

## City Council unites 13 Communities to 'Clear the Air' about Smoking Issues *Also Supports Working Families with Endorsement to Raise Ohio's Minimum Wage*

Joined by the elected leaders of some of Central Ohio's 13 smoke-free cities, Councilmember Charleta B. [Tavares](#) and Council President Matt [Habash](#) added the City of Columbus to the growing list of communities endorsing SmokeFree Ohio and State Issue 5 on the November ballot.

Council also endorsed the passage of State Issue 2, encouraging Columbus voters to raise up Ohio's working families by raising the state minimum wage.

As part of the endorsement - urging voters to say No on State Issue 4 and Yes on State Issue 5 - speakers warned about an election smokescreen that could trick Central Ohioans into nullifying their votes and rolling back some of the protections from secondhand smoke several communities have come to enjoy.

"Secondhand smoke harms the health of everyone who breathes it," said Council President [Habash](#). "Issue 5 protects all workers and customers from the health hazards of secondhand smoke by making all public places and workplaces smoke-free and creating a level playing field for all businesses."

"Columbus voters have spoken clearly on this critical health issue, affirming their support in both the November 2004 and May 2005 elections," said Councilmember [Tavares](#), who was the original sponsor of the Columbus Smokefree Indoor Air Act. "But Issue 4 - the so-called SmokeLess Ohio amendment masterminded by big tobacco - would nullify those votes of the people."

Councilmember [Tavares](#) also organized the endorsement of Issue 2 and the broad-based coalition of faith, labor and community organizations called Ohioans for a Fair Minimum Wage.

"The minimum wage of \$5.15 hasn't been raised in ten years. A vote yes on Issue 2 will raise up Ohio's workers by raising the minimum wage to \$6.85 an hour and raising the ability of our residents to support their families," said Councilmember [Tavares](#).

Approximately 14% of the workforce in Columbus would likely see a raise if Issue 2 passes on November 7.



***Joining the City Council's SmokeFree endorsement were Dublin, New Albany, Heath, Granville, Bexley, Hilliard, Grandview, Worthington and Gahanna. 21 municipalities in Ohio have led efforts to protect workers and residents from exposure to secondhand smoke by passing comprehensive clean air ordinances.***



## Special Tribute by Hilltop Teen honors Patriots Day *Council extends Benefits to City Employees serving Country*

On the fifth anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks, City Council took pause to remember the nearly 3,000 Americans who died that day in 2001 and the many Central Ohioans who have since answered the call to duty to protect freedom.

In a moving tribute, 19-year-old Westside resident Justin Boggs of the Greater Hilltop Area Commission performed a violin solo of the National Anthem, followed by a moment of silence.

During that same Council meeting, Councilmembers Michael C. [Mentel](#) and Kevin L. [Boyce](#) sponsored legislation to provide health insurance coverage and employee benefits for the families of City employees on active military duty.

This marks the sixth successive year for this action.

## Metro Club: Council President Calls on Community to Seek Common Good



*During his speech to the Columbus Metropolitan Club, President Habash also highlighted successful collaborations on the Big Darby Watershed, the regional Bike Path, and upcoming work Downtown on the I-70/71 Split.*

As City Council entered its Fall legislative season, President Matt [Habash](#) took to the stage of the Columbus Metropolitan Club to share his vision for the City's future, calling upon all residents to reach for a greater common good.

During his September speech, President [Habash](#) also announced a new partnership with State Senator Steve Stivers to collect and share information and ideas about improving the Central Ohio community.

"We must apply positive lessons from the past, specifically collaboration and cooperation, and open ourselves to even more innovative approaches, spending more time outside the box than worrying about the half-emptiness we think lies within it," said President [Habash](#).

He and Senator Stivers are working to launch a comprehensive, nonpartisan think tank dedicated to crafting policies for the greater common good of Central Ohio.

"Forget the schisms – conservative, liberal, Democrat, Republican. Why can't we marry the best ideas from both worlds, adapt a more holistic approach, and get results?" asked President [Habash](#) of the lunchtime crowd.

"To start, let's find a place where we can come together, thoughtfully learn about issues, build collaborations, and reach innovative, progressive solutions together."

You are invited to share your thoughts by sending an e-mail to [greatercommongood@gmail.com](mailto:greatercommongood@gmail.com).

## Youth Commission sworn in as Council congratulates former Youth Advisor



Calling upon young people to be the future civic leaders of Columbus, Council swore in the newest members of the Columbus Youth Commission.

Initiated by Councilmember Kevin L. [Boyce](#) in 2001, the members of the Youth Commission, ages 13-21, represent a youth-in-government program to advise City Council and the Mayor on youth issues and to aid in planning youth educational and recreational events.

This year, the Youth Commission is tasked with implementing a nonviolence initiative in a local school. Councilmembers set aside \$10,000 from Council's Safety Initiative Fund to sponsor the effort, in which students will pledge nonviolent behavior for the school year.

During the September meeting, Councilmembers also recognized outgoing Youth Commission Coordinator Heidi Yoakum, who has helped build and advise the young members of the commission. Councilmember [Boyce](#), working with the Mayor's Office of Education, is assisting in the search for a new advisor.

### 2006-2007 Youth Commissioners:

Kelsie Bell	Corey Morgan
Zoe Castro	Jeremiah
Margaret Chiu	Muhammad
Gustavo Garcia	Sarah Page
Andrew Hairston	Amber Phillips
Johnathan Hairston	Delawnte Simmons
Ai Binh Ho	Jahziel Soriano
Ellen Jackson	Charmaine
Caroline Kusi	Thomas-Williams
Aaron Marbley	Samantha Trotter
Devon Monroe	Makeda Williams

## Council's Safety Chair Mentel joins Mayor to Destroy Dangerous Guns

Hundreds of dangerous guns are off the streets of Columbus and gone for good.

In September, Councilmember Michael C. [Mentel](#), chair of Council's Safety and Judiciary Committee, joined Mayor Coleman and Columbus Police to destroy hundreds of guns collected from criminals since January.

Police have confiscated nearly 2,400 crime guns in 2006 and expect the total to reach 3,600 by the end of the year. The guns were recovered from arrests, domestic disputes, drug house raids, and a variety of other crime scenes.

With neighborhood leaders, safety experts, and the media watching, workers at Columbus Steel Castings in the city's South Side melted the guns in a fiery show.

With the support of police officers, safety experts, and neighborhood leaders, Councilmember [Mentel](#) headed efforts to ban dangerous assault weapons in Columbus, including semiautomatic rifles.



*Councilmember Mentel shows one of the nearly 2,400 dangerous guns and weapons confiscated by police officers in 2006*

## Walking to School a Lesson in Sidewalk Hazards

For some Columbus school children, the game of dodge ball has been replaced by a daily game of dodging traffic.

That was one lesson learned as Councilmember Maryellen [O'Shaughnessy](#) and several city officials joined students at Highland Elementary School in the Hilltop neighborhood for this year's Walk to School Day.

Now in its ninth year, Walk to School Day has raised awareness of safety and environmental issues in and around school zones, allowing city leaders to see the challenges and hazards children face in their walk to school each day.

As chair of the Public Service and Transportation Committee, Councilmember [O'Shaughnessy](#) initiated several projects to install sidewalks throughout the city and to promote safe, walkable neighborhoods. Since 1999, Council has appropriated \$5.26 million to build 6.3 miles of walkways, as part of the Sidewalks to Schools Project, benefiting students at 24 Columbus Public Schools.



*Councilmember O'Shaughnessy talks with news reporters after her morning walk to Highland Elementary School.*



## Councilmember Boyce takes Early Look at 2007 City Budget

With the third quarter of the City's annual budget cycle ending, Councilmember Kevin L. [Boyce](#) is taking a closer review of the City's spending so far in 2006 and an early look at budget projections for 2007.

Councilmember [Boyce](#), Council's Finance Committee Chair, has several briefings planned to gain an early understanding of where the City's finances stand, entering the 2007 Budget cycle. Additionally, Councilmember Boyce wants to examine a three year financial plan to reflect more of the City's future needs moving forward.

During the Council's most recent briefing in September, City Auditor Hugh Dorrian evaluated the future of the City's current triple-A bond rating, the highest credit rating possible. Columbus is the largest city in the nation able to maintain this rating.

## Success of 2006 Job-Creating Tax Incentives Reviewed

*Jobs and Economic Development Committee also tracks how unemployed workers are connected to new jobs*

As part of City Council's proactive efforts to support job creation and retention in Columbus, Councilmember Mary Jo [Hudson](#), chair of the Jobs and Economic Development Committee, hosted a series of briefings to review the City's tax incentive programs and policies.

The overview of current incentive programs at the state and local levels included Enterprise Zone Agreements, Community Reinvestment Areas, Tax Increment Financing Districts, and Job Creation Tax Credits.



**Councilmember Hudson is joined by the Economic Development Administrator Bill Webster.**

### Columbus Tax Incentive Program Performance

*based on 2005 Project Status Reports and updates in 78 active deals*

**5,450 jobs created**  
**126% of overall goal**

**8,037 jobs retained**  
**93% of overall goal**

**\$173 million in annual payroll from jobs created**  
**108% of overall goal**

**\$1.9 billion in real and personal property investment**  
**118% of overall goal**

Information is based on Enterprise Zone and Community Reinvestment Area projects

The committee then reviewed this year's recommendations by the Tax Incentive Review Council (TIRC) to continue, amend, or dissolve tax incentives with local companies. Attention was also given to the City's FirstSource initiative, designed to connect out-of-work and under-employed residents with new jobs.

Recently, Councilmembers approved a contract with the International Economic Development Council to assess the City's economic development strategies. This nationally recognized organization will evaluate Columbus' economic development system and make recommendations for enhancing the City's efforts.

## Fall Bike Ride spotlights City Trail's Connectivity and Collaboration



Celebrating the many new miles of bike trails constructed this past season, Council President Matt [Habash](#) led a Saturday morning bike ride along the Alum Creek Trail to spotlight the collaborative efforts that have connected the trail across our city.

Overall, 4.2 new miles were added to the Citywide Bike Trail System in 2006.

On the north side of town, Casto Park features a new bikeway underpass at SR 161. The Alum Creek Trail was broken at this point, and the new .5 mile pass allows full use of 7 miles of trail, from downtown Westerville to Easton.

The collaboration with Westerville during the past 4 years has enabled this northern section of trail to link up 6 parks, 1 senior center, 4 neighborhoods, and three soccer complexes, all with safe, dedicated off-street trails.

This Fall, Council has approved several pieces of legislation aimed at promoting the increased use of bicycles in Columbus.

Councilmember Maryellen [O'Shaughnessy](#), Council's Transportation Committee chair, set aside city funds to purchase fifty bicycle racks for installation throughout the city, giving riders a place to secure their bikes and encouraging healthier and environmentally-friendly lifestyles.

**QUICK LINK:** For an A-Z listing of all the walking and bike trails maintained by the City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, log on to <http://recparks.columbus.gov/trails/index.asp>.

## Project Second Chance competes for National Recognition

Councilmember Patsy A. [Thomas](#)' effort to increase the number of Columbus residents trained in performing CPR and using an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) are contenders for national recognition as an example of unique and effective local safety projects.

Each year, American City and County magazine awards its America's Crown Communities. Project Second Chance was nominated for 2006.

Through Project Second Chance, more than 139 new AEDs have been placed throughout the city: in public buildings, golf courses, community centers, non-profit offices, and private businesses. More than 1,000 City of Columbus employees and more than 3,000 Columbus residents have been trained in CPR and AED use.

Sudden cardiac arrest can happen anywhere, anytime, to anybody. The survival rate in Central Ohio is just 6%. But with CPR and AED training, anyone can give potentially lifesaving defibrillation right at the scene, more than doubling the chance of survival.



**Councilmember Thomas shares the success of Project Second Chance with Dr. Dave Keseg on "EMS Perspectives" which can be seen on GTC-3, the City's Government Cable Station.**

## Hilltop Ambassador Program to promote Business and Safety on Westside



**Councilmember Mentel joined new Hilltop Ambassadors Marilyn Stalsworth and Ray Powell on their inaugural walk.**

Looking for a business in Columbus' Hilltop neighborhood? Want to report overgrown weeds or broken windows? Need directions to the closest gas station? Help can now be found on the sidewalks of West Broad Street, as part of a new Hilltop Ambassador Program.

Columbus City Councilmember Michael [Mentel](#), chair of Council's Safety Committee, joined community leaders and the Homes on the Hill CDC to unveil this new initiative, funded in part by a community safety grant from the City.

Sporting royal blue jackets with "Hilltop Ambassador" printed on back, these ambassadors walk the area of West Broad Street between Highland and Hague Avenues. In addition to offering information to visitors, the ambassador will report suspicious activity to Columbus Police, record code violations, and help keep sidewalks and public spaces clean.

## Statehouse Lunch with High School Teens Highlights Next Generation of Voters

With conversations ranging from school funding to neighborhood safety, Councilmembers Maryellen [O'Shaughnessy](#) and Charleta B. [Tavares](#) heard from the next generation of voters at this year's Kids Voting Youth Summit at the Ohio Statehouse.

This unique event brought together high school seniors from Columbus and several suburban communities in central Ohio to explore current issues, share opinions with students from different backgrounds, meet with elected officials and young adults active in politics or public policy work, and begin to develop the skills needed for active citizenship.

**QUICK LINK:** <http://www.kidsvotingoh.org/>

