



## Morning News and Stuff

### **PUCO appointment criticized, poll supports school funding, superintendent investigation**

February 18, 2013

Gov. John Kasich appointed a former Republican to a Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) seat that must go to a Democrat or Independent, according to *The Plain Dealer*. M. Beth Trombold will finish her term as the assistant director in Kasich's Ohio Development Services Agency in April, when she will then take up the PUCO position. The appointment immediately drew criticism from some Democrats. State Rep. Mike Foley of Cleveland called the appointment "another example of Kasich cronyism running rampant."

A poll from Innovation Ohio, a left-leaning policy research group, found Kasich's budget proposals aren't popular with most Ohioans. The poll found 62 percent of Ohioans prefer prioritizing school funding over reducing the state income tax, while only 32 percent prefer tax reduction. When asked what Ohio lawmakers should prioritize in the coming months, 56 percent said job creation, 38 percent said school funding, 24 percent said keeping local property taxes low and 18 percent said cutting the state income tax.

A school superintendent from Warren County may face prosecution for misusing public resources after he wrote a letter to parents urging them to campaign against Kasich, reports *Dayton Daily News*. Franklin City Schools Superintendent Arnol Elam was apparently angry with Kasich's new school funding formula, which did not increase funding for poor school districts like Franklin Cities, but did give increases to Springboro, Mason and Kings — the three wealthiest districts in Warren County.

County Prosecutor David Fornshell said he will be investigating Elam for engaging in political activity with public resources.

Kasich will give his State of the State Tuesday. The speech is expected to focus on the governor's budget and tax reform plans.

As part of an agreement with the city, Duke Energy is suing over the streetcar project, according to WLWT. The lawsuit is meant to settle who has to pay for moving utility lines to accommodate for the streetcar. *CityBeat* covered the agreement between the city and Duke here and how the streetcar will play a pivotal role in the 2013 mayor's race here.

Thousands of people in Butler County, mainly students, are benefiting from Judge Robert Lyons' criminal record seals, according to *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. Lyons' practice of sealing cases came to light after he sealed the case for the Miami University student who posted a flyer

on how to get away with rape. In the past five years, Lyons has sealed 2,945 cases — more than a third of the new misdemeanor cases filed.

Ohio's casinos are falling far short of original revenue projections, according to *The Columbus Dispatch*. It's uncertain why that's the case, but some are pointing to Internet-sweepstakes cafes. Cincinnati's Horseshoe Casino, which will open March 4, was spurred by the original projections.

StateImpact Ohio reports that many Ohio teachers are concerned with new teaching evaluation rules.

Two Cincinnati Republicans will begin reviewing the effects of legislation that deregulated phone companies in Ohio, reports Gongwer. State Rep. Peter Stautberg, who chairs the House Public Utilities Committee, and State Sen. Bill Seitz, who chairs the Senate Public Utilities Committee, will hear testimony from PUCO Tuesday.

Downtown's Chiquita center has landed in bankruptcy, reports WCPO. The building lost its major tenant last year when Chiquita Brands relocated to Charlotte, N.C.

"Star Trek" is becoming reality. University of Cincinnati researchers are developing a tricorder device to help users monitor their own health, reports WVXU.

Are you worried about space rocks recently? *Popular Science* says NASA is concerned as well.

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