

**Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association
Annual Membership Meeting
Ravens Glenn Winery – West Lafayette, Ohio
April 21, 2010**

With nine cities and nine counties represented, President Penny Traina declared a quorum and called the Annual Membership Meeting of YR2010 to order. Attendance is reflected on the previous page.

Financial Reports

Fiscal Officer Sue Wood provided the financial reports for February and March. The financial reports include the balance of the Revolving Loan Fund. Cash receipts were \$92,655.27 and disbursements were \$56,503.04 for February 2010. We have cash in the checking account in the amount of \$39,026.04, cash in the savings account of \$170,308.36, a Certificate of Deposit (CD) in the amount of \$100,000, and \$420,700.55 in the Revolving Loan Fund. With all accounts, an ending balance of \$730,034.95 was recorded for February 28, 2010.

Cash receipts were \$81,833.68 and disbursements were \$48,725.89 for March 2010. We have cash in the checking account in the amount of \$42,612.67, cash in the savings account of \$180,987.57, a Certificate of Deposit (CD) in the amount of \$99,999.99, and \$439,542.51 in the Revolving Loan Fund. With all accounts, an ending balance of \$763,142.74 was recorded for March 31, 2010. Mayor Mucci moved to approve the financial reports as submitted, second by Commissioner Eyler. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes

Executive Board meeting minutes from the following dates were provided to the board for the consideration: November 19, 2009 – December 16, 2009 – February 17, 2010. T.J. Justice moved to approve the minutes as submitted, second by Mayor Wallace. Motion carried.

Intergovernmental Project Review

Intergovernmental Review Project Coordinator Lana Watkins provided to the membership a listing of projects reviewed and processed since the previous meeting. Four (4) regional projects and five (5) Community Development Block Grant applications were included on the listing. With no negative comments received, T.J. Justice moved to approve all nine (9) projects reviewed, second by Commissioner Abbuhl. Motion carried.

Featured Speaker

President Penny Traina introduced Tony Logan, Ohio state director of the United States Department of Agriculture – Rural Development (USDA-RD). Mr. Logan oversees housing, business and community development programs that provide financial assistance to Ohio's rural communities.

Mr. Logan stated it is USDA-RD's mission "to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for all rural Americans." Mr. Logan explained that there are four USDA-RD branches covering the state of Ohio; offices are located in Findlay, Massillon, Hillsboro and Marietta. The Ohio USDA-RD central office is located in Columbus. Mr. Logan introduced the Area Program Directors for each of the five offices.

Mr. Logan spoke of the individual programs that USDA-RD operates: community (including water/sewer infrastructure), housing and business programs. Mr. Logan elaborated on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding filtered through the USDA-RD and he acknowledged the direct benefit rural communities across Ohio have experienced through new economic development infrastructure projects, housing, and business investments that have helped to create and save thousands of rural jobs. During 2009 and in the OMEGA ten-county district alone, USDA-RD invested a total of \$133,597,117 through its housing program, \$7,137,353 through its business programs and \$35,714,967 through its community programs. These totals also represent ARRA funds administered by the USDA-RD.

The USDA-RD is involved with the Renewable Energy for America Program or REAP. Ohio 2009 program funds totaling \$12.9 million were committed to the installment of wind turbines, solar electric, geothermal heating, bio-mass facilities and energy efficient farming applications. Program funding for FY10 is expected to exceed FY09 levels.

For contact information for the office nearest you or for additional information on USDA-RD's programs and activities, visit www.rurdev.usda.gov/oh.

Executive Director's Report

OMEGA Executive Director Greg DiDonato reported on recent organization activities. He stated that OMEGA has been awarded a supplemental grant increase of \$30,000 to its existing three-year contract with the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Mr. DiDonato would like to use the increase in administrative funding to employ an individual who could assist OMEGA's member communities with energy efficiency related issues, i.e., audits, etc. More information will follow in the near future.

Director DiDonato stated that the OMEGA By-Laws have not been updated since 1976. Recently, a committee was established to make recommendations on updates and revisions of the By-Laws and the membership was provided a copy of those recommendations. Director DiDonato thanked those who took time out of their busy schedules to participate on the committee.

Fred Deel, director of the Governor's Office of Appalachia (GOA) was present. Mr. DiDonato acknowledged the very good working relationship OMEGA shares with the GOA and Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and he thanked Mr. Deel for his excellent support of the OMEGA district. Mr. DiDonato highlighted several projects funded by the GOA or ARC. In the OMEGA district alone, nineteen projects totaling over \$1.7 million were funded by the

GOA/ARC in 2010. The infrastructure, health and education projects have helped to retain/create jobs and foster economic growth in the district.

OMEGA will accept FY'11 project pre-applications until June 18, 2010. For more information on the pre-application process or to obtain a pre-application form, contact Dana Kay Soter of the OMEGA staff.

Mr. DiDonato reported on the status of the broadband infrastructure project application submitted to the NTIA (ARRA funding). While a first round application was not awarded funding, a refined version focusing on "middle mile" broadband capacity has been submitted to the NTIA. Awards for the second round of funding will be made in late summer or early fall. This new proposal still ensures all 32 Ohio Appalachia counties will have increased ability to obtain broadband.

Governor's Regional Representative – Region 10

Lisa Duvall, Governor's regional representative (Region 10) addressed the membership. Ms. Duvall explained her role as a regional representative; helping local communities and businesses investigate state resources that might benefit them; act as a liaison for the Governor and keep apprised of key development issues in the region.

Ms. Duvall also introduced several of her colleagues from the Ohio Department of Development's Strategic Business Investment Division. The ODOD representatives noted that anyone who is aware of a business that may need to tap into available state resources, should contact the ODOD.

OMEGA Revolving Loan Fund Update

Revolving Loan Fund Program Administrator Lolly Ravak provided a program update. Ms. Ravak reported that the OMEGA Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Program offers low-interest loans to businesses in conjunction with bank financing. To qualify for the program, the business must be private-for-profit, create or retain jobs and be located within the ten-county region served by OMEGA.

Advantages of working with the OMEGA loan program include: the participating bank reduced their exposure and, in most cases, will secure a first position on available collateral; the business receives a low, fixed interest rate on the portion financed by OMEGA; and the local economy receives the benefit of creating or maintaining full-time equivalent jobs.

To date, the program has invested approximately \$4.6 million in 74 businesses resulting in 1,174 jobs created.

Ms. Ravak announced she is currently looking for projects. Those interested in obtaining more program information should contact Lolly Ravak at 740-439-4471.

Election of Officers

OMEGA held its annual election of officers. President Penny Traina reported that nominations were as follows: President – Penny Traina, Columbiana County Commissioner, Vice President – Thomas Wheaton, Carroll County Commissioner, Secretary – Domenick Mucci, Mayor, City of Steubenville, and Treasurer – Thomas Laughman, Guernsey County Commissioner. Elected officer's terms are effective April 21, 2010 through March 2011. Commissioner Pincola moved to approve the nominations as submitted, second by Commissioner Bates. Motion carried.

Approval of Revised By-Laws

As previously discussed by Director DiDonato, members were provided with a copy of the committee recommended revised OMEGA By-Laws. President Traina asked for a motion to approve the final revisions and updates to the By-Laws. After a brief discussion, Commissioner Ray Eyer moved to approve the committee recommendations and subsequent final revisions of the By-Laws, second by Dorothy Blaner. Motion carried. President Traina thanked those who participated on the committee.

Annual OMEGA Mixer - Date Change

President Penny Traina advised that there were scheduling conflicts for the original date of the OMEGA Annual Summer Mixer/Executive Board Meeting. President Traina requested a motion to move the date to August 25, 2010 at Noon. Mayor Wallace moved to approve the date of August 25, 2010 at Noon, second by Mayor Mucci. Motion carried.

Miscellaneous

Handouts distributed at the meeting included:

- OMEGA Annual Report
- OMEGA Revolving Loan Fund Program Info
- 2010 Membership Appointments
- OMEGA FY10 Project Priority List
- OMEGA FY'11 ARC/GOA Project Pre-Application Criteria & Info
- ARC (Overview of Appalachia)
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With no further business, President Traina asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Mucci moved to adjourn, second by Commissioner Eyer. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Future Meetings

April 30, 2010 – EODA Annual Meeting – Walnut Creek, Ohio

June 16, 2010 – OMEGA Executive Board Meeting – Millersburg, Ohio

Respectfully Submitted by:

Approved:

_____ ***Date:*** _____

Mayor Domenick Mucci, Secretary