

Ohio Marine Trades Association
and Government Advantage Group

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

AUGUST 2025



Transforming Ohio's Riverfronts

Governor Mike DeWine along with local leaders have broken ground on three landmark projects in Ripley, Higginsport, and New Richmond that will open up public access to the Ohio River, create vibrant gathering spaces, and strengthen local tourism and business growth. Funded through the Appalachian Community Grant Program's Wonderful Waterfronts Initiative, these developments are part of a \$204 million investment to revitalize riverfront communities across 12 counties.

In Ripley, the Freedom Landing Riverfront Revitalization Project will bring a dramatic 30-foot Freedom Beacon, festival space, an amphitheater, and walkable links from the river to Main Street—along with a new public boat dock for easy water access.

In Higginsport, Slim Sallee Park will be transformed into a riverfront hub with a fishing pier, scenic overlook, pedestrian walkways, event space, and an RV campground—reconnecting residents and visitors with the water's edge.

In New Richmond, the Liberty Landing Redevelopment will feature a new public marina, an ADA-accessible floating dock system, expanded event space, and upgraded streetscapes—turning the village into a walkable, welcoming destination for festivals, recreation, and year-round tourism.

"These investments will make our riverfronts more accessible, more enjoyable, and more vibrant than ever before," said Governor DeWine. "They will improve quality of life, attract visitors, and spark new economic growth."

Celebrating America's 250th with a Journey Through Waterways

Ohio has officially launched the Lake Erie to Ohio River Trail, a new experiential driving route connecting more than 150 sites across the state. This exciting addition is part of the America 250-Ohio "Trails & Tales" initiative, commemorating the nation's 250th birthday in 2026.

Announced at Geneva State Park Marina, the trail celebrates the historic role of Ohio's lakes, rivers, and canals as "highways of hope," vital to the state's growth and culture. Visitors can now explore a curated lineup of museums, historic sites, natural areas, lighthouses, and scenic overlooks from Lake Erie to the Ohio River.

The stops are organized into seven categories: boat rides and ferries; Lake Erie lighthouses; Lake Erie museums and historic sites; canal museums, locks and natural areas; Ohio River museums and historic sites; natural areas and overlooks; and aquatic science and research sites.

Ohio Tourism Powers Communities and Opportunity Statewide

In 2024, Ohio's tourism industry continued to grow, attracting nearly 242 million visits—3.5 million more than 2023—with 48.5 million overnight stays. Visitor activity generated \$57 billion in economic impact, \$4.7 billion in state and local tax revenues, and supported over 443,000 jobs statewide. Officials, including Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jim Tressel, and state tourism leaders, highlighted tourism's role in boosting local economies, showcasing Ohio's attractions, and fostering repeat visits—93% of recent visitors said they're likely to return within a year.



Investment to expand Ohio workforce

Governor Mike DeWine announced a \$7.1 million investment to expand career planning and experiential learning in Ohio schools through new Career Pathway Support Networks. The two-year initiative will provide advising, mentoring, and career-technical education to prepare students for high-demand jobs. Funding will be distributed across the seven JobsOhio regions—\$3.1 million in FY26 and \$4 million in FY27. Each regional network will be guided by a steering committee focused on grades 7-10, mentoring, and community partnerships. The effort builds on existing momentum, with more than 141,000 students already engaged in career-technical education and aims to close participation gaps in districts with low enrollment. LaRose ran with the endorsement of Congressman Mike Turner and was the only candidate who had previously won a statewide election. It was Moreno that came out on top and will face off against Senator Brown in November in what is expected to be one of the most closely watched races in the country.