

MAYOR'S MESSAGE

Craig A. Stough 3/28/2019

"Meeting Governor Michael DeWine"

One of the benefits of being Mayor is that I get to meet important leaders when they visit the Sylvania area. I have met two Presidents, a Vice President, four US Senators, the four previous Ohio Governors and most recently, Governor Michael DeWine.

Governor DeWine was in Toledo on March 14th for the 2019 Impact Ohio Conference at the Renaissance Hotel. Unlike almost every other high ranking elected official I have met, he arrived early and unannounced to the conference. I unexpectedly came face to face with him in the back of the hall ahead of his speech, and was introduced to him by former Ohio Senator Mark Wagoner.

The Governor initiated a friendly conversation, opening by telling me he was trying to get all local governments in Ohio some additional road funding with his proposed 18¢ per gallon gasoline tax increase. He was pleased that I knew his proposal would add \$465,000 annually to the City's road improvement fund, and that Sylvania could surely use the additional funds.

He politely continued the conversation with an inquiry about Sylvania's wellbeing and needs, and took the time to listen to my answer. Needless to say, I was impressed and pleased by his attention and sincerity. I believe this bodes well for Ohio, and that he truly wants to help Ohioans and lead all of us forward to a better future.

I sensed in him the same leadership and sincerity I felt more than twenty years ago when I met my first governor, George Voinovich. Both men projected a larger than life presence to me, even though both are physically shorter in height than almost all other high level elected officials I have met. Both were open and ready to serve Ohio in whatever way would best help our state.

Governor Voinovich took the time to visit Sylvania decades ago and went on a bus tour with us north of Sylvania into Michigan when we were concerned about a possible expended nuclear fuel storage facility in Riga Township. Years later I had the privilege of a longer conversation with then US Senator Voinovich on a ferry boat coming back from a TMACOG/NOMMA conference at Put-In-Bay. He took the time to share with me some of his experiences as Mayor of Cleveland, Governor and Senator, and how the roles all had their own particular challenges and leadership opportunities.

Governor DeWine has similarly served Ohio in many roles and brings a lot of experience and wisdom with him to his new office. But his "honeymoon period" as the new governor is apparently already over in Columbus with the Ohio Legislature resisting and reducing his gas tax proposal. I wish him well and the best of luck as he leads Ohio – looks like he is going to need it!

