

Ohio Matters

An Official Publication of *The Ohio Chamber of Commerce*

By Barry James, President and CEO, and David James, Senior Vice President, James Investment Research Inc.

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2017 ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

Indicators point to a stronger year

Here is an overview of the economic outlook for 2017.

ECONOMY

We see a low likelihood of a recession in 2017. Overall, economic activity has been below normal but should improve in the coming year.

Our research department has developed a number of tripwires, items that, when triggered, suggest a recession may be forthcoming. The tripwires include a negative spread between long- and short-term interest rates, rising jobless claims after a multiyear low, a decline of 2.5 percent or more in Industrial Production (year over year) and back-to-back quarters of tighter banking standards on commercial and industrial loans.

Recently, only tighter bank lending standards have signaled problems ahead. While a recession in 2017 is possible, the data suggest it is unlikely. (Chart 1: Recession Tripwires)

Our economic history over the last 10 years has been disappointing. GDP growth over this time has only averaged an annualized rate of 1.3 percent, among the lowest levels our country has seen. A record low level of the velocity of money is further evidence of our anemic economy. Small business owners argue high taxes and burdensome regulations are mostly to blame. What can be

done? The new administration, with its “Contract With The American Voter,” boasts of lower taxes and reduced regulations. While this agenda may be economically beneficial, concerns remain over when and what Washington will get done.

Fortunately, the economy is showing green shoots in other areas. Consumer spending on big-ticket items including vehicles, furniture, electronics and building materials is on the rise. Interest in housing remains robust at this time. (Chart 2: Consumers are spending)

A trade war is a potential concern. Although we view this scenario as unlikely, it would have a negative impact on the U.S. economy in general and Ohio in particular, as Ohio is ranked eighth in the nation in terms of exports. Furthermore, approximately \$10 billion worth of Ohio’s exports go to China and Mexico, countries that Donald Trump singled out for higher tariffs.

There are other concerns. Post-election years are notorious for being touched by a recession. Since 1940, a recession has occurred in nearly half of post-election years. Additionally, the Federal Reserve may be moving toward a tightening posture, which could lead to higher interest rates. However, even with these concerns, we believe 2017 will be stronger economically than 2016.

STOCKS

The election results provided a strong “hope” rally for stocks. Investors hope for lower taxes and fewer regulations in the future. These are considered pro-growth policies and market reaction is favorable. What comes next?

Valuations are a concern. Popular methods of valuing the market include Shiller’s CAPE (Cyclically Adjusted Price to Earnings), Tobin’s Q (Current Price to Replacement Cost) and Market Value to GDP. Presently, each of these measures suggests stocks are greatly overvalued. Although valuation methods are poor market timing indicators, they do suggest investors should temper long-term expectations. (Chart 3: Fundamentals – Cheap vs. Expensive returns)

The Federal Reserve, formerly highly accommodative in terms of quantitative easing and low interest rates, is now implementing a tightening policy. This constitutes a headwind for stock investors. Fortunately, this is not insurmountable. Since 1971, the S&P 500 has averaged an annualized 5.4 percent return during periods of Fed rate hikes. (Chart 4: Monetary Risk)

A contrarian perspective would note the low level of equities and high levels of cash being recommend by institutions before the election, which has provided tinder for the post-election rally. Concerns could arise if institutional and retail sentiment becomes overly optimistic.

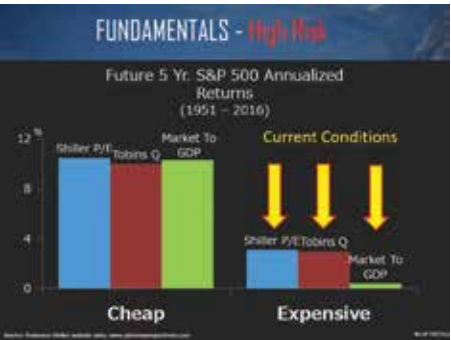
Given this outlook, how should an investor prepare? We believe bargain stocks offer strong relative returns over the long term. We define bargain stocks as those exhibiting good relative value, profitability and price appreciation.



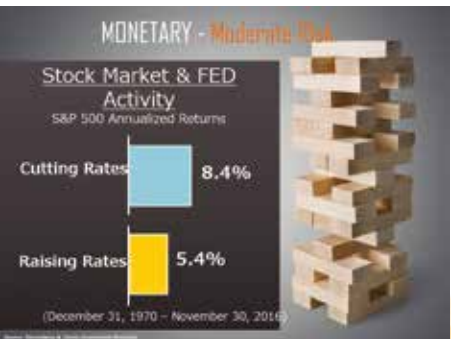
(Chart 1: Recession Tripwires)



(Chart 2: Consumers are spending)



(Chart 3: Fundamentals – Cheap vs. Expensive returns)



(Chart 4: Monetary Risk)



(Chart 5: Bargains Today – small vs. large)

Continued on page 3



*You're creating jobs
to strengthen
your community.*

*We're creating policy
to strengthen
free enterprise.*

We're All for Ohio.


We are going to make sure the legislature doesn't stray from its main priority of making Ohio a better place in which to do business. This is why our goal for 2017-18 is to create policy that strengthens free enterprise. You will receive the Ohio Chamber's Public Policy Priorities so that you can easily refer to it during the 132nd Ohio General Assembly.

Remember, we're *#allforohio*.



OHIO CHAMBER PLAYS CENTRAL ROLE IN DELIVERING VICTORIES ON KEY BUSINESS BILLS


Over the past two years, the Ohio Chamber and its government affairs team have helped deliver victories on a number of important legislative accomplishments that will benefit your business. Here are some highlights that will save your business money or reduce your compliance burdens.



BUSINESS TAXES

Fought to ensure that the legislature passed a \$1.2 billion tax cut without the use of tax shifting or offsetting tax increase that would have been detrimental to Ohio businesses


House Bill 64



DRUGS IN THE WORKPLACE

Developed and successfully advocated for robust protections for Ohio’s businesses as the state went about legalizing marijuana for medicinal purposes. Protections include the ability to terminate, discipline, or refuse to hire individuals who use medical marijuana and to maintain drug-free workplaces and drug testing policies.


House Bill 523



ENERGY MANDATES

Worked to protect employers against the escalating costs of Ohio’s energy efficiency mandates — projected to cost energy users nearly \$500 million per year by 2022 — by allowing more businesses to opt out of a utility’s energy efficiency plan and by expanding which energy reduction activities count toward compliance

House Bill 554



HEALTH INSURANCE MANDATES

Worked to obtain a requirement that the Ohio Department of Insurance conduct an actuarial study on the costs of Ohio’s existing health care mandates — finally answering the question of just how much these mandates add to the cost of health insurance in Ohio

House Bill 463



LOCAL PRE-EMPTIONS

Protected employers from a potential compliance nightmare by pre-empting local governments from enacting different, inflexible and burdensome employment regulations on employers

Senate Bill 331



LOCAL TAXES

Joined efforts to secure new protections for businesses located in Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD) by allowing a landowner or business owner to apply for exemption from a JEDD


House Bill 182



LOCAL TAXES

Repealed the authority counties previously had to impose a utility service tax that could be up to 3 percent of a business’s electric, natural gas and telecommunications bills

House Bill 390




TAXES

TAXPAYER DOLLARS

Led the effort to protect taxpayer money and guarantee better transparency and accountability when the state hires outside attorneys by subjecting any contingency fees they may be awarded to reasonable limits


Senate Bill 38



UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Negotiated a short-term compromise between business and labor that represents a commitment to finally fix Ohio’s broken unemployment compensation system early this year


Senate Bill 235



UNEMPLOYMENT DEBT

Brokered a plan to pay off Ohio’s outstanding unemployment compensation debt to the federal government, which will save Ohio employers approximately \$351 million in 2017

House Bill 390



WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

Brought common-sense reform to Ohio’s workers’ compensation system by permitting an employer whose employee is injured in a motor vehicle accident caused by a third party to apply to the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation (BWC) to have that claim charged against the BWC Surplus Fund and not its experience 🏠

House Bill 207

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ECONOMIC OUTLOOK 2017

While stocks with these combined attributes did not fare well in early 2016, data suggest a reversal may be under way.

One area offering bargains today is in select small cap stocks. (*Chart 5: Bargains Today – small vs. large*)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INVESTORS

Many investors should focus on bargain securities and consider adding to their small cap exposure. Not only are small cap stocks generally better bargains, their focus on domestic sales may prove advantageous in the current political environment.

Regarding sectors, we favor consumer discretionary, telecommunication and finance. Those areas that are expensive and perhaps should be underweighted are electric utilities, consumer staples and materials.

While risks are currently not excessive, volatility is likely to increase. With this, investors should stay nimble to take advantage of changing markets.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXECUTIVES

Business executives always face the challenge of a shifting economic landscape, and 2017 will be no

different. Based on our analysis, businesses should prepare for lower corporate taxes ahead. Executives should remain alert to potential deduction changes.

Opportunities may be forthcoming. When prudent, borrow money for expansion while rates are low. Furthermore, given the current political mood, it may prove sensible to emphasize U.S. facilities over foreign operations.

The U.S. dollar, strong in 2016, may see further strengthening in 2017. The Federal Reserve recently raised rates for the first time in a decade, making our currency more attractive

on a relative basis, making import costs relatively attractive for U.S. businesses. Unfortunately, in this scenario, export growth may slow, and it may be advantageous to focus on domestic sales. 🏠

Reach David James, CFA, and Barry R. James, CFA, at James Investment Research Inc., (937) 426-7640 or www.jir-inc.com. James Investment Research is a member of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

JOIN AN OHIO CHAMBER COMMITTEE

Our eight standing committees are the lifeblood of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Each committee focuses on a particular area that is important to Ohio’s business community. These committees study the needs of Ohio’s businesses and recommend policies to the board of directors. The committees also review pending legislation and recommend what action, if any, should be taken on a bill.

Attendance is encouraged, but optional. Committee members also receive regular emails that keep them abreast of topics impacting their committee. Committee membership is open to anyone who is employed by an Ohio Chamber member company. If you are interested in joining a committee, contact Sherry Heffner at sheffner@ohiochamber.com or (614) 228-4201.

EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Mission: To respond to the needs of Ohio employers for qualified, well-trained employees by promoting policies that meet the demands of today’s workplace by pursuing strategies that link education and workforce development in a seamless system and embed skills-based learning into academic instruction.

Staff contact: Brandon Ogden, director, Ohio Small Business Council – bogden@ohiochamber.com

EMPLOYMENT LAW

Mission: To protect employers’ rights to manage their workplace with limited governmental involvement and regulation and to simplify Ohio’s employment law statutes in a way that’s fair to both employers and employees.

Staff contact: Don Boyd, director, Labor and Legal Affairs – dboyd@ohiochamber.com

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Mission: To advocate for energy policies that promote Ohio’s economic competitiveness and protect business’s access to affordable, dependable energy and ensure environmental policies and regulations are both based on sound science and comprehensive information and avoid creating unnecessary red tape.

Contact: Zack Frymier, director, Energy and Environmental, Policy – zfrymier@ohiochamber.com

HEALTH CARE

Mission: To advocate for an affordable and sustainable market-based health care system that provides access to quality, affordable health care for all Ohioans.

Contact: Keith Lake, vice president, Government Affairs – klake@ohiochamber.com

OHIO SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL

Mission: To promote and protect the establishment, growth and vitality of small business in Ohio. Members of the Ohio Small Business Council (OSBC) learn how to be an advocate for their business and voice their concerns directly to Ohio’s decision-makers. Participation in OSBC is limited to individuals representing a for-profit business that employs fewer than 400 directly supervised persons. Small business owners and managers are especially encouraged to join this committee.

Contact: Brandon Ogden, director, Ohio Small Business Council – bogden@ohiochamber.com

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Mission: To monitor and evaluate public affairs issues and activities including elections, campaign finance, ethics and lobbyist regulations when of interest to the business community, and to examine proposed state constitutional amendments or initiative petition efforts that affect the electoral process.

Contact: Keith Lake, vice president, Government Affairs – klake@ohiochamber.com

TAXATION AND PUBLIC EXPENDITURES

Mission: To foster a fair and equitable tax system that stimulates growth, innovation and job creation and minimizes compliance costs and administrative burdens.

Contact: Jeff McClain, director, Tax and Economic Policy – jmccclain@ohiochamber.com

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION

Mission: To ensure Ohio’s workers’ compensation system runs efficiently and effectively for both state-funded and self-insured employers, is effective in providing proper medical treatment for injured employees and keeps its cost for employers competitive with other states’ systems.

Contact: Don Boyd, director, Labor and Legal Affairs – dboyd@ohiochamber.com 🐼

By Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor

OHIO: A STATE OF OPPORTUNITY

Wilbur Wright once said, “If I were giving a young man advice about how he might succeed in life, I would say to him, pick out a good father and mother, and begin life in Ohio.”

This was the Ohio I was born in — an Ohio that truly represented all of the opportunity of the American Dream. Along the way, Ohio fell on difficult times, and the perception of life in Ohio changed. After working in the private sector as a CPA, I entered public service, first as a state representative, then as auditor, and now as your lieutenant governor, and ever since, I have been working to remake Ohio into a state of opportunity. The Common Sense Initiative (CSI) is a key driver of that economic opportunity for all Ohioans.

Since CSI was created in 2011 under my leadership, we have been making Ohio’s regulatory environment more business friendly. The core principles of CSI state that regulations should facilitate economic growth and should be fair, transparent and easily followed. In doing so, we have set the stage for the engine of that growth, Ohio’s businesses, to create more jobs and thus greater opportunity for Ohioans. And we’re succeeding.

In 2016:

- CSI has reviewed more than 2,000 rules in 276 rule packages submitted by agencies
- 524 comments were received regarding 92 of the packages
- 138 of the 276, or 50 percent, of the rule packages were impacted by the CSI process
- Almost 70 percent of the rules were either amended or rescinded

While our overall goal remains to reduce regulatory bureaucracy, we also introduced a new tool this year for small businesses. The Small Business Toolkit was conceived in partnership with business members of the Council of Smaller Enterprises (COSE), the small business division of the Greater Cleveland Partnership, to make CSI even more accessible to small businesses.

Our progress in reforming Ohio’s regulatory environment through CSI is enhanced when small business owners participate in the CSI process. The toolkit gives Ohio’s businesses information on how to participate in the rule review process and how to resolve specific regulatory challenges. Improved communication and understanding between government and the business community are critical and enhance a business owner’s ability to navigate the rules and regulations that impact them.

The modernization of the Ohio Business Gateway is another project designed to improve the business experience in Ohio. It offers businesses an online filing and payment system to simplify interactions with the state.



The modernization will further realize the vision of a simple, streamlined and secure interface and user experience that meet the demands and expectations of Ohio businesses. Collaboration with the business community has been critical since the inception of this initiative, and business feedback directly informed the vision and design of the modernized Ohio Business Gateway.

The CSI team and I remain committed to fostering a business-friendly climate in Ohio. We are seeing the results of this culture change and common-sense approach by being able to:

- Cut taxes by \$5 billion
- Close an \$8 billion budget hole and create a \$2 billion surplus
- Save employers \$4.8 billion in BWC premium reductions, rebates and credits

Since 2011, the private sector has created nearly 428,000 jobs in Ohio. And unemployment is down, with wages rising faster than the national average.

I’ve had the opportunity to meet with CEOs from Ohio and from across the globe to make the case for Ohio, to sell our people and our state and tell them what we’re doing in Ohio. Because what we’re doing in Ohio is common sense, and it’s working.

Along with the leadership of our Small Business Advisory Council, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, smaller chambers throughout Ohio and other business associations, we have addressed issues that matter to the business community.

There is much work to be done. In the coming year, I will continue to tackle the concerns of business owners I meet in my travels, including workforce development, infrastructure needs and the opiate issue in our state. I see ways that CSI can work to bring more innovation to state government. But it is clear that significant progress has been made, and if our government and businesses continue to work together, the future of Ohio is strong and bright. 🐼

By Miriam L. Rosen, member, McDonald Hopkins LLC

THE EEOC’S NEW GAME PLAN IS AN OPEN BOOK FOR EMPLOYERS

Employers are anticipating many changes with the new administration in Washington, D.C., including some relief from regulatory burdens. However, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) recently approved an update to its Strategic Enforcement Plan (SEP) that indicates it may have its own plans for staying the course for fiscal years 2017 to 2021. The EEOC’s original SEP, which covered fiscal years 2013 to 2016, brought new focus to the agency’s key priorities and enforcement initiatives. The updated SEP refines those priorities and is intended to take the EEOC’s enforcement game to the next level.

Because any policy shifts by the new administration will take time to implement, employers should understand what the EEOC has planned and how to comply.

THE EEOC’S FIRST SEP

The EEOC used its first strategic enforcement plan to establish six key priorities for defeating workplace discrimination.

- Eliminate barriers in recruitment and hiring.
- Protect vulnerable workers, including immigrant and migrant workers, and underserved communities from discrimination.
- Address selected emerging and developing issues.
- Ensure equal pay protections for all workers.
- Preserve access to the legal system.
- Prevent systemic harassment.

The EEOC executed on its playbook, and employers saw (and sometimes felt) the EEOC’s priorities play out through increased guidance, investigations and litigation. Consider some of the EEOC’s activities over the past four years.

- Enforcement guidance on pregnancy discrimination
- Enforcement guidance on retaliation and related issues
- Guidance regarding leave as an accommodation under the ADA
- Fact sheet on bathroom access rights for transgender employees
- First-ever lawsuits alleging transgender and sexual orientation discrimination

THE EEOC’S 2017 TO 2021 SEP

The EEOC has updated and refined its game plan with the 2017 to 2021 SEP in hopes of making it even more effective. The plan continues to focus on the six core priorities while homing in on specific aspects within each area.

1. Eliminating barriers in recruitment and hiring. The EEOC considers lack of diversity in the technology sector and the increasing use of data-driven screening tools as key hiring barriers. The EEOC recently held a listening session to get input on what it suspects is the use of analytics in a way that has a disparate impact on hiring and other employment practices of protected status workers. EEOC Chair Jenny Yang commented, “It is critical that these tools are designed to promote fairness and opportunity so that reliance on these expanding sources of data does not create new

barriers to opportunity.”

2. Protecting vulnerable workers, including immigrant and migrant workers, and underserved communities from discrimination. The EEOC has committed to protecting vulnerable workers by charging its district offices with identifying vulnerable workers and underserved communities within their areas for focused attention.
3. Addressing selected emerging and developing issues. The EEOC has indicated that it will continue to focus on rooting out inflexible leave policies, which it maintains do not allow for sufficient leave time as a disability accommodation.
4. Ensuring equal pay protections for all workers. The EEOC will target compensation systems and practices that discriminate based on gender and will extend that focus to reach pay inequities among all protected status workers.
5. Preserving access to the legal system. The EEOC will target policies and practices seen as discouraging individuals from exercising their rights under employment discrimination laws. The focus will include overly broad releases, mandatory arbitration provisions, failure to maintain applicant and employee records, and retaliatory practices that dissuade employees from exercising their rights.
6. Preventing systemic harassment. Despite years of workplace training, harassment claims remain a significant percentage of discrimination charges filed with the EEOC. In June 2016, the EEOC issued a report on the complex issues associated with harassment in the workplace and recommended changes to the nature of harassment prevention programs. The EEOC will make a concerted effort to promote holistic prevention programs, including training and outreach, to deter future harassment.

The 2017 to 2021 SEP is the EEOC’s game plan for the next five years. It’s an open book for employers to study and adapt their practices to avoid game-changing penalties.

Miriam L. Rosen is chair of the Labor and Employment Law Practice Group of McDonald Hopkins PLC, with offices in Cleveland and Columbus.



EARLY FEDERAL LOAN PAYOFF MEANS EMPLOYERS WILL SEE A REDUCTION OF \$72 PER EMPLOYEE

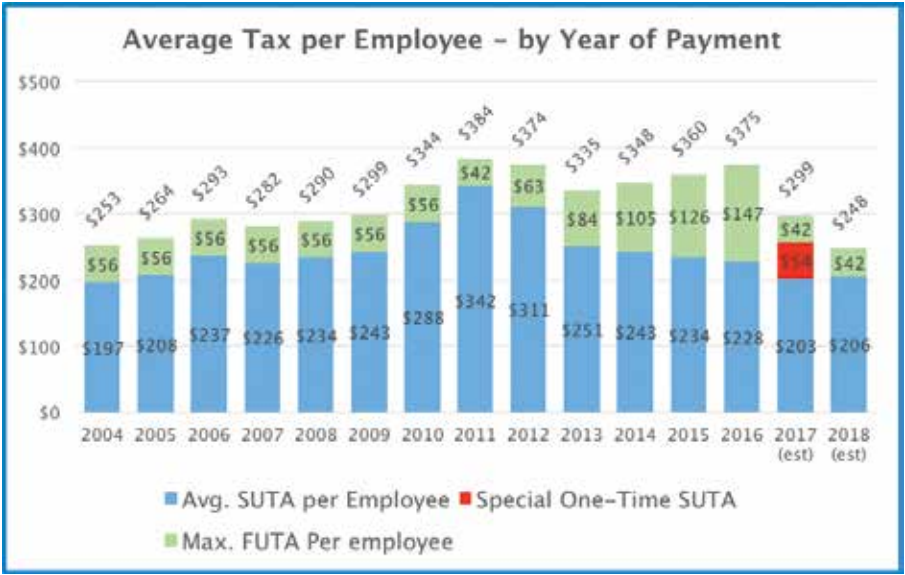
In June 2016, Gov. John Kasich signed HB 390, giving the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) the authority to pay off the remaining balance of the Federal Unemployment Trust Fund loan using state funds. This early payoff means that employers will see a reduction of \$72 per employee in their overall federal/state unemployment cost. Without the early payoff, Ohio employers would have been assessed an additional 1.8 percent per employee in Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA) taxes.

To replenish the state loan, experience-rated employers will pay an additional rate on their 2017 state unemployment quarterly reports. This additional rate of 0.6 percent is only in effect for one year and will

be listed in the Mutual Rate portion of the 2017 rate notice. Money collected from this additional rate will be used to repay the state loan.

The chart to the right depicts the average total tax per employee paid by the year in which the tax is paid. You can see the significant reduction for 2016 and the one-time increase for 2017 to repay the state loan, followed by a return to a lower ongoing tax rate. Even with the one-time increase for 2017, the total average tax per employee remains at the lowest level since 2009 and is projected to return to a pre-recession level in 2018.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Contribution Section at (614) 466-2319.



Source: 2004–2005 ETA394


OHIO CHAMBER CONTACTS

With the New Year come changes at the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. We’ve added new staff members and electronic media outlets in the last year, so that you know who to contact at the Ohio Chamber and where to go for information. Please save this information for future reference, and don’t hesitate to contact us, as we are here to serve you!

- Main phone number – (614) 228-4201
- Mailing address –
Ohio Chamber of Commerce, 230 E. Town St., Columbus, OH 43215
- Main website – www.ohiochamber.com
- Blog – www.allforohio.com
- Political Programs website – www.ohiobusinessvotes.com
- HR Academy website – www.hracademyohio.com
- Ohio Chamber Self Insurance website – www.selfinsuranceohio.com
- Facebook – Ohio Chamber of Commerce
- Twitter – @OhioChamber
- LinkedIn – Ohio Chamber



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- Executive Director, Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation:
Katie Kogelman – kkogelman@ohiochamber.com 

JOIN THE OHIO CHAMBER’S ONLINE COMMUNITY

After months of preparation with Ohio Chamber staff, the time has come to launch our new online Member Portal. All members who are the primary membership contact for their companies and all committee members should have received an email with a personalized login for the portal. With this information, members can establish an electronic connection to the Ohio Chamber.



The Member Portal allows users to conveniently:

- Submit the membership investment electronically through a secured server
- Register for events and seminars
- Receive committee communications
- Shop for human resources products
- Purchase event sponsorships
- Interact with chamber staff and other Ohio Chamber members

“With this new database, our members are able to connect directly to us,” says Ohio Chamber’s Assistant Vice President of Membership Andy Piccolantonio. “We will be sending our members electronic invoices through the portal, posting committee agendas there, allowing for seamless online event registration and allowing our members to connect with each other.”

Besides accessing the Member Portal through the personalized email, users can also access it through the redesigned website at www.ohiochamber.com.

OhioChamber.com now includes a member login in the top left corner where users can access the Member Portal by typing in their user name and password.

“Through our website redesign, we were able to incorporate our new Member Portal, as well as all


The redesigned website also includes an online membership search that is directly linked to the new member database.

of our social media outlets and secondary websites,” says Director, Public Policy Communications, Samantha Cotten. “Our website now has everything in one online location. Direct links to our All for Ohio blog site, our HR Academy website, our new foundation website and our grassroots website are all right there for users to easily access without having to remember every web address.”

The redesigned website also includes an online membership search that is directly linked to the new member database. Now, when a change is made to the database, it is reflected in the online listing.

Joining the Ohio Chamber has also become easier. New members can join online at www.ohiochamber.com, and their information is linked to the member database.

“We hope that this new Membership Portal becomes an integral part of Ohio Chamber membership,” says Piccolantonio.

Users who might need help accessing the Member Portal can address their questions to occ@ohiochamber.com. 

2017 SEMINARS

PRESENTED BY
THE MANUFACTURERS’
EDUCATION COUNCIL
AND THE OHIO CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE

**26TH ANNUAL
OHIO TAX CONFERENCE**
Tuesday, Jan. 24 and
Wednesday, Jan 25,
at the Hyatt Regency Columbus
in downtown Columbus

**21ST ANNUAL OHIO ENERGY
MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE**
Tuesday, Feb. 21 and
Wednesday, Feb. 22,
at the Columbus Renaissance
Hotel in downtown Columbus

**26TH ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY
& HEALTH CONFERENCE**
Tuesday, March 21 and
Wednesday, March 22,
at the Duke Energy Center in
downtown Cincinnati

For more information on
these highly regarded seminars,
including agendas and registration
information, please go to
www.mecseminars.com.

THE OHIO CHAMBER IN ACTION

- 1. On Dec. 1, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Medina Chamber of Commerce hosted an HR Symposium on the Top 10 Mistakes Employers Make When Terminating Employees, presented by Bill Edwards of Ulmer & Berne LLP.
- 2. On Dec. 15, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce recognized Dan Navin for his 25 years of service.
- 3. On Nov. 29, Ohio Chamber President and CEO Andy Doehrel and Director, Energy & Environment Zack Frymier participated in a Shale Update hosted by Ohio Chamber member McDonald Hopkins.



By Samantha Cotten, Director, Public Policy Communications

OHIO CHAMBER LAUNCHES RESEARCH FOUNDATION

With the turnover in the Ohio Legislature due to voter-passed term limits, much of the institutional knowledge regarding the process of state government has been lost. Although term limits make our legislature more intellectually diverse, it now falls on organizations such as ours to provide research to educate legislators on complex business and economic issues. In response, as an outcome of the chamber’s 2013 Strategic Plan, the business leaders serving on the Ohio Chamber’s Board of Directors collectively determined that Ohio’s policymakers would be better served with sound economic research at their disposal when making decisions.

Tasked with leading the charge on this initiative, we have launched the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation Inc. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) that will provide nonpartisan, educational resources on public policy issues that impact Ohio’s economy, job creation and long-term competitiveness.

The Ohio Chamber has tapped Director of External Relations Katie Kogelman to take the reins as the executive director of this new affiliate organization.

Organizational goals for 2017 include recruiting five additional members to the board of directors, planning for the inaugural annual meeting, raising seed dollars and delivering sound research.

The first project the Research Foundation will undertake is a quarterly CEO outlook and confidence survey. “The outcome of the survey will allow the foundation to identify any obstacles at the state level and provide guidance as to where to focus



our future research,” Kogelman says.

Additionally, Kogelman plans to work with the board of the Research Foundation and the Ohio Chamber’s government affairs team to brainstorm other project or study ideas and topics. Ohio Chamber members can also submit suggestions they think will make Ohio’s business community stronger.

Because the Research Foundation is in its startup phase, financial investments will also be critical to ensuring the success of the organization. “Asking Ohio Chamber members for ideas and to help fund our research will be beneficial and telling of the needs of business across the state,” Kogelman says.

Because the Research Foundation is structured as a nonprofit 501(c)(3), any corporate foundation can give to the organization, as well.

To invest in the foundation, suggest ideas for research, or learn more about the organization, visit ohiochamberfoundation.com, or contact Katie Kogelman at kkogelman@ohiochamber.com for more information.

MEMBER NEWS

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

Former Ohio House of Representative Jeff McClain joined the Ohio Chamber staff Oct. 2 as director of tax and economic policy. McClain had served in the Ohio House since 2009 and was term-limited.

At the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, McClain will lead efforts to advance the organization’s public policy agenda in the area of tax policy. He will work to protect business taxpayers from state and local tax policies that impede their ability to grow or impose unnecessary compliance and procedural burdens on their Ohio operations. In this position, he will direct the Ohio Chamber’s Tax Committee.

While in the House representing citizens of the 87th district, McClain served as chairman of the House Ways & Means Committee, vice chair of the Finance & Appropriations Committee and chair of the Finance Subcommittee on Medicaid. Prior to serving four terms in the Ohio House, McClain served as the Wyandot County auditor for more than 26 years. He is a graduate of Tiffin University, with a bachelor’s degree in accounting.

McClain replaces Dan Navin, who retired from the Ohio Chamber at the end of 2016 after 25 years.

Kathy Eshelman is the new vice president of membership, replacing Beau Euton. Euton left the chamber to take the position of finance director and special adviser to Onward Ohio, chaired by Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor. Taylor, considered a strong pro-jobs, pro-business candidate, is exploring a run for Ohio governor.

Eshelman is a graduate of the University of Texas, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism. She is a former Central Ohio business owner who knows firsthand the challenges of running a business. She was a representative of the National Women President’s Council for three years. She is also a graduate of the Jo Ann Davidson Ohio Leadership

Institute and serves on its board of directors.

Finally, Katie Kogelman a former director of external relations for the Ohio Chamber, is now the executive director of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation. The foundation will focus on delivering research that will drive and promote the economic well-being of Ohio.

SELF-INSURANCE FOR SMALL AND MID-SIZED BUSINESSES

In listening to our members, one of the common concerns we hear is the rising cost of health insurance. Because of this, we have sought out ways to bring down these costs. The most cost-effective way we have found is through self-insurance. Once predominantly used by larger firms, self-insurance for employer-based health insurance is now an option for companies of all sizes. The Ohio Chamber of Commerce has partnered with BE Solutions to bring this health care option to our members. For more information on our self-insurance program, contact Laz Picciano at lpicciano@ohiochamber.com or (614) 228-4201.

THE LARGEST AND BEST BUSINESS TAX CONFERENCE IN THE NATION

Join the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and more than 650 attendees at the nation’s largest business tax conference Tuesday, Jan. 24, and Wednesday, Jan. 25, at the Hyatt Regency Columbus. For 2017, the nation’s premier law firms, tax consulting organizations and CPA firms will be in attendance, with many of them as speakers in breakout sessions. Cost is \$695 and includes two days of expert instruction (approved for CLEs), comprehensive flash drive of all the sessions’ presentations and materials, two luncheons, two breakfasts, refreshment breaks and a celebration reception. For more information, a complete agenda and to register, go to www.mecseminars.com.

BUSY YEAR AHEAD



While 2016 ended with a flurry of activity driving lame duck sessions at the Ohio Statehouse, 2017 will be very busy for the Ohio Chamber and our members. This issue of *Ohio Matters* delves deeper into some of the events and new offerings available to our members.

First, we have new staff members and a new foundation. Jeff McClain, a former member of the Ohio House of Representatives, joined our staff in late October as director of tax and economic policy. McClain replaces Dan Navin, who retired from the chamber on Dec. 31 after 25 years of service. Kathy Eshelman joined our team in December as vice president of membership. A former business owner, Eshelman replaces Beau Euton, who is now the finance director and special advisor to Onward Ohio. Katie Kogelman, who was in our membership department as director of external relations, has taken on the position of executive director of our newly formed Ohio Chamber of Commerce Research Foundation. More information on these staffing changes can be found under Member News in this issue.

In preparation for the 132nd Ohio General Assembly, our member-driven committees have developed

the chamber's goals. These goals are combined to create our Public Policy Agenda, which was approved by our board of directors in December. All members and members of the General Assembly will receive a standalone printed piece in early February. The agenda is used to focus the Ohio Chamber's advocacy efforts for the next two years.

As we have been highlighting for several months, we converted all of our membership information into a new member database in August. While our staff has been using the new database for several months, our members now have access to it through our new Member Portal. In January, all primary contacts from our member companies and all committee members should receive an email from us with login information. The Member Portal will be used for event registration, committee information, invoice payment and the purchase of Ohio Chamber goods. For questions about accessing the portal, email us at occ@ohiochamber.com.

The Member Portal can be accessed from our redesigned website at www.ohiochamber.com. The redesign of the site incorporates all of our social media outlets, as well as videos we

will be creating throughout the year to explain important legislation and provide updates on chamber events. The Member Portal login is in the top right corner of the website and the navigation menu is in the top left corner.

Finally, in addition to our Human Resources webinars and symposiums, we have two major events planned for 2017. Our Annual Meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 2, at the Jo Ann Davidson Theatre in the Riffe Building in downtown Columbus. A keynote speaker will be announced shortly, with registration opening in March. Our biennial Policy Conference at Salt Fork is scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 6, through Friday, Sept. 8, at Salt Fork State Park near Cambridge, Ohio. Sponsorship opportunities are available for both events by contacting Ashley Brown at abrown@ohiochamber.com.

We all look forward to another busy and productive year as we strive to make Ohio the place for business growth and job expansion. #allforohio

Andrew S. Doshul

EDITORIAL POLICY

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POSTMASTER

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OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNUAL MEETING & LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

TUESDAY, MAY 2, 2017

JO ANN DAVIDSON THEATRE (FORMERLY
RIFFE THEATRE), DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS
RECEPTION: SHERATON HOTEL

Register online soon at www.ohiochamber.com then click on Annual Meeting.

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