

Dream state: Wake up to campus reality

BY LUIS M. PROENZA

All Ohio governors past, present and, surely, future aspire to create a healthy economy. They work to attract major enterprises that can have a significant impact on the state's economy.

Let us examine a dream that any one of these distinguished governors could have.

The governor, while dreaming, is excited because great efforts by himself, his staff, members of the General Assembly and key business leaders across the state have lured a major enterprise to Ohio.

This clean, nonpolluting, high-technology enterprise is part of a global conglomerate with annual worldwide revenues of \$500 billion, of which about \$200 billion is in the United States.

It has proposed an investment that is expected to generate \$7 billion and it will put facilities in

about 175 municipalities across the state for a net capital investment of \$15 billion.

What is more, it will create about 130,000 jobs for Ohioans, with an unusually high percentage of those jobs requiring at least a bachelor's degree and about 30,000 of those jobs requiring advanced training in science and engineering at the master's or doctoral level. In north-east Ohio alone, the company will have 22 locations, it will create 25,000 jobs and will generate \$2.5 billion in annual revenues.

For its Ohio operations, this enterprise anticipates about 675,000 primary customers, with about 15 percent of them from other states and from countries around the world. Its non-Ohio revenues will be nearly \$2 billion, with half of that resulting from contracts and grants from the

federal government.

Already, the company has hundreds of thousands of stockholders in Ohio, with the prospect of a healthy rate of growth in the percentage of individual investors.

Of course, thousands of Ohio suppliers will benefit from this enterprise, and the net economic impact to Ohio is calculated to begin at about \$32 billion per year and to grow annually at the rate of 15 percent to 25 percent.

As this dream unfolds, the director of the Ohio Department of Development rushes into the governor's office and proclaims: "We've got it! We've got it!"

Everywhere, celebrations break out and there is much excitement and anticipation. Chrome-plated shovels and construction helmets are readied for all of the groundbreaking photo opportunities across

the state. The media are ecstatic and shower the governor and his team with a running stream of praise on its editorial and front pages.

By November, the governor is re-elected by a landslide and economic growth is above the national average, bringing Ohio, once again, to a position of leadership in our nation.

Success after success continues to unfold in the dream.

And then, as morning breaks, the governor wakes up to find that such an enterprise already is a reality in Ohio: It is called higher education!

Wake up, Ohio! Live the dream.

Higher education is the infrastructure of our future prosperity.

— *Luis M. Proenza is president of The University of Akron.*
