

Week in review

August 5, 2011 -- Our top "6" subjects you should know

1. Speaker Batchelder writes Governor Kasich with his support for electric deregulation

House Speaker William Batchelder (R-Medina) released a letter to Governor Kasich on Wednesday, August 3, 2011, stating his support for deregulatory energy reforms. While emphasizing the effect that energy policy has on Ohio businesses, the speaker wrote that a robust competitive market is the best way to ensure a reliable and affordable supply of power for consumers. Batchelder also indicated that a House panel spearheaded by Rep. Peter Stautberg (R-Cincinnati), chair of the House Public Utilities Committee, will begin oversight hearings as a review of the State's regulatory climate in the near future.

The letter follows Kasich's announcement of an energy summit that will take place September 21 and 22 at The Ohio State University coordinated by Battelle, a leading energy research center in Columbus. The purpose of the summit is to help the Kasich Administration and Ohio policy makers develop a 21st-century energy policy for Ohio. Summit participants will include leaders from the energy sector, business, education, state and local government, the regulatory community, non-governmental organizations, and economic development.

2. Casino Control Commission developments

On Wednesday, August 3, 2011, the Ohio Casino Control Commission members approved a resolution adopting the instructions that a casino operator, management company or holding company must follow in completing license applications. The Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review had previously approved the measure, which will allow developers of the state's gambling complexes to submit license applications in early September. A non-refundable fee of \$1.5 million per application is required by state law and will be deposited into a commission fund. A fee of \$50 million per facility must then be paid by applicants who obtain a casino license. The money generated by this fee will be used for state economic development programs.

Chairwoman Jo Ann Davidson said the commission is continuing its search for an executive director and aims to have someone selected by September, noting the difficulty in convincing prospects to move to another state.

Penn National Gaming is scheduled to open its Hollywood Casino Toledo in early April 2012 while their Hollywood Casino Columbus has an opening date of late next year. Rock Ohio Caesars is scheduled to open the first phase of its Horseshoe Casino Cleveland in late March 2012 and its Horseshoe Casino Cincinnati has an opening scheduled in late 2012.

3. November election update

Secretary of State Jon Husted, along with members of the Ohio Ballot Board, this week approved ballot language for the three statewide issues appearing on this November's ballot.

The ballot issue order is as follows:

- **Issue 1.** House Joint Resolution 1 – Judicial Retirement Age Constitutional Amendment
 - “Yes” means approval to increase the maximum age for assuming elected or appointed judicial office from seventy to seventy-five
- **Issue 2.** Senate Bill 5 Referendum
 - “Yes” means approval of the new law relative to government union contracts and other government employment policies
- **Issue 3.** Health Care Freedom Act Constitutional Amendment
 - “Yes” means approval of an amendment stating that in Ohio, no law or rule shall compel any person, employer, or health care provider to participate in a health care system

The Ballot Board spent most of the afternoon Wednesday, August 3, 2011, listening to testimony and working on language for Issue 2, with both supporters and opponents of the new law seeking the "no" designation. Business groups in Ohio, including the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, the Partnership for Ohio's Future and the Cleveland Partnership, have announced support for the Building a Better Ohio campaign to defend Senate Bill 5.

4. Mailing of Ohio tax booklets discontinued

Citing further cost-cutting efforts, the Department of Taxation announced it will no longer mail income tax booklets. According to the department, electronic filing has become the preferred method used by taxpayers in filing their Ohio income tax returns, with almost 80 percent of all Ohio tax returns filed electronically for taxable year 2010. Moving forward the department encourages use of their online filing programs but indicated that a limited number of booklets will continue to be available at libraries and post offices.

5. Governor's excellence in exporting award applications

The Ohio Department of Development's Global Markets Division announced that **applications** are now available for the 2011 Governor's Excellence in Exporting Awards (E-Awards). The E-Awards are presented each year to companies and organizations that have shown a strong commitment to increasing exports of Ohio goods and services or for creating a heightened awareness of exporting as a vital component of the state's economy. More than 420 companies and organizations have been recognized as E-Awards recipients.

Four Ohio companies will be recognized and receive the "Exporter of the Year" award. Each award is presented to a company that exemplifies the state's commitment to international trade. The deadline for entries is August 19. The Global Markets Division helps Ohio companies explore global trade opportunities and expand into new international trade markets.

6. Lake Erie Commission accepting nominations for 2011 award

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) is accepting **nominations** for the 2011 Ohio Lake Erie Award, which will recognize individuals and organizations that have made outstanding contributions to enhance Ohio's Great Lake. OLEC honors one person and one organization annually that have worked to protect and restore Lake Erie and its watershed. Nominations must be returned by August 15. Winners will be announced at the commission's annual meeting on Sept. 21 at the Lake Erie Nature and Science Center in Bay Village. The Ohio Lake Erie Commission was created to preserve Lake Erie's natural resources, enhance its water quality and promote economic development in the region.

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