



### Legislature Remains in Recess

The Ohio General Assembly continues its summer recess with little to no activity of note. It will remain in recess until the November election, after which the Senate is slated to return to session on November 13 and the House the following week on November 20. The Senate will have five session dates, while the House is expected to have at least four. From after the election until the end of the year, the legislature will enter a fast-paced working period known as 'lame duck session,' with many lawmakers attempting to get bills passed before the conclusion of the General Assembly on December 31.

### State Fair 2024

Per tradition, a Joint House and Senate Agriculture Committee met at the Ohio State Fair. Leah Schuhart, Ohio's Fair Queen was invited to address the committee. She did an excellent job representing OFMA. You can watch her remarks here at the 1:17:00 mark: <https://ohiochannel.org/video/ohio-joint-agriculture-committee-7-31-2024> House Chairman Don Jones even plugs that he was a judge that selected her!

Following the committee meeting there were events with legislators throughout the day, ending with a hog show. Legislators were paired with 4-H participants to show hogs with Representatives Don Jones and Bob Peterson serving as the judges.

The Expo Commission continues to move forward with the renovations of the grounds and signs of the plans and progress were seen throughout the state fair. Recently the State Controlling Board approved the release of capital funds in the amount of \$196,350,000 and \$4,234,591.06 for the planned renovations to the Ohio Expo Center & State Fairgrounds. Funds for the renovation were previous approved by the legislature.

The following statistics were released by the State Fair at the conclusion of the event:

### Ohio State Fair Metrics

- More than \$3.2 million in total Midway (ride and game) revenue.
- More than \$8.3 million in total vendor concession gross sales across the fairgrounds.
- Exhibitors/participants from all 88 counties.
- 346 total vendors with indoor and outdoor locations at the Ohio State Fair. Approximately 59% of all Fair vendors are Ohio vendors.
- More than \$260,000 in sales at the Sale of Champions from generous buyers, \$134,500 of which goes to the Virgil L. Strickler Youth Reserve Program to award thousands of Ohio State Fair youth exhibitors.
- Food Facts:
  - More than 42,000 lemonades or lemon shake ups purchased.
  - 21,992 corn dogs purchased.
  - 18,515 ears of roasted corns purchased.
  - 16,480 funnel cakes purchased.
  - 16,115 slices of pizza purchased.
  - More than 13,800 orders of french fries purchased.
  - 8,361 orders of cotton candy purchased.
  - 6,473 cream puffs purchased from Schmidt's (both original and cotton candy).
  - Nearly 1,000 pickle lemonades purchased.
  - Nearly 1,800 flights of deviled eggs and 5,839 single deviled eggs (all flavors) purchased.

## **Bill Introduced Regarding Imitation Meat and Egg Products**

[House Bill 661](#), sponsored by Representatives Roy Klopfenstein and Jack Daniels, was introduced in the House on September 3, 2024 and would create a framework for regulating imitation meat and egg products in Ohio. As introduced, the bill would require each local board of education, the Department of Education and Workforce, and state institutions of higher education to adopt policies prohibiting the purchase of misbranded meat or egg products and “cultivated-protein food products.”

HB 661 also establishes requirements for the Department of Agriculture, which must inspect food processing establishments if a “credible complaint” is lodged against them for selling misbranded meat or egg products. The bill outlines specifically what is to be considered a misbranded meat or egg product and creates a civil penalty for selling misbranded products.

## **Ride Safety Fee Proposal Moves Forward Through the Advisory Committee**

Ride Category	Permit Fee	Initial Inspection Fee	Total Initial Permitting Cost	Cost Difference
Inflatables	\$100	\$50 - \$100	\$150 - 200	-\$124 to -\$174
Kiddie	\$225	\$100	\$325	\$0
Family	\$225	\$200	\$425	\$40
Major	\$225	\$300	\$525	\$140
Spectacular	\$225	\$400	\$625	\$240
Family/Portable Coaster	\$225	\$1200	\$1445	\$0
Tower	\$225	\$1800	\$2025	\$1640
Large Coaster	\$225	\$4000	\$4225	\$2800

Based on a directive from the legislature, the ODAg’s Ride Safety Advisory Council created a subcommittee to study and review ride inspection and permitting fees. Inflatable ride owners have been advocating for fee decreases and some members of the legislature generally agree they are being charged too much. Any changes would need to go through the legislative process before being enacted.

The subcommittee met on March 19<sup>th</sup> and ultimately unanimously voted to send the

recommendations to the full advisory council for further review. The full council met on April 25, 2024 and was presented the proposal, but did not take action at the time.

They met again during the State Fair and the council voted without objection to move forward with presenting their fee structure proposal to the General Assembly. They had a lengthy discussion about proposing the fees be phased in over 2 years. (So, the inflatables would get half their decrease, and we would take half our increase, before fulling phasing it in). The updated proposal also keeps kiddie rides at neutral, so those fees wouldn’t go up.

## **Fire Code Changes a Work in Progress**

The State Fire Marshal’s office is going through a review of the fire code and planning revisions to the code. The fire code set the minimum standards for the state, but local jurisdictions can go above and beyond the state requirements. GOSA is tracking changes that could impact our member businesses, particularly our mobile food concessions. Of particular concern would be any proposal that required units be retro-fitted with equipment. The initial round of comments were to be submitted to the Fire Marshal by the end of July, 2024. They are currently reviewing that feedback. Another round of comments will be solicited based on changes made as a result of the comments. All information regarding this process, including the initial draft proposal can be found here: <https://com.ohio.gov/divisions-and-programs/state-fire-marshal/code-enforcement/ohio-fire-code/2024-proposed-ohio-fire-code-update>

One significant change being proposed is to create a new permit for mobile food preparation units, replacing the current provisions regarding mobile food units. Under the proposal: Mobile food preparation vehicles are “Vehicles, including but not limited to any motorized vehicles, trailers and hand propelled carts, that are used to cook, prepare or serve food or that contain cooking equipment that produce smoke or grease-laden vapors for the purpose of preparing and serving food to the public. Vehicles intended for private recreation shall not be considered mobile food preparation vehicles.”

### **Allergen Disclosures**

Legislation has been introduced by Representatives Munira Abdullahi and Tom Young regarding food allergen disclosures on menus. [House Bill 558](#) would require all food service operations to denote on their menu (including menu boards) the food items that contain milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, or soybeans. This bill was referred to the House Commerce and Labor Committee.

### **Minimum Wage Increase Set**

Ohio's minimum wage is scheduled to increase to \$10.70 per hour (up from the current \$10.45) for non-tipped employees and \$5.35 for tipped employees, effective Jan. 1.

The increase applies to employees of businesses with annual gross receipts of more than \$394,000 per year.

Since Ohioans passed a constitutional amendment in 2006 that increases the minimum wage annually by the rate of inflation.

### **TechCred Program**

The Office of Workforce Development announced their most recent opportunity for employers to apply for grants to cover the cost of upskilling employees with industry recognized credentials. The next application period will be **November 1 – 29, 2024**. You would apply at [TechCred.Ohio.Gov](https://www.techcred.ohio.gov).

NAARSO is one of the recognized credentials if you are interested in taking advantage of this program to help cover the cost of training.

### **Mobile Food Legislation**

Senator Paula Hicks-Hudson has introduced legislation regarding mobile food operation inspections. Under the provisions of [Senate Bill 203](#), fire code inspections and permits issued by fire code officials would be valid for 1 year (or the duration of the permit) and would generally require other local jurisdictions to accept the inspection report.

While the primary sponsor is a Democrat member of the Senate, there are a couple of Republican co-sponsors. So, the legislation could get some movement in the Chamber. The bill has had one hearing before the Senate Government Oversight Committee.

### **How to Contact Your Lobbyist**

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