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JOHNSON LAUNCHES FIRST ROUND OF JOB READY SITES PROGRAM
Program to Fund Sites That Will Attract Large Scale Business Investments to Ohio

COLUMBUS – Lieutenant Governor Bruce Johnson today announced the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) is launching the first competitive application round of the Job Ready Sites (JRS) Program. The program, approved by voters last November, is designed to fill gaps in Ohio’s site offerings market and to create types of sites or facilities that do not exist or are not available in sufficient quantities within the state.

“The Job Ready Sites Program will allow Ohio to compete for large scale investments that could have an immediate, economy-shifting impact in communities across the state,” said Johnson, who also serves as director of the Ohio Department of Development. “It is imperative that Ohio has an inventory of accessible, certified sites available to firms searching for an attractive location for their projects that will create a significant number of jobs. It’s this type of forward thinking and strategic investment, combined with our state’s recent comprehensive tax reform, that will give Ohio a competitive advantage in securing such projects.”

The JRS Program is a competitively funded program and was part of the \$2 billion public works and economic development bond package initiative, which was supported by voters last fall. The program will provide \$150 million in grants to eligible and qualified applicants across the state that are interested in developing job ready sites.

Today, the ODOD is making available applications for the first round of grant funding and releasing eligibility guidelines for the five large-scale, high-impact project site categories eligible for funding under the program. These categories include: mega manufacturing operations; technical center/research laboratories; manufacturing facilities; existing industrial buildings; and “smart” office. Within three years after receiving a grant award, approved projects must receive certification from a third party firm to verify the site has the necessary attributes to accommodate large-scale end use development; the property will then be added to a statewide inventory of available sites.

The program is funded by \$150 million in bonds issued by the State over the next seven years. Grant recipients will receive up to \$5 million per project site, not to exceed 75 percent of the total project cost. Funds may be applied to a broad array of allowable costs associated with the development of the property for site certification. The program’s first funding round is expected to be announced in early November 2006.

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Johnson further encouraged officials managing projects that do not meet the minimum guidelines for the JRS Program to consider applying for funds available through the Industrial Site Improvement Fund (ISIF) Program, which is also administered by the ODOD. Much like the JRS Program, the ISIF provides assistance to eligible applicants for the improvement of qualified commercial and industrial areas with no minimum site size requirement. Funds of up to \$500,000 may be awarded for public and/or private infrastructure improvements, expansion and/or renovation of existing buildings and environmental remediation.

“The ISIF is designed to assist communities that are considering development of smaller sections of land,” said Johnson. “While the JRS is designed specifically for the development of large scale properties, the ISIF is a perfect tool for small and urban communities that want to develop job ready sites for future development to more easily attract small to mid-sized operations. I encourage all eligible communities to investigate the ISIF and JRS programs to determine which is right for their community needs – and to apply for this assistance that will ultimately generate new investment and jobs in a number of Ohio communities.”

It is anticipated that \$2.5 million will be awarded in the fall of this year to selected ISIF applicants to develop sites for commercial and industrial uses.

Information about the JRS Program is available online at www.odod.state.oh.us/edd/obd/jrs .

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