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‘It is very dire’



Love's gas station in West Jefferson has diesel gas for \$6.64 on Oct. 1. KYLE ROBERTSON/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Ohio trucking companies face cash flow crunch amid soaring diesel costs

Nathan Hart Columbus Dispatch | USA TODAY NETWORK

There was one topic that dominated the Ohio Trucking Association's annual conference in September.

Diesel fuel prices.

National diesel prices hit a record-high average of \$6.53 per gallon Sept. 21, and they remain near the historic peak. Diesel prices in Ohio average even higher, currently sitting at around \$6.65 per gallon, almost \$3 more expensive than the same time last year, when it was \$3.66 a gallon.

The Ohio Legislature has passed and Gov. Mike DeWine has signed a gas tax holiday bill that cuts the state tax on diesel fuel by 47 cents for 90 days officially beginning Sunday, Oct. 4. But the United States' war with Iran, which sparked rising fuel and diesel fuel costs beginning in February, shows no immediate signs of ending.

Several Ohio trucking company leaders and industry experts interviewed by The Dispatch said their businesses – and the trucking industry as a whole – are facing an ongoing cash flow crisis brought on by soaring fuel costs.

“It is very dire. We have seen trucking companies go out of business,” said Thomas Balzer, president and CEO of the Ohio Trucking Association.

Fuel costs for trucking company Continental Express in Sidney are up 75% compared to last year, said Kiera Sullivan, general counsel and shareholder for Continental Express. And her company can't just immediately charge customers more to make up for these costs, she said.

Trucking rates are set by contracts,

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Second rabid bat found in the county

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A second bat found in the county this year has tested positive for rabies, according to a release from the Tuscarawas County Health Department.

This one was discovered in the area of Walnut and Franklin streets in Uhrichsville. The health department was notified of the test results on Oct. 6. The first rabies-positive bat was reported in April and was found in Dennison.

Rabies is a serious and potentially fatal disease caused by a virus that attacks the central nervous system, including the brain and spinal cord, according to the release. Although rabies is found most

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Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine issued 323 fast-tracked pardons

Laura A. Bischoff State Bureau | USA TODAY NETWORK

Nearly seven years after Gov. Mike DeWine launched his expedited pardon project, he announced that he has signed 323 pardons that came to his desk through the fast-tracked system and another 340 applications are in progress.

DeWine created the program in December 2019 for people convicted of low-level, non-violent crimes who have since rebuilt their lives to be law-abiding citizens.

“A criminal record comes with a lifetime of restrictions, but I believe those who've truly reformed their lives deserve a second chance to live up to their full potential – and that second chance starts with a pardon,” said DeWine in a press release on Oct. 6. “It has been great to hear about the transformational impacts these expedited pardons have had on recipients' lives and how doors are finally opening to allow them to achieve their dreams.”

Students and staff at Ohio law schools in Columbus, Akron, Cleveland, Dayton and Toledo work with applicants to gather records and make sure they meet qualifications and then submit the application to the Ohio Parole Board.

The first requirement is that at least 10 years have passed since the person completed the sentence for the conviction.



Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine speaks at an expedited pardon project event in 2023. He announced Oct. 6 that he has granted 323 pardons through the program since its inception in December 2019.

BARBARA J. PERENIC/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Other requirements include:

- The applicant hasn't committed any other crimes in at least 10 years, including drunken driving.

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