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Legislative Week in Review

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ABORTION

Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) said after Wednesday's non-voting session he anticipates action on a reintroduced heartbeat bill in the near future. "I think that you'll see the Senate move on something like that fairly quickly, that we will have a version of it that starts in this chamber, and my anticipation is it will pass the chamber," Obhof said.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Lady Justice's blindfold should symbolize fairness and impartiality, not tolerance of corruption in the justice system, Attorney General Dave Yost said during his inauguration on Monday. "Each of us at law has equal value, rich or poor, president or pauper. It's why Justice wears a blindfold - identity before

the law is irrelevant. That's the theory. But in a justice system run by passionate, flawed human beings, the building as built doesn't always look like the drawings. The attorney general's role -- my role, for the next four years -- is to push the system toward that ideal, where every person stands on the same level floor." Yost said the "most critical division in America is not between left and right, or even 'haves' and 'have-nots,' but between the 'protected' and the 'unprotected,'" citing *Wall Street Journal* columnist Peggy Noonan.

Ohio Attorney General and Gov.-elect Mike DeWine, along with 39 other attorneys general, recently announced a \$68 million settlement with UBS AG (UBS) for fraudulent conduct involving the manipulation of the London interbank offered rate (Libor), a benchmark interest rate that has a widespread impact on global markets and consumers.

AUDITOR OF STATE

Auditor of State Keith Faber was ceremonially sworn into office Monday morning in the Senate chamber, following an official swearing in ceremony Saturday at the Mercer County Courthouse in his hometown of Celina. Outgoing Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor, state auditor from 2007 through 2010, served as master of ceremonies for the event, and Faber's successor as Senate president, Sen. Larry Obhof (R-Medina), presided at the dais. "Someone asked me, 'Are you ready for today?'" and I said, "No, I'm ready for tomorrow," Faber said in brief remarks after taking the oath. "We are looking forward to making a change and doing the things we promised Ohioans we will do."

CIVIL RIGHTS

The following seven Ohio individuals and organizations were recognized for their efforts to advance nonviolent social change at the 34th annual Ohio Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration, the Ohio Department of Administrative Services (Ohio DAS) announced:

- **Community Building Award:** Michael Douglas, Chesterland, founded Diversity Initiatives, Inc. in 1998 to help public and private organizations advance positive interaction and communication across racial, cultural, socio-economic and gender-based boundaries.

- **Cultural Awareness Award:** Toledo Buffalo Soldiers Motorcycle Club, Inc., Toledo, conducts many community service projects and workshops for local youth and presents educational presentations about the heritage and history of the Buffalo Soldiers.

- **Governor's Humanitarian Award:** Pastor Michael E. Carter, Jr., Toledo. His ministries at the Praise City Worship Centers in Toledo and Detroit where he pastors include operating a food pantry and providing free meals for youth during the summer and free food for basketball program participants.

- **Health Equity and Awareness Award:** Dr. Darrell Gray II of Columbus, and Mental Health and Recovery Services Board of Lucas County, Toledo. As a gastroenterologist, he engineered the Provider and Community Engagement (PACE) Program for Health Equity in Colorectal Cancer Prevention, a

comprehensive colorectal cancer awareness and screening program which has been recognized nationally by the American College of Gastroenterology and National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable. He also addresses matters of inclusion, diversity and health equity in a number of other ways.

- **Social Justice Award:** Vincent Edwards, Jr., Cincinnati, works as a victim advocate for the Hamilton County Prosecutor's Office and wrote a children's book, *One Face/One Race*.

- **Youth: Capturing the Vision of Dr. King Award:** Groomed for Greatness, Toledo, is a nonprofit organization serving girls ages 4 to 17 to equip them with the necessary skills to be leaders.

Preceded by song and prayer, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted delivered the keynote speech at Thursday's Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Celebration at Trinity Episcopal Church in downtown Columbus, where he encouraged the audience to "build bridges every day" to foster a greater understanding of one another.

ECONOMY

A lack in workforce availability is causing at least one central Ohio economist to lower his estimates for job growth in 2019 after the previous year's numbers came in under estimates for 2018. Bill LaFayette, owner of Regionomics LLC and a contributor for *Hannah News*, appeared before a recent meeting of the Columbus Metropolitan Club to provide an overview of his hiring forecast for the next year. LaFayette expects a hiring gain of 1.2 percent in 2019, totaling 13,000 new jobs in the city. He said that represents his lowest forecast since the recession but still higher growth than any year between 2003 and 2007.

EDUCATION

State Board of Education members elected Laura Kohler as president and Charlotte McGuire as vice president at their organizational meeting Tuesday. Kohler beat Nick Owens on a 13-6 vote for the presidency. McGuire squeaked past Sarah Fowler 10-9, following a first ballot that split 9-9 with the abstention of Stephanie Dodd. Dodd put McGuire over the top on the second ballot.

Legal, financial and practical limits on how charter schools find buildings have pushed some into questionable arrangements that raise policy questions for the Legislature, according to a report former Auditor Dave Yost released just before handing over the office to Auditor Keith Faber. Yost, now attorney general, launched a study of charter school facility funding arrangements after the office fielded a

complaint "alleging that complex lease agreements entered into by some community schools involved with management companies are resulting in excessive lease payments, diverting public dollars away from educating students and into the pockets of private companies and the individuals who run them," the report states.

Reps. Bob Cupp (R-Lima) and John Patterson (D-Jefferson) Tuesday outlined for the State Board of Education portions of their plan to revamp the state school funding formula that they have been working on in the past year. The plan is based around two key questions: "What does it cost to educate a child today," and "What does every district need to operate?"

During a Wednesday morning discussion of policies and procedures, members of the State Board of Education floated the idea of receiving pay for time spent preparing for board meetings. What began as an informational orientation for new members pivoted to a discussion on pay when new board member

Kristen Hill asked Recording Secretary Jack Alsop if board members received pay for time spent preparing for board meetings. Alsop said, no, members do not, but they do receive pay for time spent at board meetings; time spent on other education panels; time spent on professional

development; time spent visiting schools and school facilities; and time spent actively informing or engaging the public on board business.

ENERGY

Two well-known former legislators addressed the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) Governing Board Tuesday on energy policy under the new administration and new General Assembly. Former Sen. Jeff Jacobson, lobbyist and longtime presence on Capitol Square, offered a few prognostications on how Gov. Mike DeWine and House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) are likely to approach utility legislation in 2019 and going forward. The Governing Board also heard from former Rep. Barbara Sykes, executive director of AARP Ohio, asked OCC to view her organization as a consumer advocacy partner, noting AARP Ohio has 1.5 million members.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Diesel Emissions Reduction Grant (DERG) Program has awarded more than \$8 million to replace 26 aging diesel transit buses with newer, cleaner diesel technology or alternative fuel technology, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) has announced.

FEDERAL

Ohio recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits will receive their February allotment on their EBT cards on Wednesday, Jan. 16 because of the federal government shutdown, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) has announced.

With the federal government shutdown now at a historic duration Tuesday, Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) told reporters that "both sides need to take a step back and then put out the actual facts of their proposals" as there is "substantial opportunity to find middle ground." Democrat and Republican leaders are often "talking past each other" even though they aren't that far apart, he added. One path to compromise, Portman said, was a bill he'd introduced Friday to provide \$25 billion in funding for border security including barriers, technology such as drones and cameras and increased screening for narcotics at ports of entry, in return for a continuation of protections to those brought to the U.S. illegally as children in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program.

U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH) announced Tuesday that he is moving the location of his Washington, D.C. office from Room 713 in the Hart Senate Office Building to Room 503 -- the location previously occupied by John Glenn when he served in the U.S. Senate.

During the partial shutdown of the federal government, which began Dec. 22, 2018, the Judiciary has continued to operate by using court fee balances and other "no-year" funds. The Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AO) now estimates that federal courts can sustain funded operations through Friday, Jan. 25, 2019. Previously, the AO had estimated that Judiciary

funding would be exhausted on Jan. 18, resulting in federal courts' relying on unpaid staff to perform critical operations.

U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan (D-Niles) announced Wednesday that he will chair the House Appropriations Committee's Legislative Branch Subcommittee. The subcommittee oversees funding of the legislative branch of the United States government including spending on the U.S. House of Representatives, Congressional Budget Office, Library of Congress, Government Accountability Office, and U.S. Capitol Police. Ryan will oversee a budget of \$3.81 billion.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Elected at the end of November but on the opposite side of most of their caucus on the recent vote for speaker, both House Minority Leader Fred Strahorn (D-Dayton) and Minority Whip Brigid Kelly (D-Cincinnati) announced Friday that they would be stepping down from those leadership posts at the end of January. In a recently unprecedented occurrence where the speaker's race was decided by a coalition of 26 Democrats and 26 Republicans electing Rep. Larry Householder (R-Glenford) to the top spot in the House, Strahorn and Kelly cast their lot with Rep. Ryan Smith (R-Bidwell). Since then, media reports have indicated criticisms among the House Dems of Strahorn's urging support of Smith despite Householder's reported courting of the Democrats and unions' pushing the minority to support him.

Rep. Theresa Gavarone (R-Bowling Green) announced her intent Friday to seek appointment to the 2nd Ohio Senate District. The seat will be vacated by Sen. Randy Gardner (R-Bowling Green) who was appointed by Gov.-elect Mike DeWine to be the chancellor of the Ohio Department of Higher Education. The district includes the counties of Wood, Ottawa, Erie, Fulton (part) and Lucas (part). Besides Gavarone's House District 3, House District 47 represented by Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Maumee) and House District 89 represented by Rep. Steven Arndt (R-Port Clinton) are also part of Gardner's district.

Senate President Larry Obhof (R-Medina) announced Monday the application process to fill the vacancy in Ohio's 2nd Senate District seat. The Senate Republican Caucus will accept applications for the vacancy until 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 25.

Christine Morrison, who most recently was deputy director of the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) and Controlling Board president in the Kasich administration, is the new House budget director, Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) announced Wednesday. Morrison has more than 20 years of experience in state legislative and executive offices, from House intern to House GOP policy director to former leader of Gov. John Kasich's Cabinet Opioid Action Team.

Members of the Ohio House would have more flexibility in proposing amendments while avenues previously used to block amendments would no longer be allowed under proposed changes to House rules. A committee appointed by Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) and chaired by Rep. Jamie Callender (R-Concord) began its work on potential rule changes for the 133rd General Assembly on Wednesday, though it did not vote on any of those changes.

Callender explained to members that he wanted to give them time to review any potential changes.

Speaker of the Ohio House Larry Householder (R-Glenford) and members of the Ohio House Republican Caucus announced Wednesday the members of the screening panel to review applicants seeking to fill the vacant 97th House District seat. The seat became vacant when the former representative from the 97th District, Brian Hill, was appointed to the Ohio Senate in December. Rep. Jay Edwards (R-Nelsonville) will chair the selection panel for the 133rd General Assembly which will also include Rep. Brett Hillyer (R-Uhrichsville), Rep. Don Jones (R-Freeport) and Rep. Jena Powell (R-Arcanum).

Draft House rules under consideration by a special committee give a preliminary indication of the committee structure for the 133rd General Assembly, outlining 20 standing committees, plus a number of subcommittees.

House Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) named Gail Crawley as communications director for the House. She has decades of communications experience with the former Ohio Department of Development and private sector firms.

Hannah News' freshman lawmaker interview series featured Rep. Jamie Callender (R-Concord), who's not a true freshman, since he served from 1997-2004. He said the bipartisan approach Speaker Larry Householder (R-Glenford) has signaled is sorely needed.

GOVERNOR

Gov. Mike DeWine told a packed Statehouse crowd Monday that it may take years or even a lifetime before some results of his administration's work are seen, but said that those results "will be profound" and "will endure." Focusing on his early childhood initiatives during his speech during his ceremonial inauguration event, DeWine said his administration's plans to intervene "early in the lives of at-risk kids, to address their physical and emotional needs, and to give them better, higher-quality educational opportunities -- all will be undertaken in the faith and hope and yes in the confidence that these children will flourish and grow and that their lives will be forever changed by the things that we do."

Gov. Mike DeWine wasted no time to take action Monday morning after officially becoming Ohio's 70th governor, signing six executive orders within minutes of taking the oath of office. Notably, one of those orders maintains and expands the state's non-discrimination policy for government employees. The non-discrimination policy put in place by former Gov. John Kasich protected state employees from discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, national origin and military status. In December, Kasich added gender identity and expression to that list, leaving the question open as to whether or not DeWine would maintain that policy -- all of which expired with the end of his administration. Monday, DeWine decided to keep the entire policy as well as add protections for parents during and after pregnancy, parents of young children and parents with foster children. The other five executive orders do the following: 1) Create the RecoveryOhio Initiative; 2) Create the Children's Initiative; 3) Establish Ohio as a disability inclusion state and model employer of

individuals with disabilities; 4) Elevate foster care priorities; and 5) Elevate prevention efforts in the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Gov. Mike DeWine signed his seventh executive order Tuesday to create the Advisory Committee on Home Visitations, a group that will meet over the next few weeks and make recommendations to DeWine ahead of the executive budget on how to fund and expand home visitation programs for at-risk mothers and children. DeWine signed the order during his first official news conference as governor, which was held at Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus.

Gov. Mike DeWine has been named vice chairman of the Conference of Great Lakes St. Lawrence Governors & Premiers, while fellow Gov. Tony Evers of Wisconsin will be chairman.

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Ohio Democrats endured the cold on the northern Statehouse lawn Monday morning to press Gov. Mike DeWine to maintain coverage for pre-existing conditions under Medicaid, a policy that was a key campaign promise in television ads and other media, according to advocates.

Health care, business and political leaders gathered Wednesday at the Statehouse to celebrate the 10th anniversary of a collaborative project children's hospitals launched to prevent medical complications and errors. Solutions for Patient Safety (SPS) has since expanded beyond children's hospitals and now involves more than 130 adult and children's hospitals in the U.S. and elsewhere. It has saved millions of dollars in care costs and kept thousands from suffering avoidable infections, drug reactions or other preventable harm, according to event organizers.

HIGHER EDUCATION

A former head of Xavier University and Jesuit activist, Rev. Charles Currie, passed away earlier in January at the age of 88, the Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) announced recently. He served as the president of Wheeling Jesuit University from 1972 to 1982, Xavier from 1982 to 1985, the director of Georgetown University's Bicentennial celebration in 1989 and rector of the Jesuit community at Saint Joseph's University from 1991 to 1997. Currie served as the president of AJCU from 1997 to 2011.

Ohio University (OU) President Duane Nellis has formed a Corporate Engagement Task Force that will work to create recommendations regarding industries worthy of investment and partnership, the university recently announced.

Two professors at the University of Cincinnati (UC) recently received a grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) to develop new technologies to train inexperienced snow plow drivers to handle dangerous icy roads during the winter months, the university recently announced. Jiaqi Ma and Julian Wang of UC's College of Engineering and Applied Science are the recipients of a nearly \$40,000 grant to fund their research into simulation technology that can help these drivers handle difficult scenarios.

A team of researchers who first proposed studying the effect a global trade war could have on the Midwest never imagined there would be an actual trade war underway as they conducted their research. But as 2018 played out -- and as the United States and China traded tariff after tariff over the summer -- the real-world applications of their research became more and more clear. "Our farmers in the Midwest provide food throughout the world, so if we shut down that ability for them to send their goods all over the place -- if we invoke tariffs and counter-tariffs -- then that really affects the demand for what they produce," said Jeff Bielicki, an assistant professor of civil, environmental and geodetic engineering at Ohio State University.

Financial giant JPMorgan Chase is investing \$2.5 million in two Ohio State University (OSU) programs aimed at promoting diversity in academic programs. The investment will go to the Morrill Scholars Program, which rewards diversity-based leadership, and the Young Scholars Program, which supports talented, first-generation college students with academic needs.

Ohio University (OU) Tuesday announced that it was appointing an interim director of the institution's LGBT center after controversially placing the former director on administrative leave. Tyrone Carr, who has been with the university since 1991 and recently acted as both executive director of the Interlink Alliance and the special assistant for the vice president for diversity and inclusion, will serve as director.

Ohio State University (OSU) was directed to enter mediation with Brian Garrett and other plaintiffs in a federal lawsuit over the university's handling of allegations of sexual assault against deceased former physician Richard Strauss. In addition to this case and other lawsuits, the U.S. Department of Education also opened an investigation.

JUDICIAL

The Supreme Court of Ohio is seeking public comment on proposed rule changes that would implement new victims' rights under the state's constitutional adoption of Marsy's Law. As part of Court's annual rule update, the Commission on the Rules of Practice and Procedure also is proposing amendments to revise grand jury selection by local rule and to initiate a pilot program allowing troopers to show audio or video evidence of a traffic stop on the Multi-Count Uniform Traffic Ticket (MUTT).

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Positioning Ohio to play a role in future technology is an imperative rather than a choice, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted told reporters at a pre-inauguration event Friday, and he hopes to lead InnovateOhio to serve as a "change agent" in those efforts. Husted was previously announced as the leader of not only InnovateOhio but also the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation and the Common Sense Initiative. He discussed those roles at a gathering of innovators and entrepreneurs that opened the weekend's inaugural festivities.

LOBBYISTS

Former State Rep. Bob Doyle and veteran statehouse lobbyist, Richard (Rich) Bitonte have joined ZHF Consulting LLC -- Doyle as senior vice president and Bitonte as vice president of government affairs for the firm. The announcement was made by ZHF Consulting President Steve Austria, a former U.S. representative, and Thomas Zaino, managing member of Zaino Hall & Farrin, who is a former tax commissioner for the state.

High Bridge Consulting, an Ohio-based consulting firm that serves clients in both political and non-political settings across the United States, announced Wednesday that Mike Dittoe joined the firm as partner. Dittoe served from 2003 to 2018 in the Ohio House of Representatives in several roles, ending his tenure as majority caucus chief of staff after serving as a majority caucus policy advisor and director of communications for the House.

MARIJUANA

Several medical marijuana dispensaries began sales at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 16, according to the National Cannabis Industry Association of Ohio (NCIAO) when the following four locations in the state opened their doors for the first time: CY+ and Ohio Valley Natural Relief in Wintersville, Botanist in Canton and Forest Sandusky in Sandusky. Supplies were anticipated to be low as the program ramps up.

NATURAL RESOURCES

Hunters checked 14,182 white-tailed deer during Ohio's muzzleloader season, which ran from Jan. 5-8, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). During last year's muzzleloader season, 13,268 white-tailed deer were harvested, the department said.

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Groundwork Ohio announced that it has hired Vanessa Butler as its newest policy associate. Butler is a recent graduate of Capital Law School, and previously served as the civil fellow for the Ohio State University's Student Legal Services, as well as a deputy auditor for the Board of Revision in the Franklin County Auditor's Office.

The Center for Community Solutions announced that three new members have joined the organization's board of directors: Richard Jones, Joshua Kramer and Jim Vail.

While the number of nonprofit organizations has decreased statewide, their ranks have swelled in Franklin County, panelists told the Columbus Metropolitan Club Wednesday, and that has led to areas of increased strain. Around one in 10 Franklin County workers are in the nonprofit sector, United Way of Central Ohio Senior Vice President of Community Impact Michael Wilkos said in opening remarks, and the number of Franklin County nonprofits has increased from 7,013 in 2007 to 8,033 in 2015, the most recent year for which data was available.

PEOPLE

Jim Lynch, who was communications director for former Gov. John Kasich, has opened a public relations firm in Columbus. Lynch Public Relations, located directly across from the Ohio Statehouse at 20 S. Third St., will focus on public affairs, media relations, crisis communications and reputation management.

Lisa Duty is the new executive director of Leadership Ohio, the organization announced Tuesday.

The Ohio Conservative Energy Forum (OHCEF) announced Wednesday the hiring of Aaron Dauterman as the organization's field director, effective immediately.

Blaine Kelly announced Wednesday that Friday, Jan. 18 will be his last day as communications director for the Ohio Republican Party (ORP). Next week, he said, he will be joining the auditor of state's office as a policy advisor.

Former Gov. John Kasich now has a fellowship and an office at Otterbein University in his hometown of Westerville, the university announced Thursday.

Former Sen. Kevin Bacon has transitioned to private law practice, joining Isaac Wiles as a government affairs, business, estate planning and probate consultant. Bacon was term limited at the end of the 132nd General Assembly which wrapped up in December.

POLITICS

The GOP Central Committee held its elections of officers Friday morning, where members re-elected Jane Timken chairman after lauding her performance from 2016 through the 2018 midterm election. Other officers elected included Brian Williams as vice-chairman, Marilyn Ashcraft as secretary, David Johnson as treasurer and Katie DeLand as assistant treasurer.

Former Gov. John Kasich reinforced his status as a "center-right" alternative to President Donald Trump and congressional Republicans Monday in a *USA Today* op-ed that faulted the Grand Old Party for being decades behind the times. He offered Ohio's economic progress and health care changes under his leadership as examples of what a moderate America could achieve nationwide.

Upon conclusion of his final term in office, United Talent Agency (UTA) announced Monday it would be representing former Gov. John Kasich in broadcast appearances and speaking engagements, calling him "one of our nation's most unifying and inspiring political voices." Then on Tuesday, he was named a senior political commentator with CNN, including an appearance that evening on "Cuomo Prime Time" and future appearances across CNN programs.

The League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Columbus (LWVMC) announced recently that it has chosen former Ohio Rep. Ted Celeste as the recipient of its Democracy in Action Award for 2019.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio State Highway Patrol announced that it is collaborating with the Illinois State Police, Indiana State Police, Michigan State Police and Truckers Against Trafficking to raise awareness about human trafficking. The initiative runs Monday through Friday.

SECRETARY OF STATE

Republicans and Democrats should stop treating each other as enemies, Secretary of State Frank LaRose said during his inauguration in Akron over the weekend, which was streamed on Facebook. LaRose said he recently discussed the importance of bipartisanship with new members of the General Assembly during their orientation dinner, telling them they should work together regardless of party affiliation, as has been his practice. "The enemies are the problems that we have to solve -- racism, hunger, addiction, bigotry -- these are the things that we have to face ... Republicans and Democrats are partners in that endeavor," LaRose said. "Civility is not just about being nice to one another. Civility is how we get things done on behalf of the people that we serve, and compromise is not a failure. Compromise is how statesmen and women solve problems. Let's get back to that. What do you say?"

TRANSITION

Both Gov.-elect Mike DeWine and Lt. Gov.-elect Jon Husted Friday announced members of their senior staffs. DeWine said that Eve Mueller will serve as deputy communications director; Dan Tierney, press secretary; and Ron Todd, the governor's minority affairs liaison. DeWine had previously named Lisa Peterson communications director. Husted announced that Avi Zaffini will serve as his chief of staff; Joshua Eck, director of communications; Brooke Ebersole, press secretary; Julie Kirk, director of coalitions and outreach; Carrie Kuruc, director of the Common Sense Initiative (CSI); Karine Aswad-Hray, director of business advocacy for CSI; and Paula Steele, director of special projects for CSI.

Gov. Mike DeWine and Lt. Gov. Jon Husted's transition fund raised more money and spent more on inauguration festivities than their predecessors, according to reports filed with the secretary of state's office this week. Tuesday was the deadline for transition committees to report fundraising and spending activities. According to the report, DeWine and Husted's transition fund raised \$1.7 million, and spent just over \$1 million. In comparison, Gov. John Kasich's 2010 transition fund reported \$1.6 million in contributions, and spent \$604,960. Kasich's 2014 transition fund raised \$759,450 and spent \$337,791.

TRANSPORTATION

The Ohio Department of Transportation's (ODOT) proposed budget for FY20-21 calls for no new funding in major new projects, and a new coalition is calling for the state to do something about it, including a possible raise in the gas tax. Government, business, transportation and regional planning councils formed the coalition, "Fix Our Roads Ohio," to lobby the state to come up with new sources of funding to address the shortfall, which the coalition attributed to the expiration of the Ohio Turnpike bond program at the end of this fiscal year.

UTILITIES

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) has unanimously affirmed its 2017 order subjecting residential submeterers who charge more than their local public utility to the full regulatory power of the state, denying applications for rehearing by American Electric Power (AEP) of Ohio, Duke Energy, FirstEnergy, Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC), Ohio Poverty Law Center and Ohio Partners for Affordable Energy. Complainants did not object to the commission's newly adopted "relative price test" for PUCO jurisdiction as much as to its added safe harbor protections for submeterers who can prove (1) that they are simply passing on to multi-family residents annual charges assessed by the utility or competitive supplier, or (2) that charges do not exceed what residents would have paid the utility or competitive supplier directly for the same annual usage.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) Wednesday accepted the results of Vectren Energy Delivery of Ohio's auction for its default natural gas service. The auction secured natural gas supplies for Vectren's customers from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020 and established a retail price adjustment of \$0.085 per hundred cubic feet (ccf).

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Eight Ohio school districts and two private schools will share nearly \$243,000 to improve their safety and security under an expanded safety grant program launched last year by the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC), the agency announced Thursday. "We want to improve workplace safety across Ohio, and that's especially important in workplaces that house and educate our children, the future of this state," said BWC Administrator/CEO Stephanie McCloud.

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