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**RH RESOURCES**

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**Week in Review**

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As a service to the clients and friends of Governmental Policy Group, Inc. and RH Resources we would like to extend the following weekly update of events happening around Capitol Square.

**ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

The Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Pharmacy and Therapeutics Committee voted Wednesday to expand its list of "preferred" medication-assisted opioid treatments to include buprenorphine and to remove prior authorization requirements for it, making it easier to prescribe the drug in combination with Vivitrol, a long-acting injected version of naltrexone which is already a preferred medication-assisted opioid treatment without prior authorization requirements. Ohio Department of Medicaid (ODM) Press Secretary Tom Betti told *Hannah News* Thursday that these recommendations, which ODM Director Barbara Sears supports, will go into effect Jan. 1, 2019. In addition to the medication assisted treatment drugs, ODM is also including Hepatitis C and diabetes medications on these standardized preferred drug lists.

**AGING**

Starting on Saturday, Sept. 29, Ohio law greatly expanded the number of individuals required to report suspicions of elder abuse, neglect or exploitation. Mandatory reporters now include many

more individuals in the financial services, legal and medical professions -- for example, pharmacists, dialysis technicians, firefighters, first responders, building inspectors, CPAs, real estate agents, bank employees, financial planners and notary publics.

## **BALLOT ISSUES**

The Yes on Issue 1 campaign launched a statewide television ad buy, the first of the election season, urging Ohio voters to adopt the proposed constitutional amendment that would require probation over prison sentences in many possession cases. The 30-second spot titled "We Need More Treatment" features drug treatment provider Ed Sweeney talking about the need to reduce the number of people who are addicted to drugs in prisons and invest those savings into drug treatment.

The Ohio Chapter of the Christian Coalition of America announced it has begun running ads in support of Issue 1.

The Ohio Legislative Black Caucus (OLBC) endorsed Issue 1 Thursday, saying the constitutional amendment would expand access to addiction treatment and offer hope to addicts by reducing felony drug possession charges to misdemeanors. OLBC President Rep. Stephanie Howse (D-Cleveland) said at the endorsement news conference that current drug laws are "giving people a lifelong sentence when you give them the title of 'felon.'"

## **FY18-19 BUDGET**

State tax revenues are on target through the first quarter of FY19, according to preliminary figures from the Office of Budget and Management (OBM), as tax revenue edged slightly past forecasts in September.

## **BUSINESS/CORPORATE**

Columbus is the nation's top "rising" city for start-up businesses, *Forbes* announced Monday, and Cincinnati is sixth. The list was developed in partnership with Washington, D.C.-based venture capital firm Revolution and revealed at *Forbes'* "Under 30 Summit," at which Gov. John Kasich was a speaker. While 75 percent of venture capital funding is focused on California, New York and Massachusetts, the announcement said, "there is a developing class of cities with booming startup scenes beyond the coasts" and Revolution has a "Rise of the Rest seed fund" to support businesses in underserved cities. Author and investor J.D. Vance is the fund's managing partner, and its investment roster includes Quicken Loans founder and JACK Entertainment chairman Dan Gilbert.

## **CHILDREN/FAMILIES**

While both Republicans and Democrats have accepted the evidence that the social and economic benefits of investing in early childhood programs are enormous, Build-A-Bear Founder Maxine Clark said she doesn't understand why implementation of these programs is being slow-footed in many cases. Speaking to attendees of the "Vote for Ohio Kids Leadership Forum" at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, Clark said the savings to taxpayers -- estimated at a net return of over \$34,000 per child served -- comes from a variety of sources including from fewer necessary special education classes, fewer children being held back in school and reductions in violence.

## **DISABILITIES**

Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) announced that it has released a new book, **Be an Advocate: How to Use Your Rights to Tell Your Story**, created specifically for children living in residential treatment facilities (RTFs) licensed by the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS). The 44-page full-color illustrated book outlines the rights these children have under Ohio's Administrative Code in easy-to-understand language and provides a step-by-step guide to the state's grievance and appeals process.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

With Ohio set to elect a new governor and General Assembly, Montrose Development Advisors (MDA) released an "Ohio Competitiveness Report" on how to improve the state's economic position going forward, with a panel of economic development and local government leaders including Ohio Business Roundtable President Pat Tiberi discussing it Tuesday. The report says that by 2026, Ohio should add 1 million net residents, increase venture capital investment by \$5 billion, raise the per capita income by 30 percent, create 750,000 jobs and invest \$14 billion in infrastructure.

## **EDUCATION**

With a pilot of new teacher evaluation requirements set for next year and a statewide rollout the year after, the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) is seeking educational service centers and districts to develop prototypes starting this winter.

U.S. Secretary of Education (USDOE) Betsy DeVos Monday recognized 349 schools as National Blue Ribbon Schools for 2018. The recognition is based on a school's overall academic performance or progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. A total of 16 Ohio schools are among those being recognized.

After several months without convening a meeting, the Gifted Advisory Council gathered at the Ohio Department of Education Wednesday to get updates from administrators on a variety of topics including the adopted five-year strategic plan for education, the common assessments used for identifying gifted students, professional development and more.

## **ELECTIONS 2018**

Attorney General Mike DeWine and his gubernatorial opponent Richard Cordray took more measured tones in the second gubernatorial debate held in Marietta Monday, highlighting different portions of their campaign platforms in a town-hall style event. Cordray spent most of the hour going after DeWine on various positions, especially health care, though DeWine struck back, accusing Cordray of taking money from the Electronic Classroom of Tomorrow (ECOT) as well and not addressing the failed online charter school when an earlier audit detected problems. DeWine opened the debate by focusing on the location, including the area's shale reserves, that he said will bring businesses because Ohio has the cheapest natural gas in the world. He also expressed hope that the region will land a cracker plant.

Democratic gubernatorial nominee Richard Cordray outraised Republican nominee Mike DeWine in September, according to new campaign finance filings released on Wednesday, but DeWine still holds a more than \$4 million lead in overall money going into the final month of the campaign.

According to filings, Cordray raised \$2.2 million over the month and has \$9.5 million on hand. DeWine reported \$2 million in contributions and has \$13.7 million on hand.

Ohioans should consider their access to affordable health care when casting their ballots this November, advocates said during a "Care Force One" bus tour stop outside Columbus City Hall Friday. Without the protections of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), millions of Americans would be one pre-existing condition away from bankruptcy, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) President Randi Weingarten told attendees of the event, hosted by social and economic justice coalition Protect Our Care.

Republican attorney general nominee Dave Yost launched his first campaign ad of the general election Friday; it will be aired statewide. The 30-second spot titled "Balls and Strike" features Yost at a youth baseball game, discussing how he doesn't play politics while adding, "I call balls and strikes."

Bob Mazerowski, the Republican nominee for the 96th Ohio House District race, announced he is dropping out, according to media reports, leaving Rep. Jack Cera (D-Bellaire) unopposed for the November election.

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown's re-election campaign announced Monday that it has launched "Latinos for Sherrod," a group of Hispanic and Latino community leaders supporting Brown.

Every statewide Democrat on the 2018 ballot will win if voters turn out in high enough numbers, Ohio Democratic Party (ODP) Chairman David Pepper said during the launch of the party's statewide bus tour outside the Statehouse on Tuesday. Following the morning event, the bus tour headed to Delaware and Mansfield. It continued with stops over the week in New Philadelphia, Salem, Wooster, Findlay, Granville, Cincinnati, Bucyrus, Napoleon, Lorain, Elyria and Cleveland. The first week of the tour culminates with the annual ODP State Dinner on Sunday, Oct. 7 with keynote speaker U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA).

The Ohio Republican Party this week filed a complaint with the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) charging that a campaign commercial for U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) violates federal law. The spot features Whirlpool Corporation workers praising Brown for protecting Ohio jobs. Brown's campaign has added a disclaimer at the request of the company that he has not been endorsed by the corporation. In response, Brown spokesman Preston Maddock said in a statement "It's ironic that the candidate who is being flown around by a strip club owner on a private plane is attacking Sherrod's record of standing up for Ohio's manufacturing workers."

A new poll of 503 voters in the 1st Congressional District gives U.S. Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Cincinnati) a nine-point lead over his Democratic opponent, Hamilton County Clerk of Courts Aftab Pureval. The *New York Times*/Siena College Poll shows Chabot leading 50 percent to Pureval's 41 percent, with 9 percent undecided. The poll has a margin of error of plus or minus 4.6 percentage points.

Secretary of State Jon Husted issued a reminder Tuesday that the deadline to register to vote in the 2018 General Election is next Tuesday, Oct. 9. All voters may begin voting on Wednesday, Oct. 10 (first day after the close of registration) via in-person or mail-in absentee ballot.

The major party candidates for governor spoke Thursday in Cleveland about their education, workforce and jobs proposals to an audience of young Ohioans during a live broadcast forum organized by public media stations. Democrat Richard Cordray and Republican Mike DeWine each spoke and answered questions submitted by students for about 45 minutes apiece during the "Talking Jobs with Ohio's Next Governor" forum, a part of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's American Graduate initiative.

The following endorsements were made over the week:

- The Ohio State Chiropractic Association endorsed Anne Gonzales, Stephen Huffman, Steve Wilson, Teresa Fedor, Nathan Manning, Bob Peterson, Nickie Antonio, Kristina Roegner and Kirk Schuring for Ohio Senate; and Theresa Gavarone, Bob Cupp, Tim Ginter, Tom Patton, Bride Sweeney, Dave Greenspan, Kristin Boggs, Mary Lightbody, Richard Brown, Beth Liston, Stu Harris, Laura Lanese, Erik Yassenhoff, Allison Russo, Carrie Davis, Louis Blessing III, Bill Seitz, Emilia Sykes, Anthony Devitis, Casey Weinstein, Mike Rasor, Bill Roemer, Phil Plummer, Jim Butler, Zack Dickerson, Michael Sheehy, Derik Merrin, Scott Oelslager, Reggie Stoltzfus, Gayle Manning, Robert Weber, Dick Stein, David Simon, Michelle Lepore-Hagan, John Rogers, Jamie Callender, Scott Lipps, Michael O'Brien, John Becker, Doug Green, Rick Carfagna, Scott Ryan, Larry Householder, Rick Perales, Kim McCarthy, Randi Clites, Sarah LaTourette, Tim Schaffer, Kyle Koehler, James Hoops, Susan Manchester, Bill Reineke, Steve Arndt, Shane Wilkin, Beth Workman, Ryan Smith, Jack Cera, Kristine Geis and John Patterson for Ohio House.
- The *Columbus Dispatch* endorsed Richard Cordray for governor and Robert Sprague for treasurer.
- The *Akron Beacon Journal* endorsed Zack Space for state auditor.
- U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown endorsed Adam VanHo for Ohio Senate.
- Libertarian gubernatorial nominee Travis Irvine endorsed Issue 1.
- Organizing for Action endorsed Issue 1.
- Former President Barack Obama endorsed Rob Richardson for Ohio treasurer; Betsy Rader and Susan Moran Palmer for Congress; Paul Bradley, Sharon Sweda, Louise Valentine and Lauren Friedman for Ohio Senate; and Jessica Miranda, Timothy Piatt, Kelly Krause Mencke and Rachel Crooks for Ohio House.
- The Yes on Issue 1 campaign announced the endorsement of the United Church of Christ.
- Franklin County Common Pleas Judge Chris Brown endorsed Issue 1.
- The Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce formally opposed passage of State Issue 1.
- The Cordray-Sutton campaign announced their endorsement by the *Athens News*.

## **ENERGY**

The Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) is now considering an application for the state's largest solar farm to date, a proposed 300-megawatt (MW) facility in Appalachia's Highland County. American

Electric Power (AEP) has separately filed a 20-year commitment with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to purchase power from Hecate Energy Highland LLC and a second, 100 MW project proposed by Willowbrook Solar LLC.

## **FEDERAL**

Ohio's U.S. senators indicated Thursday that their votes on the nomination of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court were unchanged after a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing where Christine Blasey Ford testified that Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her when they were in high school. Kavanaugh fiercely denied the accusation. Before the allegations came out, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) had said he would vote against Kavanaugh because he believed the nominee would side with corporate interests over workers. U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), who worked with Kavanaugh inside President George W. Bush's administration and who introduced Kavanaugh at the beginning of his confirmation hearings, supports the nominee.

President Donald Trump's announcement that the U.S., Canada and Mexico have renegotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) received praise from Ohio Republican and Democratic elected officials on Monday. The White House said the proposed update to NAFTA, renamed the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), will benefit American manufacturers, farmers and other workers. Among those praising the announcements were both of Ohio's U.S. senators, Rob Portman (R) and Sherrod Brown (D), U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Niles) and Ohio Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina).

Four Democratic mayors of Ohio cities joined a press call Wednesday opposing a plan by the Trump administration to freeze the implementation of automotive fuel standards -- the Corporate Average Fuel Economy and Clean Car Standards -- saying such a move will affect jobs and the quality of life in their cities. The call, hosted by environment group Blue Green Alliance, featured Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther, Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley, Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley and Chillicothe Mayor Luke Feeny. Under the proposal, the standards would be frozen on all passenger vehicles at model year 2020 levels through model year 2026. The freeze was announced in August.

## **GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE**

Rep. Martin Sweeney (D-Cleveland) resigned from his office representing the 14th House District, effective Monday, Oct. 1, according to the *House Journal* released Thursday. Speaking with *Hannah News*, Sweeney said "it was just the right time" to step down. He said he felt fulfilled by his time in state government and the relationships he made with his colleagues. Sweeney's daughter, Bride Sweeney, is running for the seat against Libertarian Ryan McClain. No Republican is running in that race.

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) and Capitol Square Foundation Monday, Oct. 1 opened the nominations for the 2019 class of "Great Ohioans." The award commemorates Ohioans who have played a significant role in an event, or series of events, of lasting significance in world, American or Ohio history. The deadline for nominations is Monday, Dec. 3. Additional criteria include the individual's being born in Ohio or having lived in Ohio for a minimum of five years. At least 25 years must have passed since the commemorated event in which the nominee participated.

Co-chairs of the Regional Economic Development Alliance Study Committee, Rep. Steve Hambley (R-Brunswick) and Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon), Tuesday announced the appointments of the following four academia and economic development professionals to the group: Dr. Edward Hill of Ohio State University's John Glenn College of Public Affairs; Dr. Rainer vom Hofe from the University of Cincinnati School of Planning; Joy Davis, executive director of the Hocking County Community Improvement Corporation; and Tim Mayle, director of economic development for the Findlay-Hancock County Economic Development. Other members of the committee -- created by HB122 (Hambley-Rogers) --- also include Linda Woggon, Matthew Davis, Sens. Jay Hottinger (R-Newark) and Sean O'Brien (D-Cortland) and Reps. Gary Scherer (R-Circleville) and John Rogers (D-Mentor-on-the-Lake).

The Capitol Square Review and Advisory Board (CSRAB) will close the green level of the Statehouse parking garage from 6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 5 until 6 a.m. Monday, Oct. 8 due to garage maintenance.

## **GOVERNOR**

Appointments made during the week include the following:

- Thomas F. Needles of Whitehall (Franklin County) to the University of Akron Board of Trustees for a term beginning Sept. 28, 2018 and ending July 1, 2027.
- Philip E. Cole of Upper Arlington (Franklin County) to the Ohio Fair Plan Underwriting Association Board of Governors for a term beginning Sept. 28, 2018 and ending Sept. 18, 2020.
- Rashmi V. Nemade of Columbus (Franklin County) reappointed to the Third Frontier Commission for a term beginning Sept. 29, 2018 and ending Sept. 28, 2021.
- Michael W. Wise of Chagrin Falls (Cuyahoga County) reappointed to the Oil and Gas Leasing Commission for a term beginning Sept. 30, 2018 and ending Sept. 29, 2023.
- Steven A. Cohen of Blacklick (Franklin County) reappointed to the Central Ohio Technical College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Oct. 1, 2018 and ending Sept. 30, 2021.
- Beth Patla of Painesville (Lake County) to the Credit Union Council for a term beginning Oct. 2, 2018 and ending Sept. 22, 2021.
- Monica Green, FAIA of Moreland Hills (Cuyahoga County) reappointed to the Ohio Architects Board for a term beginning Oct. 3, 2018 and ending Oct. 2, 2023.
- Scott R. Everett of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Credit Union Council for a term beginning Oct. 3, 2018 and ending Sept. 22, 2021.
- Linda Woggon of Columbus (Franklin County) and Matthew J. Davis of Cincinnati (Hamilton County) to the Regional Economic Development Alliance Study Committee for terms beginning Oct. 3, 2018 and ending Aug. 1, 2019.

- Nicole C. Conrad of Huber Heights (Montgomery County), Tracy S. Freeman of Pickerington (Fairfield County) and James W. Metz of Eaton (Preble County) reappointed to the Environmental Education Council for terms beginning Oct. 4, 2018 and ending Oct. 1, 2020.

## **GREAT LAKES**

Rep. Kent Smith (D-Euclid) said that he has been selected to represent Ohio on the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Legislative Caucus (GLLC), which he said provides a forum for the regional exchange of ideas and information on key issues that affect the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

Early data gathered by wildlife agencies in the Western Basin of Lake Erie indicate an "exceptional" walleye hatch and a "strong" yellow perch hatch in 2018, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

If the state is going to achieve its Lake Erie water quality goals, policymakers need to adopt more "targeted, data-driven investments," Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) Director Craig Butler said Wednesday at the second meeting of the Toward a Cleaner Lake Erie Working Group, chaired by Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Bob Hackett (R-London) and House Agriculture and Rural Development Committee Chairman Brian Hill (R-Zanesville). Also testifying at the hearing held at Ohio Northern University were six members of the agriculture community who argued against the Kasich administration's proposed distress order, which would affect eight watersheds in the Western Basin of Lake Erie. Implementation of the order was delayed by the Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Commission in July, and the legislative working group was formed shortly thereafter. Hackett said a third meeting after the election is possible.

## **HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**

There are several key policy areas that the state must focus on comprehensively if it wishes to close the gap on child health metrics and improve its standing nationally, according to a new report from the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO). "The Assessment of Child Health and Health Care in Ohio" was produced in partnership with the Ohio Children's Hospital Association (OCHA) and was released at the recent Vote for Ohio Kids forum in Columbus. It focuses on three priority areas where the most support is needed: Mental health and addiction, chronic disease and maternal and infant health.

Franklin County leaders said Friday they'll provide funding to continue a program that sends people from low-income neighborhoods through free training at Ohio State University to become community health workers, the frontline responders to Ohio's disproportionate problem with infant mortality.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has begun hosting listening sessions across the state to gather input from local child welfare professionals in advance of sweeping changes to federal law. Among other issues, the federal Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) will allow states to use Title IV-E funds for prevention services, which are designed to keep children in their homes instead of in foster care. It also aims to reduce the time children spend in group or congregate care settings. The first listening session was held Thursday, Oct. 4 in Columbus, with others scheduled for Cincinnati, Bowling Green, Chagrin Falls and Athens through Thursday, Oct. 11.

## **HOUSING/HOMELESSNESS**

The Ohio Association of Realtors reports August home sales of 151,360 were essentially even with figures a year earlier, topping by one-tenth percent the best-ever sales numbers for that month recorded in 2017, 151,136. Sales were down from month to month, dropping 0.5 percent from July's 152,091. The average sales price of \$188,898 represents a 5.6 percent increase from the average of \$178,836 seen in August 2017.

## **INSURANCE**

Annual employer-sponsored family health insurance premiums rose 5 percent in 2018 nationwide, according to an annual Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF) study released Wednesday. This exceeded the previous report's 3 percent increase and those figures are part of a 20 percent increase in average family premiums since 2013 and a 55 percent increase since 2008.

## **JUDICIAL**

Journalists including the director of Prison Radio and a Pulitzer Prize winner formerly of the *New York Times* failed in their five-year legal battle to interview key players in 1993's Lucasville riots at the Ohio Southern Correctional Facility, based on a U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals victory for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC). The appeals court said recently that DRC's 25-year policy restricting media access to most inmates involved in the prison riot was not aimed at the anticipated content of such interviews, although on larger note the 3-0 court said the agency had the right to do just that.

## **MARIJUANA**

Any enforcement action taken against retailers selling cannabidiol (CBD) in Ohio would be "thrown out" in court, Green Light Acquisitions President Ian James told *Hannah News* in an interview. "You're going to find that you can go right up High Street to 'The Hippie Hut' -- not wonderfully named, but it's the name of the store -- and on the window they've got 'CBD sold here,'" the cannabis advocate and entrepreneur said, noting consumers can also purchase CBD products at Walmart.com and Amazon.com. James also pointed to Coca-Cola's reported interest in producing a CBD-infused beverage as another example of the compound's increasing acceptance in the U.S.

A limited number of Ohio patients could gain access to medical marijuana more quickly than previously anticipated, Ohio Department of Commerce (DOC) senior policy adviser Mark Hamlin said Thursday. The cultivators on track to provide the state's first batches of medical marijuana are FN Group Holdings in Portage County and Agri-Med Ohio LLC in Meigs County, DOC spokesperson Stephanie Gostomski told *Hannah News*.

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

As Ohio's forest canopies begin their color transformation to strong reds, vivid yellows and bold oranges, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and TourismOhio are encouraging leafers to visit the Buckeye State to catch that first glimpse of color. The two agencies will help people find the best locations to view the changing colors throughout the fall, ODNR said, through fall color reports that will be issued every Wednesday.

## **NEWS MEDIA**

Residents of 20 Southeast Ohio counties now have a new resource aimed at helping them connect with their community and share news updates, events and other information with their neighbors. Ohio University's Media Deserts project announced the launch of Zip-It News at the end of September, an online community and website developed by students and educators.

## **POVERTY**

A recent report from the Center for Community Solutions (CCS) detailed the history and structure of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and identified a current surplus of \$521.8 million in the program's coffers, while at the same time, the center noted, fewer poor Ohioans are receiving cash assistance under the program. Ohio Works First (OWF) is the cash assistance program for families with children that earn less than 50 percent of the federal poverty level, and it is a "core program" funded under TANF. Program participants must complete 30 hours of work per week to be eligible, which can include employment, volunteering or community service, vocational training and some education options. The average monthly OWF cash benefit is \$203.58 per person.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

With data breaches and ransomware attacks in the news nearly every day, cybersecurity can be a frustrating field, local experts told the Columbus Metropolitan Club (CMC) Wednesday - but general steps in good cyber hygiene can go a long way towards protecting individuals and companies.

## **TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE**

Gov. John Kasich said Thursday that it will take the same political will his administration has demonstrated to continue the technological and economic progress represented by Ohio's burgeoning smart vehicle industry. Kasich joined state and local leaders in Marysville for a real-world demonstration of connected vehicle technology under development at Honda R&D Americas, Inc.

Greater Ohio Policy Center (GOPC) released a new white paper for policymakers that makes three recommendations for new funding for public transit in Ohio. GOPC said it narrowed down the three recommendations from 20 potential options. They are recommendations that would produce a high revenue stream but would also have a minimum impact on the public at large, the group said.

## **UTILITIES**

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) must change its appellate procedure for civil forfeiture orders following an Ohio Supreme Court finding that appeals of motor carrier violations should be filed directly with the 10th District in Columbus rather than with PUCO's docketing division. The Supreme Court affirmed a 2-1 decision of the appeals court in a jurisdictional dispute with the commission brought by LMD Integrated Logistic Services, Inc. The 10th District separately found PUCO had wrongly ordered the motor carrier to pay a \$1,680 civil forfeiture for a non-existent hazardous material violation -- a decision the commission did not appeal.

In the wake of Columbia Gas's deadly explosions in Massachusetts, the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) is asking the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) to order the utility to state whether the disaster has revealed similar risks to Columbia's 1.3 million customers. OCC says the

company's recent annual pipeline safety reports violate the commission's own directives, and it wants PUCO to require Columbia to refile the 2017 report with a supplement explaining safety conditions in Ohio. Pending those filings and commission approval, the consumers' counsel is further asking PUCO to deny the utility's request to charge customers \$25 million for pipeline safety.

## **WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Board of Directors Friday voted to send budget proposals for FY20 and FY21 to the Office of Budget and Management, among other resolutions. BWC is proposing an increase of 5.9 percent for the next biennium, increasing its current biennial budget of \$592.9 million to \$630 million. This would break down to \$316.3 million for FY20 and \$313.7 million for FY21.

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) announced Monday that it was joining forces with the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and state craft brewery associations to form the Ohio Craft Brewery Alliance, which will develop industry-specific safety education and training and raise awareness of workplace concerns. Industry groups joining this alliance include the Ohio Craft Brewers Association, the Master Brewers Association of the Americas and the Brewers Association.

## **LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:**

### **SENATE:**

No legislative activity to report.

### **HOUSE:**

No legislative activity to report.