



GOVERNMENTAL POLICY GROUP, INC. RH RESOURCES

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Week in Review

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ADDICTION/SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The OneOhio Recovery Foundation Board settled on a long-awaited funding figure for its regional partners Wednesday: more than \$51 million for opioid abuse relief, recovery and prevention in years one and two, representing nearly 94 percent of dollars from the Johnson & Johnson and drug distributor settlements. The settlement balance, or \$3.5 million, will be held back for OneOhio operations in funding years one and two, and another \$3.67 million in "found money" from the Mallinckrodt Pharmaceutical bankruptcy will be invested in an endowment to support future opioid interventions. Sen. Rob McColley (R-Napoleon) and board Treasurer Michael Roizen questioned awarding all settlement dollars less administrative expenses to the 19 OneOhio regions and reserving only \$3.67 million for the endowment. Roizen said investment reserves should represent more than twice that figure. OneOhio is slated to receive a maximum of \$440 million from opioid distributors over a 17-year settlement period and a maximum of \$102 million from Johnson & Johnson over a nine-year period. Their respective allocations in years one and two of the foundation break down to \$34.6 million and \$20 million.

AGING

The Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) and the Governor's Nursing Home Quality and Accountability Task Force announced Thursday an online survey to gain insights about the quality of care and quality of life being provided in nursing homes across the state. The survey allows nursing home residents -- as well as their family members and caregivers, nursing home staff members and administrators, and other interested community members -- the opportunity to provide written testimony on each of the following five most common steps people experience in their journey to find and use nursing homes in Ohio:

- Selecting a nursing home
- Admission to a facility
- Experience in the facility
- Transitions of care
- Engaging with the state

In addition to the survey, further information on the task force can be found on the Ohio Governor's Nursing Home Quality and Accountability Task Force website at <https://tinyurl.com/5auvs6uk>.

ATTORNEY GENERAL

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost recently joined a coalition of 20 states in a brief before the U.S. Supreme Court that accuses the Biden administration and a Clinton-appointed judge of a "collusive" end run around the U.S. Constitution in an attempt to award \$6 billion in student loan debt forgiveness without the consent of Congress. Yost and Utah Attorney General Sean Reyes are leading the friend-of-court petition to the high court in support of institutions of higher education that say Secretary Miguel Cardona of the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) does not have far-reaching authority under the constitutional separation of powers to forgive the student loans of hundreds of thousands of post-secondary borrowers in act of "strategic surrender" simply by

dismissing a student-debtor class action case it had previously defended. Ohio and fellow complainants say it is one more example of an "extra-legal shortcut" by President Joe Biden to assert authority that Congress and the courts have not granted him.

BUDGET – F.Y. 22-23

State tax revenues came in \$30.6 million ahead of forecasts for March, mostly on the strength of income tax collections, according to preliminary figures from the Office of Budget and Management (OBM). Total tax receipts reached \$1.89 billion last month, or 1.6 percent more than expected. The personal income tax brought in \$32.2 million or 5.1 percent more than forecast, reaching \$668.2 million. Overperformance of 1.7 percent or \$14.3 million in the non-auto sales tax was cancelled out by a \$17.7 million or 9.6 percent underperformance in the auto sales tax, leaving total sales tax collections of roughly \$1 billion in March below estimates by \$3.3 million or 0.3 percent.

BUDGET – F.Y. 24-25

The Senate Finance Committee is in for some long and dense hearings next week as it begins informal deliberations on the biennial budget, HB33 (Edwards), while the legislation is still pending in the House. Starting Tuesday, the committee is scheduled to hear from Office of Budget and Management Director Kim Murnieks and Legislative Service Commission Director Wendy Zhan. Following them will be a four-agency panel discussion on the H2Ohio initiative; Ohio Department of Medicaid Director Maureen Corcoran; Ohio Department of Job and Family Services Director Matt Damschroder; the office of Secretary of State Frank LaRose; the office of Gov. Mike DeWine; and the House and Senate. On Wednesday, the committee is scheduled to hear from Interim Superintendent Stephanie Siddens of the Ohio Department of Education; the office of Treasurer Robert Sprague; the office of Attorney General Dave Yost; the office of Auditor Keith Faber; the Ohio Supreme Court; and Chancellor Randy Gardner of the Ohio Department of Higher Education.

Groups representing dozens of school districts in cities large and small outlined their major budget priorities this week in a letter to lawmakers, prioritizing continued progress in putting the Cupp-Patterson formula into effect but with more recent data on cost inputs. They also oppose the major expansion of EdChoice scholarships included in Gov. Mike DeWine's executive budget proposal. The letter came from the Ohio 8 Coalition, which represents major urban districts; the Ohio Mid-sized Urban Districts Leadership Collaborative; and the First Ring Schools Collaborative, a group of Northeast Ohio suburban districts. "As the biennial state budget is debated, Ohio legislators must prioritize investment in public schools. Updating the Fair School Funding formula inputs and limiting the use of vouchers is crucial to the success of Ohio's 1.6 million students," they wrote.

With Gov. Mike DeWine's executive budget proposing to spend \$46.5 million over the biennium for the state's 9-8-8 suicide prevention lifeline, the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation recently wrote the House Finance Committee asking lawmakers to maintain distribution of that funding through the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (MHAS) rather than going through county boards. The letter, signed by Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation Executive Director Tony Coder, raised concerns over a suggestion that the funds for Ohio's 9-8-8 Suicide Prevention Lifeline go to county behavioral health authorities rather than Ohio MHAS. The foundation said the executive proposal on 9-8-8 funding and distribution should be maintained.

BUSINESS/CORPORATE

The Ohio Department of Development (DOD) announced Monday that registration has opened for this year's Ohio Business Matchmaker event, which enables small businesses to meet government agencies and prime contractors that award billions of dollars. It is the largest such event in the state. The government agencies will include local, state and federal agencies, according to DOD. It will be held Thursday, May 4 at the Wright State University Nutter Center, 3640 Colonel Glenn Highway, Dayton. There will also be training opportunities for small businesses on Wednesday, May 3. The event cost runs \$130, while on-site registration is \$175 for small businesses; government buyers and prime contractors can register for free. More information is available at <https://www.ohiobusinessmatchmaker.com/>.

CITIES

The Ohio Mayors Alliance (OMA) Thursday announced it is launching a new data initiative to help cities with policy decisions and deliver better services. OMA, a coalition of the leaders of Ohio's 30 largest cities, said the initiative will help cities pursue certification through the What Works Cities (WWC) program. Launched in 2017 by Bloomberg Philanthropies and led by Results for America, the WWC certification program recognizes and celebrates city governments for their exceptional use of data and evidence to inform policy decisions, allocate funding, improve services, evaluate the effectiveness of programs and engage their residents, OMA said. The initial members of the Ohio Mayors Alliance Data Innovation Initiative include Cleveland Mayor Justin Bibb, Dayton Mayor Jeffrey Mims, Lima Mayor Sharetta Smith and Reynoldsburg Mayor Joe Begeny.

DISABILITIES

A committee of six lawmakers who examined the work of Disability Rights Ohio (DRO) as the state-designated advocate for people with disabilities recommended in a report Thursday that the job go to someone else, and that Ohio consider bringing the work back into state government rather than using an independent nonprofit. DRO criticized the report strongly, saying suggested changes run counter to federal rules. The nonprofit Disability Rights Ohio was created more than a decade ago to take over the work of Ohio Legal Rights Service, a state agency, in running Ohio's protection and advocacy (P&A) system and client assistant program (CAP). Designating an entity to advocate for people with disabilities via those two functions is a condition of receiving federal funding for disability, mental health, vocational rehabilitation and independent living services. Most states designate a nonprofit to do this work rather than perform it in-house, as Ohio had done. In recent years, however, lawmakers have fielded complaints from families about DRO's approach to institutional care settings, and about its practice of meeting with some clients without their parents' or guardians' consent.

EAST PALESTINE DERAILMENT

Gov. Mike DeWine and First Lady Fran DeWine traveled to East Palestine Monday to attend the grand opening of the East Liverpool City Hospital East Palestine Clinic. The clinic replaces a temporary health assessment clinic opened by the Ohio Department of Health (ODH) Feb. 21 in response to the concerns of East Palestine residents after the Feb. 3 train derailment. The governor's office said that because many in the East Palestine community do not have primary care providers, the state is providing funding to ensure the clinic remains available and free for those without insurance coverage.

Ohio Attorney General (AG) Dave Yost accused the Ohio Clean Water Fund of diverting more than \$130,000 from intended donors to the East Palestine train disaster through "rampant deceptive and fraudulent" marketing and is asking a court to permanently shutter the sham charity. Within days of the Feb. 3 derailment, Ohio Clean Water Fund began soliciting donations on its website and through mass texts and emails claiming it was "on the ground" and working with Second Harvest Food Bank of the Mahoning Valley to alleviate hunger in East Palestine. "This partnership did not and has never existed, and the foodbank did not authorize Ohio Clean Water to use its name ...," the lawsuit states, saying Second Harvest only received \$10,000. Ohio Clean Water is not registered with the Internal Revenue Services as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) or with the Ohio Attorney General's Office as a professional solicitor.

ECONOMY

The national unemployment rate reached 3.6 percent in March, up slightly from the 3.5 percent seen in February, while total employment rose by 236,000, according to a report Friday from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The number of unemployed people in March was 5.8 million, little changed from February. Among the major worker groups, the unemployment rate for Hispanics decreased to 4.6 percent in March, essentially offsetting an increase in the prior month. The unemployment rates for adult men (3.4 percent), adult women (3.1 percent), teenagers (9.8 percent), Whites (3.2 percent), Blacks (5.0 percent), and Asians (2.8 percent) showed little or no change over the month.

EDUCATION

Amid the stymied search for a permanent superintendent of education and the ongoing legislative debate on the total revamping of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE) and State Board of Education, Interim Superintendent Stephanie Siddens is moving on to become deputy superintendent of Upper Arlington City Schools, with a tentative start date of July 1. Siddens, a veteran of ODE and member of senior leadership for several years, has been interim superintendent much of the last year and a half in two separate stints. The state has been mostly without a permanent superintendent since the fall of 2021, when Paolo DeMaria retired.

On Tuesday, the SBOE voted to adopt a plan for the appointment of a new interim superintendent following the summer departure of Siddens. Under the plan, Siddens will recommend a list of internal candidates for the position, and the board will interview those candidates in closed-door executive session during the May meeting, then potentially appoint one of them to the position. The board again voted Tuesday to postpone for a month any action on hiring an executive search firm for help filling the superintendent position, given how SB1 (Reineke) and HB12 (Jones-Dobos) would alter the job duties of the superintendent.

A legislative update for SBOE members Monday led to questions about ODE's lobbying efforts on SB1 and HB12, companion bills that would shift most of the board's and state superintendent's powers to a governor-appointed director of the renamed Department of Education and Workforce. Board member Diana Fessler wanted to know if ODE staff had or would testify on either of the two bills. "I'm talking about the demise of the State Board of Education's regulatory duties. Is that something that you have addressed face-to-face with legislators or staffers?" Fessler asked, later adding, "Are you defending the State Board of Education in the sense that we have no reason to have the rulemaking authority removed from us?"

The State Board of Education then took up and passed an emergency measure Tuesday advocating for the preservation of its general authority over the education system in the face of legislative proposals that would relegate it to a small subset of its current duties. The board voted 13-6 to adopt the "Resolution to Preserve Transparency and Public Participation in Ohio K-12 Education," sponsored by members Brendan Shea and Christina Collins, both among the 11 elected members of the 19-person board. Most of the eight gubernatorial appointees voted to oppose the resolution, including the board president, Paul LaRue. The resolution describes education oversight as a "shared responsibility" split among the governor, General Assembly, the board, state superintendent and local education leaders, and invokes the 1953 constitutional amendment that created the board. It describes the board as providing "the proper balance between state-mandated policy and local education autonomy" and says its inclusion of elected members "provides the greatest assurance that the will of the public will be well represented." The resolution urges that the board should maintain "complete rulemaking authority" under laws in Chapter 33 of the Ohio Revised Code, which governs education, and encourages lawmakers to involve the board in policymaking to avoid implementation delays. It further requests that, should lawmakers move ahead with restructuring the board, that the superintendent be made a member of the Governor's Executive Workforce Board. The resolution also specifically authorizes Ohio Department of Education (ODE) staff to advocate on the board's "constitutional role in educational oversight."

Several members of SBOE have suggested that new graduation requirements for the class of 2023 may be overly complicated for students and schools. Interim State Superintendent Stephanie Siddens Monday discussed the requirements, which were adopted in 2019 through the biennial budget, 133-HB166 (Oelslager). In that law, lawmakers scaled back the number of end-of-course exams high school students must pass while creating a system of graduation "seals" reflecting various specializations for students to select. The graduation seals system was proposed by a business-education coalition including Ohio Excels, the Alliance for High Quality Education and the Fordham Institute. The system replaced an earlier set of criteria that provided three pathways based on exam scores, demonstration of college readiness or pursuit of work credentials. This school year's seniors are the first students who'll need to meet the latest graduation criteria, which include three basic elements: completion of required credits and coursework; demonstration of competency in math and English; and earning at least two graduation seals, one of which must be a seal with state-designated requirements.

The SBOE's Literacy and Learning Acceleration Committee started the process Monday of revising the promotion score under the third grade reading guarantee law and had a more general discussion of the literacy improvement policies proposed in Gov. Mike DeWine's latest executive budget. Notwithstanding a pause during the pandemic years, the promotion score on state English tests that students must achieve in order to move on to fourth grade has been gradually increasing and must be equivalent to the proficiency score by the 2024-2025 academic year. The score is now at 685, and ODE staff proposed to the committee that it be raised to 690; the proficiency score is 700. Alternate assessments also are available for students to show their reading abilities, and a few groups of students are exempt from retention, such as students with IEPs that specifically exempt them and English learners who've been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than three years.

Changes to the Afterschool Child Enrichment (ACE) educational savings account program laid out in 134-HB45 (West-Roemer) took effect Friday, doubling the size of the grants that families can receive and expanding eligibility for the program. Qualifying families can now receive a \$1,000 credit per child for "enrichment and educational activities" during the 2022-2023 and 2023-2024 school years. Allowable activities include before- or after-school educational programs, day camps, music lessons and tutoring, among others. The expanded eligibility includes children ages 6-18

whose family income is at or below 400 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, who participate in income-based programs such as Medicaid, SNAP and Ohio Works First, or who reside in districts identified as experiencing high rates of chronic absenteeism or include EdChoice-eligible schools. Apply for an ACE educational savings account or browse the ACE Marketplace for service providers at <https://www.aceohio.org/>.

ELECTIONS 2024

According to reports, the former mayors of Napoleon and Walbridge are among the latest Republicans to announce candidacies for the 9th Congressional House District seat held by U.S. Rep. Marcy Kaptur (D-Toledo). WTVG in Toledo reports that Dan Wilczynski, a former mayor of Walbridge, and Steve Lankenau, a former Napoleon mayor, recently announced their campaigns for the Republican nomination in 2024. They join former Rep. Craig Riedel, who ran for the seat in 2022. Then, J.R. Majewski announced Wednesday that he will run again for the Republican nomination for the seat. Majewski won a competitive primary for the seat last year but lost to Kaptur in the General Election. In his announcement, Majewski said Kaptur had spent millions of dollars "lying about my military career," referencing reports that came out later in the campaign that he had not been truthful about his military service in Afghanistan.

Republican Bernie Moreno has filed paperwork with the Federal Elections Commission to set up a run for the U.S. Senate in 2024, joining Matt Dolan in the race for the Republican nomination. U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) is running for a fourth term. Moreno had run for the seat held by the retiring U.S. Sen. Rob Portman (R-OH) before the last election cycle, but dropped out early after meeting with former President Donald Trump and encouraging the field to narrow in order to have a stronger Republican candidate. Multiple media sources quoted sources close to Moreno saying that he will make a formal announcement next week.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis touted his record as governor Thursday while saying his party nationally has "developed a culture of losing." A potential Republican candidate for president, DeSantis spoke to the Summit County Republican Party's Lincoln Day breakfast, and was scheduled to speak to the Butler County Republican Party later in the day. While former President Donald Trump, who has already announced a campaign for president, has continually attacked DeSantis over the past few months, the Florida governor did not mention Trump by name, only remarking that the party needs proven winners going into 2024 to stop Democrats from taking the White House, U.S. House and Senate.

Also speaking at the breakfast were Secretary of State Frank LaRose and Treasurer Robert Sprague. LaRose pushed back on Democratic criticism that Republicans are trying to suppress the vote, saying if that was his objective, he is doing a poor job, pointing to record turnout in the last few elections. He also told the audience that Democrats have left Ohio and its values, saying Democrats "are so focused on letting boys use girls' bathrooms, they forgot about you who build the bathrooms." LaRose, a potential U.S. Senate candidate, hinted at a campaign, saying Republicans need a proven winner to take on U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) in 2024. Sprague focused his remarks on a potential reproductive and abortion rights constitutional amendment on the November ballot, telling the audience that "life and death" is on the ballot. He called it a "dark amendment," arguing it will allow fetuses to be aborted in the ninth month of gestation and will allow children to get contraception at school without their parents' permission.

ENERGY/UTILITIES

Home and business energy prices have seen some ups and downs during the onset and wind-down of COVID-19 but will more than double just in time for the approaching summer cooling season compared to June-September electric costs in 2019, prior to the virus's arrival. Electric wholesale auctions overseen by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the 13-state regional transmission organization (RTO) encompassing Ohio, PJM Interconnection, have experienced rising price trends since the first year of the current administration, following a temporary dip during 2020's COVID-19 onset that apparently stemmed from economic slowdowns and decreased demand. Energy auctions have a delayed impact and generally occur months before their prices take effect. FERC recently had frozen so-called capacity auctions -- reserved capacity to meet peak electric demands -- for more than a year, moreover, creating considerable uncertainty for wholesale electric costs set over a year before their effective date. Auction prices are then weighted and averaged by "tranches" or percentage points for an annual service period beginning in June.

ENVIRONMENT

The Ohio Environmental Council (OEC) announced late Thursday it joined other environmental groups in seeking a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction against 134-HB507 (Koehler), which became effective Friday, April 7. The lawsuit claims the bill, which requires Ohio "to lease state parks to the oil and gas industry," is unconstitutional due to violation of the one subject and three consideration rules, according to OEC. The Buckeye Environmental Network, Ohio Valley Allies and Sierra Club also joined the OEC lawsuit. They are represented by Earthjustice, the Case Western Environmental Law Clinic and OEC's own attorneys. OEC's lawsuit said further that HB507 started as an agricultural bill focused on poultry but underwent changes during the lame duck period that "vitaly altered the bill to cover numerous unrelated and controversial topics." Those include the mandatory leasing provision and changes to the definition of green energy. The suit was filed in the Franklin County Court of Common Pleas.

FEDERAL

U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) made three announcements on federal funds coming to Ohio Thursday, including a total of \$42.73 million from the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund through 15 grants. Brown said regarding the CDFI funding, "These new investments will help expand housing and economic opportunities for families, businesses, and communities across Ohio." The grants were awarded through CDFI's Equitable Recovery Program to expand lending, grant making and investment activities in communities that have significant unmet financial service needs and have experienced disproportionate economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. The second announcement was of two National Science Foundation grants totaling \$919,586. Marion Technical College will receive \$648,370 for engineering education programs to support manufacturing jobs through hands-on and virtual reality trainings. Otterbein College will receive \$271,216 for research on chemical synthesis with potential use in optical devices and sensing. Last, Brown said the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs had awarded two grants totaling \$434,099 to the Bureau of Criminal Investigation to help meet expected caseloads and enhance overall lab capacity.

GAMING/GAMBLING

Gift cards are now an acceptable source of funding for sports betting accounts, according to Ohio Casino Control Commission (OCCC) Executive Director Matt Schuler. Gift cards must first be reviewed by the commission prior to any operator's marketing or using the product, OCCC said in an email to sports betting stakeholders. Gift cards are subject to advertising requirements and must include responsible gambling messaging.

On Wednesday, the Ohio Lottery Commission was told Ohio Lottery Director Pat McDonald has submitted his resignation to Gov. Mike DeWine, citing health-related reasons. However, a day later, the governor's office said it is hiring an outside firm to investigate allegations of potential human resources irregularities at the commission. Dan Tierney, a spokesman for DeWine, released a statement saying the governor's office has been made aware of the allegations. Tierney would not comment further on the investigation, including whether the resignation of McDonald on Wednesday is related. The commission was told at its Wednesday meeting that Michelle Gillcrist, the governor's aerospace and defense liaison and Northeast Ohio regional liaison, will be interim director, following McDonald's resignation. McDonald was named director by DeWine in February 2019. Before that, he was a member of the commission since 2007, and had served as chairman of the commission for the eight years prior to his appointment as director.

Wednesday's lottery commission meeting saw an update from staff about the type C sports lottery gaming program, which is up to 938 locations that span 68 counties, from about 770 in January. Two proprietors, Elys Gameboard Technologies and J & J Ventures, have yet to launch and can add to the number of locations as soon as July. The Ohio Lottery has recommended about 1,600 hosts for type C sports betting, and of that, over 1,140 have applied to the Ohio Casino Control Commission for licenses.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Reps. Phil Plummer (R-Dayton) and Jeff LaRe (R-Canal Winchester) will be serving as the co-chairs of the campaign arm of the House Republican Caucus, potentially resolving an issue between factions of the majority in the House. The Ohio House Republican Alliance (OHRA), the campaign organization, announced the selection of the co-chairs this week. "I look forward to working together, supporting all of our Republican members and ensuring the Ohio House remains a model for conservatism," said House Speaker Jason Stephens (R-Kitts Hill) in a statement. "Being named co-chair of OHRA is a great honor, and I look forward to working with him and my co-chair Jeff LaRe in these efforts," Plummer said. Control of OHRA was in dispute after Stephens and a number of Republicans joined with House Democrats to elect Stephens speaker over Rep. Derek Merrin (R-Maumee), the choice of an internal caucus vote. Merrin and Plummer, who was set to become speaker pro tempore under Merrin, had announced earlier this year that they had been elected chair and vice chair of OHRA, respectively, which Stephens disputed. At that time, Plummer had suggested that Republicans could sue Stephens over control of the fund, but said he and others would try to negotiate a solution.

The Ohio House Republican Alliance (OHRA), the campaign arm of the House Republican Caucus, announced Wednesday that Jared Borg has been hired as chief political director. A U.S. Navy veteran, Borg's campaign background includes roles in the Ohio Trump Victory, 2020 Georgia U.S. Senate runoff, Josh Mandel for U.S. Senate, and Max Miller for Congress campaigns. OHRA said in his new role, Borg will play a role in shaping OHRA's political strategy, coordinating campaigns and advocating for conservative principles in Ohio.

HIGHER EDUCATION

When asked about Sen. Jerry Cirino's (R-Kirtland) SB83, Lt. Gov. Jon Husted said the bill seeks to "modernize the law to help these colleges and universities navigate a changing landscape" with fewer students due to demographic shifts, more employers willing to hire non-college graduates and the economics of higher education becoming "very difficult." That requires modernization in how universities work, and Husted said he thought Cirino was seeking their feedback as part of the process.

JUDICIAL

The Ohio Supreme Court released victim rights and restitution forms this week in conjunction with the effective date of Marsy's Law 134-HB343 (White), which codifies the 2020 constitutional amendment. The Ohio Crime Victims' Bill of Rights includes privacy protections on victims' identifying information, equal treatment throughout the criminal justice process, timely notification of case developments, and the right to give input on defendant pleas and sentences in court. "The forms are designed to assist victims in electing and exercising their rights and to communicate their selections to justice partners," the Court said. Law enforcement officials and prosecutors will now provide Ohio Victim Rights Request Forms to explain which rights are automatic and which can be exercised only on request; to allow victims to choose which rights to exercise; and to designate a victim representative. Victims' contact information also will allow law enforcement, prosecutors, courts and custodial agencies to provide them key information throughout the case. The request form will be completed by law enforcement during the investigation, reviewed with the prosecutor after the case begins, and then filed with the court. The form can be updated with changes to the victim's information or their rights election.

MENTAL HEALTH

The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (Ohio MHAS) has been awarded a \$2.9 million federal grant to help state officials meet the behavioral health needs of citizens affected by traumatic events such as natural disasters, mass shootings and other large-scale man-made and terrorist events, Gov. Mike DeWine announced. Ohio MHAS will use the funding to help establish statewide and local partnerships, policies, procedures and protocols that create the systemic changes necessary to immediately deploy essential behavioral health supports and resources across the state in the aftermath of tragedies. This additional federal funding from the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act comes nearly a week after Ohio MHAS was awarded a \$209,402 federal Supplemental Emergency Response grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration to help meet the immediate and ongoing behavioral health needs of the East Palestine community.

PARKS/RECREATION

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has recommended eight local communities for \$3.4 million in funding to improve and increase outdoor recreation opportunities. The money is provided through federal matching grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) and is pending final approval by the National Park Service. ODNR administers the federal LWCF grant program for Ohio. Annually, the LWCF provides up to 50 percent reimbursement assistance for state and local government subdivisions, such as villages and cities, for the acquisition, development and rehabilitation of outdoor recreational areas. The federal grant program is supported by offshore oil lease revenues and other non-tax sources.

PEOPLE

Former Rep. Jon D. Myers, who served in the House from 1991 to 2000, died Tuesday, April 4 at Avow Hospice in Naples, FL. In addition to serving in the General Assembly, Myers was a Lancaster City Council member and president and a Fairfield County commissioner. He also served as a lobbyist for the Community Bankers Association of Ohio and owned a promotional advertising business, Fairfield Promotions. He is survived by his wife of 39 years, Cheryl, sons Shon (Darla) Myers of Springboro, Jerrod (Amanda) Myers of Lancaster and Ashley (Rob) Carroll of Dublin, and nine grandchildren, brother Norman (Cynthia) Myers and sister Linda Hooper. Jon was predeceased by his parents and brother, Ronald Myers. A service will be held at 11 a.m. Saturday, May 20 at First Presbyterian Church of Naples, 250 6th St. S, Naples, FL, 34102. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the church or to Avow Hospice at avowcares.org in his memory.

Ohio Women's Alliance (OWA) Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director Erin Scott will be leaving the organization later in April, according to fellow OWA Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director Rhiannon Carnes. However, she will remain on the OWA team part-time through July to aid in the transition. In her next chapter, Scott will serve as deputy director of Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ), where she will lead the organization's fundraising efforts across several states.

PUBLIC SAFETY

The Ohio Department of Public Safety (DPS) and the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) have issued a joint warning on the growing trend of cryptocurrency scams targeting older adults. DPS's Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center (ONIC) worked with ODA on a public bulletin released Friday to encourage older Ohioans, family members and caregivers to be on alert. Fraudsters ask individuals to pay for transactions in cryptocurrency, including Bitcoin and Ethereum as two of the most common, or through cryptocurrency automated teller machines (ATM). Some of the more common ones targeting older adults include romance scams, in which the offender encounters the victim online or by telephone, develops a relationship, and then requests a loan or financial assistance; government impersonation scams, in which the fraudster pretends to be from a public jurisdiction, calls the victim and threatens arrest without immediate payment; and grandparent scams, in which offenders pretend to be a grandchild, state that they are in trouble, and say they need money immediately.