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Gov. Mike DeWine speaks about the state of journalism at ONMA

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In his opening statements at the Ohio News Media Association convention, Gov. Mike DeWine said the head of his communications team left him a memo reminding him that the speech was on the record.

“When isn’t it on the record?” DeWine said prompting a round of laughter from the room full of Ohio journalists and media executives.

While his speech focused on the largest issues shaping his plans for this term, DeWine also spoke about the role of the news media in today’s political climate.

“You all perform an absolutely essential function for our country,” he said.

DeWine acknowledged the decreasing size of newsrooms but said, “The truth is that there is always going to be a market for information, and there always should be a market for someone who is an impartial reporter of facts.”

That market includes DeWine himself, who said he reads the front pages of major newspapers in Ohio every morning. He added that he relies on local news media to get information about the problems facing the people of Ohio.

Later in the session, DeWine took questions from the audience.

When Megan Bachman of the Yellow Springs News mentioned she was from his hometown paper, DeWine made sure to say that he was a subscriber, getting laughter and a round of applause from the audience.

The distribution of information is also an important part of the governor’s job, DeWine said.

“I’m informed by the news media, but the public is informed as well,” he said. “That’s my ability to communicate with the public about the problems we have.”



CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Keynote speaker Gov. Mike DeWine speaks about his administration’s efforts to alleviate ODOT’s budget shortfall. (See article, page 4.)

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MIKE DEWINE
Governor

DeWine specifically referenced the impending transportation crisis in Ohio. Borrowed money for the Ohio Department of Transportation has been masking a massive shortfall in funding according to DeWine. Ohio citizens could see a drastic change in the quality of road maintenance and project development and DeWine said his ability to communicate why and what he is doing to prevent it depends on reporters.

DeWine was asked about the media’s performance in the recent election cycle. In response, he said he was very proud of his daughter, Anna DeWine, who is a reporter for the Xenia Daily Gazette.

“Look, you all do great work,” he said. “Do I agree with everything you write? No, but that’s all right. We have the First Amendment.”



Meet our Student News Bureau



I'm a fourth-year journalism major with minors in media, production and analysis, and music. I've been writing for The Lantern for almost two years and I am currently the outreach and engagement editor at the paper. I've had experience working both production and reporting at the NPR-affiliate station WOSU and I will be an intern at the Columbus Dispatch starting in May.

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I'm a third-year journalism major with minors in political science and modern greek. I got involved with The Lantern last year and now work as the Lantern TV news director.

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I'm a second-year communication major with minors in Spanish and political sciences. I have been working with The Lantern since last January when I was a freelance photographer. I became Photo Editor in May.

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I'm a fourth-year journalism major currently working for The Lantern. My minor is media production and analysis and I've worked for the Lantern for over two years as a copy editor as well as producer for the "Lantern Lites" podcast. I am currently the Lantern's Assistant Arts & Life Editor.

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Gov. DeWine discusses top priorities and issues with convention attendees

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Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine addressed his top concerns for the state at the annual Ohio News Media Association convention on Feb. 8.

DeWine's budget, which will be announced soon, will give special focus to the Ohio Department of Transportation, early childhood development and the opioid crisis. While these were all issues that were major talking points during the governor's 2018 campaign, DeWine said the ODOT situation was much worse than he thought.

"We are in a crisis. We are getting ready to go over the cliff literally," he said.

According to DeWine, based on a recent report he requested from the new ODOT director Jack Marchbanks, Ohio has a structural deficit. He said it is due to the decreasing power of the dollar and that it was masked by borrowed money that is now gone.

"For us to maintain the standard of roads that we have in the state of Ohio, at the normal level, plus do priority fixes ... to



CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Before his speech, Gov. DeWine (left) presented outgoing ONMA President Dennis Hetzel with a proclamation honoring his decades of work on open government and newspaper issues. DeWine also gave Hetzel a signed baseball and hat from the Tourists, a minor league team owned by DeWine in Asheville, North Carolina. Hetzel will be retiring in April to North Carolina.

do that we've got a shortfall of about \$1.5 billion per year," DeWine said. "This is a question of jobs. Companies are not going to come to a state where the roads are in total disrepair."

DeWine said that the current step of the process is to understand the problem by gathering information.

Another one of DeWine's focus points was early childhood-development programs. He said that current programs meant to aid at-risk moms are only helping 4 percent of eligible mothers and he wants to triple that number with his new program.

He also said that his budget will uphold a promise he made during his campaign to significantly increase the amount of money going to children's services.

"We have kids going into kindergarten today who have half the vocabulary of other kids who are sitting right by them,"

DeWine said, adding that he wants to help children enter school at age five and be ready to "get in the game."

The third issue DeWine addressed was the addiction problem. He made it clear that he views it as tied closely to mental health and education problems. He wants to have a drug education program in each grade and to introduce a mental health expert into each school in Ohio.

After talking about all of his concerns, DeWine commended the citizens and government workers of Ohio on their work so far.

"Never has Ohio been as energized as Ohio is today in community after community," he said in reference to the efforts to combat the opioid crisis.

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MIKE DEWINE
Governor

Rosenberger talks cannabis industry, medical marijuana



CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Thomas Rosenberger, executive director of the National Cannabis Industry Association of Ohio, speaks in a small group session on day two of the ONMA convention.

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The cannabis industry is in its infancy in Ohio as medical marijuana sales began January 16. To help explain what this means for the state's newspapers, Thomas Rosenberger, the executive director of the National Cannabis Industry Association of Ohio (NCAIO), spoke at the Ohio News Media Association 2019 convention about the media and future of Ohio's marijuana industry.

Currently there are 56 approved dispensaries across the state of Ohio, Rosenberger said. The main focus at these locations is educating patients on the idea of medical marijuana, including which positions it can be used to treat, he said. Current qualified medical conditions include cancer, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and Tourette's syndrome. Rosenberger said the NCAIO board is currently reviewing additional conditions that it hopes the state will add to the qualified conditions list such as chronic pain, autism and insomnia.

"There's going to be a lot of discussion on whether or not insomnia or autism or chronic pain or opioid abuse disorder really deserve to be a part of that qualified conditions list and how medical marijuana impacts those issues," he said.

Rosenberger said he expects the decisions to be made around June.

Rosenberger said some communities have been welcoming of the new law while others remain hesitant.

"It spans a lot of different opinions," Rosenberger said. "We have some communities out there that have to have a moratorium on all business types. Other communities have welcomed the entire industry with open arms."

He said bigger cities such as Columbus, Cincinnati and Cleveland are more progressive and tend to be more open to the idea of medical marijuana and even full recreational legalization. However, smaller more conservative communities are more likely to reject the idea.

When asked how to educate people who don't want to be educated on the cannabis industry, Rosenberger said the key is repetition.

"Repetition is really just making sure that they see this information," he said. "All the different safeguards are in place to make sure that in Ohio we have a program that is patient centered."

Another way to educate the public, Rosenberger said, is to share the success stories of medical marijuana.

"Everyone has someone in their family that's been affected by cancer, that has a condition causing chronic pain or one of those other very debilitating conditions," he said.

He said getting those stories out and

letting people see how much it helps the patients is crucial.

Rosenberger also said from a security standpoint the industry takes precautions to make sure medical marijuana stays within the patient population and doesn't make its way into the general population.

When asked about available research on the effectiveness of medical marijuana, Rosenberger said the fact that it is still listed as a schedule one drug at the federal level makes it difficult to conduct any clinical research. However, many observational anecdotal studies have been done.

"Some conditions have more support than others, but if you go in and do a search in a medical journal on the efficacy of medical marijuana, things like multiple sclerosis pain ... (there's) a lot of observational data that shows medical marijuana is effective in that," he said.

Regulations on advertising medical marijuana are also very strict, Rosenberger said. License holders in Ohio cannot advertise on TV or radio. Signs and pictures of products are also prohibited. Rosenberger said the NCAIO and the Ohio Department of Commerce are working together to develop regulations around advertising holders.

However, advertisements are allowed in newspapers as well as handouts and pamphlets.

Rosenberger said there are testing requirements for every product to ensure its safety and effectiveness, such as making sure there's no mold or illegal pesticides.

"It's also testing for things like the THC content, CBD content and run those plainly on the label," he said. "So every time a patient goes in and says, 'Okay, I'm buying flower with 15% THC,' it's going to be on that label, fully tested."

Rosenberger said the statistics of medical marijuana use is very closely monitored and that states know "within a second" when new patients are registered. Sales and marketing statistics are also monitored, he said.

Rosenberger said there is a strong desire among patients for the legalization of smoking rather than vaporizing and consuming edible products. He said although he doesn't expect that to happen soon, he believes down the road there will be a change in the law as people get more familiarized and comfortable with the product.

Panel discusses how Ohio media outlets can restore and build trust



CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Gary Abernathy, a Republican county commissioner and columnist for The Washington Post, speaks about endorsing presidential candidates during his time working at The Times-Gazette in Hillsboro, Ohio.

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If local news media did a better job of explaining what they do and why they do it, they'd have more credibility according to panelists from the "What Ohio Media Outlets Must Do to Restore and Build Trust" session at the Ohio News Media Association convention on Feb. 7.

George Rodrigue, president and executive editor of the Plain Dealer, began the session by sharing recent trends of the public trusting their local news outlets more than those at the national level as well as certain political parties trusting certain national outlets.

For example, Republicans trust local media less than Democrats but still show significantly more trust in local media than national media.

Aimee Edmondson, an Ohio University Scripps school professor, discussed why the public trends toward trusting their local media outlets more than the national outlets and what, as local media outlets, they can do to ensure their viewers trust in their reporting.

Edmondson referred to Fenno's paradox, the belief that people generally disapprove of the United States Congress as a whole, but support the congressmen from their own congressional districts, to draw parallels between the distrust of national media outlets versus the trust of local media.

Edmondson recommended several ways local media outlets can gain viewers' trust.

First, she said to describe the ethics and funding of local media in a transparent way.

"People assume that journalists are controlled by corporate interests in many cases and that most journalists are focused on clicks or ratings," Edmondson said. "We can counter that by explaining our business practices, our sources of money, where it comes from."

Some of the other recommendations include: being more responsive to readers complaints, holding events inside the newsroom such as with live cameras showing budget meetings, inviting viewers to get to know your entire staff with deep bios, and explaining your reporting process.

Edmonson said the recommendations encourage outlets to be transparent in

their practices to create more trust and understanding between the community and their local news outlets.

Gary Abernathy, a Republican county commissioner who writes op-ed columns for The Washington Post, spoke of his previous experience as publisher of the Gazette in Hillsboro, one of the only newspapers to endorse President Donald Trump during his campaign. Although the Gazette endorsing Trump wasn't controversial in its local news due to 76 percent of the county voting for Trump, Abernathy said that it drew attention from "The Rachel Maddow Show" and Politico.com almost instantly.

Abernathy said that he while he is a conservative, he is still a journalist first. He said that he believes that journalists have hurt themselves by believing they have to change the rules of journalism to cover Trump because he is an "out-of-the-box president."

He also spoke about social media's negative impact on reporters' relationships with viewers due to the anonymity.

"We spend way too much time worrying about anonymous people shooting back at us," Abernathy said. "I think that the internet and social media are one of the worst things that's happened to public discourse in our society."

Abernathy added that while he believes that social media is great because it gives everyone a voice, he doesn't feel that news media benefits from feedback off these sites since most of it is anonymous, which doesn't hold much value.

Former Ohio House Speaker Jo Ann Davidson shared how she became aware of how important journalism was during her time in office. She said that she read the news regularly to be informed of issues that the press felt was important and that she didn't take those issues lightly.

"I always had the feeling that I had a job to do and the press had a job to do and that there was a way in which that we could meet in the middle and be sure that we each had an opportunity to do the job that people expect of us," Davidson said.

Maurice Clarett gives advice to student athletes, talks about life after prison

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As Maurice Clarett and Rob Oller sat on stage, Oller began the breakfast session noting how they both “go way back,” as Oller wrote about him when Clarett was a star for the Ohio State football team.

“Back in the day, Maurice would have never been caught dead in a suit and tie,” Oller said.

During breakfast at the Ohio New Media Association 2019 convention, Clarett, former Ohio State football team running back, was joined by Oller, reporter for the Columbus Dispatch, to talk about Clarett’s life after the 2002 BCS National Championship and his advice to current student athletes.

Early in the session, Clarett was asked by Oller about his advice to student athletes who are trying to separate themselves from their past, and not let those negative influences rub off on them.

However, Clarett, who went to prison for four years in 2006 after multiple arrests for various criminal charges — including aggravated robbery and carrying a concealed weapon without a permit — said it’s foolish to try to escape their past. Instead, student athletes can learn from their experiences.

“Your past, your experiences, make you who you are,” Clarett said. “Sometimes I think we do an unfair service to kids, like believing that [these] kids are a lot more mature than they are.”

Oller added that it’s a challenge because besides the general public, the media also treats younger student athletes as “gods.”

“Even though they are 18, you think of them being 28, or 38, and it’s hard to just think of them as just teens,” Oller said.

Clarett was also asked about his relationship with former Ohio State football head coach Jim Tressel, with whom he won the national championship, since Clarett was dismissed from the team in 2003.

When he was in prison, he said Tressel would write to him, and so when he was released from prison in 2010, he was able to fully reconcile with Tressel and eventually became closer with him, especially



CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Maurice Clarett shares a laugh on stage with Rob Oller on day two of the ONMA convention.

“Your past, your experiences, make you who you are ... Sometimes I think we do an unfair service to kids, like believing that [these] kids are a lot more mature than they are.”

MAURICE CLARETT
Former Ohio State running back

once Tressel became the president of Youngstown State University.

“[During that time] we had spent a lot of time talking to each other around town,” Clarett said.

Clarett also discussed how he transitioned to becoming the motivational speaker that he was today. He said when ESPN created its “30 for 30” documentary, “Youngstown Boys,” in which Clarett was featured, he began going around the country to speak about it at events.

Clarett said one day after he spoke in Toledo, he met a man who specialized in

behavioral therapy with student athletes.

“The next thing you know, I learned what [behavioral therapy] was and I was like ‘Man, this is things that I want to get into,’ because I thought so many young kids just aren’t emotionally well,” he said.

That’s how the idea behind Clarett’s behavioral health agency, the Red Zone, began.

After the event, Clarett talked about the future of the Red Zone after a 2018 report showed a 16.5 percent increase in GPA among students that they assist.

“Of course, you don’t succeed every time, but the goal is to try to figure out what’s working and [consistently] improve,” he said to the ONMA Student News Bureau.

Clarett gave one piece of advice for students and student athletes alike: doing things that they enjoy.

“I think society, we’ve gotten away from that, we’ve gotten into things that make money, it becomes more about, how can I do something that makes me popular, or make money,” he said. “I think just as an adult, you become more fulfilled when you are doing things that have a significant meaning to your life.”

Former newspaper managing editor discusses proper crisis management



CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Thom Fladung, managing partner for Hennes Communications, speaks in a small group session on day two of the ONMA convention.

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From KFC running out of chicken and the Detroit Free Press putting the wrong Harbaugh on its front page, to the American Red Cross accidentally posting an offensive direct message on its official Twitter, Thom Fladung has tips to fix crisis situations.

Fladung, a journalist for 33 years and partner with Hennes Communications in Cleveland, spoke to ONMA conference attendees on Feb. 9 about how to manage a crisis, whether it arises on social media, within a company or even during a tragedy. Afterwards, he spoke with the ONMA Student News Bureau about what he felt were his most important points of his session.

Fladung said the first important point people should follow is that “no comment” is never an option.

“What do you think when you see someone else saying no comment?” Fladung said. “You think they’re guilty, you think they’re hiding something. You cannot be put in that position.”

The second point Fladung mentioned was simply just to tell the truth whenever someone is deciding what to say when they are in a crisis situation.

Finally, the third point Fladung mentioned: speed of communication.

“You need to get that truth out there as fast as you can before confirmation bias sets in, before people decide you are the villain,” he said. “Once you’re cast as the villain, that can be a really hard role to get out of.”

Over the last few years, newsrooms have had crisis situations of their own, such as the Capital-Gazette shooting in Maryland as well as allegations of inappropriate behavior of Garrison Keillor at Minnesota Public Radio.

For a physical tragedy such as the Capital-Gazette shooting, Fladung said the crisis management is much more intense, and that it’s more important to be more human during this type of crisis compared to a non-physical one.

As for a situation like the coverage of Keillor at MPR, he said that it was a “textbook example” of proper crisis manage-

ment within a news organization. When Keillor was under investigation, MPR allowed its reporters to continue the coverage on the situation, despite possibly taking heat internally.

“It’s hard to report on yourself. It’s really hard,” Fladung said. “But what they did, and what I would recommend every newsroom do is [ask], ‘What are you best at?’ You’re best at journalism. So, when you’re faced with something like that, do journalism.”

Fladung said for newsrooms covering internal crisis situations, it’s difficult not only to talk about themselves, but also to report on themselves since it’s not natural for newsrooms. Even so, he said, it’s still essential.

“This is a hard time in history for news organizations,” he said. “The business model is shattered; there have been all the layoffs. That’s why it’s more essential than ever that newsroom leaders talk about what they’re doing, and why they’re doing it, and what their values are.”

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... Once you’re cast as the villain, that can be a really hard role to get out of.”

THOM FLADUNG
Journalist and partner with Hennes Communications



PHOTO AT LEFT: CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Max Heath accepts the William Maxwell Award, which recognizes individual achievement in the advancement of the newspaper profession and the public's right-to-know. Heath was honored for his lifetime of work on postal issues and regulations.

The Maxwell Award is ONMA's highest honor. The award is named for the publisher and editor of The Centinel of the Northwestern Territory. Established in Cincinnati in 1793, The Centinel was the first newspaper in what would become the state of Ohio, admitted to the Union in 1803.

From left to right, Monica Nieporte, incoming ONMA president; Dennis Hetzel, ONMA president; Max Heath; and Ron Waite, ONMA Board president.



PHOTO AT RIGHT: CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Bill Southern accepts the ONMA's President Award, award, which is given annually to someone who has provided exceptional, exemplary service to Ohio's newspaper industry and to the association.

Southern is the director of finance for the newspaper division of Block Communications and is responsible for finances at The Blade in Toledo and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. He served on the ONMA Board of Trustees and is a past board president.

From left to right, Monica Nieporte, incoming ONMA president; Dennis Hetzel, ONMA president; Bill Southern; and Ron Waite, ONMA Board president.



PHOTO AT LEFT: CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Dennis Hetzel accepts the Ohio Coalition for Open Government (OCOG) Champion of Open Government Award, which recognizes the passion and mission of ongoing advocacy and contributions to open and transparent government in Ohio. Hetzel was honored for nearly a decade of running OCOG and helping the organization win numerous open government battles in the state.

From left to right, Monica Nieporte, incoming ONMA president; Ron Waite, ONMA Board president; Dennis Hetzel; and George Rodrigue, OCOG Board Chair.



PHOTO AT LEFT: CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Staff from ONMA collegiate member papers discuss with their peers the issues their papers are facing along with the best recent ideas they've executed.



PHOTO AT RIGHT: CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

Kelly Wirges of Pro Max, one of the media industry's leading sales trainers, discusses her thoughts on advertising and other issues at the ONMA Convention. Wirges ran two training sessions during the convention, the first on "Prospecting that Pays" followed by "Developing a Competitive Multi-Media Advantage."



PHOTO AT LEFT: CASEY CASCALDO | THE LANTERN

ONMA members enjoyed Ken Paulson's performance of "Revolution, rights and rock 'n roll," an interactive look at the hidden history of the First Amendment. Paulson is president of the First Amendment Center and the former editor of USA Today.