

NAIOP

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE
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NAIOP OF OHIO

NAIOP Weekly Legislative Report
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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:* 9/27/2011 - House Ways and Means, (First Hearing)
All Bill Status: 1/11/2011 - Referred to Committee House Ways and Means
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:* 9/27/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Sixth Hearing)
All Bill Status: 2/23/2011 - House Ways and Means, (Fifth Hearing)
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 10/24/2011

GOLD STAR FAMILY LICENSE PLATES (UECKER J) To redefine eligibility for issuance of a "Gold Star Family" license plate.

TAXPAYERS CONTRIBUTE TO STATE (BLAIR T) To allow taxpayers to contribute an amount to the state through their income tax returns and designate how the state must use the contribution.

INCREASE ALCOHOL CONTENT IN BEER (RAMOS D) To increase the legally permitted alcohol of beer and to generally prohibit the inclusion of alcohol of caffeine or other stimulants in beer containing more than 12% of alcohol by volume.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE - TAXING DISTRICT (RAMOS D) To require JobsOhio and state agencies offering economic development assistance to obtain Controlling Board approval before providing assistance to a person who, at or near the time of receiving the assistance, relocates employment positions from one taxing district to another or eliminates positions at an existing location.

STANDARDS FOR BOARDS OF HEALTH (LEHNER P) To approve the Public Health Council's proposed revision of Chap. 3701-36 of the Ohio Administrative Code establishing standards to be met by boards of health and local health departments and procedures for payment of state subsidies for meeting those standards.

UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEMS TESTING (WIDENER C) To urge the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration to select Ohio as a site for testing the integration of Unmanned Aerial Systems into the National Airspace System.

NEW INTERNATIONAL TRADE CROSSING (MANNING G) To support the construction of the New International Trade Crossing between the United States and Canada.

Week in Review

Friday, October 28, 2011

ABORTION

More dissent in the ranks at Ohio Right to Life surfaced this week, with Julie Busby, an Eaton resident and member of the organization's board of trustees, filing a formal complaint with Attorney General Mike DeWine's office about the organization's staff leadership. In a statement, Busby claims the organization's executive director, Mike Gonidakis, hasn't provided her access to the books and records of Ohio Right to Life, which she argues she's entitled to see under Ohio's nonprofit corporation law.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Attorney General Mike DeWine and four of his counterparts asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review a lower court's rejection of a requested injunction to force the federal government to act to prevent the spread of the invasive Asian carp into the Great Lakes.

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine's Violent Crime with Guns Advisory Group continued a comprehensive review of crime data Wednesday in support of an emerging state profile on the criminals DeWine blames for the greatest number of weapons offenses. Deanna Wilkinson, Ph.D., of the Ohio State University Department of Human Development and Family Science, provided updated statistics from the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCII) on violent crime involving weapons.

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine vowed to redouble efforts Thursday to stem the tide of child deaths at the hand of their own parents and caregivers. He referenced the recent death of two-year-old DeMarcus Jackson in expressing his outrage over the loss and that of five children every day in the U.S. - an increase from three deaths a day in 1997, when DeWine wrote the federal law on family reunification.

BALLOT ISSUES

The Ohio Democratic Party said it has collected 150,000 additional signatures for its referendum on election law changes in HB194 on top of the 318,000 it turned in at the initial deadline. Democrats will

have 10 days to submit extra signatures if enough of the initial signatures aren't valid to meet the 231,000 threshold.

The Ohio Ballot Board certified as a single issue a proposed constitutional amendment to allow for medical marijuana use in the state. The Ohio Alternative Treatment Amendment, which backers would need 385,000 valid signatures to place on the ballot, proposes to let certain patients possess up to 3.5 ounces of usable cannabis.

Attorney General Mike DeWine rejected petition summary language for a proposed Ohio constitutional amendment to define life as beginning at conception, saying the summary didn't match the actual amendment and thus was not "fair and truthful."

The *Akron Beacon Journal* endorsed a "no" vote on Issue 2, to overturn collective bargaining law SB5 (Jones). The Ohio Nurses Association endorsed a "no" vote on Issue 3, the Health Care Freedom Amendment.

Quinnipiac University's latest poll Tuesday showed 57 percent of respondents in favor of repealing SB5 (Jones) via defeat of Issue 2, expanding anti-SB5 forces' advantage to 25 points in the poll with two weeks to go until the election.

The campaigns for and against Issue 2 squared off in their first statewide televised debate, with former U.S. Rep. Dennis Eckert representing We Are Ohio and urging repeal of collective bargaining changes in SB5 (Jones) via defeat of Issue 2, while Sen. Keith Faber (R-Celina) argued on behalf of Building a Better Ohio for retention of the law and passage of Issue 2.

Issue 2 opponents far exceeded proponents' fundraising in campaign finance reports filed Thursday. Anti-Issue 2 group We Are Ohio reported \$19 million in contributions, or \$23.6 million when in-kind contributions are counted, while pro-Issue 2 group Building a Better Ohio raised \$7.6 million. Most of We Are Ohio's large contributions came from unions. Building a Better Ohio's corporate structure doesn't require disclosure but it sent a list of donors to the secretary of state's office but did not include the amounts each donated.

We Are Ohio, the campaign to defeat Issue 2 and repeal SB5 (Jones), called a press conference Thursday to highlight what it says are SB5's specific negative effects for veterans. The campaign says SB5 limits the ability to bargain for contract provisions that enable veterans to gain recognition of their military time in public employment, such as teachers' being able to count military time toward their seniority. Meanwhile, the Democratic Governors Association reportedly donated \$150,000 to We Are Ohio.

CORRECTIONS

The staff leader of the General Assembly's prison oversight panel said Wednesday she'd like to get into the business of touring local jails, while voicing concern that administration officials are blocking her ability to fulfill a statutory duty to review inmate grievance procedures at state lockups.

DEATH PENALTY

The Ohio Supreme Court scheduled two additional executions, stretching the execution calendar into fall 2013. Ronald Ray Post is scheduled for death Jan. 16, 2013, while Harry Mitts Jr. is scheduled to die Sept. 25, 2013.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Controlling Board approved funding Monday for outside lawyers to help write an agreement for the transfer of the state liquor enterprise to JobsOhio. Attorney General Mike DeWine's office, the Office of Budget and Management and the Department of Commerce, which currently oversees the liquor enterprise, will hire McDonald Hopkins LLC to help structure deal.

Gov. John Kasich and state Chief Investment Officer Mark Kvamme updated the JobsOhio Board of Directors Wednesday on the progress of Ohio's new development strategy: 174 signed deals, 12,000 new and 25,000 retained jobs, \$520 million in new payroll, and \$1.6 billion in capital investment, all since January.

Rep. Dan Ramos (D-Lorain) said Wednesday he's introduced legislation aimed at preventing state subsidization of local governments in trying to "poach" jobs and businesses from other regions within Ohio. His HB357 would require JobsOhio and the Ohio Department of Development to seek legislative approval via the Controlling Board for any development incentives involving businesses moving locations within Ohio.

Rep. Dennis Murray (D-Sandusky), Sen. Mike Skindell (D-Lakewood), and ProgressOhio asked a Franklin County court Wednesday to stop JobsOhio from operating until their lawsuit questioning the constitutionality of the entity can be resolved. The lawmakers said they would be filing a motion when they first announced their lawsuit in August. They argue that the private economic development arm of the state is unconstitutional because it confers corporate powers and allows Ohio to take an equity stake in a private corporation.

EDUCATION

Education advisor to the governor Bob Sommers told members of the Digital Learning Task Force that Ohio must capitalize on its reputation as an e-school leader to keep pace with states' bringing online education into a new age of blended learning, an emerging K-12 model that is erasing philosophical and institutional barriers between public brick-and mortar schools and alternative learning environments.

The Board of Regents and Department of Education (ODE) concluded statewide briefings on Ohio's High School and Higher Education Alignment Project following weeklong sessions on college and career readiness -- cited by the administration as a top priority if Ohio is to prepare its workforce needed for the emerging economy.

Gov. John Kasich and state Superintendent Stan Heffner announced they are working to expand Ohio's Race to the Top (RttT) efforts through a new early learning program that could bring the state another \$70 million. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE), in collaboration with the Governor's Office of 21st Century Education, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, and the Ohio Business Roundtable, filed the formal application with the U.S. Department of Education Wednesday for the 2012-2015 funding cycle, they said.

Later in the week, Heffner provided more information on proposed improvements to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs as part of Ohio's bid for this \$70 million in additional Race to the Top (RttT) funds under the Early Learning Challenge Grant, first announced by the Obama administration earlier this year. Heffner also announced this week that the U.S. Department of Education has awarded Ohio a \$5.3 million supplement under the Education Jobs Fund program.

The National Governors Association (NGA) is looking to advise state leaders on how to implement Common Core Standards for K-12 education, issuing a 36-page report Tuesday, "How Governors Can Lead Effective Implementation of the Common Core State Standards."

State Board of Education member Rob Hovis has been elected treasurer of the National Association of State Boards of Education's (NASBE) Board of Directors. He begins an official two-year term in January 2012, having assumed the role in an acting capacity after his predecessor retired. This comes on the heels of Ohio's Board of Education debating the merits of dropping membership in the national group.

School Choice Ohio and the Friedman Foundation for Educational Choice gave Ohio policymakers a blueprint for advancing student achievement in Ohio, pointing to Florida's successes outlined in a study by the foundation. The author of that study, Matthew Ladner, senior advisory for policy and research at the Foundation for Excellence in Education, said the multifaceted reform approach passed in 1999 under

former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush led to Florida students' improving academically at a higher rate than students in the rest of the country.

The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) announced that more than \$400,000 of the state's Race to the Top (RttT) funds will be used to create the Advanced Placement (AP) Network, which aims to increase students' access to AP classes.

Ohio School Facilities Commission staff touted the security of the state's perch atop the national green-schools rankings, a list that shows Ohio with more than double the projects of its closest competitor.

ELECTIONS 2012

A Public Policy Polling survey showed U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown's (D-OH) approval rating improving since August, from 37-34 to 40-34, but shows his likely Republican challenger, Treasurer Josh Mandel, pulling within single digits of Brown after being behind 15 points in August.

Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney visited Southwest Ohio and picked up endorsements from Attorney General Mike DeWine and U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci (R-Wadsworth). While at a phone bank of volunteers advocating passage of Issue 2 and Issue 3, Romney declined to specifically endorse either one, sparking criticism of him as a "serial flip-flopper" from Democrats, who said he wouldn't back Issue 2 because he saw it was far down in a Quinnipiac poll. Romney later announced an official endorsement of the issue.

Former Sen. Kevin Coughlin (R-Cuyahoga Falls) filed paperwork with the Federal Elections Commission to withdraw his candidacy for the U.S. Senate. He was challenging Treasurer Josh Mandel in the GOP primary.

The Plain Dealer reported Wednesday that Sen. Nina Turner (D-Cleveland) has filed paperwork for a potential congressional run against U.S. Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-Warrensville Heights).

Former Secretary of State Ken Blackwell endorsed Texas Gov. Rick Perry for president.

EMPLOYMENT/UNEMPLOYMENT

Ohio's unemployment rate in September was unchanged from August at 9.1 percent, mirroring the national rate, as the state shed 21,600 jobs, the second most in the nation.

ENERGY

USEC Inc. announced it is discussing ways to share costs with the U.S. Department of Energy for research and demonstration programs that will reduce the technological and financial risks of a federal loan guarantee to help bring its American Centrifuge project in Piketon on line. USEC has been waiting a long time for the guarantee and previously announced it might have to begin scaling back and laying off workers without federal action in the near future.

The American Council on an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) Thursday released its fifth edition of the "State Energy Efficiency Scorecard," ranking Ohio 24th among the 50 states in 2011 based on best practices and leadership in energy efficiency policy and program implementation.

Duke Energy Ohio (Duke) reached a settlement agreement late Monday with most of the intervening parties involved with its application for an Electric Security Plan (ESP) originally filed with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) on June 20. The agreement, which is subject to approval by the PUCO, covers the company's generation service from Jan. 1, 2012 through May 31, 2015.

During a joint hearing on Wednesday of the Senate Energy and Public Utilities Committee and the House Public Utilities Committee, legislators heard from Dominion Virginia Power and a representative of the Energy Association of Pennsylvania discuss how electric utilities are regulated in their respective states.

The result of the third of six wholesale auctions that will ultimately determine FirstEnergy's retail generation service rates through May 2014 was accepted Wednesday by the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO).

In a statement on Wednesday, the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) recommended a reduction of \$51.8 million in distribution revenues be part of American Electric Power's (AEP) pending rate case at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). After evaluating AEP's proposal to increase distribution rates by \$93 million, the OCC filed testimony at the PUCO recommending a revenue reduction to AEP's Columbus Southern Power of 12.43 percent and to Ohio Power by 1.37 percent. The reduction was suggested after OCC questioned the PUCO staff's methods used to calculate costs related to pensions, operating income, labor expenses and other charges.

While U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Tom Vilsack announced Wednesday that his federal agency will be funding anaerobic digester projects in eight states to encourage renewable energy production, reduce energy costs and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and farm-based pollution, local USDA officials were at an anaerobic digester projects owned by Quasar Energy Group in Columbus.

ENVIRONMENT

A trio of clean air advocates told the Columbus Metropolitan Club's forum on Wednesday that the air we breathe is certainly toxic and decried efforts in Washington to roll back the powers of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to regulate air particles. Peter M. Iwanowicz of the American Lung Association, Dr. Jonathan Parsons, an associate professor of internal medicine and associate director of The Ohio State University Asthma Center, and Ickey Woods, a former Cincinnati Bengals running back who has started a foundation in honor of his son, Elbert Jovante Woods, who died last year from an asthma attack, all spoke.

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) Director Scott Nally announced that his agency will administer the Ohio Diesel Emission Reduction Grant (DERG) Program in coordination with the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT). DERG program goals include achieving measurable highway emissions reductions; improving air quality and public health; and encouraging the transportation sector to clean up diesel fleets and use alternative and cleaner burning fuels.

FEDERAL

As part of a strategy to seek executive-action opportunities to bypass Congressional resistance to its jobs plan, the Obama administration announced changes to the federal Home Affordable Refinance Program in an effort allow more underwater borrowers to refinance their mortgages.

GAMING

The Ohio Roundtable filed suit in Franklin County Common Pleas Court to block the installation of video lottery terminals at Ohio racetracks and also challenged elements of Gov. John Kasich's negotiated deal with casino operators. The roundtable said the 1973 constitutional amendment creating a lottery did not envision or authorize video slots.

Rock Ohio Ceasars (ROC), the owner and developer of casinos in downtown Cleveland and Cincinnati, announced that project construction for the initial nine months has awarded more than 41 percent of contracts to minority- and women-owned businesses, exceeding initial goals.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY/STATEHOUSE

Rep. Alicia Reece (D-Cincinnati) said she will be introducing legislation to create a single statewide certification for minority-owned businesses that can be utilized by state and local officials as well as businesses.

Senate Democrats shuffled members among committees. Senate Education Committee added Sen. Joe Schiavoni (D-Austintown) and dropped Sen. Charleta Tavares (D-Columbus); Senate Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources added Sen. Eric Kearney (D-Cincinnati) and dropped Sen. Edna Brown (D-Toledo). Kearney was appointed ranking member of the Senate Judiciary Committee and Sen. Mike Skindell (D-Lakewood) was added to the committee roster, while Schiavoni was removed. Sen. Nina Turner (D-Cleveland) was appointed Ranking Minority Member of the Senate State and Local Government and Veterans Affairs Committee.

The House dropped two of nine remaining sessions for 2011, those on Nov. 9 and 30. Its calendar now has sessions set Nov. 15, 16 and 29 and Dec. 6, 7, 13 and 14.

GOVERNOR

Fox News Channel's Sean Hannity brought his show to the Ohio Statehouse Atrium on Wednesday, for an interview with Gov. John Kasich.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy Friday designated Scioto and Adams counties as "High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas," (HIDTA) a designation that will allow the counties to receive federal assistance to help control prescription drug trafficking and production.

Advocates for Ohio's Future (AOF) and other groups representing health and human service organizations and managed care recipients Friday delivered a letter signed by more than 300 organizations to U.S. Sen. Rob Portman's (R-OH) offices urging support for struggling Ohioans. The letter outlined three overarching principles the groups seek for the deficit-reduction "super committee" on which Portman serves.

HIGHER EDUCATION

A partnership of Kent State University and Carnegie Mellon University in Pennsylvania won a \$250,000 grant from the National Science Foundation to advance computational research. The award is from the foundation's Cyberinfrastructure Training, Education, Advancement and Mentoring for Our 21st Century (CI-TEAM) program.

Ohio State University announced that it will name its breast cancer center The Stefanie Spielman Comprehensive Breast Center in honor of the Ohio State alumna who established a fund for breast cancer research, the Stefanie Spielman Fund for Breast Cancer Research.

The University of Toledo announced the formation of a Center for Religious Understanding to support religious diversity programming on campus.

Chancellor Jim Petro announced Wednesday the designation of Cleveland State University's Center for the NextGen_Economy as an Ohio Center of Excellence in Cultural and Society Transformation.

HOUSING

The number of homes and condos put under contract in September rose for the fifth straight month compared to 2010 figures, the Ohio Association of Realtors (OAR) reported Thursday. The OAR's pending homes sales index, an indicator based on contract signings, was 114.5 in September, compared to 82.1 in the same month last year. The September figure is also above this year's previous high of 105.7 in March.

JUDICIAL

A special panel appointed by the Supreme Court of Ohio issued a split decision Wednesday that the record does not support allegations that Toledo Municipal Court candidate Michelle Wagner has shown "reckless disregard" for Judicial Conduct Rules on court elections.

The Ohio Criminal Sentencing Commission (OCSC) is helping judges and lawyers get up to speed on sweeping criminal justice changes in HB86 (Blessing-Heard), the Supreme Court of Ohio said Wednesday. Professionals in the court system are attending courses and webinar sessions on HB86 and how it will affect their sentencing procedures.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

A public-private partnership of state and local officials and nonprofit stakeholders convened to explore new opportunities for increased productivity and cost savings in public education and local government. Led by the Fordham Institute, Ohio Grantmakers Forum and the Nord Family Foundation, Monday's forum featured presentations by state Auditor David Yost and Ohio Controlling Board President Randy Cole, as well as former Department of Administrative Services Director Hugh Quill and Harvard-educated C. Jackson Grayson, an expert in productivity and efficiency.

NATURAL RESOURCES

After the release of dozens of large predators in Zanesville sparked criticism of Gov. John Kasich's decision to allow a temporary ban on exotic animal ownership to expire, Kasich issued a new executive order outlining other steps agencies are to take to restrict exotic ownership, while continuing to insist the old ban was unenforceable. The new order calls for local humane societies and the state and county health departments to put more emphasis on "underused" regulatory powers to protect health and safety. A draft of permanent laws and regulations on exotic animals is expected by Nov. 30.

Six surviving wild animals from dozens released and killed in Muskingum County last week were quarantined Thursday by the Ohio Department of Agriculture on the possibility they could be diseased because of the squalid conditions under which they had been held. The order prevented the widow of Terry Thompson, who released the animals and then shot himself, from claiming the animals from the Columbus Zoo on Thursday. She can appeal the quarantine order and is entitled to a hearing within 30 days.

During the sixth meeting of the Dangerous Wild Animals (DWA) task force created by Gov. John Kasich, members reconvened Monday to hear from Jack Hanna, director emeritus of the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium, and Muskingum County Sheriff Matt Lutz, who was in charge of coordinating the efforts in Zanesville last week among public health and safety officials and ODNR wildlife officials. The closed-door meeting was the first since the incident in Zanesville involving exotic animal owner Terry Thompson, who released more than 50 wild dangerous animals, including lions, tigers and bears, before committing suicide.

Twenty-two live species of freshwater mussels are living in three Maumee River tributaries, including the state endangered rayed bean mussel (*Villosa fabalis*), according to a University of Toledo study. The study released Monday was supported by the Lake Erie Protection Fund, which is funded through sales of the Lake Erie license plate.

The season for three of Ohio's most popular game species -- ring-necked pheasant, cottontail rabbit, and bobwhite quail -- begins Friday, Nov. 4, according to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), Division of Wildlife.

PEOPLE

The Public Children Services Association of Ohio said it named Sen. Dave Burke (R-Marysville) and Rep. Barbara Boyd (D- Cleveland) its Outstanding Legislators of the Year at its recent conference.

POLLS/STUDIES

Gov. John Kasich's job approval rating dipped a few points in the latest Quinnipiac poll, with 52 percent disapproving of his performance and 36 percent approving, compared to a 49-40 split in a previous poll.

Public Policy Polling (PPP) released more information from its Oct. 13-16 survey, finding U.S. House Speaker John Boehner remains unpopular in his home state of Ohio, with a 35 percent job approval and 46 percent disapproval, compared to 34 percent approval and 47 percent disapproval in an August survey. Fewer Ohioans have opinions on U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) but his numbers also are negative with 24 percent approving and 34 percent disapproving, a slight decline from May.

REDISTRICTING/REAPPORTIONMENT

Reacting to the Ohio Supreme Court's granting Democrats the right to referendum on new congressional map in HB319 (Huffman), the House concurred in Senate amendments Friday to HB318 that split Ohio's 2012 spring primary in two, pushing the presidential and congressional contests back to June. Gov. John Kasich quickly signed the bill. Meanwhile, leaders of both parties were meeting to attempt to work out a compromise map that could avoid the need for a referendum and the two primaries.

Also following the Supreme Court decision, Attorney General Mike DeWine and Secretary of State Jon Husted certified the petitions and initial signatures of the referendum campaign on HB319, Ohioans for Fair Districts. The campaign had asked the Supreme Court grant an additional order restarting the 90-day signature collection period because of delays caused by the court battle, but justices on Thursday denied that request. Signatures will be due on Christmas. Rep. Kathleen Clyde (D-Kent), a member of the Ohioans for Fair Districts committee, said she has "no doubt" the campaign can meet that deadline.

STATE GOVERNMENT

The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review on Monday voiced no objection to rules governing the Powerball lottery game, as well as key employee and gaming-related vendor licensing requirements. However, an Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) representative was asked by members about deer and turkey hunting licensing requirements, specifically addressing concerns made by the Amish community in written testimony and related discussions.

Ohio Attorney General Mike DeWine joined the Ohio Optical Dispensers Board and Prevent Blindness Ohio Monday in a warning against over-the-counter sales of decorative contact lenses, particularly during the upcoming Halloween season.

The state panel that monitors Ohio's investment strategy learned Thursday that the Federal Reserve will seek to capitalize on a slowly recovering housing market in Ohio and the nation through a new monetary policy, "Operation Twist," which will work to lower mortgage rates further and spur more home-buying. Gordon Short, the Ohio Treasury's chief investment officer, told the state Board of Deposit (BOD) that the Fed will invest \$400 billion in U.S. Treasury bills with maturity dates as far out as 30 years in an effort to increase demand and lower rates for longer-term loans.

TRANSPORTATION

At a conference of transportation engineers, Gov. John Kasich outlined principles to guide his administration's plans to lease the Ohio Turnpike, while stressing they won't go forward if a good deal can't be reached. Under his plan, the majority of proceeds would go to projects north of U.S. Rt. 30, and funding could be directed to a dedicated fund for bridge repairs and a steady revenue stream for rural transit systems.

U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Deputy Secretary John Porcari stopped in Columbus Thursday to meet with community leaders, government officials, and business leaders and to promote President Barack Obama's American Jobs Act. Meeting with reporters at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC), Porcari highlighted the \$50 billion transportation portion of the package that could come up for a vote in the U.S. Senate next week. He said every component of the package is paid for and would send \$27 billion to the states for road and bridge repair, \$9 billion for transit, \$5 billion for a grant program, \$4 billion for high-speed rail, \$2 billion for airport upgrades, \$2 billion for Amtrak equipment, and \$1 billion for a next generation air traffic control system.

VETERANS

The Ohio Department of Veterans Services said this week that Director Tom Moe has finished a tour of visits to all 88 county veterans' services offices, as he told Gov. John Kasich he'd do upon being hired.