

Ohio Matters

An Official Publication of The Ohio Chamber of Commerce

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By Barry James, James Investment Research, Inc.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK 2021

In 2020, the economy was on a roller coaster because of COVID-19. We saw significant losses in employment, production and profits. It was the worst quarter in our economic history and wiped out much of the incredible recovery we had experienced.

In the U.S., the on and off shutdowns, partial shutdowns, shifting work patterns and home life have created many hurdles. The steep recovery after the severe drop showed the economy is resilient and has a strong foundation. (See figure 1)

The Federal Reserve Quantitative Easing (QE) Infinity and massive fiscal stimulus brought confidence and boosted spending. (See figure 2)

Housing has led the way, with median home prices reaching records and new home sales accelerating rapidly. New home building permits are very strong, and historically, this has led to a strong advance in industrial production over the next 12 months.

We feel the consumer is actually in good condition, with over \$1 trillion in savings and revolving debt at multiyear lows. Consumers have been spending, as retail sales are back above pre-COVID-19 times.

We believe conditions are excellent for a continued expansion in our economy. However, more infections, a failure of the vaccines or new administration policies and taxes could stifle the advance. Overall, we see continued but slowing economic growth, a rebound in cyclical



Figure 1

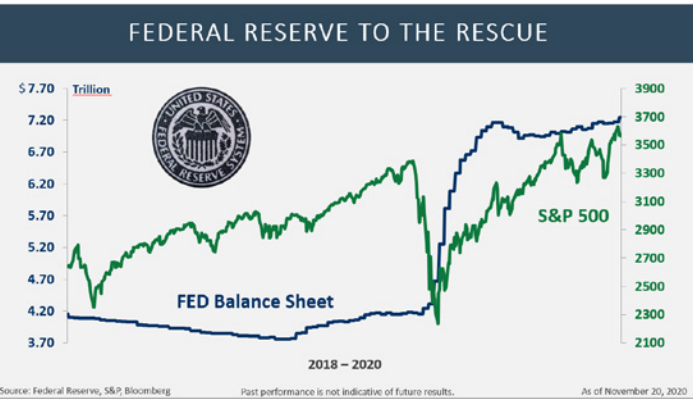


Figure 3

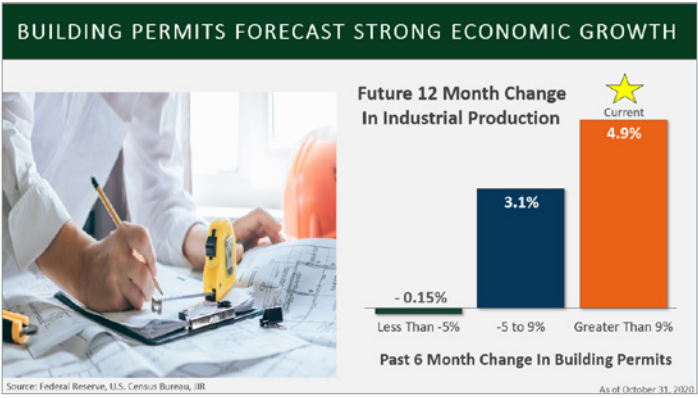


Figure 2



Figure 4

industries, strength in the housing area and new normalcy taking hold. Lastly, Washington’s gridlock may help protect the economy from some excessive interference, which could stifle our economy’s success.

STOCKS

2020 was unrivaled with the fastest drop in stock prices, the shortest recovery period, the most oversized stimulus packages and the biggest economic shutdown in history, all because of COVID-19.

Before the new vaccine’s arrival, the only antidotes for the market were the massive Federal Reserve and U.S. Government rescue packages. They provided ample liquidity to the different risk asset markets and have normalized the credit markets and shored up consumers’ finances. (See figure 3)

The year saw large capitalization stocks outperforming small capitalization, growth trouncing value stocks and whole sectors of the economy underperforming. However, the arrival of high-efficacy vaccines is a game-changer, and we believe 2021 should be a solid year for the stock market.

We think the bull market’s new leg should be driven by previously lagging and economically sensitive sectors. Our research anticipates an investment style shift from growth to value-oriented stocks. These tend to be heavily represented in the cyclical sectors like finance, industrial and materials. In addition, we believe smaller cap companies

Overall, a growing economy, Federal Reserve support and a return to normalcy should support a steady market and advancing prices.

are likely to outperform large ones, and international stocks, especially emerging markets, should do well.

However, we believe this positive outlook should be tempered by potential headwinds like a lack of widespread vaccine acceptance, distribution issues and a short-term virus surge causing economic turmoil. (See figure 4)

Overall, a growing economy, Federal Reserve support and a return to normalcy should support a steady market and advancing prices. The rotation to cyclical/value/small is likely but could be hampered if low growth and low inflation once again favor mega cap tech growth stocks. 📈



*You need a trustworthy voice
at the Statehouse.*

*At the Ohio Chamber,
Integrity is the coin of our realm.*

We're All for Ohio!



At the Ohio Chamber, *Integrity is the coin of our realm.* That's not just a saying we have on a second-floor wall in our office to take up space — it's about our way of doing business and reminds us now, more than ever, of the role integrity plays in how we advocate for Ohio's business community and represent our members before our elected officials.

To learn more, go to **www.ohiochamber.com/integrity**.



By Keith Lake, Vice President, Government Affairs

A (NOT-SO-FOND) FAREWELL TO THAT WHICH DEFINED THE OHIO LEGISLATURE IN 2019 AND 2020

Two things perhaps best defined the 133rd General Assembly, the two-year state legislative session that began in January 2019 and ended at the end of 2020. One of those things was, obviously, the coronavirus. The other was intraparty squabbling, specifically within the Republican Party. It was par for the course, then, that right up until the legislature’s last day of business at the Statehouse on Dec. 22, these two factors reigned supreme.

The virus was ever-present in Columbus throughout 2020, both literally and figuratively. The legislature considered legislation to assist Ohio businesses, local governments and citizens struggling to survive amid the health and economic turmoil caused by COVID-19 and fought over the scope of the emergency powers granted under Ohio law to Gov. Mike DeWine and the director of the Ohio Department of Health. Its members disagreed about the adequacy — or lack thereof — of health and safety protocols at the Statehouse itself and dealt with the absence of at least five lawmakers due to positive COVID tests during the legislature’s final days in December.

As for the intraparty squabbling, its nature morphed over the past two years. Major policy differences, along with different governing styles and personality clashes between then-Speaker of the House Larry Householder and Senate President Larry Obhof dominated 2019 and the first half of 2020, making the passage of nearly every bill a struggle. It also put the Ohio Chamber on the defensive, frequently having to coordinate with and rely upon the Senate to help block legislation originating in the House that would have harmed Ohio’s business climate. However, it took on another form in late spring 2020, as many



of the Republicans that comprised majorities in both the Senate and the House began to publicly push back — first with complaints, followed by actual legislation — against fellow Republican DeWine and his administration’s COVID-related health orders.

Finally, during the waning days of the General Assembly in December, a small but persistent minority in the House refused to agree to final action on several bills unless given the opportunity to attempt an override of the governor’s previous veto of legislation limiting the health director’s power to issue stay-at-home orders and quarantines. They were never given the opportunity, which resulted in these bills ultimately dying.

FORWARD PROGRESS
Despite these obstacles, several important bills supported by the Ohio Chamber were enacted, including three on the last day of the legislative session. Further, not a single bill opposed by the Ohio Chamber during the two years ever made it through both chambers and to the governor for his consideration.

Chief among the bills whose fate wasn’t determined until the last minute was House Bill 352, a landmark package of pro-business reforms to the state’s anti-discrimination statutes. Ohio’s current workplace discrimination laws are burdensome and confusing for Ohio employers and expose them

to a prolonged risk of legal liability that employers don’t face in any other state. HB 352 addresses each of these issues and brings Ohio’s workplace discrimination statutes closer in alignment with federal law and the laws of other states. This is a major victory that the Ohio Chamber has been pursuing ever since two Ohio Supreme Court decisions that upended state laws in these areas were handed down in the 1990s.

Also finalized on the last day were SB 33 and HB 388. SB 33 strengthens protections for the critical infrastructure that is vital to a well-functioning economy, giving businesses additional reassurance that capital investments in infrastructure in Ohio are safe from physical damage. This bill’s route to enactment was long and slow. A similar bill was considered during the previous General Assembly, and SB 33 itself was introduced on the very first day that any bills were introduced this session, in February 2019.

HB 388 protects patients from the burden of costly, surprise medical bills. A majority of Ohioans get their health coverage from an employer-sponsored private health insurance plan, and many employers go to great lengths to inform their employees about health care costs and quality. Nonetheless, even the most proactive patients cannot always avoid encounters with out-of-network providers, which can lead to

unexpected or “surprise” medical bills. HB 388 not only protects patients, it also ensures providers are fairly compensated without creating a process that would lead to unnecessary health insurance premium increases for employers. Unfortunately, several bills fell victim to the two above-mentioned defining characteristics of the session and were left undone. These include a vital regulatory reform package that would have required state agencies to reduce the number of regulatory restrictions by 30 percent by 2024, a bill to limit the risk of potential lawsuits through reducing the time frame to file a claim for breach of a written contract and a bill to increase access to high-speed internet connectivity. Each of these failed not because of policy disagreements but rather because of political considerations or because time simply ran out. This means there’s a good chance these will be reintroduced and fast-tracked once the new General Assembly begins work in 2021.

They will also be among the priorities the Ohio Chamber will continue to push for in the New Year, and you’ll see them contained in our forthcoming 2021-2022 Public Policy Priorities, which will be released later this month. COVID-19 will remain with us in 2021, but with Ohio receiving and administering the new vaccines, there is a sense of hope and optimism that the virus’s ongoing impact on both public health and our economy will begin to dissipate. A new Speaker of the House and a new Senate president — both of whom hail from Lima, Ohio — also give rise to hope and optimism that the counterproductive and all-too-familiar intraparty squabbling will wane, as well. In other words, like in virtually every other aspect of our lives, we’re counting on a return to normalcy at the Statehouse in the New Year. 🍌

OHIO CHAMBER HONORED BY PEERS

On Dec. 9, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce was recognized by its peers at the Association of State Chamber Professionals (ASCP) for the membership accomplishments achieved in 2019. ASCP usually recognizes the achievements of top state chambers at an annual meeting held each fall. However, this year, the awards event was held virtually. Awards are presented in six areas, with each area broken down into categories based on the state’s size. The Ohio Chamber is a Category 2 chamber, as Ohio has a population of over 6.5 million. Every state chamber is eligible to submit its information for the awards program. A committee of ASCP members reviews applications and determines the winners and runners-up and honorable mentions.

For its accomplishments in 2019, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce was recognized in three areas.

- Greatest Growth in Membership Dues — **Winner**
- Greatest Growth in Non-Dues Revenue — **Honorable Mention**
- Greatest Growth in New Member Numbers — **Winner**

“I was actually nervous watching the presentation,” says Ohio Chamber Vice President, Membership, Andy Piccolantonio. “I knew our team had exceeded our own internal goals, but I wasn’t sure how we would stack up to the other states. I was really happy that we were recognized for our efforts with three awards.”



Ohio Chamber President and CEO Andrew E. Doehrel says that while the chamber couldn’t receive these awards in person this year, it’s always rewarding to be recognized by peers. “Our membership team is to be congratulated for their outstanding accomplishments,” he says. While ASCP’s 2021 meeting is in flux, Piccolantonio is hopeful the Ohio

Chamber will earn more recognition for its work in 2020. “We have an outstanding staff of Scott Colby, Justin Giaimo, Bill White, Micah White and Justin Zink who work hard every day for our members,” he says. “While 2020 has presented us with challenges, we continue to offer a great value to our members.” 🍌

NEW GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS BRING BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

After a big election year in 2020, the Ohio General Assembly is welcoming new faces to the Statehouse. Two of these newly elected legislators are Sen. Jerry C. Cirino (Senate District 18) and Rep. Rodney Creech (House District 43), whose combined backgrounds represent the full spectrum of the Ohio business community.

SEN. JERRY C. CIRINO, SENATE DISTRICT 18

Cirino is no stranger to the business community. The Kirkland native brings 42 years of business experience to his seat in the Ohio Senate. From founding and leading several medical technology companies to serving as a founding CEO and shareholder of SourceOne Healthcare, a company with over \$1 billion in revenue, Cirino has an extensive background in the world of health care and big business. After retiring, he took on his most recent role as Lake County commissioner, where he focused on economic development in his community, a focus he hopes to bring to his seat in the Senate.

“Coming out of the business community and not being a career politician, I have the opportunity to talk with businesses and speak their language and understand what they go through,” says Cirino. “There’s a need for more business people in elected office. It brings a sense of reality when you’re making laws and regulations to have actually lived and worked under



those laws and regulations.” Health care, education and workforce development also rank high on Cirino’s policy priority list. “All of these work together,” says Cirino. “They all play a role in building a healthy and vibrant economy for Ohioans.”

Cirino’s path to the Ohio Senate was marked with support from his community and family of nine children and 34 grandchildren, who all helped take his campaign door to door and all the way to the Statehouse.

REP. RODNEY CREECH, HOUSE DISTRICT 43

Fourth-generation grain farmer, Preble County commissioner, small business owner. These are just a few of the titles held by Creech before taking on his new role in the Ohio House.



Born and raised in West Alexandria, Creech’s roots in the community serve as a base for his entrepreneurial

and governmental experience. From starting a lawncare company and following in his grandfather’s footsteps as Twin Township trustee to serving two terms as a Preble County commissioner, Creech’s simple desire to help people and give back to his community have fueled his journey to the Statehouse.

“In both my political and business life, I’m a problem-solver,” says Creech. “Being a business owner has really helped because I’m used to people coming to me with an issue, and I want to help find solutions.”

While he notes that he doesn’t have an agenda, he plans to continue to advocate for small business and workforce development issues, issues that he focused on during his time as county commissioner. Creech credits the tightknit community and his experiences as a small business owner and time in public office for his path to the Ohio House.

“We help each other out,” says Creech. “I think if you have the passion and compassion to help out, that’s what matters.” 🙌

OHIO CHAMBER HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM: YEAR-END REVIEW

Although 2020 was an unprecedented and difficult time for all of us, the Ohio Chamber Health Benefit Program (OCHBP) and its members have much to celebrate.

In September, the OCHBP celebrated its one-year anniversary. In 2019, The Ohio Chamber of Commerce partnered with the country’s largest insurance provider, UnitedHealthcare, to create the OCHBP in response to the overwhelming concern from businesses throughout Ohio.

“One of the most common concerns we hear from our members is the shrinking profit margins small businesses are facing due to the rising cost of health care,” says Ohio Chamber President and CEO Andrew E. Doehrel.

During 2020, we have remained focused on providing small business owners access to a range of products and services that will not only drive productivity but will ultimately impact their company’s profitability. Scott Colby, executive director of the OCHBP, says, “Small businesses are the backbone of our state, and we want to continue to do everything we can to support them.” Even during the challenges presented by COVID-19, the program has surpassed goals set earlier in the year.

“Working with the Ohio Chamber in developing the Ohio Chamber Health Benefit Program has been an honor and privilege for me,” says A.J. Miller, vice-president Small Business, UnitedHealthcare. “Our aligned goals in providing small businesses health care that is cost effective, easy to understand, accessible and comprehensive are top priorities. We believe this program gives small businesses peace of mind when selecting their health care, and they will be proud of the benefit packages being offered to their employees. Our first year had great results, and we will continue to help people live healthier lives.”

In November, the OCHBP also participated in its first Annual Election of Board Members. Each term began Jan. 1, 2021.

- Andrew Doehrel, board chair, for a one-year term
- Jon Allison, secretary, two-year term
- Dwight Seeley, treasurer, three-year term

The OCHBP remains committed to bringing quality health care, special programs and wellness opportunities to all small business employers and their employees. In our first year, we incorporated many new additions to the program, such as our Level 2 Digital Health Therapy. This benefit allows employees to digitally view how personal activity, food choices and sleep impact blood sugar levels. The Level 2 Therapy also offers

NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTION — JOIN AN OHIO CHAMBER COMMITTEE



The Public Policy committees are the lifeblood of the Ohio Chamber. They study the needs of Ohio’s business community, establish the Ohio Chamber’s position on key legislative issues and make policy recommendations to the board of directors. Public Policy committee participation and committee-specific emails keep you well informed of issues and events at the Statehouse. If you are interested in joining one of our committees, contact Sherry Heffner, Governmental Affairs assistant, at sheffner@ohiochamber.com.

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
Mission: To respond to the needs of Ohio employers for qualified, well-trained employees by promoting policies that meet the demands of today’s workplace by pursuing strategies that link education and workforce development in a seamless system and embed skill-based learning into academic instruction.

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY
Mission: To foster a next-generation environment that will accelerate Ohio’s economy through a focus on driving innovation in the state’s industrial base, both existing and emerging. This will help to ensure Ohio’s future global competitiveness and lead to high-quality jobs.

LABOR & EMPLOYMENT
Mission: To protect employers’ rights to manage their workplace with limited governmental involvement and regulation and to simplify Ohio’s employment law statutes in a way that’s fair to both employers and employees.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT
Mission: To advocate for energy policies that promote Ohio’s economic competitiveness and protect businesses’ access to affordable, dependable energy and ensure environmental policies and regulations are not overly burdensome and are based on sound science.

HEALTH CARE
Mission: To advocate for an affordable and sustainable market-based health care system that provides access to quality, affordable health care for all Ohioans.

OHIO SMALL BUSINESS COUNCIL
Mission: To promote and protect the establishment, growth and vitality of small business in Ohio. Members of the Ohio Small Business Council (OSBC) learn how to be an advocate for their business and voice their concerns directly to Ohio’s decision makers. Participation in OSBC is limited to individuals in executive leadership roles at a for-profit business that employs fewer than 400 directly supervised persons. Small business owners and presidents are especially encouraged to join this committee.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Mission: To monitor and evaluate public affairs issues and activities, including election, campaign finance, business and lobbyist regulation, when of interest to the business community, and to examine proposed state constitutional amendments or initiative petition efforts that affect the electoral process.

TAXATION & PUBLIC EXPENDITURES
Mission: To foster a fair and equitable tax system that stimulates growth, innovation and job creation and minimizes compliance costs and administrative burdens.

WORKERS’ COMPENSATION
Mission: To ensure Ohio’s workers’ compensation system runs efficiently and effectively for both state-funded and self-insured employers, is effective in providing proper medical treatments for injured employees and keeps its cost for employers competitive with other states’ systems. 🙌

By Executive Director Justin Barnes

OHIO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE RESEARCH FOUNDATION

As we ring in the new year, I want to thank everyone who has participated in and supported the mission and goals of the Ohio Chamber Research Foundation over the past year.

These are unusual and difficult times, and we recognize our work would not be possible without the generous contributions of time and support we receive from our patrons. Because of that support, we are excited about the weeks and months ahead.

In October, we completed our quarterly Prosperity Pulse survey of business leader economic sentiment. We conduct this survey at the end of every quarter to keep tabs on how business owners across the state are feeling about the economic landscape in Ohio, and what challenges may lie ahead for both their businesses and the state economy as a whole.

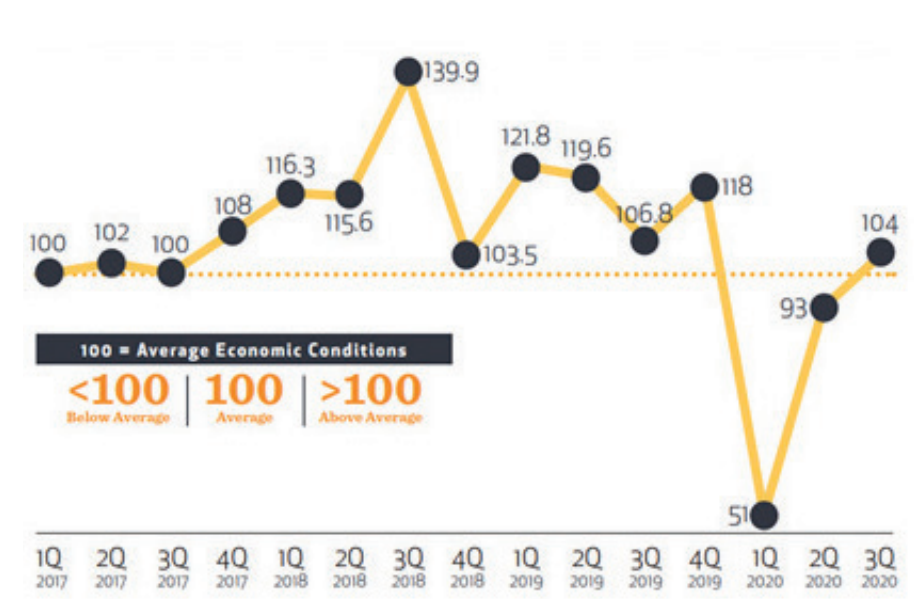


Figure 1. Prosperity Pulse Index

Our latest Prosperity Pulse Index comes in at a reading of 104, continuing a slow trend back toward normalcy in the eyes of business leaders across Ohio. The index is calculated as a metric of five forward-looking economic factors, and a reading of 100 is considered to be average economic conditions. The third quarter Index reading shows that the business community believes things have gotten a little better as we continue to deal with the coronavirus pandemic, but Ohio still has plenty of room for improvement.

TOP 5 CONCERNS of OHIO BUSINESS LEADERS

	3Q 2020	2Q 2020 (Last quarter)	3Q 2019 (Last year)
1. Cost of Healthcare	2 ↑		1 <->
2. Economic Uncertainty	1 ↓		7 ↑
3. Ohio's Political Environment	3 <->		T-4 ↑
4. Cost of All Employee Benefits	5 ↑		2 ↓
5. Workforce Issues	T-8 ↑		T-4 ↓

Figure 2. Top Issues of Concern

While the cost of health care has returned as the top issue of concern among business leaders, it lands in the top spot in a virtual tie with worries about economic uncertainty as respondents have continued anxiety about what may lie ahead in a difficult winter season. Ohio's political environment remains one of the top concerns, as the election weighed heavily on the minds of business owners throughout the state. Rounding out the top five concerns are issues surrounding the cost and availability of labor, a sign that volatility in the labor market in Ohio will continue to be a challenge in the weeks and months ahead.

We will be conducting an update to our quarterly survey in January and would love for you to make your voice heard. To participate in the survey, or to see the full results of the 3Q 2020 Prosperity Pulse survey or any of the previous editions of the survey, visit <http://www.ohiochamberfoundation.com/projects>.

In addition to continuing our tracking of economic conditions, the Research Foundation is working hard on new research, data visualization tools and conducting our Lunch, Learn, & Lead Discussion Series to bring to light new data and information that will inform policymakers about the issues affecting businesses in our state, fulfilling our mission of delivering research that drives and promotes the economic well-being of Ohio. Be on the lookout for announcements in the coming weeks about our work and how you can help spread the word.

Thank you again to all of you who participate in our quarterly Prosperity Pulse survey, who engage in our discussion sessions and who support our work. We look forward to another successful year of activity and hope you will join us.

Reach Justin Barnes at jbarnes@ohiochamber.com. 📧

LEGAL AID: HELPING OHIO BUSINESSES RECOVER FROM THE PANDEMIC

By Angie Lloyd, Access to Justice Foundation

During this unprecedented time of business challenges, there are advocates in your corner. Ohio's legal aid organizations are partners to Ohio businesses, advancing community economic development projects, stabilizing employees so that they can remain successfully employed and providing a 290 percent return on investment to Ohio's economy.

In turn, many Ohio businesses commit to supporting legal aid as an investment in healthy and stable communities and good corporate citizenship. This mutually beneficial relationship builds a better, more prosperous Ohio, sorely needed as Ohio emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic.

SUPPORTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

When Gem City Market opens its doors this winter, shoppers at the West Dayton co-op will have access to a full-service grocery store for the first time in more than a decade. After years of planning and development, neighborhood residents will realize the fruits of their labor. Residents will gain jobs, community members will have access to healthy food and the neighborhood will receive a fresh start.

Legal aid is at the forefront of this innovative project, which worked with the co-op to launch the market and ensure its long-term success and sustainability. The Ohio Access to Justice Foundation, the largest funder of civil legal aid in Ohio, provides

290% ROI

Every dollar spent on legal aid returns \$2.90 to Ohioans and our communities.

funding for statewide community economic development projects such as Gem City Market through its Neighborhood Stabilization Grants. These projects keep money in local communities, fuel the economy and benefit residents and surrounding businesses.

IMPROVING STABILITY FOR EMPLOYEES

Ohio business leaders who plan to increase their payrolls need a ready and capable workforce as the pandemic ends. For Ohioans battered by COVID-19-related legal challenges, legal aid provides a lifeline to stability and self-sufficiency, helping Ohioans stay in or rejoin the workforce.

Julia*, a single parent working full time as a parking attendant, fell behind on her mortgage after paying for unexpected car repairs so she could get to work reliably. She attempted to make the payments late, but her lender had already moved forward to foreclose on her home.

Legal aid represented Julia in the foreclosure case and obtained a loan modification that allowed her to make her monthly mortgage payments, kept her and her children safely housed and ensured that her lender received full,

timely payments. Legal aid also helped her apply for mortgage assistance funds to make her payments during a layoff due to the coronavirus. Julia is now back to work full time, making regular monthly payments and no longer at risk of losing her home.

Legal aid solves housing-related legal challenges to increase stability for Ohioans. Securely housed Ohioans are more likely to remain productive and reliable employees. Legal aid saves communities money, too. Strength in Justice, the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation's 2019 community economic impact study, found that legal aid's work in preventing foreclosures saved Ohio \$21.4 million in costs and property values. When communities are strong and stable, businesses flourish.

STRENGTHENING OHIO'S WORKFORCE

Legal aid removes barriers to employment, helping Ohio businesses by increasing the talent pool of potential employees. Strength in Justice reported that legal aid generates \$25.4 million in increased earnings, household spending, and sales and income tax revenue by removing these barriers. In fact, every dollar spent on legal aid returns \$2.90 to Ohio, a 290 percent return on investment.

Jackson* was anxious to find a job to support his family, but he struggled because of a mistake he made as a teenager that left him with a criminal record. He tried to seal his record

on his own but was unsuccessful. Legal aid helped Jackson file a new application to seal his record, removing a barrier that held him back from employment. He is now ready to work and on the path to financial stability.

BENEFITTING FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY'S SUPPORT

Ohio businesses that support legal aid recognize the value it provides. Prime Partner financial institutions offer premium interest rates on Interest on Lawyers Trust Accounts (IOLTA) and Interest on Trust Accounts (IOTA) to maximize funding for Ohio's legal aids. Law firms and corporations provide financial support and encourage their attorneys to support legal aid through pro bono service.

As Ohio recovers from the pandemic's fallout, businesses will continue to face many challenges. Fortunately, business leaders can count on legal aid to best position their employees, customers and communities to thrive in a post-COVID-19 world.

*Names are changed to protect client privacy.

Angie Lloyd is executive director at the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation. Reach her at alloyd@ohiojusticefoundation.org or (614) 715-8565. 📧

OHIO CHAMBER HEALTH BENEFIT PROGRAM: YEAR END REVIEW

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personalized coaching to improve one’s overall well-being. Thanks to UnitedHealthcare, this benefit is offered to qualifying members at no additional charge.

Another service provided by the OCHBP is telemedicine. Members benefit by having 24/7 access to telemedicine services provided through the UnitedHealthcare app, a feature that has proven particularly valuable amid COVID-19.

The first-year success of the OCHBP is due, in part, to UnitedHealthcare account executives, brokers, agents and general agents throughout Ohio who have partnered with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce to offer this program to their clients. The relationships UHC account executives have with these professionals has proven very successful.

“2020 has been a difficult year for everyone, but I think the impact on employers of small groups — who are often less able to absorb the disruption that this has brought — has been especially difficult,” says UnitedHealthcare Account Executive Raymond Godzinski. “Working with the Ohio Chamber and the incredible small business broker community in Columbus, Ohio, we have the ability to lessen the financial strains that so many are feeling. With the rising cost



of medical care and pharmaceuticals and the associated insurance, we are uniquely positioned to positively impact employers’ — and their employees’ — bottom line.”

UnitedHealthcare Account Executive Donna Hasslebeck adds that the Ohio Chamber Health Benefit Program is a true differentiator for UHC clients and a great way to deliver innovation to the market.

“Brokers are using the OCHBP as a new way to get in front of small businesses throughout the state and enabling them to have conversations about how the OCHBP can uniquely help improve health benefit offerings and other services included,” she says.

Ed Lightcap, UnitedHealthcare account executive says 2020 has been a year unlike any other, making the organization more focused than ever on the safety and health of family, friends and co-workers.

“The introduction of The Ohio Chamber of Commerce MEWA program late last year, administered

by UnitedHealthcare, was perfect timing for small business employers,” he says. “The Ohio Chamber and broker partners are offering small employers a competitive rate in the marketplace that has been an area in which small business has expressed deep concern. The OCHBP has created a health and well-being offering that all small employers can utilize to provide the tools and resources necessary for their employees and families to continue to stay healthy or make a life change to become healthier.”

Whitney Winters says that, as a new account executive with United Healthcare, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce has been an extremely welcoming and helpful.

“I would like to personally thank the Ohio Chamber for being such a supportive organization to the Toledo community of small business brokers,” says Winters. “The Ohio Chamber MEWA has been a game changer in the marketplace for brokers and their clients. I am proud to partner with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce to provide an innovative product to help small businesses provide the best benefits to their employees.”

OCHBP Executive Director Scott Colby says he appreciates the contributions of brokers and agents, especially during a pandemic, to support the program and cultivate its success.

“There are hundreds of you throughout Ohio working to ensure your clients find the best health care solutions, and I personally thank each of you for the trust you have placed in the Ohio Chamber Health Benefit Program, administered by UnitedHealthcare,” says Colby. “Additionally, I would like to offer special thanks to all the Ohio Chamber Broker Partners. You play a major role in the success of this program, and we appreciate everything you do.”

Ohio Chamber Broker Partners can be seen on the OCHBP webpage at <https://ohiochamber.com/health-benefit-program/> and below.

- ARC Benefit Solutions
- Association of Benefit Planners
- Associated Employee Benefits LLC
- Assured Partners
- Benefit Administrators
- CBIZ
- ClearPath Benefit Advisors LLC
- Gallagher
- Haughn & Associates
- Huntington Insurance
- Malbasa Financial, Inc.
- Marsh & McLennan Agency
- National United Brokers, Inc.
- Ohio Insurance Services
- Preferred Benefits Services Agency, Inc.
- SeibertKeck Insurance Partners
- Strategic Business Services
- Todd Associates
- US Employee Benefits Services Group

SANKOVIC NAMED CHAIRMAN OF NEW INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

Dr. John M. Sankovic is the president and CEO of the Ohio Aerospace Institute (OAI) and the chairman of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce’s new Innovation and Technology Committee.

Before OAI, you had a distinguished 31-year career at NASA. Tell me more about your time at NASA and your journey to chief technologist and director of the Office of Technology there.

I started my early career in space propulsion. I was fortunate early in my career to have one of the propulsion systems I worked on go on to fly on several commercial communication satellites. That’s always really excited me — I liked that I could work on something and then, in the span of a few years, see it come out of the laboratory and into orbit and operational use.

After propulsion, I went back to get my doctoral degree and spent some time with the Cleveland Clinic, joined later with NASA and worked on getting some of the technology that NASA developed into the health care area. My background throughout this was in fluids so, seeing how things flow and understanding gases and liquids and how they behave in extreme environments. My doctorate was in artificial hearts and understanding how the blood flows, which may seem a lot different than a rocket engine, but it all comes back to how things move.

Then, I came back and ran the bioscience group at NASA. During this time, I worked on technologies that would improve pilot cognition and other astronaut health projects. Later, I moved into space power

work, working on rockets for deep space and their power systems. And eventually, I moved into management. I ran the office responsible for space station experiments in fluids and combustion, like understanding how things boil in space or how fire behaves in space and where to place a smoke detector in a spacecraft.

Soon after this, it was a dream come true to become the chief technologist. It was one of the most rewarding parts of my career there to have our tech transfer portfolio under me.

Can you explain the Ohio Aerospace Institute and its role in Ohio?

We were founded in 1989 when leaders in the state came together and wanted to recognize that Ohio has been a leader in aviation since the beginning. We have a lot of industry that dates back to the Wright Brothers. Ohio is the No. 1 supplier for Boeing, Airbus — we make all the parts, even the engines. Ohio Aerospace Institute was a way of tying together all the pieces of government, academia and industry.

We work in three main areas: research and technology, industry and commercial. Within research and technology, we have smart people solving hard problems at NASA and the Air Force base, and we also work on the education side. At different times we’ve worked from K-12 to post-

doctorate. Right now, we’re focused on undergraduate. We support scholarships and succeed in our diversity and recruitment metrics.

On the industry side, we run consortia, with almost 50 consortia since our inception. And for commercial, we work directly with the aircraft industry. We also run an industry association for the state called the Ohio Aerospace Industry Association, which ties together companies that operate within Ohio.

You’re also the first chairperson for the Ohio Chamber of Commerce’s Innovation & Technology Committee. What are some of your goals for the coming year?

The thing that excites me the most, and what I really hope this committee can push forward, is taking the voice of industry and making direct recommendations to the Ohio Legislature. Understand where the state is, and then use the Ohio Chamber’s “Ohio BOLD: A Blueprint for Accelerating the Innovation Economy” plan to make these recommendations.

One thing that’s killing us right now is regionalism in Ohio. Whenever I

see a map of Ohio from government leaders, it’s chopped up into different pieces, and it can sometimes make it seem like we’re competing against each other within the state, which is hurting us every time. With this committee, if we do nothing else, I want to come together as one state. I want to use this committee to bolster each other up and succeed as Ohio, not individual regions.

Past or present, who would you add as a member to the new committee?

The Wright Brothers. They had so many people tell them flight was impossible, and within a year of that, they were operational. That’s the kind of energy I would want.

As for the future, I know the U.S. is planning on going back to the moon and on to Mars, and I want to make sure that that first American on the surface of Mars is an Ohioan, and I want that Ohioan on the committee. We’ve led our innovations all this way. I expect it’s an Ohioan touching down on Mars.



NEW MEMBERS

The following companies joined the Ohio Chamber of Commerce between Aug. 20 and Dec. 18, 2020. We welcome all of our new members and look forward to working with them.

A+ Children's Academy, Columbus	Freedom Benefits LLC, Napoleon
Aberdeen Financial Group Inc., Dayton	Freight Lane Solutions LLC, Lima
Air Force One Inc., Dublin	Fries Machine & Tool LLC, Dayton
Akron Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery Group, Akron	Gale's Willoughby Hills Garden Center Inc., Willoughby Hills
All Phase Construction Inc., Solon	Good Samaritan Hunger Center, Akron
Amazon.com Inc., Washington, D.C.	H. Robert Gaetano, O.D. Inc., Youngstown
Aristides Capital LLC, Toledo	Hackman Financial Group, Cincinnati
Arnold Insurance Agency Inc, Reynoldsburg	Harper Construction LLC, Cable
Associates Insurance Services LLC, Columbus	Harrison Township, Pickaway County, Ashville
Aster Industries Inc., Akron	Hilliard Family Medicine Inc., Hilliard
Avakian Financial Group, Hilliard	Hometown Broadcasting of Portsmouth Inc., Portsmouth
B&S Custom Machine LLC, Ottawa	Horse Haven Stables LLC, Marblehead
B & W Welding Inc., Fremont	Horstman Insurance Services, Powell
B+G Auto and Recycling Center Inc., Wapakoneta	Hospice of the Miami Valley LLC, Seattle
Battelle for Kids, Hilliard	Hydro Supply Co., Zanesville
Bethel Township, Clark County, Medway	Ideal Property Maintenance, Youngstown
Bonzo, Westerville	Ignite Philanthropy, Cincinnati
Brain Trust LLC, Mason	In College Planning Experts & College Liftoff, Columbus
Brainerd Industries Inc., Miamisburg	Intertek LLC, Elyria
Brokers of Northern Ohio, Akron	Jabco & Associates Inc., Amelia
Buckeye Transfer Realty LLC, Columbiana	Jeffrey A. Grossman Co. LPA, Columbus
Bud Industries Inc., Willoughby	Jeffrey Allen Corp., Cincinnati
Bud Manufacturing Inc., Willoughby	Jennifer D. Roberts DO LLC, Portsmouth
By Design Tool LLC, Dayton	Johnston Supply Inc., Marion
Calvary Baptist Church Bellefontaine, Bellefontaine	Joules Angstrom UV Printing Inks Corp., Pataskala
Capital City Appliance Service Inc., Columbus	JPS Oil Inc., Continental
Cardaras Funeral Homes, Logan	Juul, San Francisco
Cardinal Joint Fire District, Canfield	K & S Cabinetry, LLC., Lebanon
Carlile Patchen & Murphy LLP, Columbus	Kapp Excavating Inc., Columbus
CBLH Design Inc., Cleveland	Kase Equipment Corp., Valley View
Chagrin Valley Hunt Club, Gates Mills	Kelley Real Estate Group Ltd., Columbus
CJK Sonnenberg Trucking LLC, Liberty Center	Kemp Electric Supply Co., Middletown
Clark Heating & Cooling Inc., Milford	Kleen Air Solutions Inc., West Chester
Continental Dairy LLC, Continental	Knox Concrete Construction, Mount Vernon
Costume Specialists Inc., Columbus	Larchmere Imports Automotive, Chagrin Falls
Crossfit Gahanna LLC, dba CrossFit Grandview, Columbus	LaRue Trucking Inc., Steubenville
Dana & Pariser Co. L.P.A., Columbus	LEL Operating Co./Superior Dairy, Canton
David J. Simmons & Associate, LLC, Canton	Linear 1 Technologies, Marysville
Dayton Glaucoma & Cataract Consultants, Dayton	Logan Insurance Agency, Logan
Digital Insurance LLC, dba OneDigital Health and Benefits, Atlanta, Georgia	Lordstown Motors, Lordstown
Design Molded Plastics Inc., Macedonia	Lormet Community Federal Credit Union, Amherst
Distributor Partners LLC, Naples, Florida	M&M Delivery LLC, Pleasant City
Dominion Liquid Technologies LLC, Cincinnati	M.J. Coates Construction Co. Inc., Centerville
Drs. Alperin, Fried & Popper, Mayfield	Mark Levy DDS Inc., Columbus
Earth and Pipe Contracting Inc., Waynesville	Marysville Public Library, Marysville
Ellis Custom Homes, Centerville	McCloud Law LLC, Reynoldsburg
Ellis Services LLC, Pickerington	Missler Financial Services, New London
Enterprise Machine Inc., Cincinnati	Mojonnier USA, Streetsboro
EQT Corp., Pittsburgh	MSI Utilities Inc, Dublin
Evanhoe & Associates Inc., Dayton	Nelsonville TV Cable Inc, Nelsonville
Finkelmeier Insurance Agency Inc., Wapakoneta	Next Level Columbus LLC, Columbus
Forty-Nine Inc., Cincinnati	Northbend Architectural Products Inc., Cincinnati
Freedom a la Cart, Columbus	Ohio Health Benefits LLC, Tallmadge
	Ohio Travel Association, Columbus
	Oklok Criss & Assoc., Steubenville
	Orthopedic Associates of Dayton Inc., Dayton

HOUSE AND SENATE LEADERSHIP FOR THE 134TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

A new year brings a new General Assembly and new leadership in both the Ohio House and Senate. We look forward to working with these leaders to ensure that Ohio has a strong business climate.

HOUSE REPUBLICANS

- Speaker — Rep. Bob Cupp (Lima)
- Speaker Pro Tempore — Rep. Tim Ginter (Salem)
- Majority Leader — Rep. Bill Seitz (Cincinnati)
- Assistant Majority Leader — Rep. Rick Carfagna (Genoa Township)
- Majority Whip — Rep. Don Jones (Freeport)
- Assistant Majority Whip — Rep. Cindy Abrams (Harrison)


HOUSE DEMOCRATS

- Minority Leader — Rep. Emilia Sykes (Akron)
- Assistant Minority Leader — Rep. Kristin Boggs (Columbus)
- Minority Whip — Rep. Paula Hicks-Hudson (Toledo)
- Assistant Minority Whip — Rep. Richard Brown (Canal Winchester)

SENATE REPUBLICANS

- Senate President — Sen. Matt Huffman (Lima)
- President Pro Tempore — Sen. Jay Hottinger (Newark)
- Majority Floor Leader — Sen. Kirk Schuring (Canton)
- Majority Whip — Sen. Rob McColley (Napoleon)

SENATE DEMOCRATS

- Minority Leader — Sen. Kenny Yuko (Richmond Heights)
- Assistant Minority Leader — Sen. Cecil Thomas (Cincinnati)
- Minority Whip — Sen. Nickie Antonio (Lakewood)
- Assistant Minority Whip — Sen. Tina Maharath (Canal Winchester) 

Overload Fitness, Beachwood	Stephen M. Haverkos DMD LLC, Cincinnati
Petronzio Management Co. Inc., Chesterland	Stringer Auto Repair LLC, Johnstown
Pillar Insurance Inc., Cincinnati	Sykes Enterprises, Inc., Tampa, Florida
Pinnacle Metal, Columbus	The American Wind Energy Association, Washington, D.C.
Powell Veterinary Clinic, Powell	The Brand Alliance LLC., Cincinnati
Precision Polymers, Reynoldsburg	The Boyd-Eichinger-Brafford Group, Mansfield
Principle Business Enterprises, Bowling Green	The Dayton Respiratory Center, Dayton
Quality Electric Inc., Columbus	The Forker Co., Zanesville
Quest Community Church, Westerville	The Ohio Aerospace Institute, Brook Park
Quest Logistics Ltd., dba Barnum Warehouse, Sidney	Title Search Services Inc., Worthington
R.P. Biederman Co Inc., Hamilton	Tobias Cardone, Holland
Ram Plastics Inc., North Lima	U.S. Refractory Products LLC, North Ridgeville
Ranalli Painting Inc., Dublin	Unique Fabrications Inc., Fremont
Richard E. Connolly & Associates Inc., Columbus	Unity Catholic Federal Credit Union, Parma
Ridge Stone Builders & Developers LLC, Perrysburg	Village of Bethel, Bethel
Robert K. Jones Insurance Agency, Kettering	Village of Hebron, Hebron
Rogar Plumbing Group, LLC, Mount Vernon	Village of New London, New London
Schnippel Construction Inc., Botkins	Village of Utica, Utica
Scioto Valve & Fitting Co., Westerville	W-Jerpbak, Solon
Scott W. Schiff & Associates Co. LPA, Columbus	Wagner Machine Inc., Norton
SeibertKeck Insurance Partners, Akron	Walnut Township, Millersport
Service Air Technology LLC, Westerville	Warner Automotive Group Inc., Findlay
Sheoga Hardwood Flooring, Middlefield	Washington Township, Alledonia
Signets Inc., Mentor	West Side Community House, Cleveland
Simvay Systems, Westlake	WIN Home Inspections- Summerside, Cincinnati
Snyder & Sons Electric & Maintenance Inc., Hubbard	Worthington Resources LLC, Worthington
Springfield Antique Center, Springfield	Wright-Patt Credit Union Inc., Beavercreek
Square Inc., San Francisco	Xenia Township Board of Trustees, Greene County, Xenia
Starwin Industries, Dayton	YSA Strategic Consulting LLC, Granville

WELCOME TO 2021!

OHIO CHAMBER LAYS OUT YEAR'S AGENDA



As I write this, Ohioans in the medical community and in nursing homes are starting to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. As some have stated, this is the beginning of the end, but we can't let our guard down now.

This past fall, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce joined the Coalition to Stop the Spread. Over 105 business organizations, led by the Ohio Business Roundtable, are part of this coalition to fight the pandemic that is crippling our economy and wreaking havoc on our families. The coalition stresses "Spreading the word. Not the Virus," as participating companies are asked to share factual information about the virus with their employees. I encourage all of our members to join the Coalition to Stop the Spread at stopthespreadcoalition.com so that our state and nation can "get back to normal."

Looking forward to what is yet to come, 2021 starts the first year of the 134th General Assembly. We will have new leadership in the Senate, with Sen. Matt Huffman taking over as Senate president, while Speaker Bob Cupp will continue to lead the House. The House and Senate majority and minority leaders are listed in this issue.

With the new General Assembly, we have adopted our latest Public Policy Agenda. Approved by our board of directors at our December board meeting, the Public Policy Agenda outlines our legislative goals for the next two years. Every member will receive a copy of our agenda in the mail later this month. There is much that needs to be done to make Ohio the best place to do business.

A new year also brings new programming. Our very popular HR Academy has been renamed the Ohio Chamber Business Academy to better reflect a broadening of our educational programming. We will continue to offer free webinars related to human resource topics but will expand our offerings to include more issues that impact Ohio businesses.

Usually around this time, we announce the keynote speaker for our Annual Meeting. The 2020 Annual Meeting & Legislative Reception was canceled due to the pandemic, and for 2021, our board of directors has decided to move it back in the year. We are now looking at late October or early November to meet in Columbus to conduct chamber business and host our elected officials at our legislative reception.

2021 is also scheduled to be a "Salt Fork" year, when we invite our members and the members of the General Assembly to the Policy Conference at Salt Fork State Park. We have been hosting this event every other year since the 1980s and hope that we will be able to do so this year. An announcement about the event will be made in late February.

Finally, at some point in the first quarter, an announcement is expected as to who will be the new president and CEO of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce. In August, I announced my retirement effective April 1, 2021, after 37 years of advocating for Ohio's business community. There is a search committee currently going through the process of selecting a new leader.

Yes, there will be many changes in the New Year, but I can assure you our mission is not changing. The Ohio Chamber of Commerce will continue to be the state's leading business advocate and resource aggressively championing free enterprise, economic competitiveness and growth for the benefit of all Ohioans! 🇺🇸

Andrew E. Dechul

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