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GUEST COLUMN

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September Brought Job Growth to Southwest Ohio

By State Senator Peggy Lehner

COLUMBUS – Several recent announcements hold the potential for providing an added jolt to Southwest Ohio’s growing workforce. As one local company shared plans to triple its total employment by next year, two more were offered tax incentives to either bring jobs into Ohio or maintain existing ones.

Caterpillar Logistics of Clayton, which has already added more than 200 jobs since May, is expected to have a total of 600 new jobs in place by sometime next year. The new distribution center will eventually include 400,000 square feet of space where heavy equipment parts will be packaged and stored. Currently, the distribution center offers primary support to Caterpillar dealers throughout the Midwest.

September also saw the Ohio Tax Credit Authority spearheading a pair of efforts to incentivize business in exchange for retaining and attracting long-term jobs in our area.

An incentive package was approved for the New York-based Aeroseal, LLC to locate its headquarters and 40 jobs in Centerville. Included in the prospective project is \$350,000 to lease space and purchase equipment. Aeroseal’s work focuses on sealing holes and leaks in the air duct systems of residential and commercial spaces.

Also approved was an additional incentive package to keep Eastman Kodak, and its 700 workers, in Kettering. The offer includes a 30 percent, 10-year refundable job retention tax credit that will keep \$32 million in existing payroll in our state. Under the agreement, the Ohio Tax Credit Authority would require the company to maintain the jobs in Kettering for a period of at least 13 years. Recently, the company was weighing a possible relocation to either Indiana or New York.

House Bill 58, passed by the General Assembly earlier this year and later signed into law by Governor Kasich, established a new job retention tax credit program that incentivizes businesses committed to creating and keeping jobs in Ohio. Without question, the provisions contained in that bill are helping to put our citizens back to work.

Since the start of 2011, we have been laying the foundation for a revitalized Ohio. Rebuilding our economy, expanding our workforce, and bringing industry into our state are the central themes to our work in the 129th General Assembly. Though much progress has been made, it is vital that we keep this momentum going into 2012.

I look forward to hearing your ideas and thoughts on what is happening in our region and throughout our state.