



WORKING TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF OHIOANS LIVING IN THE 32-COUNTY REGION



BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW OHIO

Governor John R. Kasich's Fiscal Years 2016-2017 Budget



Earlier this month, Governor John R. Kasich presented the General Assembly with recommendations for the budget for the state of Ohio. It builds on the work that the Governor and General Assembly have completed to get Ohio back on track and in a position for long-term economic growth.

Small businesses make up about 98 percent of all Ohio businesses – and employ about half the private-sector workforce. These businesses are the backbone of Ohio's economy and why Governor Kasich's plan eliminates the income tax for virtually all small businesses. Small businesses – those with **gross** receipts less than \$2 million – will no longer pay income taxes. And the minimum Commercial Activities Tax (or CAT) will go from \$800 to \$150. It is estimated that this will help hometown businesses grow and create jobs.

Governor Kasich also proposed a \$500 Million Net Tax Cut. It is a 23 percent income tax cut on top of the income tax cut from last year. In addition, the personal income tax

exemption will be increased. For Ohioans earning less than \$40,000 a year, the exemption increases from \$2,200 to \$4,000 in 2015, and for those earning between \$40,000 and \$80,000 a year, the exemption increases from \$1,950 to \$2,850. These increased exemptions will

result in more than 200,000 households no longer paying state income taxes.

Oil and natural gas is still being developed throughout the Appalachian region and the Governor's budget proposal ensures that all Ohioans, especially those communities impacted by the industry, see its

benefits. Currently, Ohio has the lowest, or near – lowest tax rates on natural gas and oil in the country. This proposal will increase the severance tax on oil and gas and put Ohio near the middle of the severance tax rates charged by other states. The proposal also provides counties, where drilling is occurring, 20 percent of the tax revenue. This is money the community can use to improve infrastructure, safety forces, and other community services.

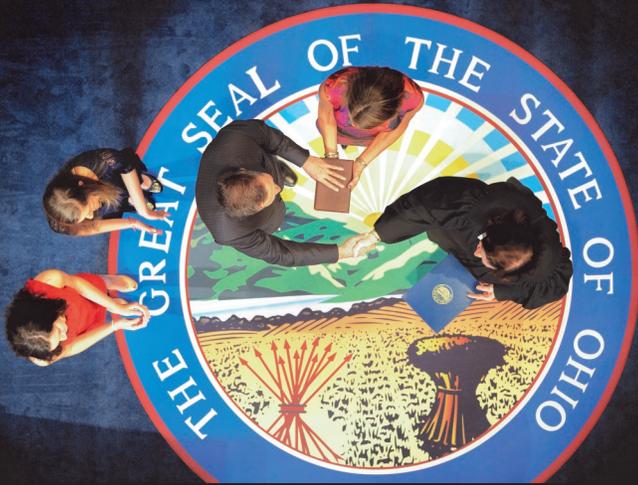
Governor Kasich's budget proposal also increases funding for early childhood education, increases access to college-level courses for high school students, and cuts unnecessary state regulations to increase local control.

Initiatives to improve access to higher education include limiting tuition increases, and creating a new \$120 million fund to address student loan debt. Governor Kasich believes that all Ohioans should benefit from the state's economic turnaround. If you would like to learn more about Governor Kasich's Blueprint for a New Ohio, visit <http://blueprint.ohio.gov/>



To Reach the Governor's Office of Appalachia call (614) 644-9228

To watch Governor Kasich's Second Inaugural Address, [click here](#).



Americans and Ohioans are hungry to see people work together, to build better communities, to build a better Ohio, to build a better nation.
- Governor John R. Kasich

Ohio Department of Education Helps Military Family Members Become Teachers

The Ohio Department of Education, acting on an executive order from Governor John Kasich, is eliminating fees for educator licenses to recognize the contributions of military families.

Beginning this year, the fees for any initial Ohio educator license, permit or certificate – or renewal – will be waived for candidates who are veterans or current service members of all branches of the United States Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves. Spouses of active duty service members also may receive a license free of charge.

“Service members, veterans and their families make many sacrifices - this is just a small way to thank them and show them how much we appreciate those sacrifices,” said Richard A. Ross, superintendent of public instruction at the Ohio Department of Education. “Thanks to Gov. Kasich, veterans, members of the National Guard and Reserves, current service members and the spouses of current service members will have their licensure fee waived.”

In addition, all eligible military applicants and their spouses will be able to use G.I. Bill program benefits to pay fees associated with taking the Ohio Assessments for Educators licensure examinations.

For more information about educator licensure policies for veterans and military members, visit the Ohio Department of Education [website](#).



COMMUNITY CONNECTORS

CommunityConnectors.Ohio.gov

Community Connectors Grants Available

Community Connectors is one of the key education initiatives announced by Ohio Governor John R. Kasich at his 2014 State of the State address. It increases student mentorship in Ohio schools by bringing together families, community organizations, faith-based organizations, and businesses.

Community Connectors provides 3-to-1 matching grants that will help give more Ohio students access to role models who can help motivate and inspire them, as well as help them develop skills that lead to success in school and the workplace. Applications will be accepted **through 5:00 p.m. March 6, 2015**. Grantees will carry out the five core principles of the program:

- Setting Goals to be Prepared for the 21st Century Careers
- Building Character
- Developing Pathways to Achievement
- Building a Sense of Resiliency
- Believing in a Positive Future

A nonprofit entity, faith-based organizations, houses of worship, community nonprofits and nonprofit entities associated with a for-profit business are eligible to apply. If the lead applicant is a community nonprofit or nonprofit associated with a for-profit business, a faith-based organization must be included as a partner. Applications will be accepted **through 5:00 p.m. March 6, 2015**.

More information about the program can be found at CommunityConnectors.Ohio.Gov.



OhioMeansJobs

**Looking for a job?
Looking for workers?**

**Visit OhioMeansJobs.com
to find job opportunities and
skilled workers across Ohio**



Department of Aging

Nominate an Outstanding Older Ohioan for the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame

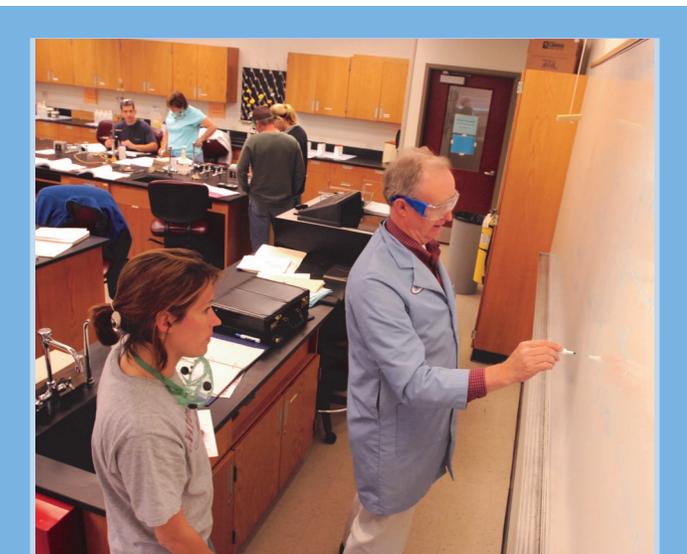
The Ohio Department of Aging is accepting nominations for the 2015 Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame. Individuals and organizations interested in nominating a neighbor, colleague, friend, or family member may visit www.aging.ohio.gov/news/halloffame/ for more information.

Nominees for the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame must be age 60 or older and be native-born Ohioans or residents of the state for at least 10 years. Posthumous nominations will be accepted. The nominee (or a representative of the nominee if he or she is unable) must consent to the nomination.

"Our elders can and do play a vital role in their communities, across our great state and nationwide," said Bonnie K. Burman, Sc.D., director of the Ohio Department of Aging. "By choosing to live a life defined not by their age, but by the good work they have done and continue to do, nominees for the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame serve as role models inspiring all of us to continue to grow, thrive and contribute."

Induction is held each May, observed nationally as Older Americans Month. Those selected will join 421 other older Ohioans inducted into the hall since its inception in 1977. To learn more and view past inductees, visit www.aging.ohio.gov/news/halloffame/.

Ohio 2014 Senior Citizens Hall of Fame



APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE

The 2015 Appalachian Regional Commission/Oak Ridge National Laboratory Summer Math-Science-Technology Institute applications are now available. Ohio Appalachian middle school and high school students interested in math, science and technology are encouraged to apply. For more information and a copy of the application [click here](#).

COMING SOON: Ohio Appalachia Export Grant



The Ohio Appalachia Export Grant (AEG) is funded by the Ohio Development Services Agency in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Commission. The grant offers financial assistance for Appalachian small businesses to promote their products and services in international markets by attending international trade shows. The grant will provide a 50 percent reimbursement up to \$3,000 per fiscal year for qualifying activities. The Minimum AEG reimbursement amount is \$500 (50 percent on expenditures of \$1,000). For more information and questions please email AEG@development.ohio.gov

Top 5 Romantic Ohio Getaways

Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls at Hocking Hills

Within the first few hours of checking into the Inn & Spa at Cedar Falls in the Hocking Hills region, you will forget about life back at home and turn your attention toward the one you love. Enjoy a relaxing couple's massage, or a hike through Ash Cave and Old Man's Cave where waterfalls are now stunning winter ice sculptures. Then retreat to the lodge to play cards and enjoy great conversation by a roaring fireplace.

Maumee Bay State Park Lodge



While Maumee Bay State Park Lodge is a great family getaway, it is also a hidden gem for couples. Each room has a private balcony and the lodge features three large fireplaces, perfect for reading books or playing games. The property features a 2-mile boardwalk and several hiking trails.

Just 15 minutes away, you can visit the Toledo Museum of Art or have a romantic dinner at The Real Seafood Company on the waterfront.

The Mohicans Treehouses



The owners of the Mohicans Treehouses describe this romantic experience in the trees as rustic meets elegance. Wake in the morning to the breeze gently swaying you in your own private getaway. The three treehouses: Old Pine, White Oak and Little Red provide luxury comfort accommodations with perfect privacy. Spend your days at nearby Mohican State Park or Tree Frog Canopy Tours in the summer or Snow Trails for skiing and tubing in the winter.

The Yurts at Nomad Ridge at The Wilds

One of the most secluded and unique romantic getaways is in a private yurt on the grounds of The Wilds in

Cumberland, Ohio. The nomadic-style hut is built with canvas over a wooden frame, bamboo floors, and a private bathroom. You can stargaze on your porch or sit by a bonfire with a glass of wine. You awaken to a sunrise providing a beautiful safari backdrop to the Rhinos and Giraffes off in the distance - yep you are in Ohio! Suitable for warmer weather, the Nomad Ridge lodging season runs May-October.

Lafayette Hotel in Marietta



Located along the Ohio River, the historic Lafayette Hotel, built in 1918, has unique architecture. Couples enjoy modern-day amenities like cable TV and WiFi, as they sink away to another time in themed rooms with Victorian and riverboat décor. Locally, couples can explore the old riverboat town of Marietta and take a ride on the Valley Gem Sternwheeler.



HEOP

Home Energy
Assistance Program

Need a little help staying warm during this winter?
Learn more about the Ohio Winter Crisis Program.

Visit energyhelp.ohio.gov to find out more about the Winter Crisis Program



DIRECTOR'S SCRAPBOOK



Deputy Director Padgett met with Coshocton County Memorial Hospital Interim CEO Lorri Wildi, Chief Nursing Officer Stephanie Conn and other state officials to discuss the importance of rural hospitals



Dave Nestic, Director of TBike and Director Wilson review plans for the new building and lab facilities in Warren, Ohio



Scott Hamilton, executive director of the Appalachian Regional Commission met with local officials during his visit to Ohio



Deputy Director Padgett, David Wheeler, Tom Wheaton, Chris Abbuhl, B. J. Smith, Greg DiDonato and Dale Norris at the Eastern Ohio Development Alliance meeting



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If you have a story idea for the newsletter, please send it to Penny Martin at Penny.Martin@development.ohio.gov.