

# THE PLAIN DEALER

## **Gov. John Kasich pitches Ohio to visiting business leaders from across the country**

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COLUMBUS, Ohio - Ohio Gov. John Kasich was in his element on Thursday, working a stage with television cameras trained on his every movement in a ballroom filled with hundreds of business executives tending to his every word.

Kasich's goal of creating jobs and attracting new business to Ohio has been the staple of his administration and he didn't miss the opportunity to make his pitch at the "Leading from the Middle" national summit at Ohio State University in Columbus, an event broadcast live by the C-SPAN cable network.

"Look, you can't change the world in nine months," said Kasich, who took office in January. "You can only begin to lay down the foundation to say to people who are the job creators, who are precious to us, 'you come here and we'll nurture you. If you need trained workers, we'll provide them. If you need a better regulatory system, we'll give it to you.'"

Kasich's style doesn't always connect with audiences, but it did on Thursday. One language the former Lehman Bros. banking executive seems to know well is how to talk to business people. He promised them he is trying to make state government run with the efficiency of a fast-paced corporation so as not to slow business growth.

"Government moves at the speed of statute. Now, I saw a race between statute and a glacier," Kasich quipped, drawing laughter, punctuating his view that state government moves too slowly. "We know who won."

Kasich worked hard to make the business leaders feel that everything on his agenda in some way relates to job creation for Ohio and that nothing would stop him from achieving his goals, especially not politics.

"What we learned is it's (about) reforming. It's providing a better product at a better quality, at a lesser price to the customer," he said. "And if the government thinks that way and strips the politics out, then it's amazing how much you can accomplish."

And like any good salesman, Kasich, again using humor, closed by inviting the business leaders to come set up shop in Ohio.

"For all you foreigners out there -- those are folks from Indiana, Michigan, West Virginia, Pennsylvania," Kasich said above the laughter, "you all come home to the Buckeye State. We'll take good care of you."

The summit was sponsored by GE Capital and OSU's Fisher College of Business. The goal of the conference is to help medium-sized companies brainstorm and share ideas for overcoming challenges and growing into larger, global companies.

Other speakers included Jeff Immelt, CEO of General Electric and Roger Penske, founder and chairman of the Penske Corporation.

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