

Ohio Matters

An Official Publication of The Ohio Chamber of Commerce

By Keith Lake, Vice President, Government Affairs

THE CENSUS MATTERS TO OHIO BUSINESS

Article I, Section 2 of the United States Constitution requires that, every 10 years, a count of every person in America be taken. The founders enshrined the census in our constitution in order to determine representation in Congress.

The U.S. Constitution requires only that the decennial census be a population count. Since the first census in 1790, however, the need for useful information about the United States' population and economy became increasingly evident.

The next decennial census will be conducted this year, and the census totals will be used not only to determine how many seats a state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives but also to allocate taxpayer dollars — more than \$675 billion in federal funds annually — fairly and efficiently for both federal programs and for every state. Each year, Ohio receives roughly \$34 billion in federal dollars based on census information, including funds for education, health care, housing and transportation.

In addition, census data is an important tool utilized by businesses every day. Employers rely on census data to make critical, data-driven business decisions about potential investments, employees, customers, products and markets. For example, employers use information from the census — such as population density, worker education levels and

transportation — to determine where to locate new facilities. Retailers use information from the census to determine what products to offer on their shelves at each store.

Because many economic and business decisions are based on products benchmarked by the decennial census, achieving an accurate population count is imperative. An inaccurate count may also impact calculations concerning the unemployment rate, interest rates, inflation rates, exports and other considerations upon which employers rely.

The accuracy of the census is critical for strengthening the economy, and an undercount of Ohioans would jeopardize the validity of data and our share of federal dollars. Unfortunately, there are many hurdles that must be overcome in order to ensure an accurate count.

In particular, there are approximately 1.5 million Ohioans who have been designated by the U.S. Census Bureau as hard-to-count populations. These include young children, highly mobile individuals, racial and ethnic minorities, non-English speakers and immigrants, low-income individuals and individuals who distrust the government. Further, those with unreliable internet access are at risk of being undercounted because Census 2020 will rely on the internet as the primary response method.

That's why the Ohio Chamber of Commerce is just one of a growing group of business and community leaders and organizations from the private and nonprofit sectors working to increase awareness of the census and reduce the likelihood of undercounts. Our own Vice President of Government Affairs Keith Lake was appointed by Gov. Mike DeWine to serve on the 2020 Ohio Complete Count Commission, which was established to develop recommendations and strategies to help get Ohioans counted.

The success of the census depends upon everyone's participation. Individual businesses have a role to play in helping achieve an accurate 2020 census, as well. In mid-March, homes across the country will begin receiving invitations to complete the 2020 census. Businesses can begin by encouraging their employees and customers to complete their census questionnaires early.

April 1, 2020 is Census Day. This day is neither the beginning of the census nor a deadline, but a day that is designated to promote the census around the country. Companies can help by participating in local census events and posting messages on social media.

Companies that interact with hard-to-count populations as employees or customers can play an especially vital role by encouraging them to participate and helping to address their concerns. Businesses can also assist by simply promoting the census in stores and offices, or go a step further and include messages promoting the census on receipts and in bills, statements, or other correspondence with customers. Because the 2020 census is designed to be taken primarily online, businesses can also provide a private common area equipped with computers or tablets and encourage employees to complete their census questionnaires at work.

Many chambers of commerce are leading efforts in their communities to encourage a complete count, and we urge you to connect with your local Complete Count Committee. Lastly, join the National Business Network for an Accurate Census. It is a free, private listserv for businesses and distributes information and provides opportunities to support the census. Learn more at strongnation.org/census.

By the end of the summer, Census 2020 will wrap up. Population totals will be sent to the president by Dec. 31. Congressional reapportionment will be determined by then, as well.

We need every resident to participate to ensure an accurate count. Please join the Ohio Chamber in this important effort to protect our economy and communities for the next decade. 📊

MARCH / APRIL 2020

GET INFORMED. 1

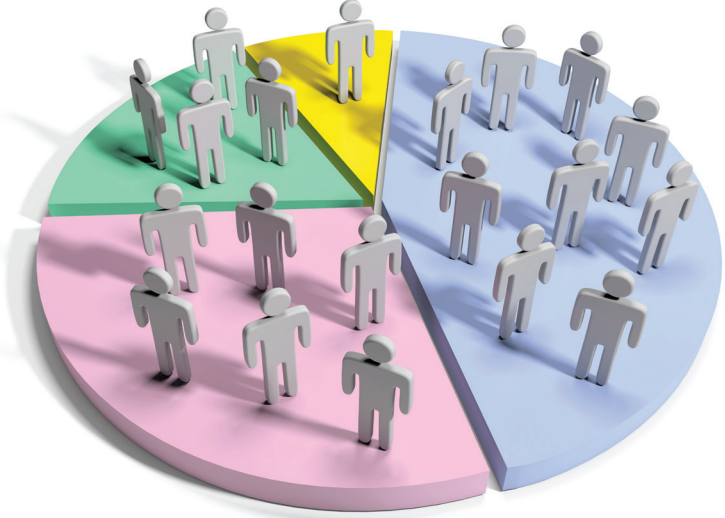
- The census matters to Ohio business
- USMCA implementation
- Amendment to increase minimum wage 50 percent

SHARE SUCCESS. 4

- BWC cuts private employer rates
- Common Sense Initiative going on the offensive
- Deadline to meet REAL ID standards approaching
- Supporting Ohio's businesses
- Exploring the future of innovation in Ohio

STAY CONNECTED. 6

- 29th annual Ohio Business Tax Conference
- New member spotlight: Good Hands Supported Living
- New members
- Annual Meeting & Legislative Reception



*You want to hear
from top-name speakers.*

*We host nationally
recognized events.*

We're all for Ohio

This year's Annual Meeting & Legislative Reception will be held on Tuesday, May 19, at the Jo Ann Davidson Theatre in the Riffe Building in downtown Columbus. The event features an internationally known business leader whose company has a large footprint in Ohio. The program will start at 3 p.m. with a fireside chat with our keynote speaker, followed by our Annual Meeting. The day will end with our ever-popular Legislative Reception at the Sheraton Columbus Hotel across from the Ohio Statehouse.

For our local chamber partners, we will be holding Chamber Day at the Capitol starting at noon on May 19. Local chamber executives, their staff and members are encouraged to attend. The program will begin with a buffet lunch and will include several speakers and a Legislative Update.

Watch your mail for more details! Sponsorship opportunities are available by contacting Ashley Brown at abrown@ohiochamber.com or (614) 629-0918.



By Daniel Ujcz, Practice Group Chair, International and Regional Practices, Dickinson Wright PLLC (Columbus, Ohio)

THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA AGREEMENT (USMCA) IMPLEMENTATION

The time to tweak, transition and transform

The implementing legislation for the new North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), presently known as the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), book-ended the start of 2020 by passing with overwhelming majorities in the U.S. House of Representatives (385-41) and Senate (89-10). President Donald Trump signed the bill on Jan. 29, 2020.

With Mexico fully ratifying its version of the legislation in mid-December 2019, Canada’s Parliament remains the lone North American partner needing to give its approval. Canada’s process is likely to conclude in late March/April 2020, setting USMCA on course to be implemented “on the first day of the third month” after Canada’s notification.

As a result, USMCA will come fully into force between this summer’s Fourth of July and Labor Day picnics. The time, therefore, is now for Ohio companies to examine the impact of the new agreement.

As a threshold manner, USMCA neither ripped up NAFTA, nor is it just a rebrand of the former deal. On the one hand, approximately 60 percent of the USMCA includes language from the original NAFTA and more recent deals such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, from which the U.S. withdrew in 2017. In short, the three countries kept the parts of NAFTA that worked.

On the other hand, USMCA is more than NAFTA 2.0, with more than 40 percent of North America’s \$1 trillion economy subject to new provisions, including the automotive sector that, along with agriculture, is the backbone of the continental economy. Companies tempted to believe that USMCA will be business as usual need to keep in mind that 193 House Democrats and 36 Senate Democrats

— including one of NAFTA’s leading critics, Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown — voted yes on Trump’s USMCA. Clearly, something is different about USMCA compared to NAFTA, and there are significant implications for Ohio businesses.

Indeed, the USMCA is a renovation of the North American economy. The first phase of the renovation is a fresh coat of paint on nearly 20 chapters of the original NAFTA that will likely have positive impacts on Ohio’s food processors, chemical and coatings industries, agricultural producers and small and medium-sized enterprises.

The second phase of the renovation includes adding new 21st century fixtures and appliances, including a new digital trade chapter, a customs and trade facilitation chapter that locks in improvements to the movement of goods across borders developed since Sept. 11, 2011, intellectual property upgrades and more mid-range provisions that will have the three countries aligning regulatory processes and potentially issuing joint approvals for new products and technologies.

In exchange for these pro-business upgrades, the last phase of the renovation includes knocking down walls and building new structures. USMCA’s architects designed these provisions to stop the flow of non-North American-made products (e.g., China-sourced goods) from receiving duty-free treatment, launch the labor reforms in Mexico to rebalance the southward migration of jobs and investment, and settle a number of one-off disputes such as dairy quotas in Canada, wheat grading standards, Mexican trucking issues, wines sales in Canada and even whether Canadian broadcasters need to show U.S. commercials during their broadcasts of the Super Bowl.

As any party that has every knocked down a few walls during a renovation knows, the costs always skyrocket, the delays last a bit longer than anticipated and the disruption

is more than imagined. USMCA implementation will be no different.

To mitigate these risks, companies should be pursuing three strategies between now and the summer.

TWEAKING AND TRANSITIONING FORMS AND PROCESSES

All companies that presently rely on NAFTA will need to make some changes to their forms and processes in the leadup to USMCA. While many of the USMCA’s provisions may look akin to NAFTA, many of the chapter numbers, terminology and other procedural matters are different.

Standard terms and conditions, manuals, procedures and forms will need to be updated. On a more substantive level, between now and the summer’s implementation date, the three countries will be developing the Uniform Regulations, which are the agency (e.g., U.S. Customs and Border Protection) guidelines and procedures that companies will use on a day-to-day basis to operationalize USMCA.

Companies should examine the USMCA to determine whether changes and/or clarifications need to be made via the Uniform Regulations in order to minimize (or enhance) USMCA’s impact on existing operations. Additionally, changes relating to the length of intellectual property protections, customs procedures at ports of entry (particularly along the U.S.-Mexico border), audit protocols and enhanced ways for determining duty-free treatment require close review.

To start, companies should internally review all of their current uses of NAFTA and cross reference to USMCA. Our experience conducting internal compliance audits regarding USMCA implementation with hundreds of companies has revealed that this minimal front-end investment of time and administrative resources may lead to large efficiency gains given the improvements presented in the

USMCA.

At the very least, companies that engage in this activity now will have a competitive advantage vis a vis their less prepared competitors when the USMCA bell rings later this summer.

TRANSITIONING TO VERIFYING SUPPLIERS’ SUPPLIERS

The leading objective for the Trump administration in renovating North American trade was to prevent non-North American products from receiving the benefits of USMCA treatment. The agreement advances these priorities in a number of ways, such as establishing a monitoring mechanism for all foreign steel and aluminum, requiring that 70 percent of all steel and aluminum used in the automotive sector actually be derived from North America (and, in seven years, all steel used in autos will actually need to be melted and poured in North America) and ensuring that some large automotive parts can never be made outside of North America.

The USMCA places increased responsibilities on North America’s importers of record — that is, your company — to ensure that all goods receiving USMCA treatment are “Made in North America.” This was the case in NAFTA; however, over the past two decades, the amount of North American content in NAFTA supply chains dropped from the required 60 percent or higher to approximately 45 percent in practice. The USMCA establishes new approaches to raise these thresholds in both form and in substance.

Specifically, most NAFTA companies are familiar with the Certificate of Origin (CoO). Companies that claim NAFTA duty-free treatment would produce a CoO on a prescribed form and then provide the same to their customers. Those customers, in turn, may pass the products and the CoO through the supply chain.

The USMCA, as part of its red-tape-
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CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WOULD INCREASE OHIO’S MINIMUM WAGE BY 50 PERCENT

By Kevin Shimp, Director, Labor and Legal Affairs

Ohio’s two largest public labor unions seek to bypass Ohio’s legislature to set the state’s minimum wage. The proposed amendment was filed with the attorney general’s office in February and would dramatically increase the Buckeye State’s minimum wage, while also mandating annual increases.

The amendment would increase Ohio’s minimum wage starting in 2021 to \$9.60 per hour — a 10 percent increase from the 2020 minimum wage of \$8.70 per hour. Then, for the next four years, the rate would escalate 85 cents each year — a rate that far exceeds inflation

or cost of living adjustments — until it reaches \$13 per hour in 2025. After 2025, the minimum wage is tied to the Consumer Price Index and will go up annually every January.

This proposal mirrors another ballot initiative that labor groups put before voters in 2006 that indexed the minimum wage to inflation. At the time, labor groups said that tying the minimum wage to inflation would guarantee the minimum wage kept pace with the rising costs of living. The voters approved the amendment in 2006, so for more than a dozen years,

Ohio’s minimum wage has already been increased every year at the same rate as inflation.

Yet labor groups are coming back with a new proposal to raise the minimum wage to a level far exceeding inflation and will undoubtedly seek to raise the minimum wage even higher in the future, regardless of the outcome of this current amendment.

According to media reports, the two labor unions behind this ballot proposal are the Service Employees International Union District 1199 and

the Ohio Education Association. The unions also believe national groups will fund their campaign to enact the amendment if it qualifies for the ballot. Likewise, the Ohio AFL-CIO, Ohio’s largest labor union, has agreed to assist in the signature-gathering process.

At a time when there are more open jobs than workers to fill positions, this proposed amendment does nothing to upskill workers to assure they have the training and education that will land them a job paying well above the minimum wage. This proposed

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THE UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA
AGREEMENT (USMCA) IMPLEMENTATION

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cutting efforts, eliminates the CoO form. Companies need to provide similar data elements to verify North American origin but can do so on purchase orders or other forms. This undoubtedly will alleviate some of the form-producing burdens confronted by companies operating in the NAFTA environment.

However, the record-keeping responsibility still rests on the importer of record. Companies will need to develop record-keeping processes to verify origin and maintain those records for at least six years.

Of greater significance, in-house counsel, CFOs, customs compliance managers and procurement/purchasing officers will need to wean themselves off relying solely on their supplier's CoO. No longer can a U.S. company take comfort in its Mexican supplier importing from around the world, manufacturing in Mexico, issuing a CoO and then the U.S. relying on certificate as a de facto get out of jail free card in the event of a customs issue.

Rather, all companies need to verify their suppliers' suppliers. Right now, companies need to ask their North American suppliers to verify origin under the USMCA and provide the underlying documentation supporting those claims. U.S.-CBP will be on the lookout post USMCA implementation. The USMCA, combined with changing policies regarding China tariffs and others, make customs compliance a high priority for USMCA implementation.

A TRANSFORMED LABOR
ENVIRONMENT IN
NORTH AMERICA

The USMCA, coupled with Mexico's domestic legislation, provides

the largest labor reform on the continent since the New Deal. U.S. Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi only agreed to advance the USMCA implementing legislation after nearly a year of negotiations regarding strengthening the USMCA's labor and enforcement provisions.

These changes include a new collective bargaining regime in Mexico that seeks to eliminate company-sponsored unions, provide freedom of association and secret ballots, and establishes labor tribunals, all subject to a rapid response labor enforcement mechanism. This enforcement mechanism includes monitors and inspections and, where needed, may remove duty-free treatment from Mexican facilities deemed to be in violation of the agreement.

The potential changes to your company's operations in and/or sourcing from Mexico cannot be overstated. Ohio companies must be vigilant about these proposed and ongoing changes in Mexico and review labor practices within the company and with Mexican suppliers.

The renovation of North American trade is under way. Now is the time to put on the hardhat and safety goggles and tweak, transition and potentially transform your company's continental operations.

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). 📧

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT WOULD INCREASE
OHIO'S MINIMUM WAGE BY 50 PERCENT

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amendment also ignores the fact that the free market is currently addressing wage issues in our state. Numerous companies, ranging from the largest employers to locally owned businesses, have independently chosen to raise their minimum wage over the last several years. These employers did not need a law to provide a higher wage but instead chose to raise their wage to attract and retain talented workers.

The Ohio Chamber believes the market will continue to raise Ohioans' wages, which makes artificial increases as proposed by this new amendment unnecessary.

The proposed \$13 minimum wage is far from taking effect, however. In Ohio, once a constitutional amendment and its summary are delivered to the attorney general's office, the attorney general has 10 days to certify the summary is a fair and truthful statement of the proposed amendment. After certification by the attorney general, the Ohio Ballot Board has 10 days to certify the amendment contains only one proposed amendment and return the amendment to the attorney general.

The attorney general then files a copy of the amendment with the secretary of state and proponents of the amendment can begin gathering signatures. In order to qualify for the ballot, the proponents must collect enough signatures to equal 10 percent of the total votes cast in the most recent gubernatorial election — currently 442,958 signatures — and they must obtain signatures in 44 counties. Additionally, in those 44 counties, they must gather at least enough signatures to equal 5 percent of the total votes cast in the county at the last gubernatorial election.

The proponents are now in the signature-gathering phase and must submit the prerequisite signatures to the secretary of state no later than July 1 to meet the statutory deadline, which requires submitting signatures 125 days prior to election day.

At the Ohio Chamber, we will continue monitoring the progress of the proposed constitutional amendment, because if the proposal is on the ballot this November, it raises the stakes of the 2020 election even higher for the business community in the Buckeye State. 📧

By Kevin Shimp, Director, Labor & Legal Affairs

BWC CUTS PRIVATE EMPLOYER
RATES FOR THIRD YEAR IN A ROW

At the Bureau of Workers' Compensation Board of Directors committee meetings on Jan. 30, 2020, staff recommended a 13 percent private employer premium rate reduction. This rate reduction will save employers across the state over \$132 million next fiscal year and is the third-largest decrease since 1960, following the largest last year.

The rate reduction, approved by the BWC's board of directors on Feb. 28, comes after a 20 percent premium reduction last year and a rebate of \$1.5 billion this fall. It also represents the third rate cut in three years and the 11th cut in 12 years.

"We feel it's appropriate to significantly reduce rates this year because our covered employees continue to experience fewer and less costly claims, and the recent medical inflation rate has been relatively low," says BWC Administrator/CEO Stephanie McCloud.

While the actual premium costs will vary by individual employers, lower workers' compensation costs are good for all employers. It shows that Ohio workplaces are safer, employees are experiencing fewer injuries and investments into safety grants by BWC are working.

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce believes a 13 percent private employer premium rate cut is prudent because it will help assure employer's rates remain stable, even if investment returns take a step back, the number of filed claims goes up, or the cost of those claims spikes.

This premium reduction comes at a time when the Ohio House is

considering legislation that seeks to remove the physical injury requirement from Ohio law for an entire class of employees for the first time. If the legislation goes into effect, it will jeopardize future premium rate cuts, as workers' compensation costs will increase due to the expansion of coverage to purely mental conditions.

The rate reduction is effective July 1, saving private employers \$131.6 million over this year's premiums. It follows a 10 percent rate reduction for public employers — counties, cities, schools and others — that went into effect Jan. 1. Overall, the average rate levels for the 249,000 private and public Ohio employers in the BWC system are at their lowest in at least 40 years.

Premiums paid to BWC not only cover health care and lost wages for injured workers, they also support BWC's Safety & Hygiene Division, which offers training, consultations and other services to help employers improve workplace safety. Employer participation in these services has grown by more than 70 percent since 2010. Total annual claims, meanwhile, have fallen 19 percent over that time, to 84,364 in 2019.

The 13 percent rate cut represents an average statewide change and does not include the costs related to the administrative cost fund or other funds BWC administers. The actual premium paid by individual private employers depends on several factors, including the expected future claims costs in their industry, their company's recent claims history and their participation in various BWC programs. 📧

CHAMBER DAY
AT THE
CAPITOL

For local chamber members, their staffs and their members
Sheraton Hotel Columbus
Tuesday, May 19 • Noon to 2:30

This is a special program for local chamber executives, their staff and their members. The program will include selected speakers and the always popular Legislative Update from the Ohio Chamber of Commerce's Government Affairs staff. A buffet lunch will be provided. The cost of this program is included in the cost of your Annual Meeting registration. Local chamber executives and their staff members can attend Chamber Day, Annual Meeting and the Legislative Reception for a special price. Watch your mail for details.

If you have any questions about Chamber Day, please contact Sherry Heffner at sheffner@ohiochamber.com or Anthony Lagunzad at alagunzad@ohiochamber.com. For questions about the Annual Meeting and the Legislative Reception, please contact Ashley Brown at abrown@ohiochamber.com or (614) 629-0918.

By Lt. Gov. Jon Husted

COMMON SENSE INITIATIVE GOING ON THE OFFENSIVE

Gov. Mike DeWine and I have set the goal of making Ohio the most innovative, creative and entrepreneurial state in the Midwest. At the Common Sense Initiative (CSI-Ohio), we are tackling one important part of that — reviewing state regulations through the eyes of Ohio’s businesses and job creators so we can remove barriers to economic growth.

Unfortunately, when the governor and I took office, CSI faced a backlog of over 1,200 unreviewed rules. An initiative designed to cut through bureaucracy had become part of the bureaucracy itself.

I made it a priority to clear that backlog, and within the first 100 days of our new administration, we accomplished that goal. Throughout 2019, CSI received 1,700 comments from businesses and the public on 2,829 rules, 52 percent of which were improved by the CSI process. You can read more about CSI’s rule review and other accomplishments in the 2019 Annual Report at CSI.Ohio.gov.

Now that CSI is caught up, we are going on offense. Ohio has over 200 years of rules and regulations that have been patched together in a way that no one person or team of people can effectively review them and emerge with a recommendation for significant change. A 2018 report from the Mercatus Center at George



Ohio currently has over 240,000 regulations that would take a person 21 weeks to read.

Mason University estimated that Ohio currently has over 240,000 regulations that would take a person 21 weeks to read.

That is why we’ve just launched a project through CSI, in partnership with InnovateOhio, that uses text analytics and artificial intelligence to analyze Ohio’s rules. Any regulatory topic can be researched and analyzed in seconds. In partnership with CSI staff, we are going to use this new tool to bring comprehensive regulatory reform to Ohio.

We believe Ohio is the first state in the nation to use artificial intelligence to tackle regulatory reform on this scale. As we work with this new tool, it would be helpful to hear from you about areas where Ohio’s regulations have created unnecessary obstacles or are outdated and may benefit from a focused review. Help us help you. Please share your thoughts with us by emailing CSIOhio@governor.ohio.gov or calling (855)821-8898.

Provided by the Ohio Department of Public Safety

DEADLINE TO MEET FEDERAL REAL ID STANDARDS QUICKLY APPROACHING

The REAL ID Act, passed by Congress in 2005, requires all state-issued driver’s license/identification DL/ID cards that will be used for identification purposes for federally regulated tasks to comply with guidelines established by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. The strengthened federal requirements standardize the process of issuing DL/ID cards throughout the country to prevent identity theft and fraud.

Effective Oct. 1, 2020, the state-issued identification that airline passengers present at Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screening checkpoints for boarding a commercial airline must be REAL ID compliant. REAL ID compliant cards will also be needed to gain access to federal buildings.

Federally compliant cards include a number of enhanced security features and are marked with a black star in the right-hand corner.

Customers obtaining a REAL ID will be required to provide documentation at a deputy registrar location proving their name and date of birth (such as a birth certificate or passport), Social Security number (such as a Social Security card or most recent W2), and two additional documents proving residential address, such as a utility bill or bank statement. Those who have changed their names must also provide a certified marriage certificate, divorce decree, U.S. passport, or court order with their legal name.

The Ohio BMV has a full list of documents that Ohioans can use to obtain a REAL ID at www.bmv.ohio.gov. The website also has an



interactive checklist to help Ohioans create a customized, printable list of documents.

Some customers may also take advantage of the new Get in Line, Online virtual queuing system, which allows customers to advance in line at the BMV without physically waiting in the office. After checking in online, customers have a four-hour window to arrive at the deputy registrar location, check in at a self-service kiosk and claim their spot in line.

DL/IDs are now printed offsite at a secure, central location. While at the deputy registrar, the customer will receive a paper interim document and the old DL/ID card will be perforated to visually indicate a new license is in the process of being issued. Customers must carry this paper document, along with the perforated card, until their new DL/ID arrives in the mail. The new DL/ID will arrive in a plain white envelope within seven to 10 days.

For more information, please visit www.bmv.ohio.gov or call (614) 752-7500.

By Ohio Treasurer Robert Sprague

SUPPORTING OHIO’S BUSINESSES

A thriving business community is critical to our state’s prosperity. Your stories are sewn into Ohio’s success story, and we’re proud of what you do each day not only for yourselves but the people of our state.

As treasurer, I’ve made it a priority to partner with Ohio’s business community. It’s hard work running a business, and I want to ensure the treasurer’s office is a valuable resource to you.

Under Ohio law, the treasury can invest up to 12 percent of the state’s portfolio in economic development efforts. We do this by facilitating interest rate reductions through four linked deposit loan programs — GrowNOW, ReEnergize Ohio, ECO-Link and Ag-LINK.

Interest rate reductions make borrowing more affordable, which improves financial stability and allows businesses to retain talent, hire new employees and increase overall productivity. These four particular programs are serving business owners, farmers and homeowners throughout Ohio.

Once a qualifying applicant is approved for a loan at an eligible lending institution, the treasurer’s office deposits funds at that institution, receiving a below-market interest rate on the deposit. The lending institution then passes the interest savings on to the borrower via a reduced interest rate on the loan.

- Through GrowNOW, small business owners can receive a reduction of up to 3 percent on the interest rate on small business loans. To use this program, small business owners must commit to the creation or retention of at least one full-time job or two part-time jobs in Ohio for every \$50,000 borrowed.
- ReEnergize Ohio is designed specifically to help small businesses through a reduction of up to 3 percent on interest rates. These loans must be used to renovate existing buildings, expand operations, upgrade equipment, or install energy-saving products and systems.

- ECO-Link assists homeowners with financing home improvement projects, including restoration, natural disaster recovery and energy-efficiency upgrades. While ECO-Link helps homeowners save money through lower interest rates, it also supports Ohio’s economy by stimulating the businesses providing products and services to homeowners.
- The treasurer’s office has long administered the Ag-LINK program to help farmers and agribusinesses finance upfront operating costs for feed, seed, fertilizer and fuel. As one of Ohio’s biggest economic drivers, supporting agriculture and agribusiness is a priority of my administration. In line with our mission of bold innovation, we moved in February 2019 to implement a 1 percent minimum interest rate discount for Ag-LINK borrowers.

In spring 2019, extreme weather took a devastating toll on many parts of Ohio, leaving more than one in seven



acres of Ohio farmland unplanted. With a staggering figure like that, we wanted to assist the hard-hit agriculture industry. In July, we reopened the application period for the Ag-LINK program to alleviate some of these difficulties. During the special application period, more than 150 farmers and agribusinesses were able to receive lower interest rates on loans totaling over \$18 million.

More information on all of our linked deposit programs can be found on our website at http://ohiotreasurer.gov/Economic_Development.

A NEW PROGRAM
We’re also in the process of establishing a fifth linked deposit

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SUPPORTING OHIO'S BUSINESSES
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loan program to invest further in Ohio's families. In November, I partnered with State Rep. Jon Cross to announce an initiative aimed at easing the financial burden placed on families seeking to adopt.

Family Forward will help families manage adoption-related costs, which can range from \$10,000 to \$50,000 for a private adoption. Under the proposal, individuals and families may be eligible for reduced interest loans that can be used for qualified expenses such as adoption agency expenses, court expenses and legal fees, expenses incurred on behalf of the birth mother, health and psychological examination fees and home studies.

Across Ohio, families want to open their hearts and homes through adoption. Through Family Forward, we hope to chip away at financial stressors and provide families with much-needed relief.

Our office's programs help create jobs, promote financial stability, support Ohio's farmers and will strengthen families. I am committed to ensuring business owners — and all Ohioans — have access to the opportunities and programs offered through the treasurer's office. These programs are strengthening our communities, and I believe investing in our businesses and families is one of the best things we can do to create a brighter future for Ohio. 🍷

OHIO CHAMBER RESEARCH FOUNDATION EXPLORES THE FUTURE OF INNOVATION IN OHIO IN LUNCH, LEARN & LEAD DISCUSSION SERIES



OHIO CHAMBER of COMMERCE
RESEARCH FOUNDATION

The Ohio Chamber Research Foundation held its second meeting for its Lunch, Learn & Lead Discussion Series at the end of November 2019. Focused on the future of innovation in Ohio, the event, "Planning for the Future of Innovation in Ohio," brought together policymakers and industry leaders to unveil the pivotal point that Ohio's economy is at in its innovation future.

The panel discussion was a follow-up to the Research Foundation's July 2018 report, "Ohio BOLD: A Blueprint for Accelerating the Innovation Economy," a report that detailed ways in which driving innovation in the state's industrial base will ensure future global competitiveness. On the panel were Bill Baumel, managing director of the Ohio Innovation Fund, John Mellwraith, managing director of Allos Ventures, Matt Peters, assistant director for the Ohio Development Services Agency (DSA), and Aaron Pitts, senior managing director at JobsOhio.

The panel examined the impact of their individual organizations in Ohio's innovation space, as well as the goals, challenges and steps being taken to keep Ohio at the forefront of the innovation discussion. With job growth slowing in Ohio and neighboring states, the importance of recruiting talent, collaboration between companies and universities, and maintaining balance when it comes to investments and capital were all points of discussion.

"By taking several key steps to present a unified framework and align the various efforts of all of the entities operating collaboratively in the entrepreneurial space, Ohio can reclaim its position as a regional and national leader in innovation and capital investment," says Brian K. Hicks, president and CEO of Hicks Partners LLC and president of the Ohio Chamber Research Foundation's Board of Directors. "We appreciate the officials from DSA and

JobsOhio, as well as the capital investment experts, for sharing their views and helping to identify a path to greater success moving forward."

Some recommendations from the panel discussion include:

- Create a new venture capital "fund of funds" to catalyze an increase in the number of Ohio-based venture capital funds and the amount of capital targeting early stage companies in Ohio.
- Develop a program to allow Ohio, through JobsOhio or other entities, to co-invest with other Ohio-focused investors into young companies with high growth potential.
- Facilitate creation of one or more life sciences and/or medical technology venture capital funds.
- Increase efforts to attract talent to help grow promising startup companies.
- Engage corporate and nonprofit institutions that produce technology, talent and intellectual property to be more coordinated in their approach, more aggressive in their outreach and more impactful in their results.
- Determine and articulate a clear future for the Ohio Third Frontier program.
- Better align the various programs among JobsOhio, DSA, OTF and InnovateOhio.

For more information, visit www.ohiochamberfoundation.com/projects, or contact Executive Director of the Ohio Chamber Research Foundation Justin Barnes at jbarnes@ohiochamber.com. 🍷

29TH ANNUAL OHIO BUSINESS TAX CONFERENCE

A RECAP FOR THOSE WHO MAY NOT LIKE TAXES

By Tony Long, Director, Tax & Economic Policy

The 29th annual Ohio Tax Conference recently wrapped up in Columbus, Ohio. For the casual reader, do not worry, this article will not delve into the Tax Reform Act, the application of GILTI at the state taxation level, or any of a number of other hot topics in the field of taxation.

The conference held over two days in late January always brings the weather into play. However, this year the weather was quite balmy, and speakers faced no weather delays at airports or on the highways. In past years, the winter weather has become part of the lore of the Ohio Tax Conference in trade magazines and newsletters. One year, the snow was so bad that a few speakers were delayed, and the conference had to rely on speakers already at the conference who had to speak with little to no preparation. We got through that conference and others that either delayed speakers, canceled dinners, or required coats to be worn during one of the coldest conferences held in a hotel near the airport.

This year, the conference attracted over 575 attendees who participated in six plenary sessions and then chose from 44 breakout sessions in five time slots. The conference also offered two optional ethics sessions for professionals who needed ethics hours for annual certification.

These optional sessions have been hugely successful, even though one is offered at 7:30 a.m. on day two of the conference.

In past years, the conference attendance has waxed and waned as new tax issues or topics became more settled. For example, during the infancy of the Commercial Activity Tax (CAT), attendance climbed to nearly 900. The CAT drew a crowd because it was one of only a few gross receipts tax structures in the country, and Ohio was phasing out its business income (franchise) tax regime. For a few years, conference attendees debated whether the broad base and low rate of the CAT would hold together.

As tax professionals became more familiar with CAT, the Ohio Business Tax Conference fell back to a normative attendance, like that at this year's conference. Our friends at COST once commented that they were amazed so many tax professionals chose to attend a conference in Ohio during the heart of winter. I like to think it is because of the quality of topics offered and the opportunity to network with other tax professionals, including employees from the Ohio Department of Taxation.

This year the Ohio Department of Taxation provided 21 speakers for the



sessions. The sessions also included speakers from Washington, D.C., Indiana, Pennsylvania, Michigan, California, Georgia, Kentucky, Connecticut, New York, West Virginia, Texas, Illinois, Oregon, Washington, Ontario and British Columbia. Although the focus of the conference remained on Ohio tax matters, the conference also examined taxation in other states and cross-border transactions with Canada. The Canadian sessions allow tax professionals to hear about similar transaction taxes in the Canadian provinces and the impact of the CAT on international transactions.

This year the conference included a session on the emerging blockchain technology. This topic and its application to tax compliance, supply chain transactions and real property titling will make it a go-to session for the next several years.

The two-day conference provided attendees an opportunity to hear about Ohio legislation impacting the tax community from several state legislators and the emerging technologies used by company tax departments. The conference also

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provided a refresher on Ohio taxes, Ohio court cases and information about the Ohio Department of Taxation. Along with valuable information gained from the conference, the conference provided networking opportunities with state tax department employees, state legislators, economists and fellow tax practitioners.

Finally, the lunch speaker on day one was the Ohio tax commissioner, who gave an update on the operations of the department. That speech was followed by the announcement of James Seiwert as the newest member of the Ohio Tax Hall of Fame. Seiwert recently retired from Owens Illinois and was the longtime chair of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce Tax Committee and emcee of the Ohio Tax Conference.

Lunch on day two included a presentation on the short-term outlook for the U.S. economy. Those in attendance heard good news on the prediction of a continuation of the strong and steady economy.

I encourage anyone in the tax profession, whether you work in policy, compliance, or economic development, to block off the last week of January on your calendar to attend the 30th annual Ohio Business Tax Conference in 2021. I look forward to seeing you there. 🇺🇸

NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT:
GOOD HANDS SUPPORTED LIVING



High-quality and inclusive care are the sole priorities for Good Hands Supported Living, one of the newest members of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce.

Good Hands Supported Living provides daycare services to adults with developmental disabilities. With locations in Columbus, Circleville and Chillicothe, the adult daycare service provider strives to create an inviting and caring atmosphere that provides services to individuals without regard to ethnicity, cultural diversity, handicap or disability.

Since 2001, the 80-employee company has provided services that include group activities and events like Zumba, art therapy or DIY activities. Through continual training, staff members are also able to provide home and personal care services to help with functional limitations. Good Hands Supported Living is also dedicated to the safety of its consumers, ensuring the installation of security surveillance on all of its facilities as well as fitting its transportation systems with GPS tracking and two-way camera monitoring.

Its commitment to safe and continued training for employees is a testament to its focus on improving Ohio’s workforce, says Michelle Green, director of operations, who has been with the company for 10 years.

“Good Hands Supported Living joined the Ohio Chamber to be a part of a team that focuses on improving the workforce for Ohio employees,” says Green.

To learn more about Good Hands Supported Living, visit www.ghslohio.org.

Find Good Hands Supported Living on Facebook, as well. 🇺🇸



NEW MEMBERS

1800 Packouts Midwest, Cincinnati
Academy Games Inc., Fremont
Allegiant Air, Las Vegas
Alpha 1 Induction Service Center Inc., Columbus
Beck’s Construction Co., Napoleon
Bell & Blaire LLC, Akron
Bella’s Lawn and Landscape LLC, Toledo
Benefits Analysis Corp., Troy
Best Insurance & Financial Services LLC, Edon
Black Gate Partners, Columbus
Butler County Lumber Co., Hamilton
C&A Benefits Group LLC, Dublin
C&J Contractors, Cleveland
Cahill Insurance & Financial Services LLC, Bay Village
Central OH Paper & Packaging Inc., dba Breckenridge Paper & Packaging, Huron
Collamore Built LLC, Columbus
Corporate Plans LLC, dba CPI-HR, Solon
Creno’s Pizza Co., Nashport
Crowl Lumber Co. Inc., Malvern
DCW Group, Boardman
DeGeorge Ceilings of SW Ohio Inc., Hamilton
Don’s Automotive Group, Wauseon
Dr. Marino & Associates, Cuyahoga Falls
E&A Pizza LLC, Nashport
Evans Wealth Management, Gallipolis

We welcome the following new members to the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. These companies have joined the Ohio Chamber since Jan. 1, 2020. We look forward to working with all of these new companies as they are #allforohio.

Field Underwriters Agency Inc., Dayton	Megadeal Pizza Inc., Chillicothe	Ron Corsaro Insurance Agency Inc., Mentor
FRSTeam by DKS Dry Cleaning Restoration, Parma	METSS Corp., Westerville	Roosters Canton Inc., Canton
Gerbus Remodeling, Cincinnati	Miller Body Shop Sales and Service, Montpelier	Sage Partners LLC, Middleburg Hts.
Good Hands Supported Living, Columbus	Mitchell Golf Cart & Equipment Co., Tipp City	Schaefer Box & Pallet Co., Hamilton
Greif Inc., Delaware	Mt. Orab Food Court, Mt. Orab	Simmons & Simmons Insurance, Athens
Grinstead Insurance Services, Pickerington	Nemsys, Toledo	Stapleton Insurance Group, Toledo
Hagerty, Dublin	New Era Benefits Consulting Ltd., Akron	Stoddard NLA LLC, Highland Heights
Hardy Financial Group Inc., Lima	Open Systems of Cleveland Inc., Oakwood Village	Tabtronics Inc., Dayton
Hartshorn Financial Services LLC, Granville	OPOC.us, Worthington	Tartan Insurance Agency, Youngstown
IFYE Association of the USA Inc., Plain City	PepsiCo, Raleigh	Timothy J. Bright, D.O. Inc., Johnstown
Imperial Renovation and Designs, Dublin	Perna’s Janitorial Service LLC, Parma	Uber, Pittsburgh
Industrial Fastener Supply, Hamilton	Pinecrest Nursery & Garden Center, West Chester Township	United Benefits Agency Inc., Cincinnati
Insurance Office of Central Ohio Inc., New Albany	Rider+Reinke Financial Group, Hilliard	Universe Electric LLC, Columbus
IntelliPak Ltd., Novelty	Rinehart, Walters & Danner InsuranceAgency Inc., Mansfield	USI Insurance Services LLC, Cincinnati
Jerry’s Do-It Center, Wellston		Village of Beverly, Beverly
Jersey Township, Pataskala		VSP Vision Care Ranch, Corodova, California
Kalcor Coatings Co., Willoughby		
Keystone Insurance & Benefits Group LLC, Dover		
Lake Humane Society, Mentor		
Lang Financial Group Inc., Cincinnati		
Linden Grove School, Cincinnati		
Luxaire Cushion Co., Newton Falls		
McInturf-Fulmer Insurance Group, Zanesville		
McManamon Financial Services, Cleveland		



IF IT IS SPRING, IT'S ANNUAL MEETING TIME

I am happy to announce that we have our date, time, place and keynote speaker for our upcoming Annual Meeting & Legislative Reception. This year's event will be held on Tuesday, May 19, at the Jo Ann Davidson Theatre in the Riffe building across from the Statehouse in downtown Columbus. Our keynote speaker this year is **Jamie Dimon, CEO of JPMorgan Chase & Co.**, Ohio's 10th-largest employer and the state's largest financial employer. All members of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce are invited to attend, so please let all of your interested staff know.

This year we are going to flip our program. Doors will open for seating at 2:30 p.m. Dimon will speak first starting at 3 p.m., with the business portion of our meeting conducted afterward. The fireside chat format was so popular that we are going to do that again with Dimon, where he will be interviewed on stage and then take questions from the audience.

The business portion of the program will be led by the our Board of Directors Chairman Jeff Walters, with our Treasurer Melissa Ingwersen giving the financial report. We will also elect our board of directors and will send out the



list of candidates 30 days prior to the election. Finally, we will be recognizing some of our top local chamber partners.

After the Annual Meeting, all attendees are invited to join us at our Legislative Reception. The reception will again be held at the Sheraton Columbus Hotel, a block from the theater. All members of the Ohio General Assembly are invited to join us, as well. The reception is a great place to meet with other chamber members and your elected officials

and an easy way to show the legislators that businesses care about public policy.

Again this year we will be hosting Chamber Day at the Capitol for our local chamber partners and their members. The event is held at the Sheraton Columbus Hotel prior to our Annual Meeting. This year, Chamber Day will begin at noon with a buffet lunch and include selected speakers and the informative Legislative Update given by our government affairs staff. This event is planned specifically for our local chamber members, their staffs and their members.

If you are thinking of coming to Columbus this spring, make sure it is on Tuesday, May 19, for our Annual Meeting & Legislative Reception. More information will be mailed to you, including the official invitation. Registration can be done online at www.ohiochamber.com. Sponsorship opportunities are available as well by contacting Ashley Brown at (614) 629-0918 or abrown@ohiochamber.com.

We look forward to seeing you in Columbus on May 19. 🇺🇸

Andrew E. Deebul



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POSTMASTER

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be mighty.

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For more information, visit ohiochamber.com and click on "Learn More."

¹ 25% savings based on Q1 2020 UnitedHealthcare internal analysis for average price comparison between UnitedHealthcare plans in Ohio.
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