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Highlights of the '81 Session of the 114th G.A., November 30, 1981

Vern Riffe

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INTER-OFFICE COMMUNICATION

Wed Nov 25th

TO Mr. Speaker DATE _____

FROM: Don Roberts

SUBJECT: Informationoon Van Wert Rotary speech

Event: Luncheon talk to Van Wert Rotary Club

Date: Monday, November 30, 1981

Time: 11:30 lincheon

Location: Best Western Motel, North Washington St. Van Wert

Note: Notes attached include the new school money for the Van Wert City and other districts in Van Wert County, in case they ask.

*CONTACT PERSON: Dr. Tom Miller. (419) 238-5923
HE WILL MEET YOU AT THE AIR PORT*

REMARKS BY OHIO HOUSE SPEAKER VERN RIFFE
TO THE
VAN WERT OHIO ROTARY CLUB
BEST WESTERN MOTEL, NORTH WASHINGTON STREET
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1981
11:30 A.M.

CLUB PRESIDENT MOE MILLER, DR. TOM MILLER, MEMBERS AND GUEST,
THANK YOU FOR ASKING ME TO BE WITH YOU TODAY.

I UNDERSTAND THAT YOU HAVE SOME SPECIAL GUESTS ALSO TODAY---
FRANK KADUK, GEORGE CRUMMEY, STEVE KIESTER AND OTHERS.

IT'S GOOD TO BE WITH EACH OF YOU.

ROTARY IS AN ORGANIZATION THAT DRAWS IT'S MEMBERSHIP FROM
MANY WALKS OF LIFE. I AM FULLY AWARE OF THE SEVERAL FINE COMMUNITY
PROJECTS THAT ARE ACCOMPLISHED BY YOUR CLUBS. YOU ARE AN INTEGRAL
PART OF AMERICAN SOCIETY.

BECAUSE YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS MADE UP OF PEOPLE FROM A VARIETY
OF BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONAL PURSUITS I THOUGHT THAT EACH OF YOU
WOULD BE INTERESTED IN HEARING ABOUT WHAT YOUR GENERAL ASSEMBLY HAS

BEEN DOING IN COLUMBUS AND MORE ESPECIALLY MORE ABOUT WHAT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HAS BEEN WORKING ON.

THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1981 SESSION OF THE 114TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
THE BUDGET (H.B. 694)

FIRST LET ME SAY THIS. 1981 HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT YEARS THAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED IN MY 23 YEARS IN THE HOUSE.

THE REASONS ARE OBVIOUS. OHIO HAS A HIGH RATE OF UNEMPLOYMENT. THE CURRENT AVERAGE IS 10 PERCENT WITH SOME COUNTIES HAVING HAD AS HIGH AS 17 PERCENT. THIS UNEMPLOYMENT HAS DRAWN DOWN HEAVILY ON STATE UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION FUNDS. IN FACT WE HAD TO BORROW \$600 MILLION FROM THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION.

ANOTHER REASON FOR A DIFFICULT YEAR IS INFLATION. INFLATION IS RAMPANT. IT HAS CUT DEEPLY INTO STATE DOLLARS THAT PROVIDE SERVICES TO OUR PEOPLE.

STILL ANOTHER REASON FOR DIFFICULTY THIS PAST YEAR, ESPECIALLY IN PREPARING THE STATE TWO-YEAR BUDGET, IS THE HEAVY CUTBACK IN

FEDERAL FUNDS. PREVIOUSLY OHIO HAD A STATE BUDGET THAT WAS ABOUT
25 PERCENT FEDERAL DOLLARS: REVENUE SHARING, GRANTS AND THE LIKE.
THE ONLY THING THAT WE ARE REALLY CERTAIN ABOUT NOW IS THAT THE
FEDERAL DOLLARS FOR OHIO WILL BE FAR FEWER THAN THEY HAVE BEEN IN
THE PAST. MOST PERMANENT FEDERAL BUDGET DECISIONS HAVE NOT BEEN
MADE BY CONGRESS.

BECAUSE OF THE STATE'S CRITICAL ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, INFLATION
AND UNCERTAINTY IN FEDERAL FUNDING WE WERE FORCED TO MOVE SLOWLY IN
PUTTING TOGETHER THE TWO-YEAR BUDGET. IT NORMALLY WOULD HAVE
BEEN IN PLACE LAST SUMMER.

WE OPERATED ON INTERIM BUDGETS, WITH REDUCED SPENDING LEVELS
UNTIL LAST WEEK WHEN WE PASSED A PERMANENT BUDGET. I'M SURE YOU'VE
ALL READ ABOUT IT.

OUR MAJOR CONCERNS WERE MAINTAINING PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES
AT QUALITY LEVELS AND MAKING CERTAIN THAT NO SCHOOL DISTRICT HAD TO

CLOSE ITS DOORS, AND, IN PROVIDING APPROPRIATIONS FOR SUCH MAJOR SERVICES TO PEOPLE AS MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS, MENTAL RETARDATION PROGRAMS, WELFARE AND ALL THE OTHER CRITICAL NEEDS SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE STATE.

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.

HERE IN VAN WERT IT MEANS THAT THE VAN WERT CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL RECEIVE \$957,189.04 IN STATE DOLLARS IN FISCAL YEAR 82-- AN INCREASE OVER THE PREVIOUS YEAR OF \$91,629.21. AND, IN FISCAL YEAR 83 THE CITY SCHOOLS WILL RECEIVE \$268 THOUSAND DOLLARS MORE IN STATE FUNDS THAN DURING THIS YEAR.

IT TOOK LOTS OF HARD WORK, SOUL SEARCHING, DISCUSSION AND

COURAGE TO FIND THOSE NEW DOLLARS SO BADLY NEEDED BY SCHOOLS, AS YOU KNOW WE HAD TO RAISE SOME TAXES IN ORDER TO FIND THEM.

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.

THESE DECISIONS WERE MADE AFTER WEEKS AND WEEKS OF STUDY AND WORK, WE MADE EVERY EFFORT TO BE AS FAIR AS POSSIBLE AND TO KEEP TAXES AS LOW AS POSSIBLE AND STILL MAINTAIN CRITICAL SERVICES.

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.

A NEW LAW, ORGINATING 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.

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. GOVERNOR RHODES WILL SIGN THIS BILL INTO LAW PROBABLY IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS.

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.

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

THE HOUSE HAS SPENT THOUSANDS OF MAN/WOMAN HOURS WORKING ON HUNDREDS OF BILLS DURING 1981. WE HAVE PLACED INTO THE LAW BOOKS SOME FINE WORK AND WE HAVE SCREENED OUT MANY BAD IDEAS.

THERE IS MUCH MORE TO BE DONE AND WE WILL GET STARTED SOON AFTER THE FIRST OF THE YEAR. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT 1982 WILL BRING BETTER ECONOMIC TIMES AND FEWER CRITICAL PROBLEMS THAT WE'VE HAD TO DEAL WITH IN 1981.

CLOSING

LET ME CLOSE BY SAYING THAT BEING HERE TODAY IS A REAL PLEASURE FOR ME. IT WAS GOOD TO TRAVEL HERE WITH MY LONG TIME FRIEND DICK ZIMMERMAN AND TO SEE SOME OTHER OLD FRIENDS HERE AGAIN.

THE FUTURE FOR OHIO, I BELIEVE? IS VERY BRIGHT. WE WILL SOLVE OUR MANY PROBLEMS AND WE WILL, ALL OF US, IN OUR OWN WAY, HELP OUR FELLOW MAN TO HAVE THE BETTER LIFE IN OHIO.

THANK YOU.