

NAIOP

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
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NAIOP OF OHIO

NAIOP Weekly Legislative Report
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Report created on August 22, 2011

Supported Bills

- HB10 REMEDIATION OF CONTAMINATED SITE (SEARS, B)** To authorize refundable tax credits for the completion of a voluntary action to remediate a contaminated site and for the return of such sites to productive use, and to exempt persons through 2017 who have issued covenants not to sue under the Voluntary Action Program from certain fees and penalties for one year after the issuance of such a covenant.
- Current Status:* 3/2/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 2/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
2/16/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
2/9/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
2/2/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
1/26/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
1/11/2011 - Introduced
- HB17 TAX CREDIT FOR HIRING UNEMPLOYED (BAKER, N)** To authorize a \$2,400 income tax withholding credit for an employer that hires and employs a previously unemployed individual.
- Current Status:* 1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
All Bill Status: 1/11/2011 - Introduced
- HB18 TAX CREDIT - EXPANDING BUSINESSES (BAKER, N)** To authorize a nonrefundable tax credit for a business that increases payroll and expands into a vacant facility.
- Current Status:* 2/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 2/16/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
2/9/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
2/2/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
1/26/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
1/11/2011 - Introduced

Oppose

- HB50 TYPE-II ANNEXATION (SNITCHLER T)** To require that a political subdivision owner be included in determining the number of owners needed to sign a petition for an expedited type-II annexation.
- Current Status:* 6/21/2011 - House Local Government, (Fifth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 6/14/2011 - **BILL AMENDED**, House Local Government, (Fifth

Hearing)
5/24/2011 - **SUBSTITUTE BILL ACCEPTED**, House Local Government, (Fourth Hearing)
3/1/2011 - House Local Government, (Second Hearing)
2/22/2011 - House Local Government, (Second Hearing)
2/15/2011 - House Local Government, (First Hearing)
2/1/2011 - Referred to Committee House Local Government
1/26/2011 - Introduced

Monitoring

- HB134 CAPITAL GAINS INVESTMENTS (SCHURING K)** To reduce the income tax rate on capital gains reinvested in Ohio-based investments.
Current Status: 6/1/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fourth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 5/11/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
3/30/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Third Hearing)
3/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Second Hearing)
3/16/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
3/2/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
3/1/2011 - Introduced
- HB198 PROPERTY TAX COMPLAINTS (COLEY II W)** To permit property tax complaints to be initiated only by the property owner.
Current Status: 5/12/2011 - House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development, (Second Hearing)
All Bill Status: 5/4/2011 - House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development, (First Hearing)
4/12/2011 - Referred to Committee House Financial Institutions, Housing and Urban Development
4/12/2011 - Introduced
- SB89 LABOR REQUIREMENTS (JORDAN K)** To prohibit state agencies from requiring or prohibiting certain labor requirements as a condition of performing public works and prohibit the appropriations of state funds for public works when political subdivisions require or prohibit certain labor.
Current Status: 3/8/2011 - Referred to Committee Senate Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review
All Bill Status: 2/23/2011 - Introduced
- SB115 PROPERTY SALE GAINS (KEARNEY E)** To exempt from income taxation any gains from the sale of Ohio property used in a trade or business and held for at least two years.
Current Status: 3/24/2011 - Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development, (First Hearing)
All Bill Status: 3/15/2011 - Referred to Committee Senate Ways & Means & Economic Development
3/9/2011 - Introduced

Bills Introduced Since 8/15/2011

YELLOW DOT MEDICAL INFORMATION (TAVARES C) To establish the "Yellow Dot" motor vehicle medical information program within the Department of Public Safety.

ART THERAPY (SKINDELL M, GRENDELL T) To regulate the practice of art therapy.

Week in Review

Friday, August 19, 2011

AGING

Nearly four in five elderly Ohioans given a home-care intervention through a Department of Aging initiative had avoided going in to or back to a nursing home six months later, a new report from Miami University's Scripps Gerontology Center found.

AGRICULTURE

Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and Administrator Karen Mills of the Small Business Administration hosted a media teleconference Monday to discuss new policy recommendations by the White House Rural Council for growing the economy and creating jobs in rural America which include helping rural small businesses access capital, expanding rural job search and training services, and increasing rural access to health care workers and technology.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General (AG) Mike DeWine convened the Human Trafficking Commission Monday to restart discussions on how to fight child prostitution and 21st century slavery in Ohio. While the group had issued its statutorily required final report under former AG Richard Cordray, DeWine said, "Our work is not done on the issue of human trafficking in Ohio. The Human Trafficking Commission will help the attorney general's office and law enforcement develop practices and proposals to root out human trafficking in our state."

AUDITOR OF STATE

Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor convened the Small Business Advisory Council, an arm of regulatory reform efforts through the administration's Common Sense Initiative (CSI), for the first time on Thursday while also touting a new early-stage project for the office: consolidating municipal tax collection.

BALLOT ISSUES

In a unanimous decision Friday, the Ohio Supreme Court rejected ProgressOhio's challenge of 69,000 signatures collected by paid circulators to put Issue 3, the constitutional amendment challenging a federal mandate for individuals to purchase health insurance, on the November ballot. In a three-page opinion, the Court said that ProgressOhio did not meet the burden of demonstrating that the petition failed to contain a sufficient number of valid signatures to qualify for the ballot.

Connie Wehrkamp, a deputy press secretary for Gov. John Kasich, has taken a leave of absence to join Building a Better Ohio, the group formed to defend collective bargaining law SB5 (Jones) in a referendum. Other administration officials are also taking a role in the campaign, which appears as Issue 2 on the ballot. Kasich's office confirmed that Chief of Staff Beth Hansen, Communications Director Scott Milburn, and senior advisor Jai Chabria are volunteering personal time "to provide counsel to the effort."

In advance of next week's Ohio Ballot Board meeting, legislative leaders Wednesday assigned lawmakers to help draft the official arguments on three statewide ballot issues for publication across the state. State Issue 1 is a constitutional amendment proposed by the General Assembly that would allow judges to seek election up to age 75, compared to the current age limit of 70. Rep. Matt Huffman (R-Lima) and Sens. Larry Obhof (R-Medina), Scott Oelslager (R-Canton) and Joe Schiavoni (D-Austintown) were assigned to write arguments in favor of the issue. Reps. Tracy Heard (D-Columbus) and Mark Okey (D-Carrollton) were assigned to write arguments against it. Writing arguments in favor of State Issue 2, the referendum on collective bargaining changes in SB5, will be bill sponsor Sen. Shannon Jones (R-Springboro), House

Speaker Pro Tem Lou Blessing (R-Cincinnati), and the chairmen of the committees that heard the bill, Sen. Kevin Bacon (R-Minerva Park) and Rep. Joe Uecker (R-Loveland). State Issue 3 is a constitutional amendment proposed by voter petition that seeks to preempt the individual insurance mandate in the federal Affordable Care Act. Assigned to write arguments against the amendment are the two top legislative Democrats, House Minority Leader Armond Budish (Beachwood) and Senate Minority Leader Capri Cafaro (Hubbard), as well as Rep. Mike Foley (D-Cleveland).

Attorney General Mike DeWine and Secretary of State Jon Husted Thursday certified efforts by Fair Elections Ohio, a group including former Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner, to collect signatures on a referendum on the elections reform law, HB194, giving opponents of the bill a short window to gather the signatures needed to put it on the November 2012 ballot.

With a deadline approaching for ballot committees to pull state issues off the ballot, Gov. John Kasich, House Speaker William Batchelder (R-Medina), and Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) Wednesday called for union leaders to come to the negotiating table with a compromise on Issue 2, the referendum on the collective bargaining law SB5 (Jones). The three Republican leaders sent a letter to "the government employee union leaders of We Are Ohio" asking that both sides get together at a meeting scheduled for 10 a.m. Friday in the Vern Riffe Center, 31st floor, Room South A. Kasich later said he would personally attend.

We Are Ohio, the group behind the Issue 2 referendum on SB5 (Jones), responded Thursday to a call by Gov. John Kasich and Republican legislative leaders to sit down to talk about a compromise to keep the issue off the November ballot, sending a letter that says the group will only talk after the law has been fully repealed. As a result, no one from We Are Ohio showed on Friday.

Ohioans for Healthcare Freedom, the campaign group in favor of Issue 3, the Ohio constitutional amendment aimed at preempting parts of the federal Affordable Care Act, named Meghan Snyder communications director Thursday. Snyder has been press secretary in the Washington, D.C. office of U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Urbana).

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Speaking at the first of six regional meetings rolling out Phase II of the governor's privatized workforce initiative, JobsOhio, and the resulting reconfiguration of the Ohio Department of Development into the Ohio Development Services Agency (ODSA), Gov. John Kasich's job czar Mark Kvamme said the state is "going on the offense" to expand Ohio's economy and workforce, and that a major overhaul of state development functions will be at its center. Citing poor customer service, a slow and cumbersome approval process, lack of proactive sales efforts and participation from corporate level execs and the inability to maintain confidential information, Kvamme said a radical redesign of state development responsibilities is needed at this point in Ohio's history. The plan itself was delivered to the General Assembly on Thursday.

The U.S. Department of the Treasury said Tuesday that it has approved Ohio's State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) application, which will allow the state to access \$55.1 million in federal funds to support state-level, small business lending programs. The treasury department said that Ohio expects to generate at least \$10 in new private lending for every \$1 in federal funding through the program, which could support up to \$551 million in new private lending.

EDUCATION

With seven community schools on the state's "unauditable" list, Ohio Auditor Dave Yost held a one-day boot camp for charter sponsors, operators and board members Monday in the hope of preventing future cases of poor accounting, mismanaged funds, and outright fraud. Items covered included community school closing procedures, Ohio Ethics Law updates, charter school legislation, and accounting and auditing support.

Following the reopening of the enrollment for Ohio's EdChoice scholarships after the state budget was passed more than doubling the cap from 14,000 to 30,000 slots, the Ohio Department of Education reported that there were a total of 5,031 applications for new scholarships and 11,972 renewal applications. Students from 41 districts applied during the two enrollment periods, with students from the large urban districts driving interest in the program.

As the State Board of Education runs up against an end of the year deadline to have a teacher/principal evaluation plan in place and a Department of Education desire to pilot the plan this upcoming school year, representatives of Education First Consulting presented the results of their assessment of the "Ohio Teacher Evaluation System" (OTES) to members of the board's Capacity Committee Wednesday.

ELECTIONS 2012

Greg Jolivette, a former state representative and Butler County commissioner, announced that he will be running next year for the House seat he formerly held. Jolivette served in the Ohio House from 1997 until 2004, when he switched seats with then-Butler County Commissioner Courtney Combs. Combs faces term limits in the House next year and cannot run again.

ELECTIONS

The Libertarian Party of Ohio (LPO), which has filed a lawsuit against Secretary of State Jon Husted over ballot-access provisions in elections reform law HB194, filed a motion for preliminary injunction and expedited proceedings Thursday. The motion asks a federal court to allow Libertarian candidates on the ballot and the Libertarian Party of Ohio to remain a legal political party to protect its constitutional rights. The party sued Husted earlier this month, claiming that changes in HB194 return the requirements third-parties need to meet to qualify for the ballot to the same level that had been in an Ohio law that was later struck down as unconstitutional by a federal court. Libertarians say in their motion the main issue is what constitutes reasonable ballot access.

ENERGY

USEC Inc. announced that it has entered into an amendment to its standstill agreement with Toshiba America Nuclear Energy Corporation (Toshiba), and Babcock & Wilcox Investment Company (B&W) to extend the agreement through Sept. 30, because the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) still hasn't approved the facility for its loan guarantee. The amended agreement provides a limited additional period of time for USEC to finalize and enter into a conditional commitment with DOE for a \$2 billion loan guarantee to support the construction of the American Centrifuge Plant and achieve the closing of the second phase of Toshiba and B&W's investment in USEC.

ENVIRONMENT

The Columbus Metropolitan Club packed the Athletic Club ballroom on Wednesday for a session titled "What the Frack?" -- a panel discussion of the economic, environmental and health impacts of the hydraulic horizontal fracturing drilling process of Ohio's Utica shale formations. The panel was made up of representatives from the Ohio Oil and Gas Association, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, along with health and environmental advocates.

With natural gas production from Ohio's Marcellus and Utica shale deposits projected to increase, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) is creating a new general permit to make sure the air around production sites is safe while providing business with the most efficient option to get operations up and running. This new process will allow most applicants to apply for and receive a permit in as little as two weeks.

FEDERAL

The Government National Mortgage Association (Ginnie Mae) announced Friday that it guaranteed more than \$27.7 billion in mortgage-backed securities (MBS) in July.

U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH), former head of the federal Office of Management and Budget and a member of the Senate Budget Committee, said Thursday during a media teleconference that he is encouraged to be on the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction to change the trajectory of Washington's record high debt now that consequences for both political parties are in place if they do not act. The committee faces a deadline of Nov. 23, 2011 to recommend at least \$1.5 trillion in additional deficit reduction steps to happen over a 10-year period. If the committee fails to agree on a package or the full Congress fails to pass it, a so-called "trigger mechanism" would enact \$1.2 trillion in automatic spending cuts split between national security and domestic program budgets to serve as the second installment of deficit reduction.

GAMING

With a deal between the Kasich administration and companies developing new casinos in place, the Ohio Lottery Commission Monday approved new rule language to implement video lottery terminals (VLT) at Ohio's seven racetracks, amending four rules implemented under the Strickland administration that deal with installation of VLTs and operator applications. It also adopted nine new rules for businesses that will be providing actual machines used at the racetracks. Under the revised rules, racetrack owners would be entitled to two-thirds, or 66.5 percent, of the revenues that VLTs would generate.

The head of an Ohio problem-gambling group told the Casino Control Commission Wednesday the state is being proactive in addressing social ills that can come with expanded gambling, and she urged the commission to work cooperatively with other gaming regulators and addiction-treatment groups. The Problem Gambling Network of Ohio noted that most of the money provided to research problem and pathological gambling in the U.S. comes from the gambling industry itself, with no federal money set aside whatsoever, although legislation to provide funding has been proposed.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

House and Senate leadership began reviewing the "Enterprise University Plan for Ohio," a 62-page plan to free the University System of Ohio -- or its major players -- from regulatory mandates that, according to the chancellor, are hampering improved performance at the state's benchmark institutions. Chancellor Jim Petro had presented the two-phase, three-tiered plan at the annual university trustee conference on Aug. 11.

House Republicans said Wednesday they'll send bipartisan, ad hoc study committees on tax policy, workforce development, and improving state government's use of technology on field hearings in the coming weeks to gather public input that could inspire legislation in the fall. Then on Thursday, they released the names of members of the three committees which are the House Tax Structure Study Committee, House Workforce Development Study Committee, and House Technology in State Government Study Committee.

Rep. Jarrod Martin (R-Beavercreek) said this week that he won't resign his seat despite a request from top Republicans, including House Speaker William Batchelder (R-Medina). Martin was charged with operating a motor vehicle while intoxicated and child endangerment after a July 22 traffic stop in Jackson County.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine and other Republicans got the decision they were looking for Friday when the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta ruled 2-1 to uphold Ohio's challenge to the federal health care mandate, finding the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act exceeds Congress's enumerated powers under the Commerce Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Unlike the U.S. District Court in Florida, from which the appeal was taken, the 11th Circuit did not overturn the entire law.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Ohio University and the African University College of Communications in Ghana have signed an agreement for student and faculty exchanges, study abroad opportunities for Ohio students and professional development for the African college's faculty.

Miami University ranks highest among Ohio's public universities in *Forbes* magazine's recently released America's Top Colleges 2011 list, which features 650 private and public colleges and universities across the country. Among public universities nationwide, Miami ranked 46th. Miami also appears as the 5th ranked public university in *Forbes*' "Best in the Midwest" list and 33rd among publics on the "Best Research Universities" list.

The University of Akron (UA) School of Law announced the creation of a joint Juris Doctor (J.D.) and Master of Laws (LL.M.) program in intellectual property. Intellectual property courses that students can take include Fundamentals of IP, Patent Policy, Copyright Law, Trademark and Unfair Competition Law, International IP Law, Entertainment Law and more.

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine asked participants at the annual Summit on Ohio Campus Safety and Security, where he appeared Wednesday with Chancellor Jim Petro, to submit recommendations in the next 30 days on critical training needed at the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) to address college safety.

The University of Toledo (UT) announced a \$10 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to advance science and discovery in early childhood and elementary education. The new NURTURES program led by UT will transform the way preschool through third-grade science is taught in the greater Toledo area.

Chancellor Jim Petro will not be leading a move to privatize the broadcast responsibilities of eTech Ohio after a majority of the eTech Commission voted Thursday to remove him as chair of the study committee and replace him with Vice Chair Bruce Hawkins. Commissioner Hawkins is chief executive officer of the Management Council for the Ohio Education Computer Network (MCOECN), one of the many technology players in Ohio's public education pantheon. A proposal apparently originating in the chancellor's office had argued for subcontracting eTech's public broadcasting oversight of Central Master Control, as the TV and radio infrastructure is called.

Ohio University's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs released its Green Jobs Report on Thursday, which explores training and education programs within the University System of Ohio (USO) that prepare students for green jobs. The report, titled "Green Jobs and the Ohio Economy - Part 4: Education and Training Programs," focuses on university system programs relating to six sectors of Ohio's green economy: renewable energy, energy efficiency, manufacturing, advanced energy, bioscience, green building and agriculture/biomass.

H. Richard Rowe, Jr. of Findlay (Hancock Co.) as a member of the Owens State Community College Board of Trustees for a term beginning Aug. 18, 2011 and ending on Sept. 21, 2016.

HOUSING

Ohio's 9,185 home sales in July marked a 17.8 percent jump compared to July 2010 figures, according to data from the Ohio Association of Realtors. The association also released the results of a recent survey of members that it says shows a good outlook for the market. The July average sales price of \$140,903 was 3.1 percent above the same month a year ago, while total dollar volume was 21.4 percent higher, with sales of \$1.3 billion compared to July 2010's \$1.1 billion.

INSURANCE

Ohio Lt. Gov. and Department of Insurance Director Mary Taylor named Jillian Froment the department's deputy director. In that role, Froment is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the department. She previously served the department as the assistant director/chief administrative officer

and was responsible for fiscal, human resources, information technology, communications and consumer affairs.

JUDICIAL

The Ohio Supreme Court announced the latest updates to Supreme Court Rules of Practice Wednesday, highlighting important changes to Rules 1.2, 18.3, 2.2 and 8.5 -- the latter having the "broadest impact."

Former Nixon White House Counsel John Dean told a crowded room of capital-area attorneys Wednesday that the Watergate scandal of the 1970s is a clear lesson in what not to do as a legal advisor to individuals or institutions, public or private. Dean, who hasn't practiced since his Nixon days, is anchoring ethics discussions across Ohio this week as part of the Ohio State Bar Association's continuing legal education program. The former advisor to President Richard Nixon carefully recounted the events leading up to and after the Watergate break-in on June 17, 1972 by five Republican operatives.

The Supreme Court of Ohio Thursday completed its latest action to protect against personal identity theft as part of public access rules for judicial records adopted in December 2008. The Court published the new probate form for "Confidential Disclosure of Personal Identifiers," which provides a permanent record of Social Security numbers, financial account numbers and the like.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES (NCSL)

Ohio Republican Sen. Kevin Bacon (R-Columbus) defended the state's collective bargaining reforms at a session Thursday. "All we were doing was wanting to let that relationship between the local government and their unions exist," said Bacon.

The economy is dependent on higher education, according to experts gathered at the National Conference of State Legislatures Legislative Summit, and Texas is wrangling the problem with purse strings. Former Texas legislator and Texas Association of Business President Bill Hammond said that schools should be funded based on their effectiveness and productivity. He suggested states base a percentage of their funding for higher education on degree completion or graduation rates. And he's not talking about anything under 5 percent.

Outspoken former Shell President John Hofmeister, who founded and now heads Citizens for Affordable Energy, addressed a small session, calling the current form of governance unfixable. He advocated the creation of an independent regulatory system, similar to the Federal Reserve System, to direct U.S. energy policy. There is no federal plan for the energy future of the nation. Eight presidents since Richard Nixon and 19 Congresses have promised a plan, but there is no federal plan to benefit your state -- quite disturbing. Everyone has promised, but no one has delivered.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The Lake Erie watersnake, a federally threatened and state endangered species, is being removed from the federal government's list of threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. This reptile has one of the smallest geographic distributions of any North American vertebrate and is found almost exclusively on the Lake Erie Islands. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Division of Wildlife will also proceed to down-list the species from state endangered to state threatened.

PENSION FUNDS

The Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) said Thursday that finance director Karen Carraher is the new executive director of the pension fund, a job she's held on a temporary basis since February. Carraher became interim director Feb. 28 following the resignation of Chris DeRose, who became vice president of client services for strategic accounts at the health care consulting firm Ingenix.

PEOPLE

Robert Shamansky, an attorney and former Columbus-area U.S. representative, died Saturday at age 84. Shamansky won a term in Congress in 1980, defeating long-time Republican U.S. Rep. Sam Devine. But he was unseated just two years later by now-Gov. John Kasich, who was then a state senator. It was later revealed that Shamansky had committed suicide.

Dr. Bernadine Healy, 67, the chair of the Ohio Commission to Reform Medicaid established by former Gov. Bob Taft in late 2003 to conduct a complete review of the state's Medicaid program and make recommendations for comprehensive reform and cost containment of the program, died Aug. 6 of complications from brain cancer.

POLLS/STUDIES

A new poll from Public Policy Polling shows that President Barack Obama is unpopular in Ohio, with 52 percent of the state's voters disapproving of him in the pollster's most recent survey. But the president is leading all of the current Republican candidates running to face him next year, albeit by single digits for most.

Former Ohio State football coach Jim Tressel may have had a winning record in his years in Columbus, but a new poll, released by Public Policy Polling, suggests one opponent he wouldn't beat would be U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH). Tressel was included in the group's hypothetical matchups of Republican opponents who may challenge Brown's bid for re-election next year. Although the poll found that Tressel remains popular in the state, Brown would defeat him 46 percent to 34 percent. In other potential matchups, Brown beats U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Urbana) 47 percent to 35 percent, former State Sen. Kevin Coughlin 47 percent to 33 percent, and Treasurer Josh Mandel 48 percent to 33 percent. The poll said that Brown is benefiting to some extent from a field of unknown and disliked opponents.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

Secretary of State Jon Husted announced Monday that the ability for Ohioans to draw new state and congressional district boundaries is now live on the www.ReshapeOhio.org website hosted by his office. The web-based program uses the map drawing program Maptitude to allow anyone to take 2010 U.S. Census data and draw new lines. The deadline for submitting maps for consideration is noon on Sept. 23, 2011.

STATE GOVERNMENT

A request to modify Avon Lake's wastewater treatment plant discharge permit will be the focus of a Sept. 1 Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) public meeting in Avon Lake. Ohio EPA is reviewing an application from the City of Avon Lake to have its permit modified for the discharge of mercury from the city's wastewater treatment plant located at 33370 Lake Rd. If approved, the modification would allow the city to continue discharging mercury to Lake Erie at levels that exceed the 1.3 parts per trillion (ppt) limit required in its existing permit.

TRANSPORTATION

The Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) began its first review of projects submitted for consideration over the summer as it works to create a list that doesn't over promise what the state can afford. As part of this year's process, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) asked those with projects on the TRAC's Tier II list, which contains transportation projects in the early stages of planning, to resubmit applications if they want to remain on the list. As a result, many of the applications reviewed by the panel on Thursday were requests to stay in the Tier II category.

WORKERS COMPENSATION

Nine individuals were convicted of or pleaded guilty to charges related to defrauding Ohio's workers' compensation system in July, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) said Friday. The court actions are the result of investigations by BWC's Special Investigations Department (SID).

