

Riverfronts, Attractions, Convention Centers Target Ohio Capital Budget Bill for Funding

Ohio's biennial capital budget, enacted in each even-numbered year, provides appropriations for the repair, reconstruction and construction of state agencies, colleges, universities, school districts, community projects of local or regional interests.

The Office of Budget and Management reviews submissions made, sends its preliminary capital budget recommendations to the governor. When the final decisions have been made, the governor's recommendations are introduced in the General Assembly as the biennial capital appropriations.

The local projects make up a relatively small portion of the capital spending bill, which includes funding for other large state projects, but usually consumes most of the planning and negotiations among lawmakers. The capital budget for last biennium totaled \$2.62 billion in appropriations. Officials say the preliminary funding target for local projects this cycle at about \$130 million. The following are the top regional hospitality related highlights:

Cincinnati Region: \$4 million was requested for FC Cincinnati stadium proposal, \$2 million for the Cincinnati Museum Center, \$1.25 million for the Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park, and \$1 million for building envelope improvements at the Cincinnati Art Museum.

Cleveland Region: \$5 million was request for the second phase of restoring the Irishtown Bend on the city's riverfront. The work would include stabilizing the bulkheads along the bend and starting work to turn the top of the hillside into a public green space.

Columbus Region: \$5 million was requested for the redevelopment of COSI. That project has a total cost of \$40 million. Additionally, \$2 million was requested as part of a larger project for a 35-story tower where the parking lot of North Market now sits. The Market Tower grand atrium and arcade project is expected to cost \$115 million in total.

Another request comes from the Columbus Regional Airport Authority, which is asking for \$2 million as part of a \$4.85 million air cargo terminal ramp expansion. The Columbus region also asked for \$2 million for park development on former quarry land in Northwest Columbus. The overall cost of the project is \$20 million.

Toledo Region: \$10 million was requested for the renovation of SeaGate Convention Center, including the renovation of existing space and the construction of a new ballroom. \$5 million was requested for the first phase of changes to the Toledo Museum of Art. That project includes the installation of new elevators to make it more accessible, the renovation of the Glass Crafts Building and the creation of an art support building. Other big projects out of Toledo include the Imagination Station Theater Experience, for which the chamber is asking for \$3 million.

Akron Region: \$1.5 million request for the Akron Civic Theater restoration and expansion and \$2.5 million for Hudson's downtown district parking facility. The Akron Civic Theater project is expected to cost a total of \$6.35 million, with the anticipated project cost of the Hudson parking facility at \$5.56 million.

Youngstown Region: \$7 million for the Mahoning Valley Innovation and Commercialization Center.

OHLA Supports Fair Electric Costs for Hotels

OHLA Lobbyist Michael Evans provided testimony on behalf of OHLA before the Ohio House Public Utilities Committee last week in support of H.B. 247 sponsored by Mark Romanchuk (R-Mansfield). OHLA supports H.B. 247 because it contains important protections for our member businesses and helps ensure a competitive electricity market. The legislation creates an environment conducive to continued business investment, economic growth and job creation. OHLA and its members throughout our industry ask for support for this legislation. For more details, see our complete testimony.

U.S. Senator Rob Portman Joins Hoteliers for Trafficking Roundtable

During National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, OHLA's Greater Cleveland Lodging Council hosted U.S. Senator Rob Portman for a roundtable so that the Senator could speak with hoteliers firsthand about human trafficking and his pending legislation. Local Council Chair David Minah served as host at The Tudor Arms DoubleTree hotel, and welcomed representatives from throughout the industry, as well as community partners. Senator Portman, whose Golden Lamb Inn is an OHLA member, reinforced how important the work being done by OHLA and its members is in combating trafficking, and vowed to collaborate with us on other key issues for years to come. OHLA supports the Senator's legislation to make online platforms that promote sex trafficking accountable is an important step that continues to gain supporters from both parties in Congress.