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By JAMES W. WADE III

Staff Reporter

President Barack Obama is returning to Cleveland and will deliver remarks on the economy Wednesday, Jan. 4, at Shaker Heights High School, according to the White House Press Office.

The president is scheduled to arrive in Cleveland around 11:35 a.m. and depart around 2:35

p.m. He is expected to deliver his speech in the North Gymnasium around 1:15 p.m.

The speech is the president's first since returning from a more than a week-long vacation in Hawaii for the holidays. The president had put off his trip to Hawaii to wait for Congress to extend payroll tax cuts expiring at the end of December, which lawmakers eventually agreed to continue for only two months because of disagreements about how to offset their cost.

Ohio, which holds its primary March 6, remains a state key to winning the presidential race in November. The Shaker Heights visit will be Obama's 16th to the Buckeye State since taking office in January 2009. Yet Obama's poll numbers show he has a challenge ahead. In a Quinnipiac University survey last month, 55 percent of Ohioans disapproved of the president's job performance.

Obama won here by four points in 2008 and saw promising signs last fall after a Democratic-backed coalition led the repeal of a labor law championed by Republican Gov. John Kasich. A week after the measure went down; Obama's re-election campaign sent Vice President Joe Biden to Euclid to celebrate with firefighters and other unionized public employees.

When President Obama came to Shaker Heights High School in July 2009, full of first-year optimism and salesmanship, he called on Congress to work with him on an overhaul of the nation's health care system.

President Obama came to Cleveland State University with several of his Cabinet members on Feb. 22, to convene a "Winning the Future" forum on small business in conjunction with local business innovation groups.

"The entrepreneurial spirit in America is one of our greatest assets, and small-business owners who grow these fast-growing companies create the majority of the jobs," said Small Business Administrator Karen Mills, who is one of the Cabinet secretaries.

President Obama met with more than 100 small-business executives at Cleveland State

University where he discussed ways on how the government could help them to succeed.

As expected, security will be tight and Shaker Heights Police Chief Scott Lee is recommending that people attending President Barack Obama's visit to Shaker Heights High School Wednesday be dropped off.

Lee says school will be in session and parking will be severely limited. With that in mind, Lee is encouraging ticket holders to make arrangements to be dropped off near the intersection of Parkland Drive and Ashford Road. From there it's a short walk to the high school.

In the alternative, Chief Lee says you can park on area side streets outside of the restricted area if spots are available and legally permitted.

A reminder that only those holding tickets to the Obama event will be allowed in the high school. The doors open to the public at 10:30 a.m.

Obama aides say the president's trip to Cleveland marks the start of an aggressive 2012 domestic travel schedule. Still, they insist Obama will not fully engage in the presidential race until after Republicans pick a nominee.