

Responses from Around Ohio to Another Billion Back & New Safety Initiatives

Chambers and Associations React to Another Billion Back

Ohio Chamber of Commerce - “The Chamber thanks Governor Kasich for his strong commitment to Ohio businesses. This relief provides tremendous help to all businesses in this state, small and large, as they continue to power Ohio’s dramatic recovery.”

National Federation of Independent Business(NFIB)/Ohio - Roger Geiger, vice president and executive director - “The additional rebates that were announced earlier today by the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation are more welcomed news to small-business owners, who make up the majority of state-fund employers,” said Roger Geiger, Vice President and Executive Director for NFIB/Ohio. “On behalf of our 25,000 members, NFIB/Ohio applauds the continuing efforts of the BWC to return more dollars to employers that will in-turn help to stimulate Ohio’s rebounding economy through reinvestment in their businesses. Both Governor Kasich and Administrator Buehrer have continued to demonstrate sound fiscal management of the BWC and a determination to make Ohio’s workers’ compensation system more efficient.”

Columbus Minority Business Assistance Center - Jennifer Avery Frost, director - “I think it is a very good idea that the BWC is putting money back into Ohio’s economy, especially small and minority businesses. They can certainly use the liquid capital.”

Council of Smaller Enterprises - Mike O’Donnell, director of workers’ compensation - “This is great news for Ohio small businesses. The rebate is certainly welcome news, but the BWC’s commitment and investment in safety, health and wellness is what will really pay dividends for the state fund and its insured.”

Professional Independent Agents Association of Ohio, Inc. (PIAA) - George W. Haenszel, CAE, chief executive officer - “Business owners are facing challenges from every direction, yet Governor Kasich and the BWC continue to identify ways to help businesses improve themselves and their bottom line. As entrepreneurial business owners, Ohio’s independent insurance agents appreciate the continual leadership exhibited by Governor Kasich in operating state government in an efficient and effective manner and more like a private enterprise,” said George W. Haenszel, CAE, chief executive officer of Professional Independent Agents Association of Ohio, Inc.

Ohio Grocers Association - Nate Filler, president/CEO - "Ohio's grocers and related businesses in the retail grocery industry truly appreciate the efforts from the Kasich Administration to help create a safer environment for our workers."

We again applaud Governor Kasich and Administrator Buehrer on a strong investment strategy that has yielded another positive return for the entire system. These dollars will help grocers invest back into their businesses and into creating a better workplace – a real win-win for Ohio's food industry."

Ohio Restaurant Association(ORA) - ORA President & CEO Geoff Hetrick - "The Ohio Restaurant Association is pleased with the manner in which the BWC has been managed by both its board and administrator, which has resulted in the bureau's ability to provide this significant rebate to our members and other small businesses," said ORA President & CEO Geoff Hetrick. "The BWC understands the value that the restaurant industry brings to Ohio's economy. We look forward to working with the Kasich administration and the BWC on initiatives that lead to continued job growth and stability."

Ohio Township Association - Matt DeTemple, executive director - "Governor Kasich's announcement this morning is good news for townships. Another billion dollars back will reduce costs for townships and help their bottom line. A number of townships have used BWC Safety Grants to purchase much needed equipment. Extending that program for two more years will create more opportunities for townships to enhance the safety of their operations. Finally, we were pleased to hear about the Bureau providing an additional \$1 million for firefighter training. Much of Ohio is protected by small and volunteer companies that can really use the help in getting their firefighters additional training. Governor Kasich and Director Buehrer are to be commended for these initiatives."

County Commissioners Association of Ohio - "Counties appreciate the BWC's sound investment and asset management strategy, resulting in the Administration's recommendation to responsibly return the taxpayer dollars used by counties to pay premiums back to their local jurisdictions. We also commend the BWC for continuing to invest in the safety and wellness of Ohio's workforce."

Lawrence County Chamber of Commerce - Bill Dingus, PhD, executive director - "The progressive advancements of the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation over the past three years has been exceptional. The Another Billion Back rebates are just one more example of BWC working with Ohio employers, including small businesses, to be successful and competitive. These rebates, initiatives and lower rates will help business, help employees and help Ohio moving forward."

Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce - Chamber Vice President Sue Peeples - "The Wooster Area Chamber of Commerce is thrilled at Governor John Kasich's announcement that the State of Ohio will be returning over \$1 billion in premiums to Ohio businesses. Estimates indicate that about 184,000 private companies will receive cash rebates." Chamber Vice President Sue Peeples said, "This economic stimulus will have an impact on the majority of small businesses in our area and she hopes the trickle-down effect will be experienced widely in our community. The Chamber also remains positive that the additional money being allocated to safety programs will be of great benefit to our county's workforce. The Chamber partners with the BWC's Division of Safety & Hygiene to administer the Wooster Area Safety Council that provides a forum to disseminate safety & health information to members."

**Ohio Manufacturers Association Released Statement
Manufacturers Commend Gov. Kasich and Administrator Buehrer on Plan to Rebate \$1B in Premiums and Increase Safety Programming**

Plan provides a one-time rebate of \$1 billion for Ohio employers and public-taxing districts and increases BWC's commitment to safety by up to \$35 million over the next two years

[COLUMBUS]: Today's announcement by Governor Kasich and Bureau of Workers' Compensation CEO/Administrator Steve Buehrer is good news for Ohio's manufacturers.

"Under the leadership of Governor Kasich and Administrator Buehrer, the BWC has been responsive to the economic needs as well as the safety support requirements of employers. Innovative programs, prudent financial management and operational cost-downs are going a long way to make Ohio's workers' compensation system a competitive advantage for Ohio," said OMA president Eric Burkland.

The BWC, in coordination with the Governor's Office of Health Care Transformation, has also begun a process that is intended to lead to improvements in its health care management system. BWC aims to lower cost and improve medical quality through better coordination of care and development of a payment system that creates incentives for best clinical practices. "The BWC is improving on all fronts, and it's a good thing for Ohio employers, employees and Ohioans." said Burkland.

**Ohio Council of Retail Merchants Released Statement
Retailers Applaud Governor Kasich's Second \$1 Billion BWC Rebate to Employers**

(August 13, 2014, Columbus, OH) - Ohio Council of Retail Merchants President and CEO Gordon Gough applauded Governor John Kasich today for returning another \$1 billion to employers through the Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) program, in addition to boosting funding for health and safety programs to protect Ohio workers.

"This is another example of Governor Kasich's sound, responsible leadership that once again shows it does pay to operate your business in Ohio," Gough said. "Merchants across the state can put this dividend to good use by hiring new employees or reinvesting in their business and continuing to move Ohio forward."

Founded in 1922, the Ohio Council of Retail Merchants is Ohio's oldest and largest advocate for the retail industry, representing more than 6,400 retailers across the state. Ohio's retail industry accounts for 18% of Ohio's Gross Domestic Product (\$26.5 billion annually) and directly or indirectly employs 1.5 million people, 1 in 4 Ohio jobs, more than any other industry. Council members include large retailers and department stores, jewelers, tire and automotive stores and convenience stores that serve millions of Ohioans daily.

Safety Councils React to Another Billion Back announcement

Northeast Ohio

Medina Safety Council - Jennifer Gray, Medina County Safety Council Administrator - The New Billion Dollar Back Program is a wonderful program that funds phenomenal programs like Safety Council. The Medina County Safety Council members will benefit from the new program by having access to the most current training and education available to them from the BWC to ensure their company's success while maintaining a safe workplace. The health and wellness initiative is a topic of great concern in today's society. This funding program will help address this concern and lead our members to a healthier and more productive work lifestyle.

Greater Cleveland Safety - Tom Rabe - "This is good news for all of the employers in Ohio. It will help relieve some of the financial burden of employers while encouraging investment toward the safety of their employees"

Ashland Safety Council - Melissa Martin, Membership Services Coordinator - "Once again, the State of Ohio proves its commitment to Ohio Business! The news of this new wave of rebates will surely have a positive economic impact in all our communities! Many of our local businesses will now be able to put these extra funds to work for their business, helping them to grow to the next level! The Ashland Area Safety Council is proud to partner with the BWC to keep our local employees safe while improving the bottom-line."

Tuscarawas Safety Council - Mike Mason - "On behalf of Ohio's economy, we wish to thank Governor Kasich and BWC for once again returning over One Billion dollars to Ohio businesses."

Southeast Ohio

Belmont Safety Council - Jennifer Woollard - "The news of the investment in Ohio's employers with programs and incentives as well as another Billion being given back by Governor Kasich and the BWC is phenomenal. Ohio's employers and workers will benefit greatly and that is important for all of Ohio."

Central Ohio

Columbus City Schools, “We appreciate the Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation’s commitment and reallocation of funds back to employers. Columbus City Schools is pleased to accept the return payment from our premium and plan to use the funds to support our District goals of increasing student achievement, improving our learning environments and building community engagement.”

Southwest Ohio

Greater Hamilton Safety Council - Kim Wentz - “The BWC proposal to once again put money back in the hands of the private sector is another bold step in this administration’s efforts to push growth and job creation in Ohio.”

Highland-Fayette-Clinton (HFC) Safety Council - Dessie Buchanan, Director HFC Safety Council, Membership Director Wilmington-Clinton County Chamber of Commerce - "On behalf of the Highland-Fayette-Clinton Safety Council, we wish to thank Governor Kasich and BWC for this expanded funding. This rebate translates into nearly \$6 million going back to our business community in our tri-county region, which will make a positive and, in many cases, a much-needed impact on each and every one of our participating companies. With this new funding, we’ll also be able to expand our programming to focus on the clear connection between health and wellness, a productive workforce, and a vital local community. The HFC Safety Council is proud to have the opportunity to spearhead this effort in our tri-county region, which will help us help employers and employees live happier, healthier and more productive lives."

Northwest Ohio

Northwest State Community College - Dr. Thomas Stuckey, president - "The connection between health and wellness, a skilled workforce and communities that support local business is vital to the success of Ohio. Northwest State Community College and the Black Swamp Safety Council look forward to being a partner that not only builds skills, but also provides opportunities for employees to have happier, healthier and more productive lives."

West central Ohio

West Central Safety Council, Lima - Deb Katz - “West Central Ohio Safety Council is extremely excited about all the new opportunities on the horizon with additional funding and support for safety councils, safety training, grants, and additional employer rebates. It is great to know there is such support from Governor Kasich and the BWC for the safety concerns, health and wellness of our community and employers.”

Public Employers react to Another Billion Back

Northeast Ohio

City of Massillon - Kathy Catazaro-Perry - Mayor, City of Massillon - "Thank you for the much needed good news! It is a unexpected pleasant surprise. I recommend we utilize the monies to purchase two SUV Explorer type vehicles for our police department fleet to replace two vehicles that have been taken out of service. This will help our city immensely!"

Parma City Schools - Daniel Bowman, Treasurer/CFO - "In the Parma City School District, this funding adds stability to our Worker's Compensation program. This refund makes it possible for us to consider future rate reductions while controlling the rate we pay ourselves. It bolsters our Worker's Compensation reserves as we are 'self-funded' program with the Bureau. In the future we'll also consider applying this funding to our safety programs, which is something we'd like to do more of district-wide."

Southeast Ohio

Washington County - Tim Irvine, Washington County Commissioner - "I am pleased with the decision of the Governor and the BWC to return money once again to both the private and public sector employers. This is great news for all employers in Ohio."

South-Western City Schools - Hugh W. Garside Jr., Treasurer/Chief Fiscal Officer - "Due to the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation sound financial management, I was pleased to receive notification today that the South-Western City School District will be receiving a rebate of approximately \$400,000 from past premium and claim payments the District has made. The funds will be put to good use in furthering the educational opportunities for the more than 20,000 students we serve. We appreciate the Bureau's hard work on our behalf."

City of Delaware - Dean Stelzer, City Finance Director - "With many public entities struggling to provide services for its citizens, the rebate will all the city to provide more and better services to the people of Delaware."

Southwest Ohio

Scioto County - Jim Lintz, Loss Control Manager and Workers' Compensation Administrator Scioto County - "I am pleased with today's news of the decision to return money once again to the public sector. This will help with some of the monetary challenges our county has been facing. The immediate benefit is that this will allow us to opt out of the retrospective rating program and lower our ongoing workers' compensation costs and liabilities. The long term benefit is that it will allow us to make additional investments in the safety and well-being of our employees."

Fayette County Chamber of Commerce - Roger Blackburn, president, Fayette County Chamber of Commerce - "The Fayette County Chamber of Commerce expects this rebate to assist local employers with future expansion and increased employment. Overall, it will also aid in improved workplace safety and reduced on the job injuries. It is a "win-win" situation for the state of Ohio, BWC, employers, and employees."

Northwest Ohio

Northwest State Community College - Dr. Thomas Stuckey, president - "The connection between health and wellness, a skilled workforce and communities that support local business is vital to the success of Ohio. Northwest State Community College and the Black Swamp Safety Council look forward to being a partner that not only builds skills, but also provides opportunities for employees to have happier, healthier and more productive lives."

Washington Local Schools, Toledo - Jeffrey Fouke, treasurer - "Considering school districts in Ohio continue to face budget challenges due to reductions in funding, any unexpected revenue is good news."

Private employers react to Another Billion Back

Northeast Ohio

Performance Elastomers - David Spears, owner - "Thank you for taking the time to visit our facility today. It was very helpful and informative. We will be taking some of the funds from the upcoming refund to start participating in some of the programs that are available to us."

Price Builders & Developers - David Price, owner - "The BWC continues to show it's concerted effort in trying to help small businesses across the state prosper and grow. Giving back a billion dollars to Ohio employers will allow small and minority businesses to continue providing services to their clients. There was a lot of baggage inherited by this Administration but the BWC is working hard to right the ship."

Steere Enterprises Inc. - Sherman Gandee VP-HR - "The announcement today of the BWC rebate Ohio companies will be receiving in October 2014 was outstanding. We have been very fortunate and thankful as an Ohio employer that the BWC has been so proactive in helping Ohio business grow and expand through their rebates, premium discounts, safety grants, and other programs. We truly appreciate the assistance as we strive to succeed against the global competition we face."

Parma City Schools - Daniel Bowman, treasurer/CFO - "In the Parma City School District, this funding adds stability to our worker's compensation program. This refund makes it possible for us to consider future rate reductions while controlling the rate we pay ourselves. It bolsters our worker's compensation reserves as we are 'self-funded' program with the bureau. In the future we'll also consider applying this funding to our safety programs, which is something we'd like to do more of district-wide."

Oberlin College - Kim Wiggerly, Compensation Manager of Board of Trustees of Oberlin College - “Fabulous News. We will use the monies towards the purchase of slip resistance shoes for all dining employees, which are costing approximately \$100,000. We also have contract negotiations coming up for our trade skilled unions and have been talking about getting some additional training so the details are in the fine print when released if they could use some of the safety initiative monies for this they will research.”

Central Ohio

Hirschvogel Incorporated - Witold Salandyk, president/CEO - “We greatly appreciate the services provided to our employees by the Bureau of Workers Compensation and welcome this rebate as a resource to continue improving our safety programs. We look forward to building our partnership with the BWC as we continue to expand our business. “

Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO) - Joe Huston, operations director - “This is great news about the rebate SWACO will receive in October. I would like to Thank BWC on the behalf of SWACO for giving money back to all the different organizations so they can benefit and increase awareness on safety. SWACO has always valued the good working relationship with BWC and looks forward to the future.”

Southeast Ohio

Echoing Hills Village, Inc. - Buddy Busch, president/CEO - “The BWC's announcement to put dollars back in the hands of businesses and non-profit organizations like Echoing Hills Village is another bold step for this administration. This allows for greater reinvestment in important programs like employment initiatives, community integration and employee safety, which impact our finest assets-our workforce and those we serve.”

Rosebud Mining - “Today's announcement is another example that Ohio's economy and employment environment continues to improve under today's leadership. We commend and thank Governor Kasich and the Ohio BWC for their continued efforts.”

United Dairy - Joe Carson, president - “This news is very much appreciated and comes at a time when the fluid milk processing business is having its most difficult time in history. This refund will help secure Ohio jobs and help with training to promote a safe work environment.”

Southwest Ohio

Dayton Minority Business Assistance Center - David Lyttle, Construction Director - “Considering that maintaining positive cash flow is a continuing challenge for all businesses, this is a real plus for every Ohio business. I hope all who are eligible will take time to plan the best use of their refund for reinvestment in the business, additional personnel and increased operating capacity.”

Quaker Chemical - Brian Pelan, environmental safety specialist - "The newly proposed safety program initiatives and refund show that the BWC and the Governor continue to make a positive impact on the commitment to worker safety and job growth/creation here in Ohio"

Bluford Jackson and Sons - Jill Jones, operations manager - "The BWC money coming back to our family owned business will enable us to purchase equipment and make necessary repairs to old equipment still in use. We have a real need for improvements. It is very important to put this money back into small businesses."

Northwest Ohio

Kamco Industries - Dave Rothenberger, EHS manager - "Kamco Industries is pleased with the BWC Billion Back Rebate. This will help in our expansion efforts, new equipment, and create more jobs. Also this will help in increasing our safety culture with our associates and enhance our wellness program."