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LogisticsConnect™ Highlights

Region's Advantages and Challenges

Some 120 attendees from the logistics, finance and retail sectors gathered for LogisticsConnect in Columbus on Thursday, May 12. The inaugural, full-day event offered a broad view of the most pertinent issues in logistics today, with an eye toward impending opportunities and challenges. Topics presented by industry leaders ranged from the increasing role of the on-demand economy, developments at the Rickenbacker International Airport and new opportunities for using technology – including drones – in the various sectors of the industry.

Among the speakers were Steve DeNunzio of the Fisher College of Business, Chris Luebbers of Norfolk Southern Corporation and Paul Bugenstein of DHL Supply Chain. Bill Lafayette of Regionomics® provided an economic update, showing that although Ohio is lagging in overall employment growth compared to national averages, it has seen significantly stronger growth, particularly in the transportation and distribution sectors. Retail employment, however, has seen a sharp decline, attributed mainly to a much slower than average population growth.

A portion of the conference was dedicated to workforce issues, from automation and the expansion of robotization, to the priorities of the hourly workforce. Brian Devine of EmployBridge shared a recent study showing that pay and job security continue to be the most important factors for hourly workers, indicating the need for a correction in wages as unemployment rates in the industry continue to fall. Also presenting at the conference were James Mackler, Frost Brown Todd attorney specializing in drone law, Art Makris of Duke Realty, David Whitaker of the Columbus Regional Airport Authority and Jason Acevedo of The Limited.

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