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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.

AGRICULTURE

Trees infested by Asian long-horned beetles (ALBs) have been found in a section of the East Fork Wildlife Area in Clermont County, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODAg) announced last week. The center of the newly discovered infestation is within the Williamsburg Township portion of the wildlife area, south of Clover Road, according to the department.

EDUCATION

A.J. Wagner, Third District representative for the State Board of Education, resigned his board seat Friday, telling board President Tom Gunlock in a letter that for "personal family matters" he is moving from Dayton. Per state law, Gov. John Kasich will appoint Wagner's replacement. Wagner

was himself an appointee and later won election to the seat; he replaced Jeff Mims, who resigned after being elected to the Dayton City Commission.

Sen. Peggy Lehner (R-Kettering) was recognized by the Ohio School Boards Association (OSBA) with its "highest honor," the President's Award. A news release by OSBA recognized her six years as a chair of the Senate Education Committee and her "efforts to align K-12 education with college and career readiness."

As the Ohio Joint Study Committee on Drug Use Prevention Education closes in on its recommendations to the General Assembly, it heard last week from an official from Chicago Public Schools on anti-drug messages used there as part of an overall social and emotional curriculum.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Ohio's unemployment rate was 4.9 percent in October, up from 4.8 percent in September, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) announced. The state lost 2,800 jobs over the month, going from a revised 5,499,400 in September to 5,496,600 in October.

ENVIRONMENT

New research has determined that some commercially available filter pitchers are able to remove microcystin, the main toxin produced by harmful algal blooms (HABs), from tap water. Conducted at Ohio State University's (OSU) Stone Lab island campus on Lake Erie and funded by the Lake Erie Commission's Lake Erie Protection Fund, the study showed that the leading predictor of whether a filter will remove microcystin from water is how long it takes that water to percolate through the filter, according to OSU.

GOVERNOR

The governor made the following appointments during the week:

- Linda Reis of Tiffin (Seneca County) to the Terra State Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Nov. 18, 2016, and ending Dec. 30, 2020.
- Diana M. Walton of Grove City (Franklin County) to the Board of Nursing for a term beginning Nov. 18, 2016, and ending Dec. 31, 2016.
- Laurine A. Cetovich of Powell (Delaware County) reappointed to the Maternity and Newborn Advisory Council for a term beginning Nov. 18, 2016, and ending Oct. 31, 2021.
- Michele Weiss of University Heights (Cuyahoga County) to the Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism for a term beginning Nov. 21, 2016, and ending April 21, 2019.
- E. Douglas Beach of Northfield (Summit County) to the Northeast Ohio Medical University Board of Trustees for a term beginning Nov. 22, 2016 and ending Sept. 21, 2024.

HOUSING

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) released its Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress, finding homeless rates have dropped nationally, as well as in the Buckeye State. The report looks at homelessness on a single night in January 2016, as reported by state and local planning agencies.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

City executives from across the state announced the creation of the Ohio Mayors Alliance. The nonprofit coalition of 20 Democratic and 10 Republican mayors from among Ohio's largest cities and suburbs will advocate for local governments at the state and federal level, representatives of the group told reporters at a Columbus press conference.

PEOPLE

Alison Goebel was recently named executive director of the Greater Ohio Policy Center (GOPC) after having served in an interim role for three months. She will oversee the GOPC's advocacy, research and outreach, according to the organization, and replaces Lavea Brachman, who co-founded and led the center for nearly 10 years.

The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) announced that its deputy director, Jack Shaner, will leave in January after 20 years. "Shaner has maintained a vigilant presence in the Ohio Statehouse as one of the most respected public interest advocates in the state," the council said in a statement that included praise for Shaner from two former governors.

TRANSPORTATION

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission (OTIC) approved an \$18.5 million construction contract during its meeting last Tuesday. Kokosing Construction Company will reconstruct eastbound mainline pavement in Sandusky County, according to the agency. Additionally, OTIC authorized GDP Group and PSI Inc. to perform services on the project.

UTILITIES

A new report from the nation's largest electric aggregator, Northeast Ohio Public Energy Council (NOPEC), says the real beneficiary of state deregulation are the millions of Ohioans who have saved \$15 billion in utility costs over the past five years and who are slated to keep another \$3 billion per year through 2020. NOPEC released the four-page executive summary Thursday in advance of a larger report to be issued jointly in the coming days by Ohio State University's John Glenn College of Public Affairs and Cleveland State University's Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs.

WORKFORCE

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor announced that Ohio will be entering into an agreement with Canada in 2017 to share resources and help improve the workforce in the Buckeye State and its northern neighbor. Taylor discussed the partnership with Canada during remarks at the inaugural inteG.R.E.A.T. Ohio Symposium held in Dublin, sponsored by the Ohio Department of Higher Education. The event was designed to bring together business, higher education, and government leaders to discuss better ways to educate students from the U.S. and internationally while growing a talent pipeline and stimulating innovation.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY:

Legislators did not hold session last week due to the Thanksgiving holiday.