



**John R. Kasich**  
Governor

**Christiane Schmenk**  
Director

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## **Homeless Man Realizes Dream Through State Collaboration**

*The Ohio Abilities Program gives Ohio man an opportunity of a lifetime*

**COLUMBUS** – A collaborative effort has made a man’s dream come true. The Ohio Department of Development’s Small Business Development Centers and the Ohio Bureau of Vocation Rehab (BVR) with the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (RSC) will participate in the grand opening of Darren McGowan’s Columbus Bike Tours and Bike Rentals.

McGowan, owner of Columbus Bike Tours and Bike Rentals, is a customer service oriented person, whose dream of starting a historic bike tour business in Columbus seemed out of reach last year because of recurring health and homelessness issues. Now, as he launches his business, he is a role model for others that have experienced similar issues.

After being referred to the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, McGowan learned about the Ohio Abilities Program, a self-employment program that assists individuals with health issues, while assisting with the development and implementation of business plans so they can launch a business and become self-sufficient. Ohio Abilities provides enhanced opportunities for Ohioans with significant disabilities to explore self-employment and microenterprise opportunities.

“These partnerships offer Ohioans the assistance they need to succeed after a chaotic time in their lives,” said Christiane Schmenk, Director of the Ohio Department of Development. “Success stories like this show how organizations can come together to provide programs that help improve the lives of Ohioans and build our small business community.”

“Sometimes the most direct path to a good job is creating your own business and that’s what Darren has done,” said Kevin Miller, Director of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission.

**Join us for the grand opening of Columbus Bike Tours and Bike Rentals, taking place at 55 E. Rich Street across from the Columbus Commons Park in downtown Columbus. The ribbon-cutting will take place on Tuesday, July 10, 2012 at 10:30 a.m.**

As Columbus celebrates its bicentennial this year, McGowan offers residents and visitors an opportunity to tour historic downtown Columbus via bicycle. Tours are offered two times a day, Wednesday through Sunday with Saturday adding an evening tour to its schedule. For more information, visit [www.columbusbiketours.com](http://www.columbusbiketours.com).

For information about Ohio Abilities: Neighbors creating Jobs and Wealth, visit [www.rsc.ohio.gov](http://www.rsc.ohio.gov) or call 1-800-282-4536.

*The Office of Business Assistance leads the state’s efforts to create, grow, and develop small- and minority-owned businesses resulting in job creation and a strengthened Ohio economy. The Office also provides customized services to increase the exports from Ohio companies. The Office oversees a variety of service programs including the state Small Business Develop Center network, Ohio Business Lending Clearinghouse, the Minority Business Assistance Centers, and more.*

*Working with our partners across business, state and local governments, academia, and the nonprofit sector, the **Ohio Department of Development** works to support business attraction and retention efforts by providing targeted investments that assist in job creation, as well as provides assistance and services to Ohio's communities and individuals. Engaged every day in marketing, innovating, investing, and collaborating, the **Ohio Department of Development** works to accelerate and support the teamwork that is necessary for success by providing financial, informational, and technical assistance to those making an investment in Ohio's future.*

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Media contacts: Stephanie Mennecke at (614) 466-6619  
or the Communications and Marketing Office at (614) 466-2609

Office of Communications & Marketing • 77 South High Street • P.O. Box 1001 • Columbus, Ohio 43215 • U.S.A. • 614 | 466 2609

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