

Ohio Matters

An Official Publication of *The Ohio Chamber of Commerce*

By Rich Thompson, Director, Political Programs

GET INFORMED. 1

Chamber Choice candidates share pro-business views

Riffing on politics

Chamber releases voting website

SHARE SUCCESS. 4

Website promotes employee education on election

Committee created to fix unemployment comp system

The fluctuating workweek

STAY CONNECTED. 6

Reducing health care costs

Chamber Champion Member Spotlight: Dynegy

Tax incentives and interactive toolkit

You need to vote

OCCPAC CHAMBER CHOICE CANDIDATES SHARE PRO-BUSINESS VIEWS

This summer, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee (OCCPAC) released its list of Ohio General Assembly endorsed candidates for the 2016 General Election. The list includes 74 candidates running in November; of those, seven have been awarded the distinction of Chamber Choice candidate. Of the 74 candidates, 60 are running for seats in the Ohio House of Representatives and 14 are running for seats in the Ohio Senate.

OCCPAC has made endorsements in General Assembly races since 1998. During that time, 758 candidates received our recommendation. On average, OCCPAC candidates have carried a 91.4 percent winning percentage. Please visit ohiobusinessvotes.com to learn more about all of our endorsed candidates. If all of these candidates are victorious in November, the legislature can continue its work over the next two years of improving Ohio's business climate.

In order to select endorsed candidates, OCCPAC utilizes a member-driven approach. Several criteria are used to evaluate each race. For incumbents, the Ohio Chamber's Free Enterprise Index, which was released in July, is a compilation of member votes cast during the General Assembly and is used as the leading indicator of a candidate's commitment to

improving Ohio's business climate. Other criteria applying to both incumbents and new candidates include a candidate questionnaire, personal meetings with candidates and input from members.

The seven Chamber Choice candidates were selected because they are in highly competitive races and have shown to strongly support job creation and economic growth in our state. These candidates have distinguished themselves on important business issues, and signal to the business community where opportunities exist to ensure the next General Assembly has a strong voice for Ohio's economy.

Whether you request a ballot through the mail, or head to the polls on Nov. 8, be sure to vote for the pro-business candidates who will work to make Ohio's economy stronger.

Here is a further look at the Chamber Choice candidates.

• Senate District 16—Rep. Stephanie Kunze (R-Hilliard) over Cathy Johnson (D-Columbus)



Kunze is running for Sen. Jim Hughes' seat. The district, consisting of portions of

Franklin County, leans Republican at +4 on the partisan voter index (PVI). Kunze is a previous Chamber Choice candidate (2014) and has carded a perfect 100 percent session and lifetime voting record with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Her opponent, Johnson, holds an at-large position on the South-Western City School Board.

• House District 5—Rep. Tim Ginter (R-Salem) over John Dyce (D-Guilford Lake)



Ginter defeated incumbent Democrat Nick Barborak for this seat in 2014. With a -3

Republican PVI, Ginter will need a lot of support to retain his seat that encompasses all of Columbiana County. A Salem Chamber of Commerce member, Ginter has a 100 percent session voting record during his first term in the Ohio House. His opponent is a retired postman.

• Senate District 24—Matt Dolan (R-Chagrin Falls) over Emily Hagan (D-Rocky River)



Former State Rep. Dolan is running for Sen. Tom Patton's seat. The district makes a horseshoe

around Cuyahoga County and includes Westlake, Rocky River, Strongsville, North Royalton and Mayfield, among others. It carries a +2 Republican PVI. This margin is to likely decline given the uncertainty that comes with a presidential election year. Dolan served in the Ohio House

QUICK GLANCE

OCCPAC has recommended 758 candidates for the General Assembly. Candidates have averaged a 91.4 percent winning percentage.

This year, OCCPAC is recommending 74 candidates. View the full list at

www.ohiobusinessvotes.com

2005-10. During his time in the Ohio House, Dolan served as the Finance and Appropriations chairman during his second term. Dolan holds a 94 percent lifetime voting record from his total votes cast during his time in the Ohio House. His opponent is Hagan, a Cuyahoga County assistant prosecutor. Hagan scored 28 percent on her candidate questionnaire.

• House District 43—Rep. Jeff Rezabek (R-Clayton) over David Sparks (D-Dayton)



Although Rezabek easily defeated incumbent Roland Winburn by a margin of 58 percent to 42 percent

in 2014, the makeup of the 43rd House District looks quite different during presidential election cycles. The district carries a -2 Republican PVI. An attorney, Rezabek holds a 100 percent voting record thus far in his first term. His opponent is Sparks, a past education union president.

Continued on page 3

*They will work to enhance
free enterprise.*

*We all work to enhance
economic opportunity.*

We're all for Ohio.

This election, visit **www.OhioBusinessVotes.com**.

This website is our guide to provide Ohio Chamber members with the necessary information to identify pro-business candidates to help you make an informed decision come Election Day.



By Ben Taylor, Executive Director, Great Lakes Region, U.S. Chamber of Commerce

RIFFING ON POLITICS

Ranking 48th in the nation in job creation, Ohio had fallen into a rut.

Unemployment skyrocketed to nearly double digits, and the state lost 350,000 jobs. Budget shortfalls were commonplace, at one point ballooning to \$8 billion in red ink. A \$1 billion budget surplus evaporated into just 89 cents left over in Ohio's bank account.

It was early January 2011, and Ohio had just emerged from four years of rule under then-Gov. Ted Strickland. Borrowing from Bruno Mars' chart-topper at the time, many Ohioans felt like they had indeed caught a *Grenade*.

Fast forward to today, and the Buckeye State has a *Redemption Song* to sing. Thanks to the stewardship of Gov. John Kasich — working with a pro-growth legislature and the business community, led by the Ohio Chamber — jobs have flocked back, taxes are down, household income is up and the state is now deciding how best to leverage its rainy day fund. With apologies to Justin Timberlake, Ohioans *Can't Stop The Feeling* their state is well down the comeback trail.

Having ditched Strickland's record of failure six years ago, Ohioans should not give him another chance to return to Washington. Folks in Ohio might be surprised to learn that Strickland has only just returned from D.C. to run for the Senate. In Washington, Strickland was busy running the liberal Center for American Progress (his self-avowed dream job), where he led the charge defending the Affordable Care Act, aka Obamacare. Strickland and CAP also pushed for even more stringent EPA regulation, particularly destructive to the coal-rich region he used to represent in the U.S. House, and costly to manufacturers across the state.

Meanwhile, Rob Portman has made a career of helping job creators thrive. He believes in an "all of the above" energy strategy to keep Ohio's shale revolution humming and maintain the affordable, reliable energy it has created. Portman is a common-sense legislator who gets results. He extended helpful small business and research and development tax credits, while delaying some of the most onerous tax increases in Obamacare, such as the tax on medical device



U.S. Sen. Rob Portman, Executive Director & CEO of the Ohio Chamber, speaking with Andrew E. Doehrel and Senior Vice President, Political Affairs & Federation Relations and National Political Director Rob Engstrom.

manufacturers. He also works in a bipartisan way, authoring an energy efficiency bill while working with the president and senators from both sides of the aisle.

Portman has a sterling record with the business community, voting 91 percent with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

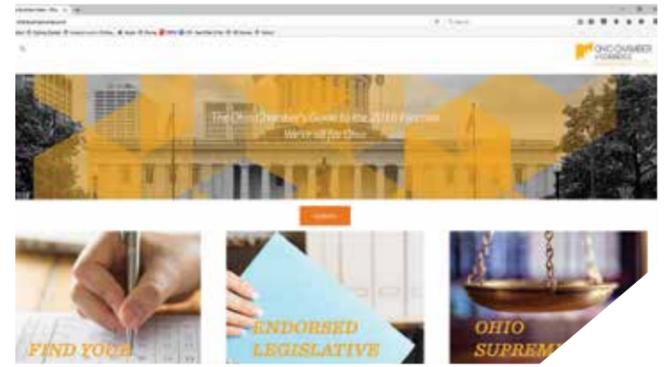
Ohioans are acutely aware of their role as perhaps the quintessential swing state in the presidential election, with Cleveland rocking out the Republican convention this summer. Yet folks in Ohio also hold the keys to deciding whether or not a pro-business majority prevails in the U.S. Senate. Several critical business priorities were signed into law last year, such as a long-term transportation bill that helps rebuild our highways, railways and bridges.

Congress also passed legislation overhauling our K-12 education system to help better train our future workforce. Cyber security law was updated, allowing businesses to voluntarily share information and strengthen their resilience to cyberattacks. These successes would not have occurred without a pro-business majority in the Senate working with House Speaker Paul Ryan and the president. The margin in the Senate is razor thin this election cycle, and the path to maintaining a pro-growth majority runs right through Ohio.

The choice here is clear: Portman consistently champions free enterprise, while Strickland would like to run away from his track record of failure. Tell Strickland to *Beat It*, and return Portman to continue fighting in the U.S. Senate for your business, its employees and their families. 🗳️

By Samantha Cotten, Director, Public Policy Communications

OHIO CHAMBER RELEASES NEW VOTING WEBSITE



As the state's leading business advocate, the Ohio Chamber strives to make Ohio a better place in which to do business. OhioBusinessVotes.com is a website dedicated to informing our members, and the general public, about which candidates are the strongest defenders of free enterprise. We created this site to serve as a guide to the 2016 election cycle for business-conscious voters across Ohio.

The site features Ohio Chamber Political Action Committee (OCCPAC) endorsements for both legislative and Ohio Supreme Court candidates. This feature informs Ohio Chamber members and the general voting public about which candidates' platforms most closely align with the Ohio Chamber's mission.

The site also highlights our Chamber Choice candidates, pro-business candidates who are facing a tough election cycle. OCCPAC will work diligently to support these candidates to make sure they are members of the 132nd General Assembly. These candidates are committed to making Ohio a state that champions free enterprise and economic competitiveness for the benefit of all Ohioans.

Additionally, in order to hold elected officials accountable for their decisions at the Statehouse, we track how current lawmakers voted on important legislation that impacts Ohio's business climate. The site features legislators' Free Enterprise Index score for the 131st General Assembly. This allows both members and voters to gauge legislator performance on issues that affect Ohio businesses.

Finally, the site serves as an election resource with "Find Your Candidate" and "Find Your Polling Location" features.

If you have questions regarding this site or would like further information on the candidates, please contact Rich Thompson, director of Political Programs at (614) 228-4201 or rthompson@ohiochamber.com. 🗳️

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

OCCPAC CHAMBER CHOICE CANDIDATES SHARE PRO-BUSINESS VIEWS



• **House District 55—Rep. Nathan Manning (R-North Ridgeville) over Kelly Kraus Mencke (D-Elyria)**

Although Manning's opponent Kevin Watkinson dropped out of the race last month, this race is a toss-up regardless of who his opponent is. The 55th District is a -3 Republican PVI and covers many traditionally Democratic communities in Lorain County. Manning's PVI deficit is the second highest for any incumbent Republican. Manning has carried a 100 percent pro-business voting record during his first term in the Ohio House. Manning's new opponent is Kelly Kraus Mencke, a sales representative at PR Newswire.



• **House District 79—Rep. Kyle Koehler (R-Springfield) over Alex Wendt (D-Springfield)**

Koehler is a small business owner, running K.K. Tool Co. with five of his siblings. During his first term, Koehler has displayed a deep understanding of business issues and a commitment to free enterprise. Koehler holds a 100 percent pro-business voting record

during the current General Assembly. He was a previous Chamber Choice candidate during the 2014 election cycle. His opponent, Wendt, is a firefighter in Yellow Springs.

• **House District 89—Rep. Steven Arndt (R-Port Clinton) over Lawrence Hartlaub (D-Port Clinton)**



Former Rep. Steve Kraus' upset of ODP Chairman and then-Rep. Chris Redfern was the surprise of the evening during the 2014 election cycle. Following some legal troubles, Kraus was forced out of his seat, making way for Arndt. Arndt, a small business owner, previously served as an Ottawa County commissioner for 27 years. During his time thus far in the legislature, Arndt has achieved a 100 percent pro-business voting record. The 90th House District encompasses both Ottawa and Erie counties. The district makeup is -3 Republican PVI. The race will be challenging for Arndt as he faces Ottawa County Auditor Hartlaub. 🗳️

By Rich Thompson, Director, Political Programs

WEBSITE PROMOTES EMPLOYEE EDUCATION ON NOVEMBER ELECTION



This year, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and BIPAC (Business-Industry Political Action Committee) have partnered to launch Ohio Prosperity Project, which seeks to inform employee voters on issues and elections that matter to their daily lives. Our goal is to give voters the opportunity to hear directly from the candidates on the issues impacting business and industry.

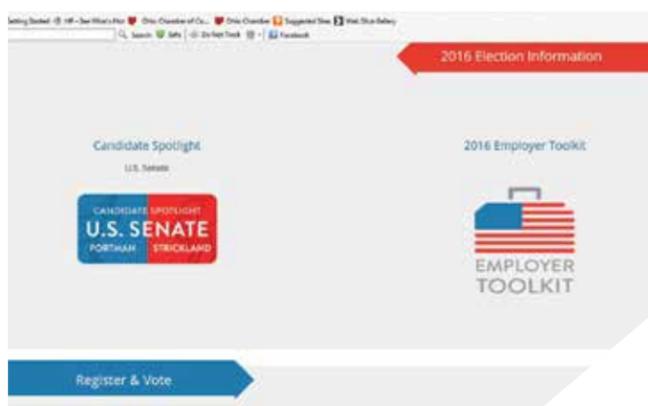
Since 1963, BIPAC has guided businesses through the political process. Today, BIPAC functions as the engine behind America's largest grassroots business network, assisting companies and associations with communications to employee/retiree voters about elections, candidates and issues.

The Ohio Prosperity Project equips the business community with essential election tools to help educate employees on the upcoming elections. Through www.ohioprosperity.com, employers and employees alike can utilize features such as the "Find My Candidates" tool to learn more about local elections, specific to the area in which they are registered to vote. If visitors have not yet registered to vote, they can utilize the EZVote tool to download a form to fill out and return to their local elections office. Should there be key legislation being discussed in the current legislative session, the Ohio Prosperity Project will deploy Take Action Alerts on the site to allow users to inform their elected officials about their support or disapproval of the bill.

Our goal is to give voters the opportunity to hear directly from the candidates on the issues impacting business and industry.

Along with its arsenal of online tools, the Ohio Prosperity Project houses Candidate Spotlights to highlight key races in the state. These comparisons are strictly information that came from each candidate — with no spin — to provide employee voters with the most objective information possible. Among these comparisons will be Candidate Questionnaires that will come directly from each candidate's campaign.

From Sept. 26 to Sept. 30, the Ohio Prosperity Project will take part in Employee Voter Registration Week, a collective effort from the business community to ensure that employees are registered to vote in the upcoming election. For more information and to learn how you can get involved in this initiative, please visit www.employeesvote.org.



By Don Boyd, Director, Labor and Legal Affairs

JOINT LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE CREATED TO FIX UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION SYSTEM



Don Boyd

Prior to summer recess, the legislature passed, and the governor signed, a comprehensive plan to pay off Ohio's

outstanding federal unemployment compensation debt to the federal government. This is projected to save Ohio employers \$400 million. Under the plan, the state will take out a loan from the unclaimed funds account to pay off the debt. This will result in the removal of federal penalties that would have raised Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) costs paid by employers to \$168 per employee next year. The removal of these penalties will drop FUTA costs back to the base rate of \$42 per employee.

Employers will then be assessed a flat-rate surcharge, expected to be approximately \$45 per employee, in 2017 to repay the loan. The loan repayment surcharge, in addition to the base FUTA of \$42, will be approximately \$87 per employee, nearly 50 percent less than the \$168 per employee employers would have paid if nothing had been done.

MORE TO BE DONE

However, there is still much more that needs to be done to truly fix Ohio's unemployment compensation system. The system, which has been insolvent and structurally unsound for years, needs comprehensive reforms to both benefit payouts and employer contributions. House Bill 394, an Ohio Chamber priority that was introduced late last year, would make these much-needed systemic improvements.

As currently drafted, the bill raises the taxable wage base on which employers pay state unemployment tax from \$9,000 to \$11,000 per employee, but only until the fund reaches minimum safe level (MSL), at which time it would drop back to \$9,000. If the fund drops below 50 percent of MSL, the wage base would automatically increase back to \$11,000. This allows the fund to be replenished when needed but doesn't unnecessarily take more money from businesses than needed to maintain solvency.

The bill also reduces the number of weeks an individual can receive unemployment compensation from 26 to a sliding scale from 12 to 20 weeks, depending upon the current state unemployment rate. This approach modernizes the unemployment compensation system to take into account the current job market in the state when



setting length of compensation.

Any legislation will need to take a balanced approach in order to achieve long-term solvency. To this end, the Ohio Legislature recently announced the creation of the Unemployment Compensation Reform Joint Committee. The committee will be co-chaired by Rep. Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) and Sen. Bob Peterson (R-Sabina). The additional members of the bipartisan committee are:

- Sen. Randy Gardner (R-Bowling Green)
- Sen. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati)
- Sen. Michael Skindell (D-Lakewood)
- Rep. Bob Cupp (R-Lima)
- Rep. Gary Scherer (R-Circleville)
- Rep. Jack Cera (D-Bellaire)

The committee will meet five times at the Statehouse in Columbus throughout the early fall to examine the unemployment system and focus on a path to long-term solvency. It will look to craft and pass legislation to fix the system once the legislature returns this fall following the election.

Fixing the unemployment compensation system is critical to ensuring that Ohio's business climate remains competitive and employers are not unfairly penalized in the future. Otherwise, employers could be in the same situation next time there is an economic downturn, with the state borrowing from the federal government to pay benefits and employers facing ever-escalating unemployment compensation taxes.

Be sure to check out our AllforOhio.com blog and social media for updates on the committee's progress.

THE FLUCTUATING WORKWEEK

An alternative for employers grappling with the new FLSA regulations

In May 2016, the U.S. Department of Labor issued a final rule revising its white-collar overtime exemption regulations, and in so doing, effected a seismic shift in the way an estimated 4.2 million American workers are paid. Among other provisions, the new regulations raise the minimum salary level for the Fair Labor Standards Act's (FLSA) executive, administrative and professional exemptions from \$455 per week to \$913 per week. In other words, workers who are currently exempt who are making an annual salary of between \$23,660 and \$47,476 – and their employers – are affected.

Employers facing a compliance deadline of Dec. 1, 2016, often approach the regulation as a choice between two unfavorable options: Raise the annual salary for affected employees to \$47,476 per year or more, or pay affected employees time and a half for all weekly hours worked over 40.

As many affected employers are simply not financially equipped to raise salaries to the thresholds required to maintain nonexempt status, the analysis equates to a Hobson's choice: Either adopt a traditional overtime structure for affected employees, or fail to comply. Employers resigned to the latter may find themselves asking some difficult questions.

- Will my company be able to afford the time-and-a-half overtime payments brought about under the new rules?
- Will the rule, although intended to boost employee pay, actually require a pay cut from existing employee rate of pay to account for overtime payments?
- For employees who view a reclassification from salary-exempt to hourly as a demotion, how would a change affect the morale and culture of the company?

ANOTHER OPTION: THE FLUCTUATING WORKWEEK METHOD¹

For some employers, a third option, the fluctuating workweek method, mitigates the impact of the new regulations on their workplace and provides a better alternative than the options above. Employers may find that this method provides a financial advantage over an hourly approach, as it allows employers to pay an additional rate of half-time instead of time and a half for overtime payments. Businesses may also prefer this method from the standpoint of morale, as the option presents a financially sound reason to keep affected employees as salaried workers, potentially affording workers a degree of the flexibility they were used to as exempt employees.

As the name implies, the fluctuating workweek method is an option for employees whose hours fluctuate to a certain degree from week to week. In such circumstances, an employer and employee can reach a "clear mutual understanding" that the employee is to receive a fixed salary that is paid as "compensation (apart from overtime premiums) for hours worked each workweek, whatever their number, rather than for working 40 hours or some other fixed weekly work period." 29 CFR 778.114(a).

Under the fluctuating workweek method, the employer always pays a minimum of the fixed salary amount regardless of the time worked. When the employee works in excess of 40 hours, the employer calculates the hourly rate of the employee and pays the employee an additional premium of half the hourly rate of pay for all hours worked in excess of 40. In all instances, the employee's "average hourly earnings" as calculated must exceed the minimum wage. 29 CFR 778.114(c).

For example, assuming a hypothetical employee is paid a fixed salary of \$600 on a fluctuating workweek basis, and during the course of four weeks works 40 hours during week one, 37.5 hours week two, 50 hours during week three and 48 hours during week four, the employee's pay would be calculated as follows.

- For weeks one and two, in which 40 hours or fewer were worked, the employee would receive the set payment of \$600.
- For week three the employee would receive total payment of \$660 for working 50 hours. This is calculated by dividing 50 hours by \$600, yielding an average hourly earnings of \$12 per hour. The \$12 average is paid at half rate (\$6 per hour) for each of the 10 overtime hours worked.
- For week four, the employee would receive \$650 for working 48 hours. Following the same calculations used for week three, the employee's average hourly earnings are calculated to be \$12.50, as the employee worked 48 hours for the agreed \$600. The \$12.50 earnings are again paid at half-rate for the eight hours in excess of 40 hours, coming to a total premium of \$50.



Under the fluctuating workweek method, the employer always pays a minimum of the fixed salary amount regardless of the time worked.

Although the fluctuating workweek option may require more administrative work than other approaches, some employers may find that this burden is outweighed in overtime savings and in employee morale. Accordingly, employers who find other immediately apparent options for Fair Labor Standards Act compliance to be less than favorable should consider the fluctuating workweek option and should consider if it applies to their operation.

Moreover, all employers should review their current payroll practices and salary levels in light of the new rules and should be actively taking all steps necessary for compliance in advance of the Dec. 1, 2016 deadline. 📌

You can reach Christopher J. Lalak at Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Aronoff LLP, 216.363.4557 or clalak@beneschlaw.com.

¹ Compliance with the FLSA and its regulations is complex and nuanced, and a full discussion of the various approaches to compliance would far exceed the space permitted for this article. This article is intended to present background information regarding one potential approach to compliance only, and is not intended to contain a complete analysis of the FLSA, the white-collar exemptions, or the fluctuating workweek method. Moreover, as missteps in the area of wage and hour law can be costly, it is recommended that employers consult with an attorney in developing their plans for compliance.

REDUCING HEALTH CARE COSTS

How self-insurance can save your business money

One of the common concerns we hear in listening to our members is about the rising cost of health care due to the Affordable Care Act (ACA) regulations. Because of this, the Ohio Chamber has sought ways to reduce costs and found that the most effective way to do so is through self-insurance.



Once predominantly used by larger firms, companies of all sizes are moving to self-insurance for their employee health care, and in the past 15 years, its usage has increased an average of 14 percent across all company sizes.

“We are always looking for new ways to help our members,” says Vice President of Membership Beau Euton. “In doing much research, we found that providing our members with the option of a self-funded health insurance product could benefit those who haven’t had that option before.”

Self-insurance is a means of covering your employees’ health care costs while avoiding costly ACA fees. In addition, self-insured companies receive unused premiums at the end of the year, all while fully protecting employees and your company with stop-loss coverage.

While self-funding is not a new concept, companies with fewer than 100 employees may be unfamiliar with it. Companies that are self-insured for health care coverage assume the financial risk for providing health care benefits. Instead of paying a fixed premium amount to an insurance carrier, employers pay for each out-of-pocket claim that is filed. An employer establishes a special account to pay the incurred claims, and the account is funded by the employer, the employee, or a combination of the two. Employers can do payroll deductions if they choose to have employees contribute to their health care coverage.

Besides the benefit of avoiding ACA fees, a self-insured employee health plan can also provide these benefits.

1. Companies can customize their health insurance plan to meet the needs of their employees.
2. Companies retain control over the health plan reserves. (The employer oversees reserves, not the insurance company.)
3. Payments are rendered only when services are used, allowing for better cash flow.
4. State mandates can be avoided.
5. Companies can select and contract with providers that best meet the needs of the group.

Because the employer takes on responsibility for the claims, self-insurance may not be suitable for all companies. However, most employers purchase stop-gap insurance to reimburse them in case larger claims are filed. Likewise, if claims are lower than projected, the participants could benefit.

Instead of paying a fixed premium amount to an insurance carrier, employers pay for each out-of-pocket claim that is filed.

Working with BE Solutions, a premier provider of health plan solutions with more than 25 years of experience in Ohio, the Ohio Chamber has compiled a variety of self-insurance options tailored to fit the needs of the company and potentially save employers money.

In the coming weeks, the Ohio Chamber will be rolling out a new website describing the advantages of self-insurance and answering questions. We are confident that this program can help businesses decrease health care costs while providing employees with adequate coverage. Companies that currently work with insurance brokers are also welcome to participate. 📌

For more information on this new health insurance program, please contact Laz Picciano at (614) 629-0926 or lpicciano@ohiochamber.com.

POWERING OUR COMMUNITIES

Dynegy reaches new heights through acquisition, continuous improvement and community service

Dynegy’s recent rebranding isn’t just about a new logo. The brand had to change because the company has changed, and that dynamic growth gives the new brand meaning, says Sheree M. Petrone, executive vice president, retail, and president of Dynegy Retail and Homefield Energy.



“We thought it was time to really think about our brand now that we’ve become one of the largest independent power producers in the country,” says Petrone. “We landed on this brand that represents the growth of our company and the exciting future ahead of us.”

The new logo features a “D” formed by “a soaring bird and a blue sky,” she says, representing how Dynegy is reaching new heights.

Dynegy doubled in size last year, thanks in part to the acquisition of Duke Energy’s Midwest Commercial and Retail Business, which brought the Houston-based company into the Ohio market. Now, Dynegy’s 34 power plants generate 26,000 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 21 million homes across the country.

The company also offers retail plans to residential and commercial customers in Illinois. Dynegy welcomed its 1 millionth retail customer this year and was named the top retail electricity supplier in Ohio by J.D. Power’s 2016 Retail Electric Provider Residential Customer Satisfaction Survey.

And by the end of 2016, Dynegy will acquire the assets of ENGIE, adding more than 9,000 megawatts of generation capacity.

ONE TEAM, ONE GOAL

The logo isn’t the only change at Dynegy, short for “dynamic energy.” As its name suggests, the company is constantly improving.

“We’re never satisfied with good enough, so we’re working on a lot of ideas to improve our service,” Petrone says. “An important part of our company is our PRIDE initiative, which stands for Producing Results through the Innovation of Dynegy Employees.”

Through PRIDE, multidisciplinary teams identify opportunities to improve margins, processes and performance. The program illustrates the company’s commitment to collaboration: “one team — one goal,” to bring knowledge together across the organization. From 2011 through the end of 2015, more than 930 PRIDE initiatives have resulted in \$1.5 billion of cash and liquidity improvements over the past five years.

And last year, Dynegy launched “PRIDE Energized,” targeting an additional \$250 million in EBITDA

and \$400 million in balance sheet improvements by 2018.

Petrone cites new data systems as an example.

“We just completed the first phase of implementing new information systems to more quickly meet customer needs,” Petrone says. “Phase two is to improve communication tools to give customers better access to the knowledge our people have.”

GIVING BACK

Dynegy’s commitment to powering communities isn’t just about supplying electricity; the company and its people are equally committed to community involvement.

“Though the name Dynegy is new to Ohio, our employees are not,” Petrone says. “Many of the people working at plants are Ohioans who have been with their facility a long time, much longer than Dynegy has owned it. They’ve been committed to their communities and involved with local efforts for years. Our employees know the job they do contributes to the public well-being, so it’s only natural for them to also get involved in giving back to our communities.”

Earlier this year, Dynegy’s team partnered with Keep Cincinnati Beautiful as a presenting sponsor of the 2016 Great American Cleanup and participated in a cleanup event at a city recreation center. The company also volunteers with the Freestore Foodbank and Salvation Army Toy Store and contributes to other local charities around each plant.

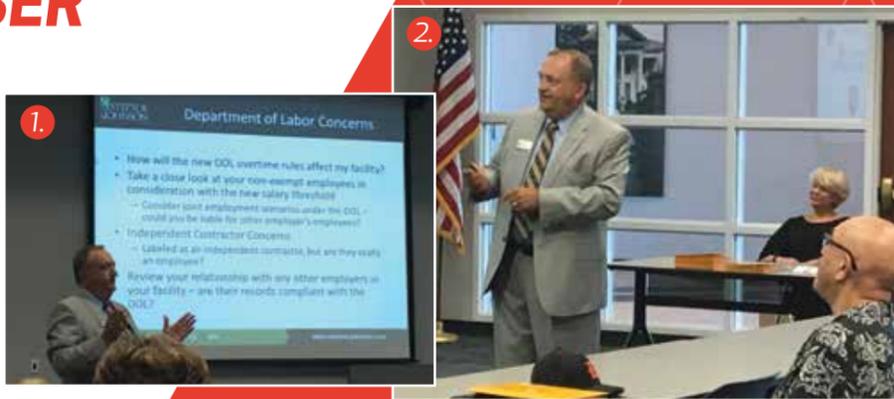
Dynegy also partners with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, in addition to several city chambers and local community organizations. Joining the Ohio Chamber “was a good avenue to become part of the business community, especially knowing that the chamber cares about the things we think are important, like the economic wellbeing of the area,” Petrone says. “It’s a great opportunity to meet people with similar values and interests, and help build the region together.” 📌

THE OHIO CHAMBER IN ACTION

1. & 2. William Wahoff with Steptoe & Johnson presented a business symposium in Champaign County on the new federal wage and hour rule changes.

3. & 4. On Aug. 17, Ohio Chamber members FedEx and CBIZ hosted a Meet the Ohio Chamber event in Akron. Local business leaders came to learn more about the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

5. On July 28, Ohio Chamber member Heritage Thermal hosted a Sunrise Business Breakfast in East Liverpool. The Ohio Chamber's Director of Labor & Legal Affairs Don Boyd gave an update on employer rights regarding medical marijuana.



TAX INCENTIVES AND INTERACTIVE TOOLKIT

Effective resources for employers hiring people with disabilities

Provided by the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities

Employers in Ohio who are considering hiring or have already hired people with disabilities have immediate incentives — a tax credit and an employer toolkit — available to make the hiring process more efficient and beneficial.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) is a federal tax credit available to employers for hiring individuals from specific target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment.

WOTC, which has been reauthorized through 2019, helps targeted workers move from economic dependency into self-sufficiency as they earn a steady income and become contributing taxpayers. Participating employers are also able to reduce their income tax liability.

The tax credit employers can claim depends upon the target group of the individual hired, the wages that person is paid in the first employment year and the number of hours worked. The maximum tax credit ranges from \$1,200 to \$9,600, depending on the employee hired.

Employers can file for a tax credit if an employee has been referred to them from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD) Vocational Rehabilitation program. Applications must be received by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services within 28 days of the individual's start-to-work date.

For information about the WOTC program and detailed instructions about how to apply, visit www.jfs.ohio.gov/wotc or call the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Office of Workforce Development WOTC Section at (888) 296-7541, option 3.

Integrating individuals with disabilities into the workplace can benefit employers in many ways.

The greatest barriers to hiring workers with disabilities are myths, fears and misunderstandings.

Individuals with disabilities have proved to be dedicated, conscientious and highly productive workers when given the chance. The greatest barriers to hiring workers with disabilities are myths, fears and misunderstandings.

Many Ohio Chamber members already hire people with disabilities.

“OhioHealth has been on a journey to support individuals with disabilities since 2007, and the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities agency has been an integral part of the process,” says Chris Moranda, systems manager of Disability Services – Associate Health. “We initially partnered with OOD by having a vocational rehabilitation counselor as the single point of contact for our program by assisting with job placement and accommodations. Continued collaboration has led to a partnership with OOD counselors through two Project SEARCH internship programs, which are business led and prepare students for competitive, integrated employment. OhioHealth is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion throughout our organization, and this connection supports our cardinal value to honor the dignity and worth of each person.”

Fifth Third Bank Executive Vice President – Chief Human Resource Officer Teresa Tanner, says her organization has had success with the program.

“When businesses identify the



A 2016 Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities job fair held in Northeast Ohio drew hundreds of applicants seeking employment. They met individually with dozens of human resource representatives during the event.

strengths of employees with disabilities, then put them in jobs that match their skills, those employees turn out to be faithful, low-turnover, hard-working employees,” she says.

And Rusty Orben, resident vice president, Ohio, CSX Transportation, says his organization's success depends on a wide range of skills.

“As a leading freight railroad, we move many different products, so it takes many different employee skill sets to best serve our customers,” he says. “That’s why we’re focused on fostering an inclusive workforce where all employees can help further CSX’s mission. We’re proud to be member of the US Business Leadership Network and one of the first 100 members in Ohio — and we invite other businesses to join us in the pursuit of an inclusive, connected workforce for everyone.”

A new, free interactive guide, “Hiring Ohioans with Disabilities: A Toolkit for Employers, Managers and Human Resource Professionals,” is a popular source of information for recruiting, hiring and retaining workers with disabilities.

Also included is information about reasonable accommodations, veterans’ resources and many other resources. Employers can learn about best practices from Ohio employers, tax incentives and other important information. To view the Toolkit, visit

<http://www.ood.ohio.gov/Employers/Employer-Toolkit>.

The Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities Business Relations Team can assist you with additional information. Call OOD's Hiring Ability Hotline at (866) 895-0058, or contact Jon Hackathorn, business relations manager, at Jon.Hackathorn@ood.ohio.gov or (614) 438-1259.

WORK OPPORTUNITY TAX CREDIT TARGET GROUPS

- Individuals referred from vocational rehabilitation programs such as Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities
- Veterans
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families recipients
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps) recipients
- Designated community residents
- Ex-felons
- Supplemental Security Income recipients
- Eligible summer youth employees

NO MATTER WHAT OR WHO – YOU NEED TO VOTE



There has been a lot of talk about people not liking either of the presidential candidates this year. But your feelings on the presidential race should not negate your duty to vote. So many races in Ohio mean something.

Under the guidance of Gov. John Kasich and leaders in the House and Senate, Ohio is on the road to recovery, and we need to elect people who will keep our state moving forward. This issue of *Ohio Matters* has the information you need on the candidates who understand the importance of job creation and economic development for our state. I encourage you to educate yourself about our endorsed candidates for the Ohio Supreme Court and the Ohio General Assembly, as well as our Chamber Choice candidates.

There are many other extremely important races. For example, for the Ohio Supreme Court, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Political Action Committee (OCCPAC) is endorsing Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor, Judge Pat DeWine and Judge Pat Fischer. O'Connor was previously endorsed by OCCPAC in 2002, 2008 and 2010.

DeWine currently serves on Ohio's First District Court of Appeals. He is

running for the open seat created by the upcoming retirement of Justice Paul Pfeifer. DeWine's judicial philosophy is guided by the principle of judicial restraint, which is aligned with OCCPAC's line of reasoning. Fischer also currently serves on Ohio's First District Court of Appeals. He is running for the open seat that is being created by the retirement of Justice Judith Lanzinger. Fischer's judicial philosophy is consistent with the Ohio Chamber's longstanding preference for candidates who refrain from judicial activism and do not attempt to legislate from the bench. While down the ticket, these races are critical to the business community.

In the Ohio House and Senate, OCCPAC has endorsed 60 House candidates and 14 Senate candidates. In order to select endorsed candidates, OCCPAC utilizes a member-driven, fact-based approach. Several criteria are used to evaluate each race. For incumbents, the Ohio Chamber's Free Enterprise Index is used as the leading indicator of a candidate's commitment to improving Ohio's business climate. Other criteria that apply to both incumbents and new candidates include a candidate questionnaire, personal meetings with candidates

and input from our members.

OCCPAC has also selected seven Chamber Choice candidates. Candidates who are selected as Chamber Choice are in highly competitive races and have shown that they strongly support job creation and economic growth in our state. These candidates have distinguished themselves on important business issues and signal to the business community where opportunities exist to ensure the next General Assembly has a strong voice for Ohio's economy.

During this election season, we will continue to provide our members with information through our election-based website www.ohiobusinessvotes.com, on our blog at www.allforohio.com and through our Twitter accounts, @ProBizPolitics and @OhioChamber.

The bottom line is that there is no excuse for not voting this November. As Thomas Jefferson once said, "America is not governed by the majority but governed by the majority of those who participate." Make sure you are one of those who participates on Nov. 8. 🇺🇸

Andrew E. Deebul

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