

Year Ahead

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But we Democrats can't rest on our laurels in this new year. Much of our success could be wiped away, if we don't work harder than ever.

Ohio is still saddled with an ailing economy bequeathed to us by the failed presidency of George Bush and his free-trade policies that have sapped our state of so many jobs.

Gov. Ted Strickland and our other statewide candidates will have tough battles. Make no mistake about it, our opponents will be putting on a full-court press to win back the Statehouse.

Control of the Apportionment Board, which redraws Ohio House and Senate districts every 10 years, is at stake in this year's statewide races. The elections of governor, secretary of state and auditor will determine which party controls this vital board.

And the General Assembly and governor will determine the makeup of our congressional districts, which also will be redrawn.

Think about what Republican victories in Ohio would mean to our state. More tax breaks for the wealthy, more cutbacks in services for average Ohioans, more anti-consumer and anti-labor union laws, more right-wing assaults on women's rights, gays and other minorities, more eroding of our environmental protections.

Luckily for us, our opponents are about to nominate candidates who represent the disastrous policies of the past.

Their leading candidate for U.S. Senate is largely responsible for the devastating trade and budgetary policies of the Bush administration. And their front-runner gubernatorial candidate is a former Wall Street high-roller who wants to slash state services even further and hand out more tax breaks to his wealthy pals.

There is only one way to ensure that Franklin County and our state don't move backwards.

We must all work harder than ever. The futures of our children and grandchildren depend on it. Together, we can build on our past successes

Grass Roots

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We have two excellent candidates running for the U.S. House - Rep. Mary Jo Kilroy, seeking re-election in the 15th Congressional District in the western part of the county; and County Commissioner Paula Brooks running to unseat a Republican incumbent in the 12th Congressional District in the eastern part of the county.

County Commissioner Marilyn Brown is running for re-election and we will field a candidate to oppose the incumbent Republican for county auditor.



Zach Manifold Executive Director
Franklin County Democratic Party

Three Ohio Senate and nine Ohio House seats are at stake this year as well as 13 county judicial seats.

Campaigns for the May 4 primary elections will be kicking off later this month. (Information about officially endorsed Democratic candidates in the primaries will be available later.)

Campaign activities for the November general elections will be gearing up soon, too.

The easiest way to volunteer is to pull up the Franklin County Democratic Party's web site at www.fcdp.org. Scroll down to the portion headlined "Take Action" on the left-hand side of the page and hit "Volunteer." You can also call us at 614-224-1193 or visit us at headquarters at 271 E. State St.

Many individual candidates also will be or already have established web sites where you can sign up to volunteer.

The important thing is to get involved and volunteer. Only through your help can we Democrats continue to be successful this year.

Union Leader

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The Ohio Democratic Party trails only the Democratic National Committee and the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in the size of its staff and budget, Rugola noted.

"It's going to be a blood fight," he said, referring to congressional and statewide races in Ohio this year. "But I say, 'Bring it on.'"

Rugola knows the value of building organizations, whether it's a labor union or a political party. Since taking the helm of the Ohio school employees union 19 years ago, membership has grown by more than 50 percent to 38,000 workers. His union represents classified school employees such as bus drivers, teachers aides, secretaries and cafeteria workers.

Rugola earned a bachelor's degree in 1972 from Ohio State University and was elected president of the Ohio AFL-CIO in April 2007. He is also an international vice president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Luncheons at the Florentine are held on the third Friday of each month. For more information, contact Denny Roberge by e-mail at daroberge@earthlink.net or by phone at 614-207-9779.

Generations

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One of the most intensive efforts in recent years was the campaign to convince voters to approve an increase in Columbus' municipal income tax, Jones said. That Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) effort included 400 volunteers. The county's GOTV effort aids Democratic candidates in presidential, statewide, county and municipal elections.



Erika Jones, GOTV coordinator for FCDP

Looking back on her years in politics, Jones said one of her biggest disappointments was the presidential loss of Sen. John Kerry in 2004.

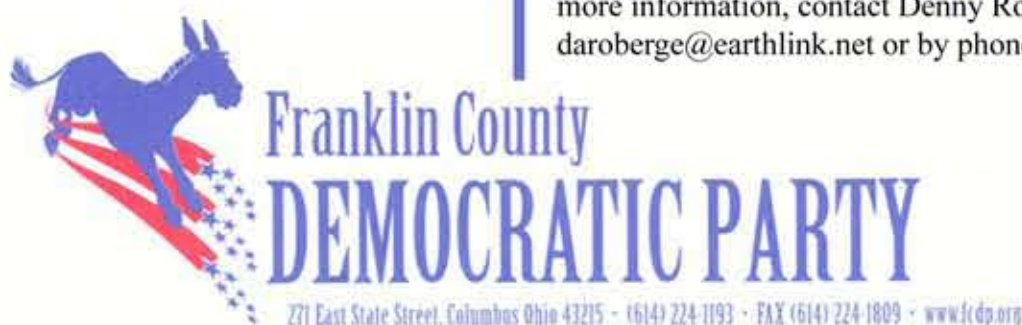
"That was tough," Jones said. "We stayed up all night waiting for the last returns to come in. Our eyes were bloodshot."

But Kerry's loss was offset four years later by one of her greatest accomplishments - helping then-Sen. Barack Obama win a majority of the vote in Franklin County for president." What a night that was," she recalled.

Who we are

The Democratic Clarion is the official newsletter of the Franklin County Democratic Party. Anyone with an idea or person of interest or anyone who wants to write an article for the Clarion should e-mail the idea or article to franklincountydemnews@yahoo.com.

Please include your name, phone number and e-mail address with your submission.



William A. Anthony Jr. Chair