

Ohio Matters

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By Rich Thompson, Director of Political Programs

NEW YEAR, NEW ADMINISTRATION: 2018 ELECTION RECAP

On Nov. 6, 2018, a pivotal mid-term election viewed as a referendum on President Donald Trump was waged in congressional and state-level races throughout the country.

In the United States House of Representatives, control has shifted from Republican to a Democrat majority, meaning Trump will have to work with a divided government in the lead-up to the 2020 presidential election. In the United States Senate, Republicans will expand their majority. The margin of expansion is still to be determined following a recount in Florida and run-off election in Mississippi. The results in Ohio mirrored historical trends that shows our state’s demographics are becoming a more Republican-leaning state, bucking the national view that we are a “purple” state.

In January 2019, Ohio will have a new governor and lieutenant governor, attorney general, secretary of state, auditor of state and treasurer of state. In Congress, Republicans Anthony Gonzales and Troy Balderson won full terms to join the Ohio delegation in 2019. Additionally, the Ohio General Assembly, will welcome 29 (pending recounts) new members to Columbus.

Mike DeWine will become the 70th governor of Ohio. DeWine defeated Richard Cordray in a rematch of their 2010 contest for attorney general by a much healthier margin of five points. DeWine outperformed all of the most recent polling numbers that showed the race within a 1 percent margin either way. DeWine was endorsed by OCCPAC this summer.



The story of the night was the margin of victory by Sen. Sherrod Brown. Many considered Brown to be the top of the ticket, and polling showed him up by double digits. The fact that he only won by five points (53-47 percent) against Congressman Jim Renacci didn’t create the political headwinds for the rest of the Democrat ticket that many were predicting.

In the congressional races, there were no surprises in the 1st and 12th Congressional districts. Balderson and Rep. Steve Chabot won their races by five and six points, respectively. Additionally, former Ohio State football standout Anthony Gonzales won his race to replace Renacci against Democrat Susan Palmer, 57-43 percent.

Polling was once again off in the races for statewide executive offices. OCCPAC-endorsed candidate Dave Yost carried the race for attorney general 52-48 percent. OCCPAC-endorsed candidate for secretary of state Frank LaRose defeated Kathleen Clyde 51-47 percent. In the race for state auditor, Rep. Keith Faber defeated Zack Space 50-46 percent. Finally, after a hard-fought primary that saw his war chest depleted, Rep. Robert Sprague rallied to defeat Rob Richardson 54-46 percent to become the next state treasurer.

Unfortunately, the two OCCPAC-endorsed candidates for Ohio Supreme Court fell short on election night. Judge Melody Stewart defeated Justice Mary DeGenaro 52-48 percent, and Judge Michael Donnelly beat Judge Craig Baldwin 60-40 percent. The partisan makeup of the court come January will stand at 5-2 in favor of Republicans. The Ohio Supreme Court is critically important to the business climate in Ohio, so these losses should be particularly concerning to Ohio Chamber members. It will also mean that in 2020, when two incumbent justices previously endorsed by OCCPAC seek re-election, the business community will need to make these races top priority.

The impact of November’s election will play out over the next two, four and six years as the victorious candidates serve out their respective terms.

Issue 1, the flawed proposal to amend Ohio’s Constitution to reduce penalties for crimes of obtaining, possessing and using illegal drugs, financed mostly by national groups, fell 63-37 percent. The Ohio Chamber board voted to oppose this measure in the early fall.

OCCPAC-endorsed candidates for the General Assembly did well, going 71-5. Ohio House Democrats picked up five seats, taking all three House seats in northern Franklin County and two additional seats in Northeast Ohio. No incumbent members from either party lost their bids for re-election.

In the Ohio Senate, the Republican majority gained another seat. It now controls 25 of the state’s 33 senate districts. Mahoning Valley businessman Michael Rulli knocked off Rep. John Boccierra to replace outgoing Sen. Joe Schiavoni in Mahoning and Trumbull counties. There are three races that are currently not certified. Rep. Jonathon Dever and Rep. Anne Gonzales hold narrow margins in their races for the House and Senate respectively. Additionally, the results in the Republican pick-up by Don Manning in the Mahoning Valley have not been certified.

The impact of November’s election will play out over the next two, four and six years as the victorious candidates serve out their respective terms. We congratulate all elected officials on their victories and look forward to working with them to promote pro-jobs, pro-growth policies for the benefit of all Ohioans. 🐾

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A celebration of

125 years



Ohio Chamber President and CEO Andrew E. Doehrel with Gov.-Elect Mike DeWine

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce was established on Nov. 5, 1893, and at that time was called the State Board of Commerce. Almost exactly 125 years later, we celebrated this important milestone.

On Thursday, Nov. 8, 300 Ohio Chamber members and legislators attended the Ohio Chamber’s first-ever member gala, which celebrated the history of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the people who have contributed to its success. President and CEO Andy Doehrel began the evening by thanking everyone in attendance and sharing a few short remarks.

“We truly have a unique organization here that has made our state a great place to live and work,” he said.

It was very fitting that Jo Ann Davidson, a former Ohio Chamber employee, Ohio legislator and the first and only female speaker of the Ohio House, was the emcee for the evening. In addition to serving as emcee, Davidson shared her memories with the Ohio Chamber. She then recognized local chambers, committee members, members of the Ohio General Assembly, former employees, past chairmen and the current chairman. She also recognized the sponsors, CareWorks, United Healthcare, The 316 Group, Delta Dental of Ohio, Charter Communications and The Boeing Co. for making the event possible.

Davidson then directed attention to a video that showcased important milestones in the Ohio Chamber’s history, including interviews with former employees, board members, legislators and partners of the Ohio Chamber.

“We are here tonight to celebrate the history of this fine organization. A history that goes back to 1893, when the country and state were in the midst of an economic depression. ... In response to this crisis, several

leaders from all over Ohio came together in Cleveland to form what was then called the Ohio State Board of Commerce. And the rest, as they say, is history.” The video shared warm sentiments and funny memories, in addition to providing a historical timeline before the keynote speaker.

Just two days after the election, the Ohio Chamber was honored to have Ohio governor-elect Mike DeWine as the keynote speaker. DeWine congratulated the chamber and spoke encouraging words about the future of Ohio for businesses. Afterward, the founding members who have continued in their membership for 125 years were recognized and given awards by Doehrel and DeWine. Then Senate President Pro Tempore Bob Peterson and Speaker of the House Ryan Smith presented special proclamations honoring the Ohio Chamber. The final recognition went to Davidson, who was presented a pewter plate by Doehrel for her meritorious service and dedication to the Ohio Chamber of Commerce and the state of Ohio.

To wrap up this special night of celebration, a final video of congratulatory messages played while commemorative champagne glasses were filled. Chairman Larry Kidd shared closing remarks and ended with a toast to the future and the next 125 years.

“This has been a very special night for all of us,” he said. “In honor of this once-in-a-lifetime celebration, I invite you all to stand and raise a glass in honor of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. Thank you all for your continued support, and we look forward to the next 125 years!”

Founding organizations of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce that have been members for 125 years:



Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber



Columbus Chamber of Commerce



Greater Cleveland Partnership



Huntington Bancshares Inc.



Marietta Area Chamber of Commerce



Root Candles



The Chamber of Greater Springfield



Toledo Regional Chamber of Commerce





Andrew E. Doehrel and Jo Ann Davidson share a laugh during a presentation



Gov.-Elect Mike DeWine, Diane Chapman and Cindy Kidd



President and CEO of the Ohio Chamber Andrew E. Doehrel



Gov.-Elect Mike DeWine, former Ohio House Speaker Jo Ann Davidson and President and CEO of the Ohio Chamber Andrew E. Doehrel



Gov.-Elect Mike DeWine



Andrew E. Doehrel with current chair Larry Kidd and past chairs David Scheffler, Dick Brandt, Jeff Gorman, Linda Hondros, Tom Zaino and Dale Fallot



Sen. President Pro Tempore Bob Peterson presented the Ohio Chamber with a proclamation.



Ohio Speaker of the House Ryan Smith presented the Ohio Chamber with a proclamation.

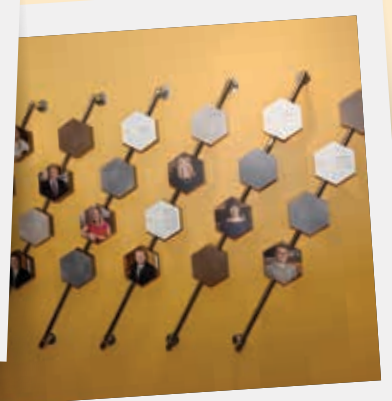


Ohio Chamber Chairman of the Board Larry Kidd offers a toast



Former Ohio House Speaker Jo Ann Davidson

Ohio Chamber of Commerce Open House



WILL THE END OF NOVEMBER LEAD U.S. TO A NEW NORMAL IN TRADE AND TARIFFS?

Ohio businesses concerned with trade and tariffs should target their attention to The Group of 20 (G20) Summit that will be held in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Nov. 30 and Dec. 1, 2018. There, President Donald Trump likely will join Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto (whose term expires Dec. 1) to sign the new NAFTA, now known as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

There will also be vigorous discussions in the lead-up to the summit regarding the Section 232 steel and aluminum tariffs imposed by the U.S. on Canada and Mexico, as well as those countries' countermeasures/retaliation imposed on U.S. products. The potential resolution of these tariffs will be a beacon for the manner in which the U.S. will resolve similar issues with other allies, such as the European Union and Japan, over the coming months.

All eyes, meanwhile, will focus on the planned meeting between Trump and the People's Republic of China President Xi Jinping at the summit that will seek a path forward regarding ongoing trade disputes. At home, these developments will set the stage for a potential showdown over trade in 2019 between the president and the new Democrat-controlled House of Representatives. As always, Ohio will be at the heart of these policy and political battles.

USMCA

The USMCA is more than a rebranding exercise, but less than a tearing up of the original NAFTA, and all Ohio companies engaged in North American trade will be impacted by the potential new deal. Indeed, as Trump predicted in February 2017, the three countries renovated the NAFTA in three key areas.

First, the parties brushed a fresh coat of paint on to more than half of the original NAFTA in areas such as anti-corruption, technical barriers to trade and other framework provisions. Rather than shredding the original agreement, the three countries maintained much of what worked and freshened it up to 21st century standards. The parties also upgraded the fixtures and appliances with

new chapters in areas such as digital trade, customs and trade facilitation (border issues), energy, environment, chemicals and polymers, and sanitary-phytosanitary (food safety/agriculture).

These measures removed much of the red tape that served as a drag on North American competitiveness. However, the parties did not stop with paint and fixtures. Rather, the Trump administration knocked down walls in areas such as automotive, labor, dispute resolution, investment and non-market economies. There are significant changes in the USMCA — some for the better, and some likely for the worse. Consequently, Ohio companies must review the agreement to determine the potential impact on their operations.

SECTION 232 STEEL AND ALUMINUM TARIFFS

The hope was that a 70 percent North American steel and aluminum requirement for autos in the USMCA would resolve the metals tariffs with Canada and Mexico. However, the Trump administration wants more.

It is likely that the U.S. and Mexico will reach a deal prior to signing the USMCA (or shortly thereafter) in which the parties will agree to remove the tariffs and countermeasures and cap Mexico's steel and aluminum exports to the U.S. at slightly above (130 to 150 percent) current levels. This will come as welcome news to Ohio's farmers and companies that have suffered from Mexico's retaliatory tariffs.

Canada has philosophical, policy and political challenges with a quota-based cap, given that it buys more steel and aluminum from the U.S. than it sells, and the Great Lakes region's binational metals industry is one of the most integrated in the world. The industry writ large, and the Ohio companies subject to the \$2.1 billion in Canada's retaliation, must engage on this issue and seek prompt resolution. Regardless of the outcome between Canada and the U.S., it is likely that a quota will be the price of admission for Japan and the European Union to resolve the issue during their planned trade negotiations with the U.S. in early 2019.



CHINA TARIFFS

The Trump-Xi meeting will have three broad possible outcomes (and potentially a mixture of all three).

1. Status quo. Maintaining three tranches of U.S. tariffs (25 percent, 15 percent, 10 percent), the ramping up of the 10 percent tariffs to 25 percent as scheduled on Jan. 1, 2019, and China's retaliation
2. Positive. De-escalating the tariffs, with the U.S. deciding not to impose the ramp-up to 25 percent on Jan. 1, 2019 (the existing tariffs will remain in place), China making concessions in certain sectors and the parties announcing a framework for moving forward
3. Negative. Status quo, as well as the U.S. proceeding with additional 25 percent tariffs on approximately \$267 billion of China-sourced goods, followed by China's response

CONGRESS

The G-20 Summit will set the stage for Trump's trade agenda to confront the Democrat-controlled U.S. House of Representatives. The USMCA will require implementing legislation to be passed by Congress in order for the agreement to take effect. (The same holds true in Mexico and Canada).

The earliest procedural date for USMCA to clear these legislative hurdles is spring 2019. However, expect approval to go deep into the

2019 calendar, if not beyond. Congress also will have to weigh whether to step in if Trump is viewed as softening on China, or wielding new tariffs with too broad a stroke.

Congress also undoubtedly will exercise more oversight over trade deals with the European Union and Japan by using the consultative mechanisms provided for in Trade Promotion Authority. The result of these procedural and political recipes is a large order of trade chaos.

CONCLUSION

Uncertainty will remain the order of the day for Ohio companies engaged in global trade through the close of 2018 and through early Q1 2019. Companies cannot stand by and hope for the best. Mitigation and sourcing strategies can — and should — be deployed to advance key objectives. This is the new normal in U.S. trade policy, and adaptability will be the key to growth in 2019.

Dan Ujcz is an international trade and customs attorney at Dickinson Wright PLLC. He is president of the Ohio-Canada Business Association (Ohio-Can) and a board member of the American Chamber of Commerce in Canada (AM-CHAM Canada,) as well as the North American Strategy for Competitiveness (NASCO). Reach him at dujcz@kickinson-wright.com.

2019 Seminars

Presented by the Manufacturers' Education Council and the Ohio Chamber of Commerce

28TH ANNUAL OHIO TAX CONFERENCE

Tuesday, Jan. 29
Wednesday, Jan.30

Hyatt Regency,
downtown Columbus

23RD ANNUAL OHIO ENERGY MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

Tuesday, Feb. 19
Wednesday, Feb. 20

Columbus Renaissance Hotel,
downtown Columbus

28TH ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY & EHS SYMPOSIUM

Tuesday, March 26
Wednesday, March 27

Sharonville Convention Center,
Cincinnati

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

By Barry Freeman, attorney, Buckingham, Doolittle and Burroughs LLP

SEXUAL HARASSMENT CLAIMS IN THE ‘ME-TOO’ ERA

Unless you have been stuck without internet in the wilderness, you are aware of the “me-too” movement and its focus on the continuing problem of sexual harassment in the workplace. Roughly a year after “me-too” began, what have been its effects and ramifications?

THE LAW

For the most part, the law has not changed in 20 years, since the U.S. Supreme Court issued three decisions defining the modern law of sexual harassment. In sum, that law is:

- If there is sexual harassment by a non-supervisor (including co-workers and third parties), an employer’s liability is based on negligence. If the employer knew or should have reasonably known about the harassment but failed to take reasonable action, the employer is liable. As the plaintiff, it is the harasser’s burden to prove negligence.
- If there is sexual harassment by a supervisor and the supervisor takes tangible action against the harasser (for example, firing him or her for not submitting to a request for sexual favors), the employer is liable, no ifs, ands or buts.
- If there is sexual harassment by a supervisor, but the supervisor does not take tangible action, the employer is presumed to be liable. This is subject to an affirmative defense (for which the employer bears the burden of proof) that the employer took reasonable steps to prevent and remedy any harassment, but the harasser unreasonably failed to take advantage of those reasonable steps.



THE PROBLEMS

With that legal standard background, harassment problems continue in the workplace.

- There is still sexual harassment in the workplace. In some industries and businesses, it remains vile and rampant (e.g., the entertainment industry) – which gave us Harvey Weinstein, Matt Lauer (who years before his most recent conduct was exposed, was noted in Katie Couric’s autobiography as constantly grabbing Couric’s behind – all to a deaf public) and Bill Cosby.
- Harassers often feel torn between speaking up and the fear of sabotaging their careers.
- Harassers who decline to report (even if to avoid sabotaging their careers) later sue their employers – although the employers never knew about the harassment and never had any opportunity to investigate and remedy the harassment.
- Whether genuine or mere perception, there is still a belief – particularly when the harasser

is high level (e.g., CEO or owner) – that harassers will not get a fair shake if they report to human resources.

THE CHANGED LANDSCAPE SINCE ‘ME-TOO’

Although the law and the nature of sexual harassment problems have not changed in over 20 years, “me-too” has most definitely had an impact over the last year. Consider:

- Federal discrimination complaints (charges) filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) are significantly down (likely due to the strong economy.) Yet, sex harassment charges filed with the EEOC are up over 12 percent. EEOC findings of “probable cause” in sex harassment cases are up over 20 percent. Sex harassment lawsuits brought by the EEOC are up over 50 percent. And EEOC recoveries in sex harassment matters are up nearly 50 percent, from \$48 million to \$70 million – all in one year.
- Harassers are less likely to accept sexual harassment. In the case of current harassment, that is a good thing. In the case of past harassment, it can be a problem if the harasser failed to report the issue to the employer. Witnesses’ recollections have faded. Moreover, employer opportunities to fix the issue may have vanished.

THE SOLUTIONS – FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS

Employers should:

- Always take harassment complaints seriously and investigate to

determine (a) whether they are substantiated, and (b) if so, what is the appropriate remedy, given all the facts and circumstances.

- Have an anti-harassment policy with teeth.
- Do more than just have a policy. Have periodic (every few years) training to remind and retrain employees about the policy and, most important, that they know where to go with concerns.

Employers should also not allow harassment to be reported to just anyone. “Anyone” is not necessarily trained and capable of handling and resolving harassment complaints. Generally, harassment should be required to be reported to human resources or counsel – those capable of investigating harassment complaints and appropriately remedying any substantiated harassment.

As an employee:

- If you see something, say something. You are responsible for reporting sexual harassment.
- If you are being harassed yourself, do not suffer. Go to HR or the company attorney. Keeping quiet makes it worse for everyone – including yourself. You hold the key (and the responsibility) to report harassment in a timely manner.

The bottom line is that if employees and employers work together, they can greatly reduce sexual harassment in the workplace. But employers and employees need to communicate – fully and timely – for this to happen. The responsibility falls on both. 🏠

NEWLY LAUNCHED WEB PORTAL CONNECTS OHIO’S RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES WITH INDUSTRY PARTNERS

Cutting-edge university research and expertise are often siloed and hard to discover outside of the academic community. As a result, it’s typically difficult for leading industry minds with new ideas to find experts and technology at individual academic institutions for support.

In September, the Ohio Department of Higher Education (ODHE), along with six Ohio universities and support from the Ohio Manufacturing Institute, launched a new online research portal to change that dynamic.

The Ohio Innovation Exchange (OIEx), at www.ohioinnovationexchange.org, delivers research and innovation opportunities, and connects industry with Ohio’s academic institutions. Industry can quickly find the faculty, research, equipment and facilities available at Ohio’s research universities. By consolidating academic resources from multiple universities into a single, searchable web portal, industry will find the expertise to advance products, services and research. The goal of OIEx is to expand workforce and funding opportunities while fostering economic development throughout the region.

“It is critical to our state’s economy that we utilize every aspect of our knowledge and innovation talent across the public and private sectors,” says ODHE Chancellor John Carey. “We’re incredibly proud of what we’ve created with OIEx – better connecting the experts and resources at our state research universities to the industries that can utilize them to push their breakthrough ideas to fruition.”

Initially developed by four Ohio universities, OIEx today provides industry in search of expertise with access to more than 8,250 faculty and 900 resources from Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland State

University, The Ohio State University, Ohio University, the University of Akron and the University of Cincinnati. From research partnerships, intellectual property and laboratory and testing access, to business development and even student internships, OIEx jump-starts the partnership process to deliver new innovations.

OIEx also offers the OIEx Rapid Response Team (at <https://www.ohioinnovationexchange.org/response>) of active university liaisons to ensure that industry experts are aligned with the resources they need. The OIEx Rapid Response Team makes it much easier to quickly develop working partnerships, while creating opportunities for collaboration.

“Ohio’s industry leaders are looking for ways to advance their ideas, products and solutions, but haven’t always been able to utilize university partnerships to assist them,” says Kathryn Kelley, director of the Ohio Manufacturing Institute. “Working with our university partners, we’re excited to introduce OIEx to provide that bridge and connection, giving industry quick access to the resources available at Ohio’s research universities.”

To learn more, visit www.ohioinnovationexchange.org. 🏠



By Chris Ventura, Executive Director, Consumer Energy Alliance – Midwest

ENERGY — MOVING OHIO FORWARD

Our modern world and its endless conveniences share one common ingredient — energy. Beyond heating and cooling our homes, energy in all its forms powers manufacturers and businesses of all sizes and fuels transportation. No matter how you slice it, energy touches every facet of our daily lives.

Yet the simple conveniences that energy provides are too often taken for granted. Most of us believe if we can turn on the lights, charge our phones and fill our gas tanks affordably that energy is doing its job. Outside of these everyday uses, energy rarely — if ever — crosses our minds. More often than not, energy remains an infrequent thought without truly understanding where it comes from, how it is made, the numerous ways it's transported and the impact it has on the communities where we work and live.

But it should, especially here in Ohio.

Much of the energy used by our families, farmers and factories is increasingly produced within our state borders. The shale energy revolution occurring in the southeastern part of our state is leading to record increases in economic investment and job creation, while lowering energy costs for businesses of all sizes.

To give consumers a better understanding of the impact of Ohio energy production, Consumer Energy Alliance (CEA) ran the numbers to see just how much Ohioans have benefitted. The results were staggering. By using the most recent Energy Information Administration data, CEA — with support from Orion Strategies — determined that Ohio's households and businesses saved more than \$40 billion in natural gas costs between 2006 and 2016. Of that \$40 billion, families saved \$15 billion, while commercial and industrial users saved \$25.3 billion.

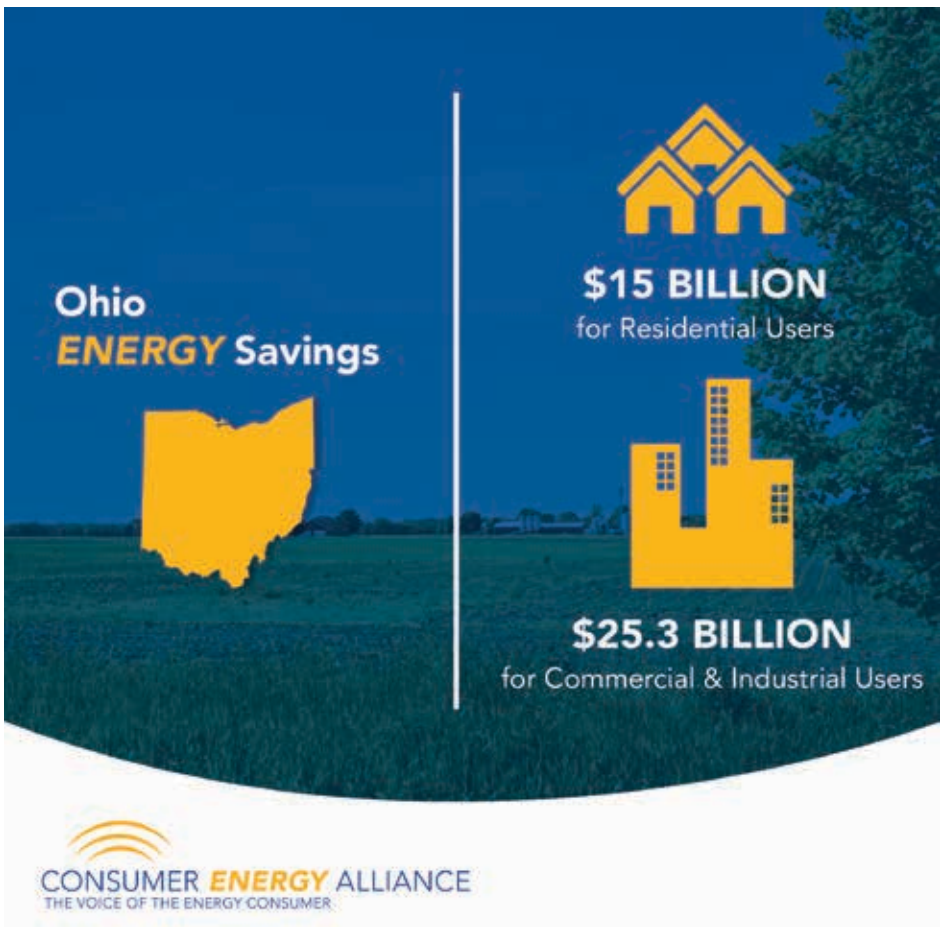
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If you think about the time just prior to our state's energy resurgence, natural gas prices peaked at \$10.66; now, they're less than \$4. Gasoline prices have also dropped, from \$4.15 per gallon in 2011 to less than \$3 today.

Even more, our region now has some of the lowest natural gas prices in the world, and energy consumers are taking note. Ohio is one of the top 10 natural gas-consuming states, with nearly two-thirds of residential consumers using natural gas for home heating. Just over the past decade, 19 new gas-fired power plants have been constructed, from Lordstown to Oregon, and points in between.

As a result, investment in core-shale industries, or those directly involved within the production and development of these resources, has led to the opening of more than 700 businesses statewide since 2011, bringing in more than \$63.9 billion in new investment. These businesses invested in all aspects of energy, including production, transmission, end-use power generation, petrochemical plants and plastic manufacturing.

What's more, shale-related industry employment has increased 7.8 percent over the last seven years, employing more than 389,000 Ohioans with an average wage of about \$98,000 — over \$49,000 more than the average salary of all other industries in the state.

Many of these careers are coming back to parts of Ohio that were hit hardest by manufacturing job losses. The Vallourec Steel plant in Youngstown represented over \$1 billion in new investment and brought hundreds of new steel jobs back to the Mahoning Valley, due to energy production in our region. In Toledo, Cliffs Natural Resources is constructing its first hot briquetted

iron facility in the Great Lakes Region — an investment of over \$700 million. These are just two of the many examples of investments being made in Ohio as a result of energy development. As long as infrastructure — from pipelines to transmission lines — is able to serve businesses, Ohio-produced energy can revitalize any area of the state.

This is why it's imperative that our elected officials and policymakers continue to work together to support common-sense energy solutions. And their bipartisan approach to implementing common-sense regulations that balances energy production with environmental sustainability has been evident. You don't have to be a Republican or a Democrat to know that environmental stewardship is a priority, but we should all agree that unnecessarily high energy prices, while bothersome for most, make our manufacturers less competitive and all too often serve as a regressive tax on small businesses and working families.

With additional investments in newer and safer environmental technologies, continued refinement of the production process, increased energy efficiency and the expansion of much-needed infrastructure — including transmission lines and pipelines, the latter of which is the safest way to move energy — we can continue to keep Ohio moving forward.


Chris Ventura is executive director for Consumer Energy Alliance - Midwest. Prior to joining CEA, Ventura served as senior project manager for the Ohio House of Representatives under Speaker William Batchelder. CEA is the leading U.S. consumer advocate in support of affordable, reliable energy for working families, seniors and businesses across the country. To learn more, visit www.ConsumerEnergyAlliance.org.

OHIO'S NEW AMERICANS OFFICE FOCUSES ON WORKFORCE ISSUES

Ohio's economy is strong. Since 2011, there are 557,600 new private-sector jobs in Ohio, and since the start of this year, the state's private-sector jobs are growing 39 percent faster than those elsewhere in the nation. To maintain its momentum, however, Ohio's economy requires a workforce of hard-working, highly skilled individuals.

Ohio's Office of Opportunities for New Americans, created earlier this year by Gov. John R. Kasich, is working to make Ohio a more welcoming state in order to attract the workers — and better prepare the existing ones — who will fuel Ohio's economic engine for years to come. The focus of the office is on three pillars — jobs, education and training, and entrepreneurship — all of which are important to business and industry.

The office's mission is to create a clearinghouse of state resources



Opportunities for New Americans

and programs that are available to all Ohioans, not just immigrants, to ease their transition into their new communities. We want Ohio to be a great place to find work and raise a family. That clearinghouse is on our website at NewAmericans.Ohio.gov.

With the number of births in the state on a gradual decline since 2006, and Census reports showing that more native-born Ohioans are moving out of the state than people are moving in, the current and coming workforce challenges can be answered by a mix of workers who are already here and new talent attracted to the state. The data show that from 2000 to 2018, Ohio's foreign-born population has increased by 56 percent, to more than



528,000, accounting for 5 percent of the state's population. The Office of Opportunities for New Americans wants to get them ready to meet your business needs.

Resources on the website point to the many programs that can help immigrants find jobs, learn English, get advanced training and start their own businesses. We will continue to add to and improve the information on the website, including stories about businesses that have successfully attracted and retained immigrant employees. Tell us how we can help you with your workforce issues.

Please visit NewAmericans.Ohio.gov to learn more about the office. If you have questions or a story about how your business is reaching out to and working with immigrants, email us at NewAmericans@development.Ohio.gov to share your story.

LARGEST BUSINESS TAX CONFERENCE IN THE NATION HAPPENING IN JANUARY



The Manufacturers’ Education Council’s 28th Annual Ohio Tax Conference will take place on Tuesday and Wednesday, Jan. 29-30, 2019. Attended by 14,802 corporate tax directors, CFOs, tax professionals and taxing authorities over the past 27 years, this event is the largest business tax conference in the nation.

The conference was established in the early 1990’s by the Ohio Chamber of Commerce along with the Ohio Department of Taxation and led by the Ohio Tax Commissioner & former Franklin County Auditor, Roger Tracy. The idea of the conference was to serve as one of the top business tax educational conferences, bringing leading experts on tax issues from across the nation to participate. The annual Ohio Tax Conference has since served as the model for public/private partnership for tax education, inspiring many states to establish their own state tax conference in similar fashion.

A volunteer, blue-ribbon tax conference planning committee, made up of many Ohio Chamber members, meets twice a year to take on the task of selecting topics, keynote speakers and workshop sessions for the annual Ohio Tax Conference. Representing some of the most prestigious national law firms and tax consulting organizations and Ohio’s leaders in corporate taxation, members of this committee attend planning sessions from all over the country to help put together this event. With hundreds of tax abstracts coming to the table, the planning committee must vote to select the handful of sessions for the speaking opportunities they see fit.

This upcoming tax conference attracts the ‘best & brightest’ in taxation in the nation to come and lead workshops, roundtables, and more at the two-day event. The newly elected Ohio governor and newly appointed tax commissioner have been invited to attend. Former Ohio Tax Commissioner and Ohio Chamber Board Member Tom Zaino is also one of the featured speakers. Ohio Chamber Director of Tax & Economic Policy Jeff McClain will preside over the Ohio Tax Hall of Fame Ceremony on Tuesday afternoon.

Several other national tax experts will be featured at the 2019 conference as leaders and keynote speakers. Conference attendees will get the chance to interact with leading tax decision-makers in Ohio as well as top tax officials from surrounding states.

Each year the tax conference planning committee establishes “hot tax topics” for the upcoming conference. Featured topics at the 2019 conference include the massive impact of technology in the tax field, the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in *South Dakota vs Wayfair*, the impact of the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act just to name a few.

In addition, this year’s conference will feature two optional ethics sessions for both CPE & CLE credits for Ethics & Professionalism for State Tax Professionals. The first session, *Ethics & Professionalism for State Tax Professionals – Top 10 Ethical Dilemmas* will take place from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 30. With a second one, *Ethics & Professionalism for State Tax Professionals – For Your Eyes Only: Understanding Privileges & Protections in State Tax Practice* will be held the same day from 3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

With the best line-up of speakers and hot tax issues, the 28th Annual Ohio Tax Conference is invaluable to keep current with significant tax developments at the federal, state & local level. As the largest business tax conference in the nation, attendees will benefit from the continuing education credits they can earn and the valuable information received on major tax and jobs issues.

For more information and to register for this influential event, go to www.mecseminars.com and click on the Taxation & Business tab at the top of the page. 📌

ANDY PICCOLANTONIO PROMOTED TO VICE PRESIDENT, MEMBERSHIP

Andy Piccolantonio, also known around the office as Andy P., was promoted to vice president, Membership, in November. He has been with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce since 2008.

He began as an account executive and has held several positions over the years. Most recently, Piccolantonio was assistant vice president, Membership. Prior to working at the Ohio Chamber, he owned his own business for six years, giving him a unique perspective that allows him to empathize with members regarding challenges their businesses face every day. He enjoys the conversations and relationships he has built with members over the years.



“I have the pleasure of talking with businesses from every industry, hearing their concerns and goals, and discussing how the Ohio Chamber can work with them to make Ohio more business friendly,” he says. “I learn something new every day, and I am thankful for that opportunity.”

One of the hallmarks of the Ohio Chamber is its staff. Piccolantonio enjoys the collective energy and knowledge everyone brings to the table.

“I have learned a lot from the dedicated, talented and hardworking individuals I have had the pleasure to work with over the years, and I am proud to be counted as one of the many who have strived to aggressively champion free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans,” he says.

Piccolantonio’s wife, Beryl, is the chief ombudsman of Ohio’s Workers’ Compensation System and serves as president of the Gahanna-Jefferson School Board. Together they have three boys, Vincent, 14, Max, 12, and Alex, 8. Piccolantonio, being a red-head himself, never had a red-headed child, so he got a red-headed dog, a cavapoo named Ginger.

“She is the first (sometimes only) one to greet me at the door when I come home,” he says.

In his free time, he attends his children’s activities or spends time with them in a heated game of Monopoly or ping-pong. He serves on the Gahanna Parks and Recreation Board and the St. Charles Preparatory School Alumni Board, and is a member of the Association of State Chamber Professionals (ASPC).

Looking forward, Piccolantonio is optimistic.

“We’ve got a good team, and we are looking forward to 2019,” he says. “I’m excited to be celebrating the 125th anniversary this year with special member benefits, including a great health insurance offering, as well as new ways to work more closely with our local chambers.” 📌

PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HEALTH INSURANCE FOR YOU AND YOUR EMPLOYEES

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce is pleased to introduce Lifestyle Health Plans as a unique health benefits program designed to address the underlying cause of the rise of health care costs — employee health behaviors.



Lifestyle Health Plans are essentially prepackaged plans, with low attachment stop-loss coverage. For the right groups, level-funded plans do not have the volatility in monthly cash flows associated with self-insurance plans that can cripple small business. Other differences include:

- Underwritten by “A” rated carriers
- Premium savings averaging 5 to 15 percent in most cases
- Integrated wellness incentives and cash rewards
- Up to a \$500 deductible credit available to all wellness participants
- Integrated concierge telemedicine, outpatient lab and diabetic supply benefits

Lifestyle Health Plans are designed for small to mid-sized employers that are looking for a flexible, wellness-inspired benefit solution

to community rating. The program platform can accommodate groups as small as two employees. This unique partnership has been made available through the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

Lifestyle Health Plans are available on an ERISA, level-funded insurance platform that uniquely blends specific and aggregate stop-loss insurance protection together at a fixed cost. Regardless of a company’s claims in any given plan year, companies will never pay more than the monthly cost quoted. The rates are the rates, period.

The program has a variety of Ohio-based regional networks to provide medical care, as well as PHCS (Multiplan) and First Health, two of the nation’s largest PPOs. The regional network partners currently include Cofinity, Ohio PPO Connect and Health Ohio Network. By choosing from multiple national and regionally based PPO networks, companies are matched to the best providers possible. As with any change in carriers, some providers aren’t in every network. However, every network available is thoroughly examined during the decision-making process.

The Lifestyle Program consists of 16 major medical plan designs, along with



five Minimum Essential Coverage (MEC) plan designs. Depending upon the size of the group, companies can mix and match plan designs to provide a turnkey solution of MEC, Minimum Value and “buy up” plan options to ensure ACA compliance.

The program also offers dental and vision programs that are available at preferred (Lifestyle Participation) pricing for the Ohio Chamber. Companies will receive a complimentary quote for these products along with the Lifestyle Health Plans proposal. Options for worksite benefits, as well as life insurance, are also available.

Strategically managing health care costs is a key focus of Lifestyle Health Plans and a major strength of this program. The Lifestyle Health Plan has integrated a number of cost management programs and benefit coverage solutions into the plan design.

For questions regarding the Lifestyle Health Plans, contact Scott Colby at the Ohio Chamber of Commerce at scolby@ohiochamber.com or (614) 228-4201. 📌

THE YEAR IN REVIEW



What a year! We have spent the year celebrating 125 years of our existence and reached some major milestones to add to our history.

In January, we announced our headquarters would be moving from 230 E. Town St., where we had been since 1996, to the historic Columbus Dispatch building. For five years we had been looking for prime real estate on “the square” to be within view of the Statehouse. Well, not only is our new headquarters at 34 S. Third St. within view, it is just a few steps away. We moved into the redesigned space in mid-July and held an open house in November.

In March we launched our Opioid Toolkit. This online free resource provides Ohio employers with the information they and their employees need to battle the opioid crisis. Our partners in this project are Ohio Chamber members Anthem BlueCross/BlueShield and Working Partners. The toolkit resides on our website at www.ohiochamber.com.

Our Annual Meeting in May featured The Ohio State University head football coach Urban Meyer. Speaking

to the business-friendly crowd, Meyer explained how he has implemented “Real Life Wednesdays” as a way to prepare players for life after football. He strongly encourages his players to participate in internships or shadowing programs with Ohio companies in order to be prepared for a professional business career.

Right after Memorial Day we launched our first-ever business image campaign. Ohio Businesses...Good for Life told stories of how everyday Ohio businesses were doing things to improve lives and strengthen communities. For five months, we told 16 stories from businesses large and small from across the state. These stories were told in the form of television commercials, social media posts, billboards, and internet advertising, and still reside on the website www.ohiogoodforlife.com.

If that weren’t enough, 2018 was a big election year in our state. The first event we hosted in our new headquarters was the endorsement announcement of Mike DeWine for governor. We also endorsed in the secretary of state and attorney general races supporting the winners Frank

LaRose and David Yost. In the General Assembly, we endorsed in 76 races and two Ohio Supreme Court candidates. As of this writing, 71 of the endorsed General Assembly candidates won their races; however the Supreme Court candidates were not successful.

As we wrap up this special anniversary year, I’d like to thank the staff. Something like this doesn’t happen without good people, and we have great people at the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. I want to thank the local chambers of commerce that are wonderful working partners, and I appreciate each and every one of them. I also want to thank the elected officials, as we really appreciate working with them and being open to hearing from the Ohio Chamber on key issues in Ohio. Finally, I want to thank you, the members, for your support and membership throughout the years, and I look forward to new accomplishments for the Ohio business community over the next 125 years. 🇺🇸

Andrew E. Dechul

EDITORIAL POLICY

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POSTMASTER

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