

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

October 4, 2005

CONTACT: Bill Teets at (614) 466-2382
or Merle Madrid (614) 466-4133**LT. GOVERNOR VISIT TO NORTH CANTON FOCUSES ON ECONOMY, ISSUE 1**

NORTH CANTON – Lt. Governor Johnson today delivered the keynote address at a gathering of more than 100 Canton-area businessmen and economic development officials. He spoke about the ongoing effort to improve Ohio's economy and the Jobs for Ohio Bond Initiative's role in that effort.

"Through tort reform, tax reform and increased marketing efforts, we are showing the world that Ohio Means Business," said Johnson, who also serves as state development director. "The next step is to ensure economic development opportunities for all Ohioans by making more investment available for public infrastructure, job ready sites, research, and the development of new technologies."

Johnson told the audience that the Jobs for Ohio Bond Initiative, Issue 1 on the November 8 ballot, provides the comprehensive infrastructure necessary for today's economy. The \$2 billion initiative funds three measures; \$1.35 billion over the next ten years for traditional infrastructure, \$500 million over seven years for technology infrastructure and \$150 million over seven years for the creation of job ready sites. "Without raising taxes, Issue 1 ensures local governments can continue building the roads, bridges and water systems that are important to their community, while allowing the state to build upon a technology infrastructure that will attract good jobs in the knowledge economy," said Johnson.

In Stark County, nearly \$84 million in Public Works funding has supported more than \$152 million worth of infrastructure projects since 1987, including the 2003 widening of Cleveland Avenue and the 1998 improvements to Market Avenue in Canton. The Akron-Canton has also been an active participant in the Third Frontier Project, with more than \$10.5 million in awards going to area recipients. In addition, 24 collaborators from the Akron-Canton region are participating in 26 Third Frontier Projects.

Local successes to date include Kent's AlphaMicron, Inc. Through a Third Frontier Grant, AlphaMicron is adapting its military-application liquid crystal technology for use in the consumer market. The resulting goggles protect skiers' eyes from changes in brightness on the ski hill and were selected by *Popular Science* magazine as the "Best of What's New 2004" and highlighted by *Forbes* in a recent "Coolest Ski Gear" article. Johnson also pointed to an announcement by HydroGen that it is moving its world headquarters to northeast Ohio and locating a 400 kW commercial demonstration fuel cell project in northeast Ohio, as well. The project is expected create up to 200 jobs. "From helping reduce our dependence on foreign oil to providing medical breakthroughs that are improving our quality of life, the Third Frontier is preparing us for the knowledge economy," said Johnson.

In addition to being placed on the ballot with overwhelming bipartisan support, Issue 1 has been endorsed by numerous organizations, including the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, the Ohio Farm Bureau, and the Ohio Chapter of the AFL-CIO. The Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce the Stark Development Board and Canton Mayor Janet Creighton are among area supporters.

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