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Fixing Ohio's economy still drives Gov. Kasich's agenda as he looks ahead to next year and reflects on first year in office

By Joe Guillen

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Ohioans next year can expect an aggressive pursuit of the economic benefits of shale gas, reform of the state's workforce development programs and the rollout of another policy-driven budget plan, Republican Gov. John Kasich said Monday.

Kasich reflected on his first year in office, including the humbling repeal of Senate Bill 5 and the creation of thousands of jobs in Ohio, while outlining his priorities for 2012 during a year-end briefing with reporters at the state-owned governor's mansion in suburban Columbus.

The first-term Republican governor did not give many specifics about how he would achieve his goals next year. But he identified "chronic problems" that his administration will attempt to fix to help turn around the state's economy.

He said oil and gas companies coming to Ohio will be regulated — but not over-regulated.

The state's severance tax, applied to companies that extract underground natural resources, is being re-evaluated. And Ohio is studying the possibility of assessing "impact fees" upon companies that drill. Some states charge such fees to help local governments compensate for needs that crop up as a result of a drilling boom.

Another priority next year will be tailoring workforce development programs to match available jobs. That means a renewed emphasis on vocational programs and better communication between employers and community colleges, Kasich said.

Kasich recited jobs statistics — nearly 83,000 jobs created or retained in Ohio this year — several times during the two-hour briefing.

"We were on death's doorstep," Kasich said of Ohio's economy. "Now we've stabilized the patient in this state."

READ FULL ARTICLE

HERE: http://www.cleveland.com/open/index.ssf/2011/12/fixing_ohios_economy_still_dr.html



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Ohio governor touts improved unemployment numbers

COLUMBUS, Ohio - Ohio Gov. John Kasich on Monday touted the state's improved employment picture since he took office a year ago, and said he will push for tougher regulations on oil and natural gas drilling in his second year that begins next month.

The Republican addressed members of the media in a year-end review, noting other accomplishments this year that he said included a revised state sentencing law and a crackdown on illegal prescriptions that closed 12 pain clinics.

Kasich said the state is running ahead in revenues and attributed economic boosts to balancing a budget without raising taxes in the face of an \$8 billion shortfall.

Ohio's two-year budget was approved by the Republican-controlled Legislature in June. The nearly \$56 billion spending plan privatizes five state prisons, overhauls Medicaid, eliminates Ohio's estate tax in 2013, bans most abortions in public hospitals and ties teachers' pay more closely to student achievement.

While the massive 3,262-page bill made its way through the Legislature, Kasich said, he kept his campaign pledge not to raise taxes while coming up with a balanced budget. The budget measure kept in place an \$800 million cut in the personal income tax that went into effect in January.

Kasich also applauded the state's new JobsOhio semi-private, nonprofit corporation, saying it has led to the creation of about 21,000 jobs and the retention of about 63,000. Joblessness in Ohio was 8.5 percent in November, the lowest level since December 2008.

READ FULL ARTICLE HERE: <http://www.newsnet5.com/dpp/news/state/ohio-governor-touts-improved-unemployment-numbers>

Dayton Daily News

Monday, December 19, 2011

Kasich: 82 thousand jobs saved, created in first year

Governor touts highlights of turbulent year; pledges to keep jobs a top priority.

By William Hershey, Columbus Bureau

COLUMBUS — Gov. John Kasich on Monday pledged to make his top priority in 2012 the same as it was during his sometimes turbulent first year leading the state, saying. “Everything we do goes through the prism ... does this create a job?”

At a two-hour, year-end press conference at the governor’s residence, Kasich touted state support for projects that he said have led to the creation of about 21,000 new jobs and the retention of more than 61,000 jobs.

A major development, the Republican governor said, was JobsOhio, the nonprofit corporation created to lead state economic development efforts.

Concerning the biggest setback of his first year — the resounding 62-38 percent defeat of Issue 2 on Nov. 8 — Kasich said he heard the voters and declined to say if he would offer parts of Senate Bill 5 separately next year.

“The ocean is full of sharks,” he said. “Sometimes you get the sharks and sometimes the shark gets you.”

A big job-creation emphasis next year, said Kasich, will be drilling for oil and gas in shale rock formations mainly in the eastern and southeastern parts of the state. Kasich said he would balance economic development with environmental concerns.

“It’s like porridge, not too hot, not too cold, just right,” he said.

Kasich also trumpeted balancing the state budget without raising taxes in the face of a projected \$8 billion shortfall and maintaining safety net benefits for the poor.

READ FULL ARTICLE HERE: <http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/politics/kasich-82-thousand-jobs-saved-created-in-first-year-1301661.html>

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