

## A message from Bruce J. Weston

### *Ohio Consumers' Counsel*

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*Attorney General Mike DeWine administering the oath of office to Consumers' Counsel Bruce Weston.*

The mission of the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel (OCC) is to advocate for Ohio's residential utility consumers. In 2012, OCC's advocacy gave consumers a voice regarding the oversight of their electric, natural gas, telephone, and water services. Our consumer voice was strong because of the dedication of OCC's staff, the guidance of the OCC Governing Board, and the support of legislators who preserved our consumer advocacy by rescinding a previously scheduled budget reduction.

In March 2012, the Governing Board allowed me the privilege, by appointment, to serve Ohioans as the Consumers' Counsel. For OCC's staff and for me, our public service means striving every day to fulfill the OCC vision of affordable rates and quality utility services. And, in this regard, I recognize OCC's staff and management team for their many efforts to protect Ohio consumers through legal advocacy and education during the past year.

In 2012, OCC's consumer advocacy continued to provide great value for Ohio's residential utility consumers. A major challenge for OCC's advocacy was how to transfer low prices in the energy market to actual reductions in Ohioans' energy bills, when others were seeking to charge customers more than market prices.

The inside front cover of this Annual Report contains a list of some of the accomplishments that OCC, working with others, achieved for residential consumers (and sometimes for all customers) in 2012. The customer savings in these accomplishments far outweigh the cost of OCC's budget.

I thank Governing Board Chairman Krebs, Vice Chairman Logan, and the Board members for their guidance and support, with best wishes and appreciation to former members John Moliterno (who served as Chairman), Roger Wise, Harold Cassel, and Anthony Peto. I thank the Administration and legislators for their time and consideration of OCC's consumer views and for sharing with us their perspectives on the issues.

OCC looks forward to 2013 and with it the continued opportunity, working with others, to make a positive difference for Ohioans regarding their utility services.