



CLEAN AIR & CLEAN ENERGY
ARE GOOD BUSINESS

Helping Small Businesses Meet Clean Air Rules **By Chadwick Smith, Executive Director** **Ohio Air Quality Development Authority**

Becoming and remaining compliant with changing federal and state clean air standards are challenges that many Ohio small business owners wake up to every day. This is especially true for companies whose primary work processes involve the release of potentially hazardous substances into the air. Those businesses can include dry cleaners, auto body and collision repair shops, bakeries, printers, metal finishers and many others.

It wasn't always this way. The federal Clean Air Act of 1970 mainly targeted large businesses – especially manufacturers, heavy industries and utilities – which were viewed as America's primary air polluters. Small businesses remained exempt from air pollution mandates until the passage of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, which introduced additional air pollution regulations that, for the first time, were extended to small businesses.

Of course, finding ways to pay for the necessary upgrades in facilities or equipment to meet clean air regulations can be a hardship for many Ohio small businesses. What some small business owners do not know, however is that our state government includes a program that can make a big difference in helping small businesses undertake air quality improvement projects.

The Clean Air Resource Center (CARC) – a program of the Ohio Air Quality Development Authority (OAQDA) – was created in 1996 to provide lower-cost grants and loans to small Ohio companies that need to purchase air quality equipment. CARC financing packages are structured to suit the needs of individual projects and incentivized through conduit bonds issued by OAQDA. These bonds can be federally tax-exempt or taxable, and all are exempt from Ohio income, real property, sales and use taxes for the term of the financing.

CARC offers grants to help pay for the up-front costs of the purchase of new air quality equipment and facilities of up to 30 percent of the cost up to a maximum of \$30,000. Qualifying businesses must have fewer than 100 employees, emit less than 75 tons per year of all regulated air pollutants and emit 50 or less tons of any regulated pollutant.

Ohio small business owners want to be compliant with clean air standards and do their part to help preserve Ohio's environment. I urge anyone interested in finding out more about CARC assistance to contact OAQDA at 614-224-3353, or at www.ohioairquality.org.