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### Highlights of the '81 Session of the 114th G.A., December 8, 1981

Vern Riffe

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ANNUAL MEETING COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' ASSN. OF OHIO

10 A.M. TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1981

HYATT REGENCY, COLUMBUS

REMARKS BY HOUSE SPEAKER VERN RIFFE

OPENING

GREETINGS AGAIN.

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOUR ASSOCIATION ON ITS' 101'ST  
BIRTHDAY. THIS IS THE OLDEST ASSOCIATION OF ITS KIND IN  
THE NATION.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FIRST YEAR OF THE 114TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THE BUDGET BILL (AMENDED SUB. H.B. 694). THE NEW BUDGET  
BILL APPROPRIATES MORE THAN \$13.6 BILLION FOR THE MANY STATE  
SERVICES. NECESSARY INCREASES FOR MENTAL HEALTH, MENTAL  
RETARDATION, WELFARE, EDUCATION AND OTHER SERVICES WERE GIVEN.

OHIO'S PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS WILL RECEIVE A TOTAL IN  
STATE MONEY OF MORE THAN \$4.6 BILLION DURING THE NEXT 19  
MONTHS. THAT'S 22 PERCENT MORE THAN DURING THE PREVIOUS TWO-YEAR

STATE BUDGET PERIOD OR IN DOLLARS, IT MEANS THAT SCHOOLS WILL GET \$750 MILLION DOLLARS MORE IN THE NEW BUDGET PERIOD THAN THEY RECEIVED IN THE LAST BUDGET PERIOD.

NEW TAXES

THE BILL INCREASES STATE COLLECTED TAXES BY \$1.6 BILLION.

NEW TAXES INCLUDE AN INCREASE IN GENERAL SALES TAX, FROM 4 TO 5 PERCENT, ADDING SALES TAX TO CERTAIN SERVICES, INCREASING VENDOR'S LICENSE FEES, INCREASING TAXES FOR INSURANCE COMPANIES, TAXING SOFT DRINK SYRUP, ADDITIONAL CIGARETTE TAX AND AN INCREASE IN TAXES FOR UTILITY COMPANIES.

ALSO, THE NEW BUDGET BILL PROVIDES FOR AN ADDITIONAL TAX INCREASE NEXT YEAR ONLY IF STATE REVENUE FALLS BELOW A CERTAIN DANGER LEVEL.

TAXES REPEALED THIS YEAR

WE REPEALED THE SO CALLED "CASUAL SALES TAX." (H.B. 671).

THIS LAW CHARGED TAX ON USED CARS AND TRUCKS BASED ON THE BLUE BOOK VALUATION. WE FOUND THAT IT DIDN'T WORK TOO WELL SO WE ELIMINATED THE BLUE BOOK FEATURE AND HAVE PROVIDED FUNDS IN THE NEW BUDGET TO REIMBURSE THOSE WHO PAID THE BLUE BOOK BASED TAX.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE ACTION THIS YEAR

DURING 1981 THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS ACTED TO FIND MONEY FOR BADLY NEEDED HIGHWAY, ROAD AND BRIDGE REPAIR. (H.B. 102). WE'VE PASSED LEGISLATION THAT WILL MODESTLY INCREASE GASOLINE TAXES FOR HIGHWAY WORK. THE HOUSE TASK FORCE ON BRIDGES IS VERY BUSY LOOKING AT BRIDGES, MEETING WITH YOUR ENGINEERS, TALKING TO WASHINGTON AND TRYING TO FIND FUNDS FOR BADLY NEEDED BRIDGE REPAIR. IT IS A GRIM PICTURE BUT WE WILL SOLVE THE PROBLEM.

ASSISTANCE FOR COUNTIES

AMENDED H.B. 373, SPONSORED BY REPRESENTATIVE BARNEY QUILTER WILL BECOME LAW ON JANUARY 29, 1982. THIS NEW LAW WILL PERMIT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO LEVY A SALES TAX AND USE TAX AT THE RATE OF ONE QUARTER PERCENT; THREE QUARTERS PERCENT OR ONE PERCENT OF PRICE. THE BILL WOULD ENTITLE VENDORS COLLECTING A COUNTY OR A TRANSIT AUTHORITY SALES AND USE TAX TO RECEIVE AN ADDITIONAL CREDIT OF ONE EIGHTH PERCENT.

ALSO, THE BILL WILL REQUIRE ANY REFERENDUM ON THE REPEAL OF AN INCREASE IN THE RATE OF A COUNTY SALES AND USE TAX ADOPTED AS AN EMERGENCY MEASURE TO BE VOTED ON AS A SEPARATE QUESTION FROM THE REPEAL OF THE TAX IN EFFECT PRIOR TO THE INCREASE.

THE BILL WILL MEAN ADDITIONAL SIGNIFICANT REVENUE FOR COUNTY OPERATIONAL BUDGETS.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

A CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS BILL (H.B. 552) HAS BEEN SIGNED INTO LAW BY THE GOVERNOR. IT PROVIDES AUTHORITY FOR THE REPAIR, RENOVATION, AND NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A VARIETY OF PROJECTS ACROSS THE STATE. THE BILL REQUIRES THAT BONDING AUTHORITY UNDER THE CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITS BE STRICTLY ADHERED TO. THAT IS, THAT THE MONEY MUST BE AVAILABLE BEFORE PROJECTS MAY START. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT WORK MAY BEGIN ON THESE MANY VITAL PROJECTS AND THAT OUR ECONOMY WILL BE ASSISTED BY THE ACTIVITY.

PRISON CONSTRUCTION

THE HOUSE PASSED AND SENT TO THE SENATE A PRISON CONSTRUCTION BILL (H.B. 530). HUNDREDS OF HOURS OF HEARINGS AND WORK WENT INTO THE BILL. THE SENATE MADE SEVERAL CHANGES IN THE

IN THE HOUSE VERSION BEFORE PASSING IT. A CONFERENCE COMMITTEE TRIED VERY HARD TO GET A COMPROMISE BILL BEFORE THE RECESS. IT WAS NOT ABLE TO AGREE. THIS BILL WILL BE ON THE TOP OF OUR LIST WHEN WE RECONVENE IN JANUARY.

OVERHAUL IN JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

A NEW LAW, ORIGINATING IN THE HOUSE, WILL MAKE MANY CHANGES IN OUR JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM. (H.B. 440). WE WANTED TO FIND BETTER WAYS TO DEAL WITH YOUTHFUL OFFENDERS. JUVENILE JUDGES WILL NOW HAVE MORE TO SAY ABOUT THE ADMINISTRATION OF SENTENCES FOR JUVENILES. MANY CHANGES HAVE BEEN MADE IN THE OLD OHIO YOUTH COMMISSION. WE BELIEVE THAT THE NEW APPROACH WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE ON REDUCING JUVENILE CRIME.

OTHER BILLS OF IMPORTANCE TO COUNTY GOVERNMENT

H.B. 230 (ON THE GOVERNOR'S DESK FOR SIGNATURE) PERMITS INTEREST EARNED IN A PUBLIC DEPOSIT BY A COUNTY TREASURER TO

BE CREDITED TO THE COUNTY GENERAL FUND. IT RELIEVES OFFICIALS RESPONSIBLE FOR INVESTING PUBLIC MONEYS FROM ANY LIABILITY FOR A LOSS RESULTING FROM AN INVESTMENT RISK OR FROM A SUBORDINATE'S ACTION UNLESS THE OFFICIAL KNEW OF THE ACTION AND NEGLECTED HIS/HER DUTIES. THE BILL CHANGES THE COUNTY'S INVESTING AUTHORITY FROM THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO THE COUNTY TREASURER.

H.B. 84 WOULD ESTABLISH A FINANCIAL AND PLANNING COMMISSION AND PROCEDURES FOR THOSE COUNTIES AND TOWNSHIPS IN WHICH A FINANCIAL EMERGENCY IS DETERMINED TO EXIST. (IN THE SENATE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE).

H.B. 91 WOULD RECOGNIZE THE VALIDITY OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACTS BETWEEN PUBLIC EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATIONS. (IN SENATE AGRICULTURE, COMMERCE AND LABOR COMMITTEE)