Metropolitan Club, 100 E. Broad St. This edition features Charlie Wilson of the OSU Moritz College of Law; Renuka Mayadev, executive director, Children's Defense Fund; and Sarah Biehl, Ohio Poverty Law Center.

COLUMBUS - The PUCO meets at 1:30 p.m., 180 E. Broad St.

Thursday, October 25

OHIO – Pre-general election campaign finance reports must be filed by candidates, PACs, caucus committees (legislative campaign funds) and political parties by 4 p.m.

COLUMBUS – Committees of the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation begin meeting at 8 a.m., William Green Building, 30 W. Spring St.

COLUMBUS - Committees of the Ohio Expositions Commission begin meeting at 9 a.m., 717 E. 17th Ave., FFA Center Meeting Room.

COLUMBUS - The State Employment Relations Board meets at 10 a.m., 65 E. State St., 12th Floor.

COLUMBUS – The School Facilities Commission meets at 1:30 p.m., Ohio Statehouse, William McKinley Hearing Room (Room 121).

CANCELLED – The Medical Care Advisory Committee meets at 2 p.m., Columbus Developmental Center, 1601 W. Broad St.

COLUMBUS - The Ohio Facilities Construction Commission meets at 2:30 p.m., Ohio Statehouse, William McKinley Room (Room 121).

CINCINNATI - A U.S. Senate debate between Sherrod Brown and Josh Mandel begins at 7 p.m., WCET-TV Studio, 1223 Central Pkwy.

Friday, October 26

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation Board meets at 9 a.m., William Green Building, 30 W. Spring St.

REYNOLDSBURG - Electrical Safety Inspector Advisory Committee of the Board of Building Standards meets at 10 a.m., Division of Industrial Compliance, 6606 Tussing Rd., BBS Library.