

## Issue 1 for Jobs campaign focuses effort on Ohio Third Frontier voter education

Ohio's defining moment is now. It's your choice: more post-Rust Belt syndrome or a new age as an international technology center.

Voters will decide on May 4 in the primary election, and even now during the early voting period.

Ohio State University President E. Gordon Gee said the state faces this defining moment, and it will characterize Ohio for the next 10 to 15 years.

At the heart of Ohio's economic crossroads is Issue 1 for Jobs, the \$700 million ballot issue, also known as the Ohio Third Frontier, that would refuel an economic engine for Ohio's technology future.

So far, the Ohio Third Frontier, an investment in technology, innovation and entrepreneurship passed by voters in 2005, has created or attracted 637 companies, the expansion of existing companies, and almost 55,000 new jobs for Ohioans.

Speaking at an Issue 1 for Jobs rally at TechColumbus on April 12, Gee said, "Without this, we won't have any economic resurgences. I believe Ohio is not the Rust Belt, but the Belt of Ideas and Opportunities. We can set the standard.

"We have a defining moment for young people, for jobs, for intellectual growth," he said. "We can be different from other parts of the country. We can create an investment in ourselves, a new way to lead the country."

Gee said the time is now, because Issue 1 for Jobs has "bipartisanship support in a day bipartisanship doesn't exist."

Campaign co-chairmen Republican Jo Ann Davidson and Democrat David Wilhelm, and entrepreneur Ray Shealy also spoke to more than 100 people at the rally. The campaign has the support of more than 150 organizations, including all major

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- E. Gordon Gee, OSU president



**"We still have many core assets, but we need to change from the status quo and think about our future."**

- Ray Shealy, high-tech entrepreneur



**"This is not a slam dunk. ... only 15 to 20 percent of Ohio voters can express an opinion about Issue 1."**

- David Wilhelm, campaign co-chairman



**"Nearly 350,000 early voting requests have been made in Franklin and Cuyahoga counties."**

- Jo Ann Davidson, campaign co-chairwoman



Ohio newspapers, universities, businesses, technology-based economic development organizations and chambers of commerce.

Now is the time to mobilize support for Issue 1 for Jobs, said Ted Ford, the event's emcee and TechColumbus' CEO and president. "The Third Frontier is the most successful economic development program in the state's history.

Central Ohio is now home to world-class centers of excellence, led by the Ohio Third Frontier, OSU, Battelle and others, Ford said.

"We have to continue the Third Frontier to continue to progress," Ford said.

Shealy shared his Ohio Third Frontier

success story of HTP Inc., a health-care software company, he helmed. Founded in 1998, HTP nearly tripled its revenues and doubled its employees to 85 before being sold to RelayHealth, a McKesson Co., the largest health-care focused company in the world.

HTP became the first recipient of funding through the Innovation Ohio Loan Fund, a program made possible through the Ohio Third Frontier to assist existing Ohio companies in developing next generation products based on intellectual property and innovation.

HTP received \$2.5 million in loans from this Ohio Third Frontier-supported program, which Shealy said were paid off by the time the company was sold.

HTP's success pays dividends for Central Ohio by putting it on the national radar as a leader in health-care information technology and electronic medical records, he said.

Issue 1 for Jobs is "so vital to state's future success," Shealy said. "Ohio track record is a little shaky at the moment, but imagine Ohio leading the world in technology.

"These days in Ohio we tend to be very humble about what we've accomplished," Shealy said, "but (Ohio offers) great infrastructure, universities and the Midwestern work ethic.

"It's just a matter of unlocking assets, combining with leadership and the Third Frontier to make up for job losses since manufacturing moved to India and China," he said.

"HTP is just one example. There are a number if other companies down at TechColumbus that will be able to gain

even more momentum (with Issue 1 passage)," he said.

Wilhelm, who directed President Clinton's successful candidacy in 1992 and was the youngest chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said, "This is not a slam dunk. ... only 15 to 20 percent of Ohio voters can express an opinion about Issue 1."

That's why it's critical to the campaign to educate voters now and "bank early votes."

"We're in the middle of Election Month," Wilhelm said. "It's no longer Election Day."

Added Davidson, "Nearly 350,000 early voting requests have been made in Franklin and Cuyahoga counties."

Wilhelm said Ohio's recent casino issue would have lost if not for early, banked votes.

Wilhelm compared Issue 1 for Jobs, the Ohio Third Frontier to hockey great Wayne Gretzky. Asked why he was better than other players, Gretzky said, "I don't go where the puck was. I don't go where the puck is. I go where the puck is going to be."

Added Wilhelm, "That's what the Ohio Third Frontier does, it goes where Ohio's economy is going to be."

### GET Connected

**Ted Ford**  
President & CEO  
tford@techcolumbus.org  
614-340-3353

**Tim Haynes**  
Vice President, Member Services and Marketing  
thaynes@techcolumbus.org  
614-340-1698

**Will Indest**  
Vice President of Venture Development  
windest@techcolumbus.org  
614-487-3700

**Michelle Murcia**  
Vice President, Finance & Administration and CFO  
mmurcia@techcolumbus.org  
614-675-3714

**Leslyn Wheelless**  
Director, Membership Sales  
lwheelless@techcolumbus.org  
614-340-1688

1275 Kinnear Rd. Columbus, Ohio 43212  
614.487.3700 • [www.techcolumbus.org](http://www.techcolumbus.org)

