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Husted Takes Early Voting Case to U.S. Supreme Court

Calling it "an unprecedented intrusion" by federal courts into how states run elections, Secretary of State Jon Husted announced Tuesday that he is appealing a federal court decision ordering early in-person voting to be restored to the Saturday, Sunday and Monday before Election Day to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals Friday sided with U.S. District Court Judge Peter Economus in ordering Husted to allow all voters to cast a ballot on Saturday, Nov. 3, Sunday, Nov. 4 and Monday, Nov. 5. (See *The Hannah Report*, 10/5/12.) Voters had been able to cast ballots on those days in previous elections, but a change in HB224 (Dovilla-Stinziano) cut off voting at 6 p.m. on the Friday before Election Day for all voters except military and overseas voters.

President Barack Obama's campaign and state and national Democrats sued, claiming it was unconstitutional to allow one group of voters access to in-person voting but not others. Husted and the state argued that military voters need special privileges and that boards of elections need extra time to prepare for Election Day. Economus and the Sixth Circuit said that while it was commendable to give extra time for military and overseas voters, there was not a legitimate reason to cut off access to other voters.

The appeals court also said that it would be up to each county board whether to open for early voting.

Husted said in a statement released Tuesday that those rulings could affect all 50 states as to who and how elections will be run in America.

"This ruling not only doesn't make legal sense, it doesn't make practical sense. The court is saying that all voters must be treated the same way under Ohio law, but also grants Ohio's 88 elections boards the authority to establish 88 different sets of rules. That means that one county may close down voting for the final weekend while a neighboring county may remain open. How any court could consider this a remedy to an equal protection problem is stunning," Husted said in the statement.

He added, "As a swing state, we in Ohio expect to be held to a high standard and level of scrutiny when it comes to elections. However, it's troubling that the federal courts have failed to recognize that there isn't another state in the union which can claim Ohio's broad menu of voting options and opportunity to vote. In Ohio, ALL voters already have at least 230 hours available to vote in person prior to Election Day, ALL registered voters received an application to vote by mail and ALL voters still have the ability to vote during the 13-hour window on Election Day itself.

Husted said the last thing he wants is to have a non-uniform system where voters will be treated differently in all 88 counties. He noted that some boards of elections have already started to take action on hours of operations for the three days before Election Day, and said he will "take time to consult with all 88 counties before crafting a directive to set uniform hours should the state not be successful upon appeal."

Democrats blasted the move by Husted.

"It is now clear that Secretary of State Jon Husted will stop at nothing to deny Ohioans full and equal access to the polls. By filing an appeal with the U.S. Supreme Court, Secretary Husted is once again searching for legal justification for Republican election laws that would deny some Ohioans the right to vote on the last three days before the election," said Senate

Democratic Leader Eric Kearney (D-Cincinnati). "Instead of standing up for the Constitution as he claims, the secretary of state is standing in the way of equal access to the polls, which is the most fundamental right in our democracy. Furthermore, Secretary Husted is causing unnecessary delay and confusion just four weeks before election day."

The Obama campaign also released a statement from its general counsel, Bob Bauer, saying there is no justification for Husted's action.

"The secretary of state has now chosen to extend the litigation and to ask the United States Supreme Court to intervene just four weeks before the election. We have no reason to believe that he will meet with any more success now than before," Bauer said in the statement. "It is a shame that the secretary would not have committed his office's energy instead to implementing the outstanding court orders and administering the orderly and effective early voting process that has served Ohio voters so well since 2005."

State School Board Votes to Release Additional Report Card Information

The State Board of Education Tuesday approved the release of additional performance data for 2011-12 after a recommendation from Acting Superintendent Michael Sawyers for an expanded spreadsheet.

School and district ratings, the Performance Index and attendance rates for all Ohio schools and districts will be published on or about Oct. 17. The Ohio Department of Education (ODE) said the release will include all the data elements released previously, plus the additional items.

State Board Member Rob Hovis asked Sawyers during Tuesday's meeting why the department doesn't just go ahead with full report cards for schools, districts and the state. The superintendent said ODE must wait for the state auditor to complete his review before issuing the official report card.

In a later statement, Sawyers added, "As we wait for additional information related to the attendance investigation being conducted by the auditor of state, we remain committed to sharing existing preliminary data with our schools and the public. In the meantime, school district superintendents and other personnel will have full access to updated preliminary local report card data and reports while ODE extracts data for public release."

ODE said it will post the updated spreadsheet on its website once the data have been extracted. Report card indicators for all districts and schools will include overall rating, Performance Index and attendance rate information, all of which remain subject to change pending the outcome of Auditor Dave Yost's investigation.

The department said it will not publish actual report card PDFs until the auditor's investigation is concluded, or otherwise as agreed upon by the State Board of Education.

Yost also released a statement praising the state board for supporting his recommendation to change state law to give the Ohio Department of Education access to student names. Yost made the recommendation when addressing the board on Monday. (See *The Hannah Report*, 10/8/12.)

"It's gratifying that the board saw the value of bringing this data in-house," Yost said. "This change will save money and give ODE better results."

Voting Registration Closes; SOS Reports over 1 Million Absentee Requests

The so-called "golden week," the overlap week between the end of voter registration in Ohio and the beginning of early voting, passed Tuesday while barely making the headlines it did in the 2008 presidential election.

Republicans fought with then-Secretary of State Jennifer Brunner over the week, which would allow Ohioans to register to vote and cast a ballot on the same day, questioning whether it would lead to fraud. (See *The Hannah Report*, 9/30/08.) More than 13,000 voters took advantage of the option in 2008.

Subsequent legislation would have removed the overlap, including the now-repealed HB194 (Mecklenborg-Blessing). This year, the debate over golden week was silent, with attention turned to early voting opportunities. Although the secretary of state's office did not have numbers on how many voters used the "golden week" this year, it noted that there are more than 7.9 million registered voters in Ohio.

Meanwhile, Secretary of State Jon Husted announced that more than 1.1 million requests to vote by mail have been received by county boards of elections, including more than 13,000 requests for military and overseas ballots. In addition, more than 59,000 voters have already cast their ballots early in-person.

Husted sent absentee ballot requests to more than 6.9 million voters this year.

"Today marks 28 days before Election Day, and Ohioans are already taking full advantage of the wide menu of options they have to vote in this election," Husted said. "The fact that nearly 1.2 million Ohioans have acted to be part of the early voting process clearly demonstrates how easy it is to vote in Ohio."

Kasich, Snitchler Outline Challenges, Goals for Natural Gas Vehicle Development

If industry leaders can overcome the challenges of creating an infrastructure then Ohio can become the national leader for natural gas vehicles (NGV). That was the message from Gov. John Kasich Tuesday at the Natural Gas Vehicle Summit in Columbus.

The summit, hosted by America's Natural Gas Alliance, was held at the Ohio State University. As Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) Chairman Todd Snitchler explained, participants of the summit were manufacturers, dealers, sellers and "doers."

Kasich addressed the crowd by ensuring that the state is working with the public and private sector to help facilitate and create an infrastructure that would support the use of NGV. He explained that he has been collecting opinions from representatives of the auto industry.

"They're all saying the same thing which is -- where's the market?" said Kasich. "So we have to bring about the market. One of the things that we really need in our state is to get our business organizations who are effective at being able to communicate a sense of urgency to the members of the business organizations which I don't think is being done."

The governor reflected on what it would take in order to create that market and infrastructure behind the use of natural gas. He noted that one of the most important elements is taken care of: Ohio already has the natural gas in the shale plays. Then he explained that it will take an effort from the state in order to encourage development.

"The state will do what it can do to try and jumpstart this with our vehicles and our fleets. ... We will begin to see some conversion," said Kasich. "But to me you know what it's going to take, it's going to take the business leaders -- the business leaders have to make up their mind that this is something they care about. And if you can show quantity and you can show a market then we can get more filling stations and as we get more compressed natural gas stations out there then we can get the auto industry to show more interest and maybe we'll be able to get them to build more cars here and then we're off and running."

While the scenario laid out by the governor is considered an ideal situation, lawmakers in the past have eluded to the core issue of developing a new energy industry as being the "chicken and the egg" dilemma. For NGV, automakers may not want to invest in manufacturing until there is a clear fueling infrastructure and demand, however fueling stations may not be created until there are NGV to fuel.

"The problem that we have is it's too isolated -- no one knows what you're doing. So until we can build some sort of a critical mass it's not going to happen. Nobody's going to get excited about this until we build a critical mass. So the Ohio Chamber of Commerce -- for example -- out to be out there and talking about this and promoting this and getting business leaders."

Snitchler referred to the chicken and the egg analogy and suggested that it should not be one before the other but rather a joint effort to develop an infrastructure.

"The vehicles and the stations need to be built out nearly simultaneously in order to bring both along. Fleet conversions and fueling agreements in order to sustain construction of stations can be a workable model to encourage a rational business case for the adoption of NGVs," explained Snitchler.

The PUCO chair mentioned the memorandum of understanding (MOU) that Ohio has signed with 14 other states. The MOU is an effort for the states to work together in order to help spur an infrastructure. Snitchler said that includes seeking a partnership with private retailers, natural gas producers, utilities and local governments to help create a fueling infrastructure.

Kasich challenged the summit participants to create a game plan and a list of goals that included his office and other state officials to help develop the industry.

"I'm here to tell you today that we want to get this done. I hope that within the next decade Ohio will be the leader in vehicles powered by natural gas. I don't think there's any reason why it shouldn't happen but we have to work together," urged Kasich.

One side of the chicken and the egg dilemma, the fueling industry, was the focus of another panel during the summit. That panel included Bob Hodanbosi, Ohio EPA; Tim Boyle, ANGI which makes NGV refueling equipment and systems; Jim Baich, IGS Energy CNG Services; Brett Barry, Clean Energy.

The experts discussed the challenges of creating a fueling infrastructure and explained the details of fueling NGV. Boyle said that a fueling station has one of three options; fast-fill; time-fill; or a combination of the two. A fast-fill pump fills a tank in the same amount of time as the typical unleaded gas station. A time-fill station takes eight hours, Boyle explained that a person would typically leave the vehicle there overnight.

Boyle added that a typical fueling station can cost anything between \$250,000 to \$5 million depending on the type of station and the amount of vehicles it planned to handle.

The panel agreed that the best way to get the industry started is to incentivize the heavy duty vehicles and fleets first.

"Everyone wants to open up to consumer vehicles first -- but I think it's kind of counterintuitive," Barry explained. "Between 20 and 30 heavy duty vehicles can support one station. If you're going after regular passengers, consumer vehicles that are going to get 30 miles to the gallon, you're going to need several hundred of those vehicles to support the same station. So you start working with the heavy duty first, you're going to get that backbone network in place which you need to make consumer vehicles a viable choice."

Boyle said his side of the industry does not necessarily need the incentives, but the country needs an NGV industry within the next five years and not the next 25 or 50 years. He said incentives will help the nation create jobs and use its domestic fuel quicker.

"I think incentives should be on vehicles," said Boyle who noted the irony of his statement given the fact that he works for the fueling industry. "If you've got the vehicles out there -- if you incentivize the user to buy these vehicles and fill them then companies like IGS and Clean Energy and others station developers will build that infrastructure."

Baich explained the economics of the price of natural gas by pointing out that compressed natural gas (CNG) may cost \$2, but only \$.50 is actually the price of CNG and the other \$1.50 is based on other components. He said that even if the price of CNG doubles, the total cost will still only be \$2.50.

The last panel of the summit was a discussion with some of Ohio's policymakers which included Sen. Troy Balderson (R-Zanesville), Rep. Jim Butler (R-Dayton), Sean O'Brien (D-Brookfield), former state senator Jimmy Stewart, now president of the Ohio Gas Association, Chad Smith with the Ohio Development Services Agency (DSA) and Sam Spofforth with Clean Fuels Ohio.

Spofforth suggested that the best course of action to create an industry is a healthy relationship of private and public partnerships.

"I think it starts with leadership and education but also being willing to get out of the way and let these projects develop and let the industry happen," said Spofforth.

O'Brien was a late addition to the panel. He was noticed by the governor during the summit and was asked to share his opinion. The representative noted that he believed the government should take a step back and let the private sector develop the industry and then jump in when needed.

Lethal Injection Drug Running Dry as Execution Calendar Extends to 2014

The state of Ohio has scheduled a dozen lethal injections into late 2014 but could be forced to adopt yet another execution protocol when its supply of pentobarbital reportedly runs dry next fall.

The Ohio Supreme Court has set three more execution dates, extending the death penalty calendar to Oct. 14, 2014.

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (DRC) responded Tuesday to reports that the use date for the state's supply of pentobarbital expires in September 2013.

"It is my understanding that there is an expiration date for the drug," DRC spokeswoman JoEllen Smith told *Hannah News*.

Its current manufacturer has said it will maintain a moratorium on continued distribution of the drug for lethal injection.

The death chamber at Southern Ohio Correctional Facility resumes operation on Nov. 13 with the scheduled execution of 38-year-old Brett Hartman, following Donald Palmer's death sentence last month. (See *The Hannah Report*, 9/20/12.) Hartman was convicted in the strangulation murder and mutilation of Wanda Snipes in 1997 but has twice secured an execution delay. (See *The Hannah Report*, 7/20/12, 7/21/12.) The Ohio Parole Board has twice refused him clemency and will review his case a third time Wednesday.

After Hartman are scheduled executions for Ronald Post of Lorain County (Jan. 16, 2013), Frederick Treesh of Lake County (March 6, 2013), Steven Smith of Richland County (May 1, 2013), Billy Slagle of Cuyahoga County (Aug. 7, 2013), Harry Mitts Jr. of Cuyahoga County (Sept. 25, 2013), Ronald Phillips of Summit County (Nov. 14, 2013), Dennis McGuire of Preble County (Jan. 16, 2014), Gregory Lott of Cuyahoga County (March 29, 2014), Arthur Tyler of Cuyahoga County (May 28, 2012), William Montgomery of Lucas County (Aug. 6, 2014), and Raymond Tibbetts of Hamilton County (Oct. 14, 2014).

Kasich Praises Romney Ahead of GOP Nominee's Visit

Gov. John Kasich went on a conference call on behalf of Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney's visit to Ohio to praise Romney's debate performance and to criticize what Kasich continues to call "headwinds" coming out of Washington, D.C.

The governor said the more he reflects on last week's presidential debate, which many pundits say Romney won and which has given the former Massachusetts governor momentum, the more amazed he is at Romney's performance. He said people got to see Romney in an "unvarnished way," and said President Barack Obama "couldn't figure out how to defend his own record."

Kasich said Romney's performance has increased intensity among Republicans who are showing more of a willingness to get out and vote. Independents and even some Democrats are also beginning to take another look at Romney, he said.

"He was able to touch people in a way he hadn't been able to do before," Kasich said.

Despite the federal unemployment rate dropping below 8 percent, Kasich said he is on edge on new job reporting numbers because of the "headwinds" he said are coming from the nation's capital. He said the number of federal regulations is paralyzing businesses, especially small businesses.

Kasich added that he is starting to think that a large chunk of the Democratic Party believes the best approach for economic success is to grow government.

To illustrate his point, the Romney campaign also brought in two Ohio small business owners who said they have suffered from government regulations. Ed Nagle, of Nagle Companies in Toledo, and Kelly Moore of GKM Auto Parts in Zanesville, both said their business have been unable to grow under those regulations.

Nagle said his company employed 80 truck drivers in 2008, and now has 40. He said his fuel costs have doubled in the past four years, and blamed the president for not having an energy policy to help the trucking industry. He also accused Obama of cooperating with labor groups to pass laws to increase costs for companies.

Moore attacked the "Cash for Clunkers" program that gave discounts on new car purchases in exchange for used cars. She said her industry was hit hard because viable used cars were taken off the market, as were used parts. She said continued regulations continue to burden small businesses, especially banking regulations.

Romney is campaigning around Ohio Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, with stops in Cuyahoga Falls, Mount Vernon, Delaware, Sydney and Lancaster scheduled.

State Begins Process for Charter E-School Expansion

The state is opening the process for the expansion of charter e-schools slated for 2013-14, the Ohio Department of Education (Ohio) announced Tuesday.

Budget bill HB153 (Amstutz) had placed a continued moratorium on publicly funded Internet or computer-based schools to allow for a review of state operating standards. For school year 2013-14, the Ohio Revised Code now allows for up to five new e-schools.

Interim Superintendent of Public Instruction Michael Sawyers said Tuesday that governing authorities who propose to open an e-school must enter into a preliminary agreement with a sponsor and adopt a community school contract by March 15, 2013. The sponsor and governing authority must then sign the community school contract by May 15, 2013 and notify ODE within 24 hours.

"If more than five applicants notify ODE that they are interested in opening a new e-school, ODE will hold a lottery to determine which schools may open," Sawyers said in a memo to school administrators.

The lottery, if needed, is scheduled for May 31, 2013.

More information on the application process for e-school expansion is available from Steve Tate in ODE's Office of Community Schools, (614) 466-7058.

Former Judge Must Shed Honorific in Race against Trapp

Former Ohio Supreme Court candidate Judge Mary Jane Trapp's Republican opponent in the fall election says she'll take her appeal of disciplinary sanctions all the way to the state's highest court, if necessary. A five-judge commission appointed by the Court has issued an interim order barring Colleen O'Toole from use of the title "judge" in her race for the 11th District Court of Appeals, and must still rule on fines and attorney fees imposed by a panel of the Board of Commissioners on Grievances and Discipline.

Like current Supreme Court candidate Bill O'Neill, O'Toole has used the appellation "judge" even though she is not a sitting jurist, having lost her previous seat on the 11th District after succumbing in the 2010 primary election. (See *The Hannah Report*, 5/10/10.)

While O'Neill has been cleared in his campaign use of the honorific "judge" by a 13-member commission of the Ohio Court of Appeals -- another permutation of the judicial campaign disciplinary process, in addition to the Board of Commissioners,

ad hoc five-judge commissions, and the Court itself -- the board and five-judge commission in the O'Toole case say her use of the title is improper. (See *The Hannah Report*, 7/17/12.)

O'Toole has until Wednesday, Oct. 10 to respond to the Board of Commissioners' findings.

Meet the Candidates: DiNallo v. Rogers in House District 60

With a shakeup on the Democratic side of the ticket, the fall contest for the 60th Ohio House District looks to be more competitive. After the withdrawal of the well-known Dan Troy, a Lake County commissioner and former House member, the race is now a competition between two prospects with municipal government experience -- Republican Painesville Councilwoman Lori DiNallo and Democratic Mayor John Rogers of Mentor-on-the-Lake.

The district occupies the northeast portion of Lake County, including Eastlake, Fairport Harbor, Grand River, Lakeline, Mentor, Mentor-on-the-Lake, Painesville, Timberlake, Wickliffe, Willoughby and Willowick. According to the Ohio Manufacturers Association's *Ohio Election Guide*, it has a 2012 Democratic index of 53.99 percent, and Gov. John Kasich had a small lead among voters there in 2010, getting 46.87 percent of the vote compared to former Gov. Ted Strickland's 46.31 percent.

The new 60th District overlaps the old 62nd District, occupied by term-limited Rep. Lorraine Fende (D-Willowick). DiNallo's home of Painesville, which under the old maps was drawn into a district with the western and southern parts of Lake County, now is part of the new northeast Lake County district.

DiNallo says the sales pitch for contrasting herself against Troy translates nicely to a contest against Rogers.

"Granted that Dan Troy had a very popular name and had been in politics for a very long time, but his background, as well as the background of my current opponent, John Rogers, is a background that many candidates have already," she said, referring to the prevalence of attorneys and financial professionals in politics. She's spent her career doing behavioral health work in schools, and only recently sought office, starting her first term on Painesville City Council in 2010.

"I think any board or any body of decision makers benefits from having a variety of backgrounds as far as their professional careers," she said.

DiNallo used to work directly for schools but now is with Crossroads Behavioral Health, which contracts with schools to offer services. She describes her work as doing "triage" for students with social and emotional challenges, either providing intervention services herself or referring them to another provider.

She is halfway through her first term on Painesville City Council.

Rogers is a long-time elected leader in Mentor-on-the-Lake, starting on the city's council in 1989 and winning the first of his five terms as mayor in 1996.

Rogers said he's not very familiar with DiNallo but is focused more on trying to sell his skills and experiences as a match for the district.

"I've never really tried to compare myself with any of my opponents," said Rogers.

Those skills and experiences include business ownership, work in county government and mayoral terms that featured restructuring fire and emergency services to enable round-the-clock responses and winning accreditation for the police department.

In county government, he's been assistant prosecuting attorney and supervising attorney for the juvenile and delinquent tax divisions in the Lake County prosecutor's office, and now serves as deputy county treasurer.

Rogers says he got into public service after a string of events where city government wasn't very responsive, including difficulty with permits to cut down a tree and the police response to his car being stolen. Finally, when he tried to build a fence, he was told that to get the needed permit, he should go to a bar after business hours and buy a beer for the guy responsible.

"At which point I decided to start attending council meetings," he said.

DiNallo says her experiences also give her good perspective on what the district faces. She's worked for struggling and well-to-do local schools in the district, and she saw her husband lose his job and much of his pension in the steel industry.

"I think what a lot of voters are looking for is somebody they feel confident actually knows what they are facing. And they can be confident that I know what they are facing," she said.

DiNallo also vows that, if elected, she will make public office her full-time job.

Job creation and the economy are unsurprisingly important to both candidates. DiNallo says Ohio needs to do a better job of education to match employers' workforce needs. The current disconnect is costing the state not just in prosperity but in population, as younger Ohioans move away for work.

"We've kind of missed a generation of population," she said. "We don't realize those tax dollars back through employment and kids buying things in our communities because they're going somewhere else to purchase homes."

Rogers says government needs to be more responsive to businesses and help match them with growth opportunities. He recalled a time when he was served a piece of jerky on a flight and saw on the label it was from Brazil, which made him think of Ohio companies he knew of that could provide jerky to the airline.

"Sometimes there's a lot of opportunity and things don't happen," he said.

As a mayor, Rogers also has a bone to pick with the current Legislature for its enactment of local government funding cuts, which he would like to see restored. He said state leaders are being "disingenuous" when they talk about balancing the budget because they pushed the costs onto local governments, and that's one thing motivating Rogers to seek state office.

"I can't sit here and complain about it and not do anything about it," he said.

State Government Roundup

Niehaus Says No Legislative Response to Yost Probe Coming in Lame Duck

Senate President Tom Niehaus (R-New Richmond) said Tuesday he doesn't foresee any new laws coming in lame duck session in response to Auditor Dave Yost's investigation of data manipulation in Ohio school districts, or the recent performance audit of the Ohio Department of Education.

"My sense is that's more appropriately handled after the first of the year in a new session when there's ample time to debate it," Niehaus said.

Term limits will force the Senate president from office in less than three months, but he says he hasn't lined up any new work and is purposefully avoiding a decision until after the General Assembly adjourns for the year. He said he's been approached by some people and organizations but told them he won't decide until after he's done.

Ohio Health Transformation Efforts Presented at Harvard Summit

Harvard University's 2012 Human Services Summit this past weekend featured discussion of the Kasich administration's health policy initiatives through the Office of Health Transformation.

Director Greg Moody gave a presentation entitled "Person-Centered Services: Ohio's Health and Human Services Mission," which covered the office's work to streamline health and human services administration in state government.

Moody's slide presentation outlines a transition from a "regulative" health system to one that's collaborative, then integrative and finally generative.

The presentation lists a health insurance exchange as a project initiated for 2013, but OHT spokesman Eric Poklar said that's not an indication that the administration has decided to implement an exchange. Gov. John Kasich and Lt. Gov. Mary Taylor have spoken unfavorably of setting up a state-run exchange. Poklar said the presentation just indicates an exchange is "on our radar" because the state will need to interact with a health insurance exchange regardless of whether the state or federal government runs it. For example, Ohio will need to be able to enroll people in Medicaid through the exchange.

States must tell the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by Nov. 16 whether they'll run their own exchange, let the federal government do it or take over only parts of exchange operations under the "partnership" model.

Portage Lakes' Boat Season Extended

State officials are hoping Ohioans take advantage of the longer recreational boating season at Portage Lakes State Park. According to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), several lakes connected to the Portage Lakes chain will not be lowered this year.

Usually, the East Reservoir, West Reservoir, North Reservoir, Turkeyfoot Lake, Mud Lake and Rex Lake are lowered by 15 inches from mid-October to mid-November, giving residents an opportunity to repair docks and seawalls. Starting this fall, that practice will be conducted every other year, leaving more time for boating this year.

Maintaining the normal lake levels during the fall season will benefit the local economy and boost vendors and area businesses that provide goods and services for boaters, according to ODNR. In October 2013, the lake level will be lowered for one month and allowed to refill, as it has in the past.

Portage Lakes State Park consists of eight lakes encompassing 2,034 acres in southern Summit County. There are also additional park facilities including a campground, picnic areas, nature trails, a public swimming beach, a dog park and a dog beach.

Campaign Corner

Romney Releases 'Agricultural Prosperity' Plan

On the campaign trail Tuesday, Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney slightly turned his focus away from economic recovery to discuss his vision for the nation's agricultural prosperity. However, he said the two issues go hand in hand.

According to a statement, Romney wants to ensure success in agriculture while supporting a "vibrant rural America." The former Massachusetts governor believes that the nation's core values thrive in small towns and family farms.

"America's farmers and ranchers play an incredibly important role in our economic prosperity and must be supported," said Romney in a statement. "My Plan for a Stronger Middle Class includes policies that will help the agriculture sector thrive and deliver an economic recovery for rural America."

Romney criticized President Barack Obama for pursuing what he called harmful policies. His campaign listed several of those "harmful policies," including tax increases, onerous regulations and a stalled trade agenda. He said those policies disregarded the concerns and needs of farmers, ranchers and rural communities.

"We already ask our farmers and ranchers to cope with natural disasters," said Romney. "They should not also have to battle a man-made disaster of taxes and regulations from Washington. Our economic recovery must also be a rural recovery, and my plan for a stronger middle class will ensure that our agricultural sector grows and thrives."

Romney listed four goals in his agenda for rural America, which included:

- Implementing effective tax policies to support family farms and strong agribusiness
- Pursuing trade policies that expand upon the success of the agriculture sector, not limit it
- Creating a regulatory environment that is commonsense and cost effective
- Achieving North American Energy Independence by 2020

To read Romney's agricultural plan, visit www.mittromney.com/blog/agricultural-prosperity-mitt-romneys-vision-vibrant-rural-america.

Mandel Reports \$4.5 Million Raised in Third Quarter

Treasurer Josh Mandel's U.S. Senate campaign said Tuesday that the Republican has raised \$4.5 million in the third quarter of 2012, giving him the best fundraising quarter of his campaign.

Mandel has raised more than \$14 million from more than 84,000 donations throughout his campaign.

"I'm honored by the outpouring of grassroots support from individuals who want new leadership in Washington and believe I'm the guy for the job," Mandel said in a statement. "As I travel Ohio speaking with small business owners and blue-collar workers, I sense a growing excitement for change in Washington that will be evident on Election Day."

Endorsements

- The *Columbus Dispatch* endorsed a "no" vote on Issue 1, the question on whether to hold a state constitutional convention.

People in the News

Chicago Police Pension Chief to Lead OP&F

The head of the police retirement system for city of Chicago police will take over the top job at the Ohio Police & Fire Pension Fund (OP&F) when current Executive Director Bill Estabrook retires at year's end, OP&F announced.

John J. Gallagher has been executive director of Policeman's Annuity and Benefit Fund of the City of Chicago since 2004 and worked at the system since 1980, previously serving as comptroller and investment officer.

Gallagher has a bachelor's degree in accounting from Roosevelt University in Chicago and a Master's of Business Administration from Keller Graduate School of Business.

"We are pleased to hire an executive director who has such a wealth of public pension experience and also who possesses an understanding of the value of public safety officers to our communities," said OP&F Board of Trustees Chair Ed Montgomery. "We are confident that Mr. Gallagher will continue the strong leadership and advocacy we have had under Bill Estabrook."

The House adjourned until Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2012 at 9 a.m. (Nonvoting Session)

The Senate adjourned until Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2012 at 10:45 a.m. (Nonvoting Session)