

POSTED ON [NOVEMBER 19, 2017](#) BY [ERIK MARTIN](#)

## State legislators address Chamber on issues

Chamber of Commerce holds State of the State luncheon

By Erik Martin - [emartin@dailyadvocate.com](mailto:emartin@dailyadvocate.com)  
The Daily Advocate



Christina Chalmers | The Daily Advocate Legislative leaders, State Senator Matt Huffman (R-Lima), State Senator Bill Beagle(R-Tipp City), State Representative Keith Faber (R-Celina), and State Representative Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City), spoke at the the Darke County Chamber of Commerce's annual State of the State luncheon.

GREENVILLE — Members of the Darke County Chamber of Commerce heard updates on state matters during the Chamber's annual State of the State luncheon held Friday at Romer's Catering in Greenville.

Legislative leaders speaking at the event included State Senator Matt Huffman (R-Lima), State Senator Bill Beagle (R-Tipp City), State Representative Keith Faber (R-Celina), and State Representative Steve Huffman (R-Tipp City).

Sen. Beagle spoke on workforce development efforts in the statehouse, and how the “In Demand Careers” section on the Ohio Means Jobs website (OhioMeansJobs.com) can help match up job seekers with jobs organized into six different regions in the state.

“It can help you develop relationships with training partners in your region or near your region who might potentially be a source for future employers, a source for training for employees who need skills,” he said.

Rep. Faber, former President of the Ohio Senate and now campaigning for the State Auditor job in 2018, told attendees the primary focus of the legislature in the last session has been on job creation, economic development, and combating the opiate crisis. Faber said he was disappointed the \$180 million set aside to help drug addicts did not have a “strong educational component.”

“I’m all for treatment for the opioid problem, but the best treatment is to keep people from starting,” he said.

Sen. Huffman said among his legislative efforts is to help get the “permanent non-working class” back into the workplace.

He said in Allen County, there are 8,000 people receiving public assistance, yet at the same time there are 2,000 job openings. Huffman said a pilot program being adopted in cooperation with Ohio Job & Family Services and Jobs Ohio, called the “Allen County Plan,” which hopes to get more people back to work and off government assistance.

“It’s going to say, just in Allen County, let’s allow people to keep their benefits for a period of time. If you go up to \$13 an hour, their benefits will drop a little bit but they can keep them for up to six months or maybe a year, then they’ll taper off,” he said.

In his remarks, Rep. Huffman addressed concerns expressed by the Chamber on the establishment of marijuana growing operations and dispensaries with the passage of legalized, but strictly limited, medical marijuana in the state.

“It will be another year before it starts,” he said. “There will be one dispensary between Butler, Darke and Preble Counties, so the likelihood of someone setting up shop in Darke County is very low. The closest grower is in Huber Heights and Dayton.”

“My advice is, as employers, you need to have a good drug policy you need to stick by,” he added. “We put in a lot of provisions with the state [Chamber of Commerce] to protect employers.”

Chamber President Sharon Deschambeau welcomed members to check out the Chamber's newly updated website, found at [www.DarkeCountyOhio.com](http://www.DarkeCountyOhio.com). She also encouraged members to participate in the Power Up Workforce survey.

The luncheon was hosted by the Chamber's Legislative Committee, Chairman Jeff Kniese. The event sponsor for this year's State of the State luncheon was Wayne HealthCare. Gold sponsors were Greenville Federal and The Andersons. Silver sponsors included BASF, Brady Ware & Company, Brethren Retirement Community, Brookdale Senior Living, Comprehensive Health, Edison State, Fifth Third Bank, Fram, Fry and Company, Kettering Health, Reid Health, Versailles Health Care Center and Whirlpool.

The writer may be reached at 937-569-4314. Join the conversation and get updates on Facebook search Darke County Sports or Advocate 360. For more features online go to [dailyadvocate.com](http://dailyadvocate.com)