



Midwestern Governors Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***Midwestern Governors Elect Strickland Chair, Focus Agenda on Investment
Capital and Workforce Development***

Washington, D.C. – Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland assumed the chairmanship of the Midwestern Governors Association today during its Winter Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Strickland's agenda, *Midwest Jobs: Training Workers and Investing in Businesses for the New Energy Economy*, will build on previous regional efforts to foster economic growth and opportunities for the Midwest in the new energy economy.

"As a region, the Midwest must determine how to best open up credit markets for mid-sized and smaller advanced energy companies," Strickland said. "As we cast off our reputation as the 'Rust Belt,' we must capitalize on the entrepreneurial spirit and strong work ethic of Midwesterners to expand our energy economy. Our region has the resources and potential to move this nation forward."

Strickland will focus his agenda on two objectives. The first will be increasing investment capital opportunities for Midwestern businesses. The Midwest has enormous energy resources to lead the nation in the new energy economy, as well as a strong manufacturing and agribusiness base. To fully realize this potential, substantial efforts must be taken to identify and create new opportunities to bring funding to the region.

The second objective of Strickland's agenda as chair is to ensure the region's workers have the necessary skills for advanced energy jobs. Building a skilled workforce is an essential component of any state or regional effort to attract capital and businesses to the region, and Strickland will work to identify areas in which states can collaborate on a regional basis in order to meet workforce demands.

At the meeting, governors were joined by U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Governors and the Secretary discussed ways in which states and the federal government can work together on issues of importance to the region.

"A key component of USDA's new approach to helping rebuild and revitalize Rural America is supporting new means such as biofuels and bioproducts for farmers and ranchers to prosper and their communities to thrive," said Vilsack. "As a former Midwestern governor, I know first-hand the important role that the

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Midwestern states will play in this effort, and understand that that we will succeed only through close cooperation with states and the federal government."

Strickland will serve as chair until February 2011. He replaces Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm. As chair, Granholm focused her agenda on *Creating and Retaining Jobs in the New Energy Economy*.

The purpose of the Midwestern Governors Association is to foster regional development, attain greater efficiency in state administration, facilitate interstate cooperation, improve intergovernmental relationships, and provide a medium for the exchange of views and experiences on issues of general importance to the people of the Midwestern states.