

Darke County Chamber wins 2016 Best Advocacy Campaign award

State Chamber gives 2016 Best Advocacy Campaign award

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From left to right: Ohio Senate President Keith Faber, Chamber Director Chief Deputy Mark Whittaker-Darke County Sheriff's Office, Ohio Chamber Vice President of Government Affairs Keith Lake, Chamber Chairman Matt Aultman-Keller Grain & Feed, Chamber Chairman-Elect Tony Roberts-Roberts Nationwide, Former U.S. House of Representatives Speaker John Boehner, Chamber President Sharon Deschambeau, Darke County Common Pleas Court Judge Jonathan Hein, Chamber Legislative Committee Chairman Jeff Kniese-Greenville Federal, Ohio Senator Bill Beagle, Ohio Representative Jim Buchy, Chamber Legislative Committee Member Wayne Deschambeau-Wayne HealthCare, Chamber Legislative Committee Member and Director Christina Chalmers-The Daily Advocate.

COLUMBUS, Ohio – For the third consecutive year, the Darke County Chamber of Commerce has brought home a state award for its advocacy for local businesses.

The Ohio Chamber's Chamber Action Alliance (CAA) awarded the local chamber the 2016 Best Advocacy Campaign Award for "its extraordinary efforts and commitment to advocating against State Issue 3 which would have legalized marijuana."

This is the third year in a row the Darke County Chamber has been recognized for its outstanding efforts in the area" by the Ohio Chamber and CAA.

"It was truly an honor to accept the Ohio Chamber's 2016 Best Advocacy Campaign Award on behalf of the Darke County Chamber Board of Directors and our membership," stated Sharon Deschambeau, president of the Darke County Chamber. "The award signifies the time and commitment that many people have already put forth to combat the issue of drugs in Darke County."

The CAA is the state-wide grassroots advocacy coalition of Ohio chambers of commerce coordinated by the Ohio Chamber. It determines state-wide policy issues facing the business community, educates and empowers pro-businesses advocates to take action, and champions a business-friendly climate throughout the state of Ohio. Every year the CAA selects one local chamber that has done outstanding work on a single issue to recognize.

In July 2015, the Darke County Chamber sent a survey to their membership with questions about upcoming Ohio Ballot Issue 3 which focused on the legalization of recreational and medical marijuana. Survey results of chamber member employers showed:

- 88 percent did not support the proposed constitutional amendment to legalize both recreational and medical marijuana usage in Ohio;
- 96 percent did not support a constitutional amendment to legalize recreational marijuana; and
- 77 percent did not support a constitutional amendment that would only legalize medical marijuana.

Chamber member employers responded that if the proposed constitutional amendment passed, the following would impact them (in order of importance):

- employer risks and liability,

- employee reliability,
- employee productivity,
- employer hiring practices
- costs/screenings, etc.,
- employee tardiness,
- employee workers' comp costs,
- business climate perception,
- commercial/auto insurance rates, and
- employee turnover.

The Chamber Legislative Committee reviewed the survey results and made a recommendation to the Chamber Board of Directors to oppose Ohio Ballot Issue 3 on behalf of the chamber membership. The Chamber sent resolutions to the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Ohioans Against Marijuana Monopolies to oppose Issue 3 and joined forces with the Coalition for a Healthy Darke County.

The Coalition for a Healthy Darke County came about in response to hearing Darke County employers say they are having trouble finding employees able to pass pre-employment drug screenings. It has since grown into a 501(c)(3) organization focused on health and wellness for the county.

Additionally, the Chamber sponsored Darke County Safety Council hosted speaker Attorney Amy C. Mitchell, of Dunlevey Mahan & Furry Attorneys at its October 2015 meeting. Mitchell is an OSBA Board Certified Specialist in Labor and Employment Law and presented information on ballot Issue 3 and the potential impact to Darke County employers. Mitchell encouraged employers to review employee handbooks, company policy and monitor legal developments regarding marijuana.

“Today, the Chamber continues to filter information on medical marijuana and legislation and the impact it will have on our member businesses,” said Deschambeau.

“Under the leadership of President Sharon Deschambeau, the Darke County Chamber of Commerce has continued to expand its efforts around the important issue of combating drugs in the workplace,” said the Ohio Chamber’s Director of Political Programs Rich Thompson. “The Darke County Chamber has always been an advocate for drug-free workplaces through its Coalition for a Healthy Darke County. This year, they helped educate businesses and voters on State Issue 3 and helped defeat the issue. The Darke County Chamber is a true asset to its

community and both the Ohio Chamber and CAA are lucky to regularly work with Sharon Deschambeau and her chamber.”

The CAA stated, “The Darke County Chamber is a leader in Ohio in helping to educate workers and business owners on drugs in the workplace and is a leading supporter of drug-free workplaces.”

Senate President Keith Faber and Rep. Jim Buchy presented commendations to honor the Darke County Chamber for its efforts and winning the Best Advocacy Campaign Award. Former Speaker John Boehner and Sen. Bill Beagle also congratulated the chamber.

The Darke County Chamber of Commerce is a private, not-for-profit membership organization. The Chamber is an advocate for its member businesses and supports their interests. The Chamber is not a public or government entity. The Ohio Chamber of Commerce is a champion for Ohio businesses so that our state enjoys economic growth and prosperity. With over 8,000 members, we have been Ohio’s premiere business advocate since 1893.