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## Blue Ash firm touted as Third Frontier success

By James Pilcher

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**BLUE ASH** - Ohio Gov. Ted Strickland Friday used a local construction software services company as an example of why voters should approve the extension of the state's technology and job creation Third Frontier program next month.

"We all know that Ohio needs jobs right now, and this is the tangible solution to that," Strickland told a crowd of employees at Construction Software Technologies Inc., better known as iSqFt. "This is not a partisan issue ... we are all joined together to get this passed."

The Ohio Legislature is asking for voter approval for \$700 million in bonds to continue the program another four years - it is set to expire at the end of 2012. The initial \$500 million bond was approved in 2005, and the extension is in front of the voters on May 4.

iSqFt received a \$2 million loan in 2006 from Third Frontier's Innovation Ohio Fund, and has already started repaying that loan with interest. It has applied for another \$1 million, which it hopes to use to improve its online product, which lets construction contractors and builders bid on projects using the Internet as opposed to getting physical plans. Company chief executive officer and president Dave Conway told Strickland that the company has gone from 4-5 employees in 2000 to more than 330 currently, with the company planning to hire more than 70 this year alone.

"We've been very successful, but we've been able to do it with the help of the taxpayers, and we're now being able to pay them back with interest," Conway told his employees.

Strickland's visit came a day before the campaign for Issue 1 was scheduled to begin in earnest in Southwest Ohio. Campaign officials said television ads were set to begin airing Saturday on local stations. The same ad began airing earlier this week in Cleveland and Columbus.

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View pictures of the visit at <http://www.isqft.com/home/governor/>