

COUNTY LEADER



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Cover: Madison County Administrator Rob Slane, County Commissioners Mark Forrest, Chris Wallace and Tony Xenikis pictured with CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler and CCAO Assistant Director John Leutz

1 Muskingum County Commissioner Melissa Bell, Defiance County Commissioner David Kern, and Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus at the Ohio State University John Glenn College of Public Affairs Leadership Academy

2 Franklin County Commissioners John O'Grady and Erica Crawley, Logan County Commissioner Joe Antram and Union County Commissioner Dave Burke with Vice President of Government & Industry Relations at Honda Tadao Kajitani in Tokyo, Japan

3 CCAO Board of Directors with Treasurer of State Robert Sprague at CCAO Summer Symposium Board Meeting

A MESSAGE FROM 2023 CCAO PRESIDENT GLENN MILLER, HENRY COUNTY COMMISSIONER

It's fall, where has the year gone! Soon we will be at the CCAO Winter Conference in December and then we will bring 2023 to a close. When I became president of CCAO some wise past presidents said you will initially be overwhelmed, then the year will go quickly! That is exactly what has happened.



Miller

This year much has been accomplished! The biennial budget had its successes and challenges. As an Association, we secured funding for more vital county jail projects, the rollout and operation of the Next Generation 9-1-1 system, indigent defense reimbursement, and a statutory increase in the Local Government Fund allocation. The budget also included funding for economic development projects, an expansion of the H2Ohio program, and many helpful changes in the human services realm. While some may feel we did not get what we were looking for, no matter what your view, we have been given an opportunity!

The Statehouse Advocacy Task Force authorized by the Board of Directors will be a key component to building a better relationship with the House of Representatives and the Senate. The Task Force will identify strategies to improve relationship building with state lawmakers and executive officials, develop advocacy materials to educate CCAO members on the Association's policy priorities, and cultivate best practices for communicating Association priorities to state-level stakeholders. We are excited for the Task Force to start its work and help strengthen counties' presence in Columbus.

Legislative leadership respects our organization so much that they have asked us to help educate their members on a variety of topics important to counties. This is a fantastic opportunity for our members to become a more integral part of our lobbying efforts at the Statehouse.

In addition to the upcoming Winter Conference, CCAO held two other educational events this year, starting with New Member Training in February and followed by the Summer Symposium in August. These events give members valuable opportunities to learn about a variety of subjects, both from experts in the fields and from colleagues around the state. I'm proud of the success of these events and what will surely be another successful Winter Conference!

Thank you for allowing me to be your President in 2023. I have always appreciated and respected CCAO for what it does and the influence our organization has in the State of Ohio and around the country. Our staff is the best there is, you have made my job easy! Thank you to the Executive Committee and the full Board. We all have chosen to work together for the greater good of our organization, members, and counties. Please accept this heartfelt "Thank You" from the bottom of my heart!

May God continue to bless you, your families, and your county!

LETTER FROM CCAO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CHERYL SUBLER

County commissioners, county executives and county council members are a driving force behind the success and well-being of our counties. They navigate complex issues, allocate limited resources, and make crucial decisions that impact the lives of every resident. They are the architects of change, the stewards of progress, and the embodiment of unwavering dedication to public service.



Subler

CCAO is preparing to launch a new recognition program to illuminate the remarkable years of service, enduring commitment, and outstanding achievements of these extraordinary individuals who shape the future of our counties.

CCAO's new **Decades of Dedication: County Governance Award** will honor our members when they've reached the benchmark of 10 years of service, 20 years of service, 30 years of service and even 40 years! Over these time spans, such commissioners, executives and council members steadfastly have led innovative projects and secured vital funding in the realms of economic development, protecting children and supporting families, vital infrastructure including water and sewer services, and much, much more!

Our recognition program will stand as a testament to the commitment and unwavering service of our county commissioners, county executives and county council members. Together, we will celebrate those individuals who have dedicated their lives to building better, stronger, and more vibrant counties for all.

We'll kick off the **Decades of Dedication: County Governance Awards** program during our CCAO Annual Membership Business Meeting on Thursday, December 7 at the CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference. There we'll share the names of the 70 officials who will receive their 10 years of service award along

with the 10 officials who will receive their 20 years of service award. Moreover, we'll honor a very special county commissioner who has been making impactful decisions for more than 40 years! Later that afternoon CCAO President Glenn Miller, Henry County Commissioner, will present each recipient their distinguished award.

In a world where the spotlight often shines on the sensational, it's time to unveil the excellence that lies in the hearts of our counties. We'll celebrate devoted public service while county elected officials are in office, thereby highlighting and igniting a passion for public service in the hearts of aspiring leaders.

My hope is you'll join us at the upcoming CCAO/CEAO Annual Winter Conference, an event that promises to be the highlight of the year, and come together to honor dedicated county commissioners, county executives and county council members with decades of service who have given much of their life, energy and passion to make their county a wonderful place to call home and have a bright future for generations to come. Stronger Counties. Stronger Ohio.

CCAO POLICY TEAM

NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1, THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SAFETY

by Kyle Petty, Esq., CCAO Managing Director of Policy

Did you know that Ohioans made nearly six million 9-1-1 calls last year? Most people believe that they are being directly connected with a live person once they call 9-1-1, but that call actually bounces around to various systems before being answered by a 9-1-1 operator through an antiquated landline-based system.



Petty

The outdated system severely limits how much information can be provided to first responders, especially when it comes to the physical location of the caller. In fact, during a legislative hearing this year it was remarked that it is easier for a Domino’s delivery driver to locate you than it is a county 9-1-1 operator.

However, Ohio made a major step in House Bill 33, through the implementation of a Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG 9-1-1) system. The NG 9-1-1 system is operated by the state and is a web-based system that will route calls through a centralized state system that counties will plug into locally. The system offers a variety of benefits that will increase public safety. For example, a NG 9-1-1 system will allow the dispatcher to locate a caller within several feet of accuracy. Additionally, the system will also allow for live video and other information to be directly sent from the caller to the first responder via phone or text.

As you can imagine, setting up this new system will come at an additional cost. House Bill 33 allocated \$46 million dollars in one-time funds to assist the state and some locals with the one-time costs associated with setting up this system. Additional funding will be provided on an ongoing basis through a fee expansion and increase contained in House Bill 33. Currently, Ohio residents pay 25 cents per

month on all wireless lines and landlines to help fund 9-1-1 and counties receive 97% of that revenue. Under House Bill 33, that fee is expanded to VoIP lines, and multi-telephone systems (MTS) and the fee amount is increased from 25 cents to 40 cents a month. Counties will receive 72% of that revenue, and the state will receive 25% of the revenue to operate the NG 9-1-1 system at the state level, with the remaining revenue going to the Department of Taxation for collection purposes. Currently, the 25-cent fee generates around \$28 million annually. The fee contained in House Bill 33 is expected to generate approximately \$100 million annually.

In addition to the technological upgrades associated with NG 9-1-1, counties will need to utilize their existing 9-1-1 program review committee to modify the existing countywide 9-1-1 plan. An updated 9-1-1 plan is due to the state 9-1-1 program office by April 3, 2024. The plan must contain the following information: how PSAPs will be connected to a county’s preferred NG 9-1-1 system; if enhanced 9-1-1, NG 9-1-1 service, or a combination of the two, will be provided (providing basic 9-1-1 service is no longer permitted); and how originating service providers must connect to the core 9-1-1 system identified by the final plan, and what methods will be used by the providers to communicate with the system, among other items.

CCAO stands ready to assist every county with the implementation of NG 9-1-1. If you have questions about the fee, the changes made to the 9-1-1 program committee or 9-1-1 plan, please do not hesitate to contact our staff.

FEATURE

NATIONAL RETIREMENT SECURITY MONTH: JUST ASK

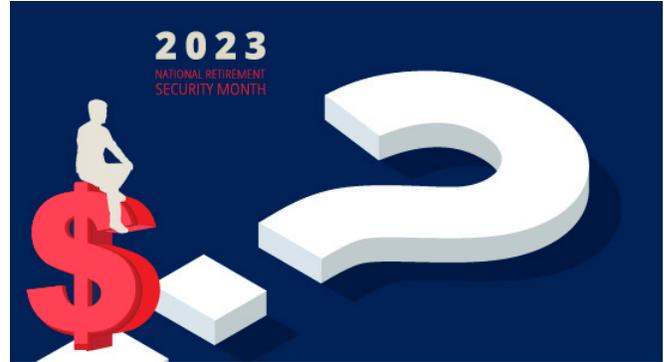
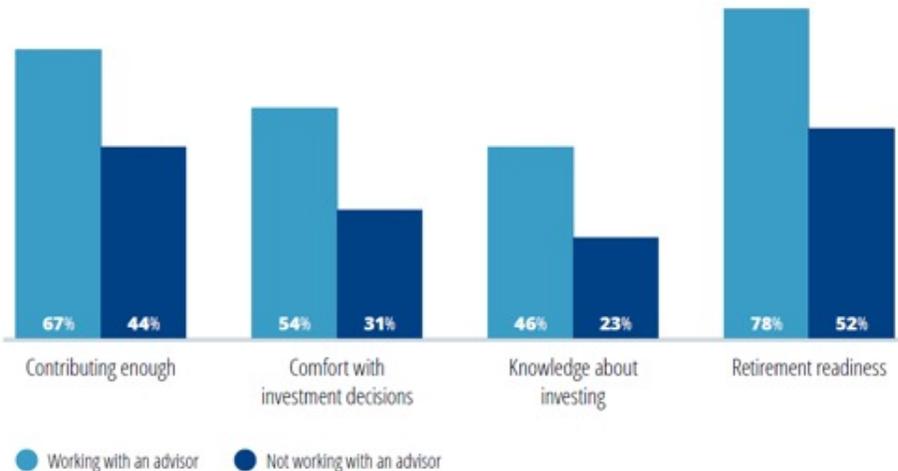
by Empower

CCAO and Empower are celebrating National Retirement Security Month this October. And we recognize everyone has questions about money. Getting answers starts with asking questions. And when you have questions about your financial future, who better to ask than a financial professional.

If you are seeking some help, you're not alone. That number is growing. While it may be due to many factors, inflation and market volatility certainly make it more challenging for people to make financial decisions on their own. Compared to last year, fewer workers with a retirement plan (40% compared to 48%) feel comfortable making investment decisions.¹

In fact, one respondent to the Empowering America's Financial Journey survey even said, "Make sure you have a plan, do your research, and don't be afraid to ask for help from an advisor." This respondent wasn't alone, either. More than half of the survey respondents said they wish they'd gotten advice earlier.¹

Of course, the question then becomes: Does meeting with a financial professional help? The answer is a resounding yes. Across the board, people feel better about important aspects of their financial planning when they work with an advisor. The chart below shows the percentage of individuals rating financial attributes higher when working with an advisor.¹



Working with a financial professional to develop a strategy designed to help you meet your personal short- and long-term goals has clear benefits. Get the answers you need – schedule a one-on-one session with an Empower Retirement Plan Advisor today.²

1 Empower.com, "Empowering America's Financial Journey™," November 2022.

2 Point-in-time advice provided by an Empower representative may include savings, investment allocation, distribution, and rollover advice, including advice on consolidating outside retirement accounts.

Point-in-time advice is provided by an Empower representative registered with Empower Financial Services, Inc. at no additional cost to account owners. There is no guarantee provided by any party that use of the advice will result in a profit.

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GUEST COLUMN

ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF OHIO’S MULTI-SYSTEM ADULTS

by Liz Poprocki, OhioMHAS, Mental Health Treatment Coordinator

Ohio has launched a new initiative to better meet the needs of adults with severe and persistent mental illness who are also involved with multiple systems like criminal justice, developmental disabilities, and aging, among others. Without coordinated support, these Ohioans can often experience inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations, high rates of incarceration, homelessness, and unemployment.

Many times, these experiences become cyclical. To improve connections to needed supports in their communities and promote stability and recovery outside of institutions, the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services developed the Multi-System Adults (MSA) Enhancing Wellness Project. This program seeks to establish and/or strengthen existing community resources and collaborative partnerships to create coordinated responses supportive of the long-term wellness of people who experience frequent inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations and interface with multiple human services and/or criminal justice systems. Thanks to Governor Mike DeWine’s introduction of this initiative in his SFY 2022-2023 budget, the program received \$11 million in funding over the biennium and was supported by Ohio’s General Assembly. These funds are enhancing critical supports for adults with severe and persistent mental illness and increase access to services to aid in sustaining their recovery.

This strategic approach is a partnership with participating county ADAMHS boards and community providers that offers financial assistance and recovery supports to adults who meet eligibility criteria. ADAMHS boards work with providers, and other systems partners in their communities who identify and serve these multi-system adults. The systems collaboration utilizes existing collaboratives and coalitions or can be a new development between community partners.

Collaboratives include ADAMHS boards and other partners such as peer-run organizations, local and regional psychiatric hospitals, county developmental disability boards, law enforcement, homeless/supportive housing serving agencies, veteran serving agencies, Area Agencies on Aging, criminal justice system partners, re-entry coalitions, guardianship organizations, crisis hotlines, supportive employment

programs, and person-centered care coordinators. Through these partnerships, a tailored network of care is created so that Ohioans have access to resources and supports they need to work, live, and thrive in the communities of their choosing, while navigating the multiple systems in which they are involved.

To be eligible for the MSA project, a person must experience two or more inpatient psychiatric hospitalizations in a year AND be involved with or in need of services from at least one additional system (criminal justice, homelessness, veterans, aging (older than 65), or developmental disabilities).

While participating in the program, people can receive person-centered recovery supports. Examples of recovery supports a person may need include:

- Housing/utilities
- Transportation
- Medication and treatment costs
- Vocational needs
- Psychiatric home health needs
- Personal identification cards
- Emergency basic needs items
- Guardianship fees

For more information about eligibility, community partners can contact their county ADAMHS board and indicate that they have a client who meets the Multi-System Adult Program criteria to begin the referral process. For a list of county ADAMHS boards, please visit the link [here](#). For more information on this project, please contact:

Liz Poprocki
OhioMHAS Mental Health Treatment Coordinator
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FEATURE

GRAND OPENING OF THE STORYBOOK TRAIL

by Kathryn Whittington, Ashtabula County Commissioner

Through a collaboration with the Ohio Governor's Imagination Library, Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, the Andover Public Library, Andover Village and the Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners, Ashtabula County joined the movement across the country and created the Storybook Trail. This literary boosting project places an illustrated children's book, taken apart and displayed page by page, along a walking trail located behind the Andover Library. As you stroll down the trail, you are directed to the next page in the story. This initiative takes literacy to a new level and allows students, families, educators and visitors the opportunity to encourage literacy, with a little exercise, in a creative and fun environment.

In the spirit of collaboration, the Ashtabula Foundation generously awarded funds to purchase kiosks which house the books located along the trail; Gazette Newspapers/Great Lakes Printing provided printing and lamination of the stories; Ashtabula County Technical & Career Campus provided the archway at the entrance of the trail; and the Ashtabula County JFS supplied the materials to build the archway. To ensure that all residents and visitors have the opportunity to experience this trail, we were able to utilize ARPA funding to create an all-concrete trail that is ADA compliant and allows accessibility to all residents and visitors.

"The Board of Commissioners fully support educational projects within Ashtabula County which benefit our residents in a positive manner," said Board President Casey Kozlowski.

This project was rated as a 5, the highest priority. The opening of the Storybook Trail impacts not only the Andover area, but surrounding communities and will provide a positive literary experience to all who visit.

"The Storybook Trail is an exciting, literary adventure for our residents and visitors, serving to promote core activities that strengthen family bonds while incorporating physical activity," said Board Vice President Kathryn Whittington.

"We appreciate the partnerships that have allowed this project to come to fruition and I can't wait to visit the Storybook Trail," stated Commissioner J. P. Ducro IV.

The County was pleased to work with our community partners and government agencies to bring this trail to Ashtabula County for the benefit of all residents and visitors, alike. A ribbon cutting was held on August 15th at 11:30 a.m. in honor of the Grand Opening.



Ashtabula County Commissioners at the Storybook Trail opening

FEATURE

LOGAN ACRES KICKS OFF \$3.7 MILLION PROJECT

by Logan County Board of Commissioners

Logan County is moving ahead with a more than \$3.7 million project at Logan Acres Retirement Community to construct an additional memory care wing of 15 rooms and a covered main entrance along with a new roof and siding of the existing facility. County commissioners and representatives from Progressive Health Care Systems, PH7 Architects and RCS Construction of Celina broke ground this week on the project which is expected to be completed next year.

For the past 20 years, the county commissioners have partnered with Progressive Health Care to operate Logan Acres as an enterprise fund under the county’s annual budget. As an enterprise, the operation generates revenue to cover day-to-day expenses and capital improvements, such as this project, without tapping into local county tax revenues.

According to records from Logan County Auditor Jack Reser’s office, Logan Acres’ fund is healthy. For the past four years, the operation has entered the new year with a cash reserve of more than \$5 million which is enough to cover more than six months of operations.

Logan Acres provides care options for long-term care, short-term rehabilitation and outpatient therapy. It is a 5-star rated facility as noted by the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services.



3D Rendering of Logan Acres



Logan County Commissioners at the Logan Acres Groundbreaking

A 2023 Community Health Assessment identified available services for senior adults as a priority, the commissioners report.

“Findings of the assessment tell us that nearly one-third (30.5 percent) of households in the county have at least one adult age 65 or older,” Commissioners Mark Robinson, Joe Antram and Mike Yoder said in a joint statement. “In addition, 18 percent of the county population is 65 or older, compared to the state average. There are indicators that this trend will only continue.

“We know that families do not always take responsibility for their senior family members and guardianship issues continue to escalate in our county.

“Many senior adults and families face increased challenges in finding answers for adult daycare, transportation, food insecurities, affordable and appropriate housing, isolation, depression and mental health. All these issues contribute to the need for expansion of services at the Logan Acres to aid in filling these gaps in services for the residents of Logan County,” the commissioners said. Progressive Health Care concurs.



3D Rendering of Logan Acres

During the past few years, it became apparent the needs of our community are growing and more support for residents and families facing this very difficult disease are necessary, the company reports. Many times family members are driving out of the area to visit their loved ones in other communities because the local options are full.

“Logan Acres can currently serve 12 residents with dedicated memory care services, but with this expansion our capacity will grow to 27 and we will have more availability for people who need inpatient memory care services,” Progressive Health’s Logan Acres Administrator Lorraine Fischio said. “This will also give current residents and families additional options when faced with an unexpected change in condition.

It has always been our desire to walk alongside the people of Logan County to support their healthcare needs.

We are proud of our dedicated team of healthcare professionals who deliver outstanding service and look forward to many more years of providing exceptional patient-centered care for our community members in need.”

The memory care expansion is a 9,472-square-foot facility designed by PH7. The firm also designed a Porte-Cochere addition for the main front entrance of Logan Acres which allows community members to drive into a covered area and drop off residents and patients with better protection from the elements. PH7 drew from successful design cues of the original Alzheimer’s and dementia care wing at Logan Acres which includes an abundance of natural light and private dining within the household.

The project’s de-institutionalized environment allows for less agitation and closer interaction between caregiver and resident. It also expands a secured courtyard, enabling residents the opportunity to enjoy outdoor activities, including outdoor dining. RCS won the general contractor bid with a \$3,723,200 submission to build the memory care expansion and installation of a new roof and siding on the 53,692-square-foot Logan Acres.

Assistance for the project was provided by Logan County Auditor Jack Reser with bond counsel from Chris Franzmann of Squire, Patton, Boggs LLP, and Andy Bossart municipal advisor with B Payne Advisors. Connor Kinsey with Thompson, Dunlap & Heydinger Ltd. was the construction contract counsel on the project.

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FEATURE

WRAPPING UP FAIR SEASON IN FAIRFIELD COUNTY

by Jessica Newbacher, CCAO Communications Coordinator

As county fair season comes to a close, there is much to reflect on. CCAO staff members got a taste of Ohio's last county fair of the season: the Fairfield County Fair in Lancaster, Ohio. The Fairfield County Agricultural Society was founded over 170 years ago in 1850 with John Reber serving as the first president. The first fair was held in 1851 in a field near the present-day fairgrounds. In 1852, the Fairfield County Agricultural Society purchased around 14 acres near Mt. Pleasant, and this land has served as the fairgrounds ever since. The fairgrounds expanded to 22 acres by 1876 and then 36 acres by 1880.



Round Cattle Barn built in 1906

The Fairfield County Fair holds a great deal of historical significance. There was a Civil War camp on the fairgrounds called Camp Anderson, named after Major Anderson, who was commandant of Fort Sumter, South Carolina, which was attacked in the war on April 12, 1861. Two other notable historical features include the iconic Round Cattle Barn, built in 1906, and the Art Hall, built in 1909.



Fairfield County Commissioner David Levacy poses next to the Camp Anderson Historical Marker

In 1947, the film "Green Grass of Wyoming" was filmed on the fairgrounds, including a bird's eye-view from atop Mount Pleasant. The film premiered in 1948, featuring many residents as extras. To celebrate the film's anniversary in 2018, people gathered at the Skyview Drive-In to watch the film. It is evident that the residents of Fairfield County take great pride in the history of their fairgrounds.

Fairfield County

Commissioner David Levacy explained that the county commissioners play a supportive role and stressed the importance of engaging with the community. "We also have a lot of nonprofits here, which I think is very important, because this gives them an opportunity for fundraising and raising awareness," said Levacy.

In recent years, new technology has been utilized by the fair, like communication to residents through social media. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a very limited version of the fair. It is back and stronger than ever in 2023.



Photo display featuring new technology allowing viewers to see a slideshow of photo entries along with physical entries



A performer on stilts entertains crowds

“There was a lot of revenue lost in that time. We, the commissioners, wanted to be supportive in any way we could, so we contributed about half a million dollars to help support and complete some of the projects that needed to be done,” said Levacy. “It was the right thing to do because it’s part of Fairfield County, and we are here to serve the residents.”

The fair has a huge economic impact on the county, especially with it being the last of the season. The fair is held during harvest time, making it optimal for participants growing crops. Many people who may not have been able to attend the other fairs have the chance to see what Fairfield County has to offer, and it serves as a meeting place for family and friends from around the state.



Fairfield County Fair Poultry Champions

The youth of Fairfield County always impress the attendees with their dedication to their projects. “One of the most dynamic parts of the fair has to be the kids and their 4H projects,” Levacy explained. “We have over 1,100 young people involved, and they are just amazing in what they are able to

accomplish.” The Fairfield County Commissioners always enjoy attending the auctions and supporting the youth. The Fairfield County Fair has one of Ohio’s largest junior fair programs with 1,166 youth members in community clubs and 913 in school projects in 2022. There were 2,563 livestock/fair entries and 227 adult volunteers leading the charge last year.

Each year, around 100,000 people visit the Fairfield County Fair as attendees. Parking is frequently sold out, which speaks to the success of the annual event. Residents from Lancaster and beyond look forward to the end of fair season each year, and we are eager to see how the fair will evolve and grow in years to come.



Fairfield County historic Pioneer Log House, recently renovated



Historic sign displaying Fairfield County Commissioners and Engineer from 1914 along with donated fair banners from years past

FEATURE

CCAO HOLDS SUMMER SYMPOSIUM “ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES: OHIO COUNTIES REACHING FORWARD”

by Rachel Reedy, CCAO Outreach & Member Engagement Manager

In August, CCAO hosted its 2023 CCAO Summer Symposium “Economic Development Strategies: Ohio Counties Reaching Forward” at the Cherry Valley hotel in Newark, Ohio. Many county officials were in attendance, ranging from commissioners, county executives, and county council members, to county administrators and clerks, and other key staff from a variety of county agencies.

This year’s symposium focused on economic development strategies. Attendees learned about Robert’s Rules of Order, the broadband landscape in Ohio, the role that county landbanks play in economic development, as well as workforce and economic development initiatives in counties around the state.

CCAO would like to extend a special thank you to the panelists for all the sessions and to statewide officials for spending time in roundtable discussions with county officials and staff. Director of Legislative Affairs for Governor DeWine Giles Allen, Director of Agriculture Brian Baldrige, Director of Development Lydia Mihalik, and Director of the Ohio EPA Anne Vogel all sat down with representatives of counties to hear their issues and discuss initiatives their departments and offices are taking to help counties tackle issues in their communities.

We also hosted a panel with legislators to inform members on the role counties can play in advocating for Association priorities and their individual county issues, inform members of pending legislation that will benefit counties, and more. Special thanks to Representative Thaddeus Claggett, House Assistant

Minority Whip Dontavius Jarrells, Representative Adam Mathews, House Minority Leader Allison Russo, Senator Tim Schaffer, and Representative Brian Stewart for coming to Licking County to discuss these important issues with CCAO members.

We are grateful to Treasurer of State Robert Sprague who attended the CCAO Board of Directors August meeting, collocated with the Symposium, to discuss initiatives from his office that counties can utilize to help streamline services and strengthen their communities.



Senator Tim Schaffer, Representative Thaddeus Claggett, House Assistant Minority Whip Dontavius Jarrells, House Minority Leader Allison Russo, Representative Adam Mathews, and Representative Brian Stewart

This symposium would not have been possible without leadership from the Planning Committee including: David Painter, CCAO 2nd Vice President and Clermont County Commissioner; Tony Anderson, Fayette County Commissioner;

Harry Brady, Huron County Commissioner; Tim Bubb, Licking County Commissioner; Cindy Cameron, Muskingum County Commissioner; Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Portage County Commissioner; Erica Crawley, Franklin County Commissioner; Rita Darrow, Summit County Councilmember; and Dave Wilson, Guernsey County Commissioner.

Thank you to CCAO President Glenn Miller and Cheryl Subler, CCAO Executive Director, for their vision and desire to create an event where CCAO members can connect and collaborate on new, innovate ideas. Additionally, a huge thank you goes to Robin Garrett, CCAO Boards’ Liaison and Events Manager, for organizing the event and ensuring everything ran smoothly.

GUEST COLUMN

LEGAL AID: A PARTNER TO OHIO'S COUNTIES

by Angie Lloyd, Executive Director, Ohio Access to Justice Foundation

When Jill Stewart*, a proud member of the National Guard and a foster mom, struggled to find steady employment during the pandemic, she fell behind on her rent and faced an eviction. Like thousands of low-income Ohioans, Ms. Stewart contacted her local legal aid for help.

Legal aid helped Ms. Stewart access Ohio's rental assistance program so that she could pay her entire back rent and make her landlord whole. With legal aid's help, the eviction was dismissed, and Ms. Stewart and her growing family have stable housing and are thriving.

Ms. Stewart's story is a powerful example of how Ohio's legal aid organizations are working in all 88 counties to help struggling Ohioans maintain housing stability. From providing legal advice or representation, to connecting tenants with Community Action Agencies to access rental relief, legal aid helped 11,539 Ohioans facing eviction in 2021 alone.

Legal aid saves counties money

To recover from the health and economic emergency, low-income Ohioans benefit from access to civil legal help. When residents remain stably housed, local governments save money in shelter care. By helping Ohioans access rental assistance, tenants and landlords are financially stabilized, increasing the dollars that stay in local communities.

This multiplier effect means that legal aid stabilizes not just individuals, but entire communities. The impact is significant: the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation's economic impact study Strength in Justice found that for every dollar spent on civil legal aid, \$2.90 is returned to local communities, a 290% ROI.

Legal aid strengthens the workforce

Many Ohioans, particularly low-income Ohioans, faced health and economic challenges during the pandemic. Ohioans need stability at home to recover

and fully participate in the workforce. Legal aid helps level the playing field for tenants facing eviction and removes barriers to employment.

As Ohio's economy continues to rebound, businesses are battling to attract and retain talent. Ohio's legal aids address civil legal issues to improve stability for Ohio employees so that they can join the workforce and remain successfully employed.

Let's work together

Ohio's county commissioners have a partner in Ohio's legal aid organizations. County governments can use unspent federal dollars allocated to coronavirus relief to stabilize residents through civil legal services. Some of Ohio's largest cities and counties have already used these funds to support civil legal work, such as eviction prevention.

If your county is interested in allocating some of its federal dollars to support such work, contact the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation to discuss possible collaboration. Together, counties and Ohio's legal aids can partner to stabilize Ohioans and move forward from the pandemic.

**Names have been changed to protect client privacy.*

Angie Lloyd is executive director at the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation, a funding organization for Ohio's legal aids. Reach her alloyd@ohiojusticefoundation.org or (614) 715-8565.

FEATURE

FOUNDATION HOSTS GOLF OUTING; RAISES FUNDS FOR SCHOLARSHIP FUND

by Steve Caraway, CCAO Service Corporation Manager

During the CCAO Summer Symposium, leaders from across the state assembled at the Clover Valley Golf Course to enjoy a great game of golf and fellowship while supporting a great cause.

Some of the highlights of the day:



Closest to the Pin Winner Fairfield County Commissioner Jeff Fix, CCAO Operations Manager Tim Hoverman, CCAO President and Henry County Commissioner Glenn Miller.



CCAO Operations Manager Tim Hoverman, Longest Putt Winner former Adams County Commissioner Ty Pell, CCAO President and Henry County Commissioner Glenn Miller, CCAO Service Corporation Manager Steve Caraway.



County Classic Champions: First State Bank Assistant Corey Richmond, Former Adams County Commissioner Ty Pell, First State Bank Executive Vice President Chad Wilson, Director of Ohio Dept of Agriculture Brian Baldrige.

The CCAO Research and Educational Foundation wishes to thank all of our golfers and sponsors for their support. If you would like to support the foundation, you can give [here](#).



GUEST COLUMN

PARTNERSHIP & COLLABORATION: WE'RE ALL TEAM OHIO FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY & OPPORTUNITY

by Darnita Bradley, Senior Manager, Local Government Affairs & External Engagement, JobsOhio & JobsOhio Network Partners



Economic development is complicated and challenging. But it's also enriching,

valuable, and crucial to advancing prosperity for all Ohioans.

As elected officials and community leaders, you know all too well the patience and perseverance required to earn results for your constituents.

That's why JobsOhio highly values our partnerships and collaboration with you and other local, state, and federal leaders in this critical endeavor.

Together, we are Team Ohio. [Learn more about Team Ohio.](#)

As Ohio's economic development corporation, JobsOhio's mission is to empower world-class corporations, small businesses, entrepreneurs, and talented workers to build their businesses and careers in Ohio. We do that through advocacy and close partnerships across a variety of stakeholders.

We consider ourselves fortunate to have the opportunity to work alongside county leaders like you every day to bring new opportunities to our state and its citizens. We drive programs and initiatives that fuel the local economic engine alongside you and other public and private-sector organizations.

And it's working, too. With your help, Ohio has established itself as one of the most diverse state economies in the U.S. A skilled and hardworking workforce in your communities and an ecosystem that encourages economic growth come together with good old-fashioned Midwest grit to make Ohio the ideal place to live the American dream.

And we are also diversifying faster than the rest of the Midwest, which better positions us to weather economic headwinds. Ohio's Industrial Diversity



Bradley

score has increased yearly from 2012 to 2022. There are only three states in the U.S. for which this is true – Ohio, North Carolina, and Nevada. Over the past decade (2012-2022), Ohio's Industrial Diversity score increased by 1.73%, the second fastest pace (% change) among Midwest

competing states (IL, IN, KY, MI, PA) and outpacing U.S. business hubs on the East and West Coasts such as New York, California, Oregon, and Arizona.

This helped us achieve some incredible results in 2022. Some of the notable accomplishments that JobsOhio achieved with your help include the following:

- Committed corporate capital project investments reached \$30.87 billion, tripling the previous record of \$9.56 billion set in 2017.
- Projects will create 26,323 new jobs, a total second only to the record 29,000 jobs secured in 2021.
- New jobs committed in 2022 are higher paying. They will generate a record \$1.84 billion in new payrolls, delivering a record \$954 million in new annual payroll tax receipts to the Ohio treasury.
- Ohio jumped from #11 to #2 nationally in megaproject impact, securing four megaprojects, including Intel, Ford, Honda/LG Energy Solution, and Medpace.
- Ohio is now the top-ranked state in the Midwest for Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) after winning record-setting capital commitments in 2022.

And Ohio continues to outperform other states in

2023. Some of this year's highlights across a variety of key industries include:

- Joby Aviation will soon bring up to 2,000 jobs and nearly \$500 million in capital investment to the Dayton area through a massive manufacturing facility for its electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) air taxis.
- This year, Ohio claimed the #1 spot in Site Selection's Global Groundwork Index – a first-of-its-kind methodology blending corporate project data with public infrastructure investments from 2019-2023.
- Ohio has climbed to the #5 spot in Area Development's Top States for Doing Business rankings.
- The Ohio-led Midwest Microelectronics Consortium was selected for the highly sought-after Microelectronics Commons Program – part of the CHIPS ACT. ME Commons is a major Department of Defense initiative to accelerate domestic microelectronics manufacturing, with \$2 billion in funding, and Ohio was one of the Regional Hubs selected.
- Amazon Web Services plans to invest an estimated \$7.8 billion in new data centers to expand its Ohio presence, creating hundreds of new jobs.
- Wells Fargo will bring a large tech hub to central Ohio and hundreds of high-paying jobs.

Ohio is a great place to live and work, made possible by our partnership, collaboration, and shared commitment to prosperity.

As we continue to work together as Team Ohio, we invite you to view JobsOhio as a guide and resource to almost any challenge you might have in attracting new business to your counties and creating good jobs for your constituents.

Programs, Services, & Strategic Initiatives

We invest in and offer several strategic initiatives that incubate innovations, enable sustainable economic growth, and enhance the quality of life for Ohioans through the power and dignity of work. They include:

- Sites: Prepare job-ready sites for companies seeking to establish or expand operations in the state.
- Innovation: Establish Ohio on the leading edge of technology and attract the best companies, talent, and capital.
- Talent: Attract in-demand talent to the state and retain, upskill, and reskill Ohio's workforce.
- Inclusion: Drive investment and job creation for underrepresented populations and distressed geographies

Within these broad categories, we want you to know about several resources you could leverage to propel economic growth in your area.

Incentives

Here's a look at just some of the incentives that are available to companies who are looking to expand or relocate in Ohio:

- JobsOhio Economic Development Grant: Promotes economic development, business expansion, and job creation by funding eligible projects in Ohio.
- JobsOhio Growth Fund Loan: Provides capital for expansion projects to companies with limited access to funding from conventional and private sources of financing.
- JobsOhio R&D Center Grant: Facilitates the creation of corporate R&D centers in Ohio to support the development and commercialization of emerging technologies and products.
- JobsOhio Workforce Grant: Promotes economic development, business expansion, and job creation by funding companies for employee development and training programs.
- JobsOhio Growth Capital Fund: Invests in early-stage companies that are Ohio-based or planning to locate a significant presence in Ohio.
- JobsOhio Inclusion Grant: Provides financial support for eligible projects in distressed communities and businesses owned by underrepresented populations like minorities,

women, veterans, and people with disabilities across Ohio.

Community Resources

As a county leader, these resources offer an extremely powerful tool to help attract capital, create jobs, and grow talent in your communities.

- **Vibrant Communities:** Assists distressed small and mid-size cities with projects that fulfill a market need and represent a reinvestment in eligible cities.
- **Inclusive Project Planning:** Offers targeted technical assistance to address gaps in capacity and expertise to generate more actionable projects across the state.
- **Broadband Access:** Expanded broadband access throughout the state to ensure all Ohioans can connect digitally to fully participate in the information economy's growth.

These resources and the accomplishments we've achieved together as Team Ohio are a direct result of the close partnership we share with you and all our stakeholders. When it comes to driving opportunity, I truly believe that no other state collaborates in a

broader, more profound, and more effective way than what we enjoy here in Ohio.

We sincerely thank you and your teams for all your hard work on behalf of the people and companies you represent.

I also invite you to contact me if you have any questions, comments, or concerns or want to chat about how we can work better together.

Darnita Bradley, Senior Manager
Local Government Affairs & External Engagement
JobsOhio & JobsOhio Network Partners
Bradley@jobsohio.com

GUEST COLUMN

HOUSING COUNSELING SERVICES AT OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

by Courtney Warman, Căzilia Loibl, Amanda Osborne, Beth Stefura, Emily Marrison, Heather Reister, Kenneth Stewart, Margaret Jenkins, Melissa Rupp, Patrice Power-Barker, Lois McCampbell, Gloria Anderson and Pat Bebo

Ohio State University (OSU) Extension is a certified housing counseling agency by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). We offer one-on-one housing counseling to homebuyers and homebuyer-education workshops across the state through our team of 12 HUD-certified Housing Counselors. Our Housing Counselors are OSU Extension Educators and staff members in the Family and Consumer Sciences and Community Development program areas. As HUD-certified Housing Counselors, OSU Extension employees not only have to work for a HUD-approved housing

counseling agency, but they also passed a federal examination. Our housing counseling faculty and staff are strategically located across the state in Butler, Clermont, Coshocton, Cuyahoga, Franklin, Fulton, Lucas, Mahoning, and Monroe counties, and at the Ohio State University Columbus campus.

In the past year alone, our team served well over 1,000 low-to-moderate income homebuyers in phone, video, and in person meetings. We also offer a self-study online homebuyer education program to provide additional flexibility to homebuyers with

limited time before closing. Detailed information on our housing counseling services is available [here](#).

Traditional homebuyer education workshops

Our OSU Extension Housing Counseling Services offers homebuyer education through three pathways. Our largest pathway is the traditional homebuyer education workshop offered through live video call series, once per month over two Saturday mornings. This workshop is offered by the two HUD-certified Housing Counselors at OSU Extension Franklin County. In 2022, the team counseled over 500 homebuyers, mostly in Central Ohio. The 8-hour workshop (both Saturday classes are 4 hours each) is followed by a one-on-one counseling video call with a HUD-certified Housing Counselor. This program is free of charge, funded by OSU Extension and donations from the financial services industry.

During the workshop participants receive hands-on information on the homebuying process; steps to prepare for the closing process; how to maintain a home; financial budgeting; the importance of good credit; principles of fair housing and civil rights; how to identify and report predatory lending practices; and renter’s rights. To register for OSU Extension’s live webinar workshop visit: go.osu.edu/buyahome.

In follow-up one-on-one homeownership counseling meetings, homebuyers ask questions about their personal homebuying process and obtain independent customized information related to their housing goals and process. Topics covered in the one-on-one meetings address the decision to purchase a home, the selection and purchase of a home, issues during ownership of a home (including financing, refinancing, default, foreclosure, and other financial decisions) and the sale or other disposition of a home.

Collaboration with the Ohio Housing Finance Agency

The second main pathway of the OSU Extension Housing Counseling Services is our longstanding collaboration with the Ohio Housing Finance Agency. In 2023, our OSU Extension Housing Counseling Services was awarded the “Number 1 Counseling Agency in the State.” We have been among the top-

three housing counseling agencies collaborating with the Ohio Housing Finance Agency since 2019. Homebuyers who obtain grants and mortgages from the Ohio Housing Finance Agency must complete a one-hour, phone-based financial counseling session prior to closing on their homes. Nine of our twelve OSU Extension Housing Counselors provide these counseling sessions year-round, offering 600 to 700 sessions per year.

Self-study homebuyer education

The third pathway of our homebuyer education program is an online self-study workshop for homebuyers. It is targeting homebuyers with immediate need for a homebuyer education workshop, with little time left prior to closing. The self-study workshop is offered in collaboration with Framework Homeownership, a nationally operated for-profit social enterprise. Each homebuyer that completes the course is followed-up with in a one-on-one counseling session with one of our HUD-certified Housing Counselors. To register for OSU Extension’s self-study workshop visit: go.osu.edu/newhome. We charge \$75 for this service.

Homebuyer education is effective

Our research shows that homebuyers who complete financial education miss mortgage payments less often and are much less likely to face foreclosure. Our everyday experience and the research study document that homebuyer education is a relatively low-cost approach that, when embedded into loan servicing, can help homeowners make timely mortgage payments. It reduces the probability of delinquency while permitting homeowners with lower credit scores to obtain a mortgage. A link to the study is [here](#).

GUEST COLUMN

FORMER CCAO MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

by State Representative Marilyn John

Public service has been a major part of my life for over a decade. I began serving in 2010 as the Mayor of the City of Shelby and then moved on to the Richland County Commissioner's office in 2015 until I was elected as State Representative in 2020. During my time as Commissioner, I also served on the board of CEBCO and am proud of the benefits we provided our county employees as well as those of many other counties.

As commissioners you perform a variety of functions throughout the county from human resources to the building department to emergency management and everything in between. During my time of service as a county commissioner, my involvement with CCAO helped prepare me for my various duties then and now. The relationships I formed with other local elected officials and CCAO staff is crucial to my work as a member of the Ohio General Assembly and I am proud of the work we have accomplished together.

From my very first bill, House Bill 87 exempting utility supply contracts from a 10-year maximum to advocating for increased limits in force accounts and competitive bidding thresholds, I have used my past experience to strengthen counties for the future. Just like county commissioners, state representatives are asked to vote on diverse, complex issues, run public meetings and build consensus to solve issues for those we serve. I am grateful for my time spent in local government as it has prepared me to serve the constituents of the 76th House District.

This General Assembly, I am honored to chair the State and Local Government Committee of the Ohio House. In this capacity, I am able to educate my colleagues on the role of local government and help craft policy that affects you. A recent example is land banks. We have two bills pertaining to land banks for consideration in State and Local, so I invited the Land Bank Association to present the basics of how they operate to our committee. While most committee members have a background in local government, not all counties have a land bank. This gave members an opportunity to ask questions



John

and gain a greater understanding before considering the pending legislation.

As I mentioned, my relationship with local elected officials is crucial to my work at the Statehouse. When I'm in district, I attend local

events to stay abreast of issues and work to keep open lines of communication when I'm in Columbus. I encourage commissioners to build and maintain a good relationship with your state representatives and senators. We may not know an issue exists until you bring it to our attention.

Lastly, thank you for your service to your communities and counties! Commissioners wear many hats in county government and often put in long hours with little recognition. I am proud to be a former commissioner and I look forward to working with each and every one of you to create a more prosperous Ohio!



Representative John with Ashland County and Richland County officials and CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler at the 2022 CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference.

FEATURE

FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER LEADS NATIONAL CONVERSATION AROUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING

by Kevin Boyce, Franklin County Commissioner



Boyce

Central Ohio is among the fastest-growing metropolitan areas in the Country. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission expects by 2050, there will be 3.15 million Central Ohioans. Franklin County is said to absorb half of this regional growth — welcoming twice

as many newcomers as any nearby County. Among other systems, affordable housing will feel the stress of this rapid growth.

According to the Affordable Housing Alliance of Central Ohio, in Central Ohio alone, there are 54,000 low- and moderate-income households that spend more than half their income on housing. This statistic exemplifies the lingering effects of decades of unjust housing policies. Redlining, access to financial institutions, and affordable financing still cloud the pathways to homeownership for many black and brown residents.

Affordable housing is the greatest challenge facing our community right now. According to the Vogt Strategic Insights Analysis of Housing Need for the Columbus Region, Columbus is projected to have a shortage of as much as 110,000 housing units by 2032.

Housing fulfills the basic human need for shelter and is the foundation for better health, more consistent education, a stronger workforce, improved financial wellness, and lowered demand for the public sector safety net. With this in mind, Franklin County spent more than \$50 million on homelessness

last year, according to the Franklin County Board of Commissioners 2023 State of the County Report.

In November 2022, National Association of Counties President Denise Winfrey launched a national task force of county officials to study housing affordability. Co-chaired by myself and Commissioner Sherry Maupin of Valley County, Idaho, we were charged with two goals: identify county-led policy, practice and partnership solutions to addressing America’s housing affordability crisis, and explore intergovernmental partnership opportunities that support housing solutions between federal, state and local officials, along with private, nonprofit and other community organizations.



Kevin Boyce, Franklin County Commissioner, Sherry Maupin, Commissioner, Valley County, ID, Kevin Shrawder, Senior Analyst, Economic and Government Studies, NACo

Housing policy is a multi-layered topic requiring bipartisan partnerships, dialogue and coordination across all levels of government, private and nonprofit organizations, and the community. Housing policy impacts residents of all political, demographic, geographic and socioeconomic stripes. Thankfully, people throughout the region are beginning to feel the urgency to work on our affordable housing crisis.

Regardless of the county approach, the process of creating solutions for housing affordability at the local level is often slow, contentious, and grueling. This recommendation framework seeks to provide a broad set

of tools county leaders may use to develop a local housing action plan that reflects each community’s unique needs, values and priorities in addition to considering the varied relationships and resources available.

1. Land Use, Zoning, Infrastructure And Community Planning

a. Evaluate Current Zoning Plans and Practices	b. Identify Potential Infrastructure Barriers to New Development	c. Understand the Inventory of Additional Land	d. Develop a Long-Term Housing and Land Use Plan	e. Assess Existing Housing Stock for Potential Opportunities
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2. Local Regulation, Permitting And Fees

a. Evaluate County Permitting and Inspections to Improve Processes and Workflow	b. Provide Pre-Approved Templates for Common Housing Designs	c. Conduct a Cost-Benefit Analysis for County Impact, Development, and General Fee Pricing	d. Analyze Local Regulations Impact on Affordability	e. Make County Systems Consistent, Convenient, and Easier to Navigate
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3. Federal-County Intergovernmental Nexus

a. Invest Additional Federal Resources to Support Housing	b. Engage in NACo Policy Resolution Process to Advocate for Counties	c. Educate Federal and State Partners on Local Housing Needs and Simplify Programs and Compliance	d. Seek Additional Funding Opportunities as Resources Allow	e. Combine Resources for Maximum Impact
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4. Community Engagement, Partnerships And Education

a. Collaborate with Intergovernmental Partners	b. Establish an Office or Department to Streamline Housing Projects	c. Foster a Healthy Dialogue with Community Organizations	d. Conduct a Robust Outreach and Education Initiative	e. Measure Success and Clearly Communicate Milestones
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5. Finance, Lending And County Tax Policy

a. Identify Opportunities for Tax Incentives or Policy Updates	b. Analyze the County Assessment Process	c. Administer Supportive Programs That Prioritize Underserved Communities	d. Partner with Local Organizations to Provide Innovative Financing Mechanisms for New Development	e. Source New Revenue Streams for County Housing Priorities
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Our report illustrates the five key areas in which counties may possess the authority to foster housing affordability:

- Community Engagement, Partnerships, and Education addresses how counties can engage with the local community and other nonprofit and for-profit partners to advance the construction of affordable housing.
- Federal to County Nexus addresses how counties can use federal funding and support in the most efficient and impactful way.
- Financing, Lending, and County Tax Policy discusses county financing assistance that support county housing priorities.
- Land Use, Zoning, Infrastructure, and Community Planning address macro level aspects of housing policy.
- Local Regulation, Permitting, and Fees which address micro level aspects of housing policy.

I am very hopeful we can use what we learned at the national level and apply it not only here in Franklin County, but throughout the State of Ohio. Should you want to learn more about this project, please reach out to my office at 614-525-5226 or emily.cooner@franklincountyohio.gov. You can read the full report at <https://www.naco.org/resources/signature-projects/naco-housing-task-force>.

BUILDING SUCCESS IN OHIO

JobsOhio

As Ohio's unique, private nonprofit economic development corporation, JobsOhio is proud to work together with companies, state, regional, and local government partners to drive the economic success of the state to a new level.

Since 2011, we've proven the benefits of relocating to and expanding in Ohio. We continue to grow our strategic focus to ensure Ohio is a best state for business.

INNOVATION BY JobsOhio **SITES** BY JobsOhio

INCLUSION BY JobsOhio **TALENT** BY JobsOhio

LEARN MORE

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December 6-8, 2023

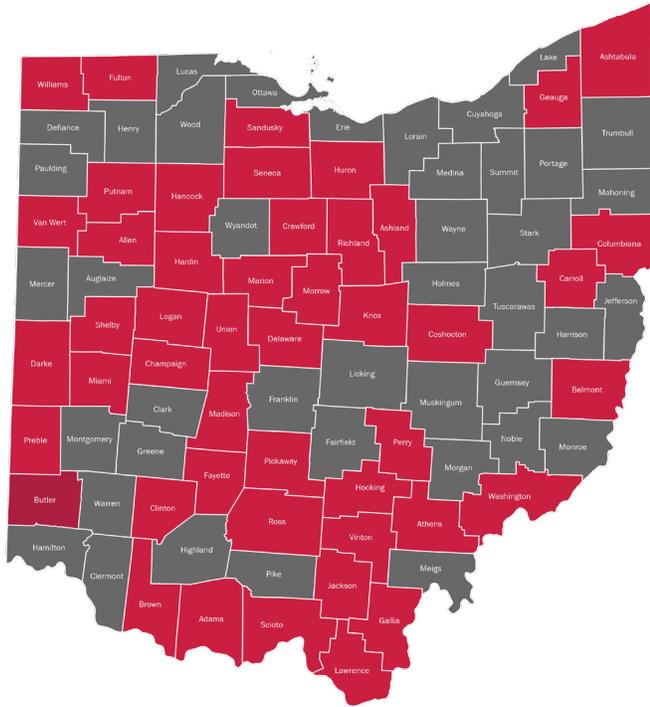
Topics include: Community-Based Solar, Broadband, Cybersecurity, and more!

Registration Open

CEBCO NEWS

CEBCO EXPANDS IN MEMBERSHIP AND IN STAFF

by Mike Kindell, Managing Director of Health and Wellness



Welcome back to Butler County, which will be re-joining CEBCO starting January 1, 2024. It will be the 47th member of CEBCO, bringing total membership to well over half of all Ohio counties. With the addition of Butler County in 2024, CEBCO will provide medical and prescription coverage to over 15,300 employees and over 34,000 members.

CEBCO hosted the 2024 Renewal Meeting, in a virtual format, in early September. The final average renewal increase was 7.7% after the use of member equity and all of the member counties have renewed their coverage for the coming year.

The Annual Wellness Coordinator’s Meeting was held at the CEBCO offices in Columbus the last Friday in August. CEBCO Wellness Coordinator, Hannah McKee, hosted over 50 county wellness contacts, staff, and vendor partners, in person and virtually, for the first time. The new Wellness Program, CEBCO Rewards 200, was introduced at the meeting.

Partnering with a new wellness vendor, this exciting new program, which goes into effect in January 2024, will provide incentives directly to employees and covered spouses. It is much more stream-lined

and user friendly and being claims-based, eliminates the need for members to self-report when care or testing is received, in order to achieve a reward. This new program is separate and in addition to the annual Wellness Grant funds that counties can receive to support wellness activities specific to their counties.



Hinkle

In early October, Kevin Hinkle joined the CEBCO Team as its new Assistant Director. Hinkle will be responsible for assisting in the management and growth of CEBCO as well as developing strategies for expansion in the future. He will also act as a liaison with CEBCO’s vendor partners.

Prior to joining CEBCO, Hinkle spent the last 17 years as Regional Vice President of Sales at Anthem and had held various other positions within Anthem for over a decade prior. Hinkle is a graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University and has also taken Executive Education at Kelley School of Business and Eckerd College. He has previously served on the boards of the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Central Ohio Diabetes Association, Access Health Columbus, and Ohio Wesleyan Alumni Association.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and November is National Diabetes Month. Please use the following links to learn simple steps to help prevent and treat these diseases and improve overall health.

<https://www.anthem.com/blog/protect-your-health-with-regular-mammograms/>

<https://www.anthem.com/blog/living-healthy/diabetes-management/>

CORSA NEWS

LAWSUITS LEAD TO DEFENSE

by Beth Miller, CORSA Claim and Litigation Manager

When can CORSA assign defense counsel to represent a member?

This is one of the most frequent requests we receive: a member county is named in a lawsuit and it is submitted to us for review, with the member requesting that defense counsel be assigned to represent the county.



Miller

CORSA is governed by our Coverage Agreement which provides for the defense of a member for a covered lawsuit which seeks monetary damages. In addition, there are three types of actions that do not seek monetary damages for which CORSA can provide a defense for members: covered actions that seek only declaratory or injunctive relief, attorney disciplinary proceedings, and actions filed with the Ohio Civil Rights Commission or the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

When we review a lawsuit for coverage, we look for an allegation of a covered wrongful act which occurred during the coverage period. We make sure that no exclusions apply, for example breach of contract or removal from office, both of which are excluded from coverage.

Generally, most lawsuits that are submitted to us are covered: suits alleging a wrongful employment practice, a law enforcement civil rights violation, or bodily injury and property damage in a vehicle accident. In these cases, we assign a defense attorney to represent the member from our panel of defense attorneys who have the expertise necessary to vigorously defend the interests of the CORSA member, with oversight and litigation management provided by the CORSA claims staff.

When CORSA assigns defense counsel, that notification to the member may also include a “reservation of rights.” Even though the lawsuit is covered and a defense is being provided, CORSA

will let the member know if there are any allegations being made or damages sought for which there is not coverage. The most common are intentional acts, acts outside the course and scope, criminal acts, and punitive damages. In this situation, CORSA provides a defense for the entire lawsuit while a covered allegation is pending, however if damages are awarded for the excluded elements, these will not be covered by CORSA.

The CORSA claims staff works out of our office in Columbus and is available to all members to discuss these and any other topics regarding our claims handling process. We are committed to providing the highest level of claims service to all CORSA members. We use every available resource to thoroughly investigate losses and provide timely and appropriate payments. Please contact us if any questions arise.

Note: This article provides a general description of CORSA coverage. If there are any discrepancies between this article and the CORSA Coverage Agreement, the Coverage Agreement language will control.

CCAO SERVICE CORP NEWS

SERVICE CORPORATION LAUNCHES COUNTY BENEFITS+

by Steve Caraway, CCAO Service Corporation Manager

First in the nation program is a partnership with NACo



In September, the CCAO Service Corporation launched County Benefits+, a pioneering initiative aimed at enhancing the lives of the county workforce in Ohio.

County Benefits+ is a new partnership between CCAO and Aflac. Through this partnership, assisted by NACo's Public Promise Insurance, county leaders and their employees now have access to Ohio's premiere supplemental benefits program.

To date, nearly a dozen Ohio Counties have taken advantage the benefits offered to counties and their employees by joining County Benefits+. In addition, many counties who join County Benefits+ have gotten a sharp reduction in life insurance rates by taking advantage of the new program.

In an era where attracting and retaining talent has never been more challenging, County Benefits+ goes beyond a traditional supplemental benefits program by offering an all-encompassing solution that caters to the specific needs of both the county workforce and the leadership that support them. With the increasing costs of healthcare in America, supplemental benefits are built to help employees cover unforeseen expenses that a core medical benefit offering may not. These unforeseen medical events often add financial hardship to the lives of county employees and their families.

Highlights of the "County Benefits+" program include:

- **Wide Range of Voluntary Supplemental Benefits:** Benefits that employees can elect to offset additional costs associated with Critical Illness, Accidents, Cancer Diagnosis, Hospital Stays, Pet Insurance, ID Theft, and Life Insurance. These provide cash payments that cover expenses such as copays, deductibles, and other unforeseen expenses.

- **State-wide Underwriting:** Aflac has agreed to strong state-wide plans and rates for the state of Ohio specific to county governments. This reduces the hassle of obtaining quotes and pulling large amounts of data for voluntary benefits.
- **No County Costs:** The benefits program is voluntary with each employee purchasing only the products they want.
- **One-on-One Enrollment Support:** Every county employee will have an opportunity for a face-to-face or virtual discussion with a certified enrollment counselor.
- **HR Team Support:** The program includes an administration, billing and payroll support feature. In addition, the certified enrollment counselors are able to assist HR teams with driving home key messages during their one-on-one consultations.
- **Enhanced Communication:** Communication materials and education campaigns are very easy to provide to your staff.
- **County Focus:** This program is built 100% for the county workforce. It is built to strengthen the benefits package your county is already offering and support your teams in the battle to attract and retain talent.



Caraway

Please take this opportunity to assess the value that a new or revised supplemental benefits program can bring to your county team. If you would like more information on the program, please reach out to CCAO's Steve Caraway at scaraway@ccao.org or by calling (614) 220-7998.

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

PERSONAL AND OFFICIAL SOCIAL MEDIA USE

by Kyle Petty, Esq., CCAO Managing Director of Policy

Social media allows for unprecedented levels of interconnectivity between people from all over the world and is now the primary source of information for a growing segment of society. It is no surprise that social media use from politicians and government officials is also on the rise, in order to meet the modern needs of their constituents. However, as we all know, sometimes people disagree with certain decisions and now use social media to voice their displeasure. As the lines between personal social media pages and official or government social media pages begin to blur, there is a split among courts as to what actions can be taken to block or limit posts.

In 2019, the Second Circuit ruled that then-President Trump violated the First Amendment by blocking people from his official Twitter account (*Knight First Amendment Institute v. Trump*, 928 F.3d 226 (2019)). However, the court left the door open for future challenges by saying that: “not every social media account operated by a public official is a government account.” 928 F.3d at 236.

That door was further opened in the Sixth Circuit via *Lindke v. Freed*, 37 F.4th 1199 (6th Cir. 2022). Freed was the City Manager for Port Huron, Michigan and used his personally operated Facebook account for a mixture of personal posts and posts containing policies that he implemented as city manager. He deleted a critical post from Lindke and subsequently blocked him. Lindke sued alleging that Freed violated his first amendment rights. The court ultimately found that Freed’s account did not amount to “state action,” and departed from the logic found in the *Knight* FAI decision, based on “no” answers to following questions:

- Whether the text of state law requires an officeholder to maintain a social media account;
- Whether state resources are used to run the social media account;
- Whether the social media account “arise[s] from the use of state authority”, i.e. whether the

account belongs to the government office, rather than the individual office holder; and

- Whether state staff are used to set up and run the account.

However, the Ninth Circuit took a different approach in *Garnier v. O’Connor-Ratcliff*, 41 F.4th 1158 (9th Cir. 2022). In this case, the social media accounts of two school board trustees began as campaign accounts and then were used to report on school district business, promote the achievements of teachers and students, invite members of the public to participate in forums, etc. The Garniers were vocal critics of the trustees and frequently posted lengthy critical comments about the superintendent of the district and his alleged wrongdoing. The Garniers’ posts were deleted and they were eventually blocked, so they sued the trustees for a violation of their first amendment rights.

The court looked at many of the factors outlined in the *Lindke* case, but adopted a slightly different test to determine if the pages constituted “state action”. The court focused on the use of the page, rather than the creation and authority of the page as in *Lindke*. Specifically, they examined “whether the public official’s conduct, even if ‘seemingly private,’ is sufficiently related to the performance of his or her official duties to create ‘a close nexus between the State and the challenged action,’ or whether the public official is instead ‘pursuing private goals via private actions.’

The court found that the pages constituted state action, and then examined whether blocking posts from citizens was a violation of their first amendment rights. The court felt that social media pages truncate lengthy posts and Twitter does not show replies unless you click on them directly. Furthermore, if the trustees were worried about “spamming” of posts, they could hide or delete unduly repetitive comments, ultimately leading the court to find that: “there is no evidence that the repetitive comments actually disturbed or impeded

the Trustees' posts or prevented other viewers of the Trustees' accounts from engaging in discussion." Therefore, deleting the posts and blocking the Garniers on the page was a violation of their First Amendment rights.

The split among various district courts across the country has led the U.S. Supreme Court to hear appeals from both cases. Oral arguments are expected to begin this fall or early spring, with a decision expected to be handed down by the end of the 2023-2024 term. Hopefully this decision will draw a clear line for when and how government officials can manage their own social media pages.



Palmer Energy Company is an unbiased independent energy consultant with over forty years of experience in the electric and natural gas industries.

To learn more about how the CCAOSC Energy Savings program can benefit you, contact:

Kirkland Mizerek
Executive Vice President
Palmer Energy Company
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County Leader, CCAO's quarterly e-magazine, provides an in-depth look at the news, programs and policies affecting Ohio's 88 counties. The e-magazine also showcases our members, offers best county practices as well as ways to enhance the state-county partnership practices and shares the offerings of the association. If you have questions or story submissions, contact Editor Jessica Newbacher at jnewbacher@ccao.org or 614-220-7986.