

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 6, 2006

JOHNSON WELCOMES GOVERNOR LUO AND HUBEI DELEGATION

COLUMBUS – Lieutenant Governor Bruce Johnson last night welcomed a trade delegation visiting Columbus from Ohio’s Chinese sister-state, Hubei Province. The delegation, which includes Hubei Governor Luo Qingquan and 20 government leaders, is in Ohio to explore future trade and educational opportunities with the state.

“For more than 27 years, Ohio and the Hubei Province have maintained a mutually beneficial partnership,” said Johnson, who also serves as state development director. “Ohio businesses are exporting more Ohio-made goods to China now than at any other time in history. By continuing to build upon our relationship with Hubei and the nation of China, Ohio firms will continue to build upon opportunities for growth in the global marketplace.”

China is currently Ohio’s seventh largest export market and Ohio exports to China have more than quadrupled since the late 1990’s. In December 2005, Johnson visited with Governor Luo and other business and government leaders during a business mission to China to bolster the state’s trade relationship with that country.

Ohio was the first state to establish a sister-state with a Chinese province; the Ohio-Hubei agreement was signed in 1979. The relationship has been instrumental in a number of business and educational collaborations. This is Governor Luo’s first visit to Ohio. The most recent previous visit by a Hubei Governor to Ohio was in 1994.

Today, the delegation will meet with Governor Bob Taft, Ohio State University President Karen Holbrook and Ohio’s legislative leadership.

#

*Media contact: Maria Smith at (614) 466-2382 or Merle Madrid at (614) 466-4133;
Ohio Department of Development*