

Shawnee State University

Digital Commons @ Shawnee State University

Speeches

Ohio Speaker Vern Riffe Collection

1-22-1981

Keynote Speech for 53rd Annual Convention, January 22, 1981

Vern Riffe

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/vern_riffe_speeches



Part of the [Public History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Riffe, Vern, "Keynote Speech for 53rd Annual Convention, January 22, 1981" (1981). *Speeches*. 173.
https://digitalcommons.shawnee.edu/vern_riffe_speeches/173

This Speech is brought to you for free and open access by the Ohio Speaker Vern Riffe Collection at Digital Commons @ Shawnee State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Speeches by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Shawnee State University. For more information, please contact svarney@shawnee.edu.

Thur. Jan 22, 1981
10:15 A.M.
Cpls-Sheraton

KEYNOTE SPEECH FOR THE 53RD ANNUAL CONVENTION OF
THE OHIO ASSOCIATION OF TOWNSHIP TRUSTEES AND CLERKS

PRESIDENT BILL BAUER, OFFICERS AND GUESTS. I CONSIDER IT A
GREAT PRIVILEGE TO SPEAK TO THIS 53RD ANNUAL CONVENTION OF OHIO
TOWNSHIP CLERKS AND TRUSTEES.

THE FINE PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP YOUR MEMBERSHIP, APPROACHING TWO
THOUSAND IN NUMBERS, ARE TRULY THE BACK BONE OF AMERICAN LOCAL,
DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. YOU ARE THE PUBLIC OFFICIALS WHO PUT INTO
ACTION THOSE MAGNIFICANT PRINCIPLES OF OUR CONSTITUTION.

MANY OF YOU WHO KNOW ME ARE AWARE OF THE GREAT RESPECT AND
APPRECIATION THAT I HAVE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT; ESPECIALLY THE TOWNSHIP
OFFICIALS. MANY OF YOU KNOW THAT MY FATHER WAS MAYOR OF NEW BOSTON
FOR MANY YEARS. FROM PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, I KNOW ABOUT THE MULTITUDE
OF PROBLEMS THAT YOU DEAL WITH AT THE TOWNSHIP AND SMALL CITY LEVEL.
I WATCHED MY DAD PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TO OUR HOME TOWN AND I KNOW ABOUT
THE HARD WORK, SELF-SACRIFICE AND STRAIN THAT MOST OF YOU EXPERIENCE.

(I WOULD LIKE TO . . .)

I WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS WITH YOU TODAY TWO SUBJECTS. FIRST I WILL BE PROUD TO REVIEW THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE 113TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT ENDED ON DECEMBER 31ST. THEN I WILL OFFER FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION MY BELIEFS ABOUT WHAT WE ARE FACING IN THE 114TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT HAS JUST BEGUN.

OF NECESSITY, I WILL HIT ONLY THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 113TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

A BUDGET-APPROPRIATIONS ACT WAS PASSED THAT PROVIDED ¹⁸ \$17.5 BILLION FOR OHIO'S GOVERNMENTAL NEEDS. LATER WHEN THE NATIONAL AND STATE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS DICTATED, ADDITIONAL LEGISLATIVE ACTION WAS TAKEN IN ORDER TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL REVENUE FOR A SIX-MONTHS TEMPORARY PERIOD IN ORDER TO PARTIALLY COVER AN EXPECTED SHORTFALL OF NEARLY \$500-MILLION. ALSO, EXPENDITURE CUTBACKS AMOUNTING TO ~~THE~~ MORE THAN ^{311.} \$100-MILLION ARE BEING MADE ^{IN THE BIENNIAL.} THE APPROPRIATIONS BY THE 113TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY PROVIDED AN INCREASE FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION OF \$786-MILLION. THAT'S \$146-MILLION IN BASIC AID ALONE.

PROPERTY TAX - AN ADDITIONAL 2.5 PERCENT TO THE PRESENT 10 PERCENT ROLLBACK IN PROPERTY TAX RELIEF TO HOME OWNERS WAS GRANTED.

(ENERGY CREDITS PROGRAM, . . .)

ENERGY CREDITS PROGRAM - SENIOR CITIZENS WERE GIVEN ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE IN DOLLARS FOR THEIR UTILITY BILLS.

MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY - REAL PROPERTY VALUE CEILINGS ON MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY HAVE BEEN LIFTED.

MINORITIES - ONE AND A HALF MILLION DOLLARS WAS APPROPRIATED TO THE MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TO PROMOTE TRADE ORGANIZATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICES.

GOVERNMENT - TWO PERCENT OF ALL AGENCY APPROPRIATIONS IS BEING HELD BY THE OFFICE OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT AS AN ATTEMPT TO CUT UNNECESSARY EXPENDITURES.

STATE AGENCIES ARE REQUIRED TO PREPARE FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENTS FOR EVERY NEW RULE GENERATED TO EXPOSE ANY HIDDEN COSTS.

AGRICULTURE - A BILL SPONSORED BY REPRESENTATIVE DALE LOCKER PROHIBITS GRAIN DELAYED PRICE AGREEMENTS. IT WILL BECOME EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 1981.

EDUCATION - BESIDES MUCH ADDITIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR SCHOOLS, THE 113TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY PASSED A LAW THAT HAS PUT SCHOOL DISTRICTS ON THE SAME FISCAL YEAR AS THE STATE. WE PASSED A BILL THAT WOULD HAVE PROVIDED

A BETTER SYSTEM FOR REPORTING, HANDLING AND PREVENTING OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND CRIMES. HOWEVER, THAT BILL WAS VETOED BY THE GOVERNOR.

ENERGY - AN ALCOHOL FUELS ADVISORY COUNCIL WAS ESTABLISHED. IT WILL STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION, DISTRIBUTION AND USE OF ALCOHOL FUELS IN OHIO.

OUR STATE IS ONE OF THE LEADING PRODUCERS OF BITUMINOUS COAL AND BECAUSE COAL IS THE STATE'S PRIMARY SOURCE OF FUEL FOR ELECTRICAL POWER GENERATION. WE WROTE A LAW THAT REQUIRED ALL STATE FACILITIES WHICH USE COAL TO PURCHASE OHIO COAL AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES - LEGISLATION WAS PASSED THAT SHOULD HELP ENSURE PROPER TREATMENT AND RECLAMATION OF INACTIVE OR ABANDONED HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES.

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY AND REORGANIZATION - A STATE FORMS MANAGEMENT CENTER WAS ESTABLISHED TO CUT DOWN ON EXCESSIVE OR DUPLICATE PAPERWORK REQUIRED OF BUSINESSES BY STATE AGENCIES. A RECENT SURVEY INDICATES THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING GOVERNMENT CAN DO TO HELP BUSINESS IS TO CUT DOWN REGULATORY PAPERWORK.

(ANOTHER NEW ACT . . .)

ANOTHER NEW ACT SPLITS THE DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL RETARDATION INTO TWO SEPARATE DEPARTMENTS. WE BELIEVE THAT GREATER EFFICIENCY WILL BE ACHIEVED IN THE MENTAL HEALTH AND MENTAL RETARDATION AREA BY THIS CHANGE.

HEALTH - A NEW FORMULA FOR MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT OF NURSING HOMES WAS ESTABLISHED. THIS WAS DONE TO PREVENT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST MEDICAID PATIENTS BY NURSING HOMES.

JUSTICE - A NEW LAW WAS PASSED THAT REQUIRES COURTS TO CONSIDER THE IMPACT OF A FELONY UPON THE VICTIM IN DETERMINING THE SENTENCE FOR A CONVICTED DEFENDANT. ALSO, LEGISLATION WAS PASSED THAT WILL ALLOW JUVENILES WHO COMMIT VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST THE ELDERLY TO BE TRIED AS ADULTS.

PUBLIC SAFETY - NEW LEGISLATION THAT INCREASED THE PENALTY FOR CONDUCTING ANIMAL FIGHTS WAS COMPLETED. ANOTHER NEW LAW PERMITS STATE UNIVERSITY POLICE OFFICERS TO PURSUE AND ARREST LAWBREAKERS OUTSIDE UNIVERSITY PROPERTY.

(UTILITIES . . .)

UTILITIES - DURING THE PAST YEAR THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TOOK A NUMBER OF ACTIONS TO HOLD DOWN UTILITY BILL INCREASES. REPRESENTATIVE RONALD JAMES SPONSORED LEGISLATION THAT ELIMINATES AUTOMATIC PASS THROUGH OF FUEL COSTS TO CUSTOMERS BY OHIO'S MAJOR ELECTRIC UTILITIES THROUGH THE FUEL ADJUSTMENT CLAUSES IN OTHER LAWS.

THESE ARE JUST THE HIGHLIGHTS OF A VERY PRODUCTIVE TWO-YEAR SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. WE ACCOMPLISHED MUCH. HOWEVER, WE KNOW THAT NEW PROBLEMS ARISE AND THERE IS STILL MUCH TO BE DONE.

WE HAVE ALREADY STARTED ON TODAY'S AND TOMORROW'S PROBLEMS WITH THE NEW 114TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

IN BRIEF, I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU MY THOUGHTS AS TO WHAT LIES AHEAD FOR THIS NEW SESSION.

FIRST AND FOREMOST IS THE BUDGET. REPRESENTATIVE MYRL SHOEMAKER WILL AGAIN CHAIR THE HOUSE FINANCE-APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE. MYRL IS KNOWN TO MOST OF YOU. HE IS AN HONORARY MEMBER OF THIS ORGANIZATION. HE IS THE ONE MAN IN THE ENTIRE STATE, IN MY OPINION, THAT HAS THE BACKGROUND, EXPERIENCE AND STAMINA TO PROVIDE THE LEADERSHIP FOR THE HOUSE COMMITTEE

(THAT WILL BE WORKING . . .)

THAT WILL BE WORKING WITH SOME OF THE MOST SEVERE PROBLEMS WE HAVE EVER FACED.

MR. SHOEMAKER AND HIS COMMITTEE HAVE ALREADY STARTED LOOKING AT THE STATE'S ECONOMIC SITUATION, THE PROJECTED REVENUES FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS AND THE EXPECTED NECESSARY SPENDING LEVELS UP TO JULY OF 1983. YOU MAY BE SURE THAT WE WILL INSIST THAT ONLY THOSE ESSENTIAL STATE SERVICES BE FUNDED AND THAT WE WILL PREVENT WASTE AND UNNECESSARY SPENDING OF YOUR TAX DOLLARS.

PERSONALLY, I INTEND TO BE DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE BUDGET MAKING PROCESS. I WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH THE SENATE LEADERSHIP, THE GOVERNOR, STATE AGENCIES AND OF COURSE OUR HOUSE FINANCE-APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE.

A MONEY ISSUE THAT DIRECTLY EFFECTS YOUR WORK IS THE POSSIBILITY OF CUTTING STATE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND. SUCH A PROPOSAL HAS BEEN VOICED BY THE STATE BUDGET DIRECTOR. HE INDICATED THAT THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION MAY TAKE SUCH ACTION EFFECTIVE NEXT JUNE 30. I HAVE CALLED FOR RESTRAINT IN SUCH TALK PUBLICALLY. I INSIST THAT STATE OFFICIALS HANDLE THE DETAILS OF THE STATE'S CURRENT FISCAL CRISES WITH QUIET,

(PROFESSIONAL CALM.. .)

PROFESSIONAL CALM. NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR STATE OFFICIALS TO PUSH THE PANIC BUTTON. WITH THE POSSIBILITY THAT LOCAL DOLLARS FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WILL BE CURTAILED, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ARE NATURALLY SHOCKED AT THE CALL TO CUT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUND.

THE BUDGET, THE ECONOMY AND RELATED MATTERS ARE PRESENTING TO ALL OF US REAL CHALLENGES. WE WILL, I KNOW, MEET THEM SQUARELY AND WE WILL FIND ANSWERS.

HERE I WOULD LIKE TO PASS ALONG A COMPLIMENT TO YOU IN TOWNSHIP GOVERNANCE. I NOTE THAT A NEW SURVEY BY THE ARTHUR ANDERSEN COMPANY INDICATES THAT 80 PERCENT OF THE CITIZENS POLLED BELIEVE THAT THE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT HAVE DONE A FAIR TO GOOD JOB OF FOSTERING A HEALTHY BUSINESS CLIMATE. I THINK THAT SPEAKS WELL FOR ALL OF US.

OTHER MAJOR AREAS OF CONCERN FOR THE NEW GENERAL ASSEMBLY ARE:

EDUCATION - WE WILL BE LOOKING AT WAYS TO PROVIDE NECESSARY STATE FUNDS TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND TO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES. WE WILL BE CONCERNED WITH MAINTAINING QUALITY IN OUR SCHOOLS AND IN FOSTERING TIGHTER FISCAL MANAGEMENT.

(HIGHWAYS . . .)

HIGHWAYS - WE WILL BE FACED WITH THE PROBLEMS OF HIGHWAY AND BRIDGE REPAIR. THE STATE'S NEEDS IN THESE AREAS ARE TO THE POINT THAT HEAVY ATTENTION MUST BE PAID TO THEM. THAT WE INTEND TO DO.

DEATH PENALTY LEGISLATION - BILLS ARE ALREADY INTRODUCED THAT CALL FOR A DEATH PENALTY FOR CERTAIN CRIMES IN OHIO. WE WILL BE STUDYING THAT QUESTION VERY CAREFULLY IN THE MONTHS AHEAD.

PRODUCT LIABILITY - THE ISSUE OF PRODUCT LIABILITY LAW IS WITH US AND WILL BE DEALT WITH.

ENERGY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION - WE WILL CONTINUE OUR STUDIES OF ALL PHASES OF ENERGY RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION. THERE IS MUCH MORE TO BE DONE IN THIS AREA AND MANY OF OUR MEMBERS INTEND TO BE WORKING ON THESE PROBLEMS.

FAIR UTILITY RATES - YOU MAY BE ASSURED THAT THE HOUSE WILL KEEP A STRONG EYE ON PUBLIC UTILITY RATES AND WILL BE SEEKING ADDITIONAL WAYS THAT WE CAN PROTECT THE PUBLIC, ESPECIALLY THE POOR AND AGED FROM EXCESSIVE COSTS FOR THEIR BASIC HOME UTILITIES.

(JOB OPPORTUNITIES . . .)

JOB OPPORTUNITIES - UNEMPLOYMENT IN OHIO IS PAINFULLY HIGH. AT LEAST 32 OF OUR COUNTIES HAVE DOUBLE DIGIT UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES. MY HOME COUNTY, SCIOTO HAD A RATE OF 17.4 PERCENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT LAST NOVEMBER. WE LOST SOME INDUSTRIAL JOBS BY PLANT CLOSINGS. FORTY-TWO OF OUR COUNTIES HAD UNEMPLOYMENT RATES OF 10 PERCENT OR MORE IN THE LAST THREE MONTHS.

WE WILL BE WORKING HARD IN THE LEGISLATURE TO DO EVERYTHING WE CAN TO ENHANCE JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN OHIO AND TO EASE THE PAINFUL BURDENS OF UNEMPLOYMENT FOR SO MANY OF OUR CITIZENS.

IN OUR BRIEF TIME TODAY, I HAVE BEEN ABLE ONLY TO GIVE YOU THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 113TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE MAJOR CONCERNS THAT I SEE FOR THE NEW 114TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THANK YOU FOR HAVING ME HERE. I CONSIDER IT AN HONOR TO BE WITH YOU - THE FRONT LINE SOLDIERS - THE PEOPLE WHO FACE THE DOWN TO EARTH, EVERY DAY PROBLEMS OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT AT THE TOWNSHIP AND LOCAL LEVEL.

MAY ALL OF YOU HAVE A HAPPY AND PRODUCTIVE NEW YEAR IN 1981.