

# Strickland kicks off energy development conference

Caitlin Bowling  
Staff Writer

Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland welcomed participants to a sold-out conference about new energy jobs and development in Walter Hall Rotunda last night.

"Energy is at the core of our economy and environment health," Strickland said. "Energy holds the promise of an even brighter future."

The two-day conference hosted by Ohio University and the Appalachian Regional Commission takes place this week in Baker University Center and features discussion panels on new types of energy, such as wind power and biofuels, as

well as the creation of new energy jobs.

"It is a privilege to host a conference that highlights a topic of singular importance to Ohio, Appalachia and the nation," said Pam Benoit, executive vice president and provost, in the conference's opening speech.

The governor chose the conference's topic to highlight new energy development in Southeastern Ohio. Strickland said he hopes the conference will provide an opportunity for information sharing and networking.

The conference will point the way toward jobs and resources, Athens Mayor Paul Wiehl, who attended the welcome ceremony, said.

The Pew Charitable Trust ranked Ohio number four in new energy job creation, State Representative Debbie Phillips (D-92) said, adding that Ohio needs to remain a leader in new energy.

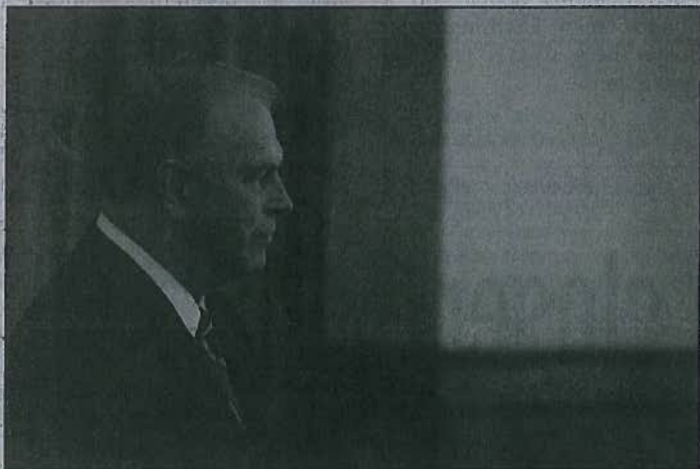
Since 2007, the Appalachian Regional Commission has funded 39 projects, giving more than \$2 million for new energy development. Strickland announced yesterday that the commission awarded OU's Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Affairs a \$100,000 grant to provide businesses with information about energy technology.

Part of reviving Appalachia is strengthening its infrastructure, Strickland said, citing the Nelsonville Bypass as an example.

Some local residents have expressed concerns about the bypass' decreasing traffic through Nelsonville, but Strickland said that the bypass will open up opportunities for the area.

Anne Pope, federal chairwoman of the Appalachian Regional Commission, also spoke about the commission's goal to promote economic growth in 420 counties in 13 states along the Appalachian Mountain chain.

"We are in the energy business, not for energy sake but for jobs," Pope said.



John Naro | PICTURE EDITOR

Ted Strickland listens while Appalachian Regional Commission Federal Co-Chair Anne Pope speaks in Walter Hall Rotunda yesterday.

cb119506@ohiou.edu