



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
Jan. 28, 2013

Travel Center elimination hurts businesses, communities

Columbus – Leaders of the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association today are saying that the elimination of Travel Counselors at the state’s Ohio Travel Information Centers, affects more than just the 34 employees being laid off, but will also have a profound effect on the local communities and small businesses.

The 11 Travel Information Centers being shuttered are along highways near Ohio’s borders, with the exception of one located at the Ohio Statehouse.

“These centers aren’t just about maps and brochures, small businesses count on Travel Counselors to share information about local business for out-of-state travelers,” said OCSEA Assembly President Gary Apanasewicz. “Travel Counselors are from these areas and care about the success and promotion of their communities.”

“If this administration is about small business, taking away these travel counselors that direct people coming into Ohio to those small, local businesses, is counterintuitive,” said OCSEA President Christopher Mabe.

“Having a person manning the roadside rests also means having another set of eyes out there for people who might be in danger on Ohio roadways,” said Apanasewicz. Last year, Henry Vento, a Travel Counselor at the center in Bowling Green, thwarted a human trafficking attempt of two young girls. Vento received an award from Gov. Kasich for his efforts.

“Our members take a lot of pride in serving the public. And now that these positions are being eliminated, there’ll be no one to help those who might be in trouble or need assistance. A cell phone app just can’t do that,” said Mabe.

This job loss is on top of the hundreds of positions that have already been eliminated in the Ohio Dept. of Transportation. “Those are employees who could have been doing more to keep our roads repaired and maintained and helping to build up Ohio’s infrastructure,” said Mabe.

##

OCSEA represents approximately 33,000 public employees who work in a wide range of security, regulatory, administrative, direct care, maintenance, customer service and other positions. For more information, contact Sally Meckling, 614-865-2602 or 614-404-3881 (cell).