Feb. 28, 2022

Jackson County Commissioners Donnie Willis and Jon Hensler at the Ohio Counties display at the Ohio Statehouse

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- 2022 Ohio Land Bank Association Conference - April 27 through April 29

County News

A weekly look at news throughout Ohio's 88 counties

Did You Know? - Columbiana County

Statehouse Report

Check out the Statehouse Report for the CCAO Policy Team's updates about legislative activity affecting Ohio's counties.

Job Postings

CCAO publishes classified ads on our website free of charge as a service to counties. When submitting your ad to CCAO, please provide a link to the online job posting and a deadline date. Email your classified ad to Communications Coordinator Andrew Johnson.

Print Version

Dates to Remember

Northwest Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association quarterly meeting scheduled for March 21 in Allen County

The Board of Allen County Commissioners and the Allen County Engineer invite you to attend the Northwest Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association First Quarter Meeting on March 21 at Ohio Means Jobs, located at 951 Commerce Parkway, Lima, Ohio 45804.

This meeting will focus on Workforce, Economic Development and Evolution of the Workplace. Click here for the full agenda.

The Northwest Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association is comprised of Allen, Auglaize, Crawford, Defiance, Erie, Fulton, Hancock, Hardin, Henry, Lucas, Mercer, Ottawa, Paulding, Putnam, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Van Wert, Williams, Wood and Wyandot counties.

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Portage County to host Northeast Ohio Commissioners Association meeting on March 9

The Portage County Commissioners will host the Northeast Ohio Commissioners Association meeting on March 9 at 10 a.m. at Camp James A. Garfield Joint Military Training Center, 8451 State Route 5, Ravenna, Ohio 44266.

All attendees are required to fill out the Access Request Form for Camp James A. Garfield and return to Commissioner Sabrina Christian-Bennett at schristianbennett@portageco.com by Friday, March 4.

There is no cost to attend. You will be responsible for your own lunch. Click here for the menu and pricing. Contact Commissioner Sabrina Christian-Bennet with any questions at 330-348-3573. Click here for the event flier and agenda.

The Northeast Ohio Commissioners Association is comprised of Ashland, Ashtabula, Columbiana, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Huron, Lake, Lorain, Mahoning, Medina, Portage, Stark, Summit, Trumbull and Wayne counties.

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Registration for the OCCO Legislative Reception opens March 1

Registration for the 2022 Ohio Council of County Officials (OCCO) Reception will open March 1. Be on the lookout for a link, which will also be available on CCAO's website. The reception will take place April 6 from 5 to 7 p.m. for county elected officials and members of the 134th Ohio General Assembly. Statewide office holders will also be invited.

OCCO is an organization that strives to unite the various associations representing county auditors, commissioners, clerk of courts, coroners, engineers, prosecuting attorneys, recorders, treasurers, sheriffs and judges in order to promote sound, efficient and fiscally responsible government.

Please contact CCAO Boards' Liaison & Events Manager Robin Garrett at (614) 220-0653 if you have any questions. We look forward to seeing you there!

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Understanding retirement plan fees

Submitted by Empower Retirement

When you're planning for your future retirement, do fees factor into your plans? It's an important question. Even a small difference in fees can add up to a sizable difference in future retirement income. How much? It depends on your account balance, your average annual return and other factors.

A Department of Labor study[1] found that an increase in fees from 0.5% to 1.5% would translate into $64,000 less for a person with an initial account balance of $25,000 and an average rate of return of 7% after 35 years (assuming no further contributions). In other words, fees can have a big impact on your savings, but research shows[2] that about 40% of retirement plan participants don't understand fees.

Retirement plan fees generally fall into one of two categories:

- Administrative fees: These fees cover the expenses of running your retirement plan. They pay for recordkeeping, accounting and legal support, as well as educational programs, statement production, the plan website and other services.
- Investment fees: These are fees the investment funds in the plan charge for investment management and related services and presented as a percentage of the value of your investment in the fund, called an expense ratio. These fees are deducted before the daily price or performance is calculated.

It's important to remember that all investments come with fees, but your CCAO 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan uses the combined negotiating leverage of you and your fellow participants to keep fees as low as possible. Also, the plan and investment documentation clearly disclose fees, so you'll always know how much you're paying.

Do you have questions about your retirement plan fees and what they pay for? Contact your local CCAO Retirement Plan Advisor for more information.

1 Department of Labor, "A Look at 401(k) Plan Fees," dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ebsa/about-ebsa/our-activities/resource-center/publications/a-look-at-401k-plan-fees.pdf, September 2019.
2 CNBC.com, "Roughly 40% of Americans don't understand 401(k) fees, government watchdog finds," cnbc.com/amp/2021/08/26/40percent-of-americans-dont-understand-401k-fees-federal-watchdog-finds.html.

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Update on May 3 Primary Election

In an effort to keep CCAO members informed of the latest developments surrounding the May 3 primary election, CCAO is sharing the following information.

Ohio has not established new state legislative and congressional district lines. Previously redistricting plans have been overturned by the Ohio Supreme Court multiple times and are subject to ongoing litigation. The Ohio Redistricting Commission met last Thursday and approved new state legislative maps. Work is expected next week on new congressional districts. The eventual outcome of these efforts is unknown.

Regardless of the product of those discussions, it appears that the May 3 primary election is in significant jeopardy.

Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose issued a directive to county boards of elections, directing them to prepare for a May 3 primary that did not include state legislative and congressional contests. In a separate letter to legislative leaders outlining the numerous logistical challenges of May 3 primary election, LaRose emphasized:

"Let me be clear on this point: it is impossible to see a scenario in which these maps are favorably passed by the Redistricting Commission, challenged by litigants, reviewed by a court, and given final approval within a timeframe conductive to a May 3, 2022, primary election date."

You can read the entirety of Secretary LaRose's letter here. Secretary LaRose briefed the CCAO board of directors last week, providing the latest information he had on the status of the May 3 primary election. CCAO thanks Secretary LaRose for his time and insights.

Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost yesterday also issued a letter to state lawmakers, outlining the General Assembly's legal options for conducting the primary election. One idea would be to move the entire primary election to a later date. Another alternative would be to bifurcate the primary, holding state legislative and congressional primary contests later in the year after redistricting disputes have been resolved while allowing all other contests to take place on May 3. Other less likely possibilities include ranked-choice voting, a post-November runoff, or congressional candidates running at-large, statewide.

The full contents of AG Yost's letter can be accessed here.

CCAO, in its communications to legislative leaders, has maintained that holding separate primaries could cause significant fiscal and logistical impacts on counties and county boards of elections. Should a second primary election be held, CCAO insists that the state fully fund these unbudgeted costs, brought on by factors completely outside of counties' control.

Any questions can be directed to CCAO Policy Analyst Adam Schwiebert at aschwiebert@ccao.org.

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Husted announces launch of March round of TechCred

Ohio Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, director of the Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation, announced that the 13th application period for TechCred will open on March 1 and close on March 31.

Since the program launched in October 2019, a total of 1,615 Ohio employers have been approved for TechCred, which will fund up to 32,269 tech-focused credentials to upskill Ohio workers. The results of the 12th round, which closed on January 31st, will be announced in the coming weeks.

TechCred helps businesses address their workforce needs by upskilling current and prospective employees. Businesses of all sizes, from any industry, are eligible for up to $30,000 per round and up to $180,000 per year. To allow businesses more time to plan their employee trainings in advance, the TechCred application will officially open on a bimonthly basis for the remainder of 2022.

Below are the upcoming application dates:

Round 13: March 1 – 31
Round 14: May 2 – 31
Round 15: July 1 – 29
Round 16: Sept. 1 – 30
Round 17: Nov. 1 – 30

You can learn more about the program at TechCred.Ohio.gov.

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NACo releases list of infrastructure funding opportunities for counties

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law increased funding for many existing programs and created new programs to address the nation's infrastructure needs. The National Association of Counties has created a sortable list of infrastructure programs available to counties through the new law. The list includes information about the agency supervising the funds, a description of the program, federal cost share requirements, and how counties can access the program. The list is available at https://www.naco.org/resources/implementing-infrastructure-investments-county-level. It can also be downloaded in CSV format. NACo will add additional information as it becomes available from federal agencies.

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2022 NACo Achievement Awards application period open, early bird application deadline is March 4

Applications are now open for the National Association of Counties (NACo) 2022 Achievement Awards. Please join us in celebrating 52 years of county innovation by applying today.

Since 1970, the NACo Achievement Awards have recognized outstanding county government programs and services. Through a non-competitive application process, noteworthy programs receive awards in 18 categories that cover a vast range of county responsibilities. By participating, your county can earn national recognition.

NACo will highlight the 18 "best of category" winners, as well as feature all winners in NACo materials and online. We also provide a customizable press release for you to share the good news with the media and residents.

EARLY BIRD APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 4, 2022 (save $25 off the application fee)
REGULAR APPLICATION DEADLINE: March 31, 2022

For more information, please review the Achievement Awards online brochure, or email awards@naco.org with any questions.

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State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds – U.S. Treasury webinars

The U.S. Treasury has also posted a series of recorded webinars to assist recipients to understand and comply with relevant reporting requirements and assist recipients in accessing Treasury's Portal.

The following webinars are currently available to view:

- Project and Expenditure Report – https://youtu.be/6YTsxrEMS1o
- Reporting Tiers - https://youtu.be/JnoKlSwCA-g
- Account Creation and Login - https://youtu.be/MS7EAO2uCs0
- User Roles - https://youtu.be/w7vbi94rVDI
- Bulk Uploads - https://youtu.be/4g6fw3DUQ3k

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Applications for ODJFS Foster Care Recruitment and Retention Funding due today

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Service announces that applications for the Foster Care Recruitment and Retention Funding must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. today. A recording, the FAQ and the other documents related to the opportunity have been placed on the SACWIS Knowledge Base (SKB): https://jfskb.com/sacwis/index.php/foster-care-licensing/1116-funding-opportunity-for-foster-care-recruitment-and-retention.

If you have additional questions about the funding opportunity, please reach out to Christine Dobrovich at Christine.Dobrovich@jfs.ohio.gov or Jenn Kobel at Jennifer.Kobel@jfs.ohio.gov.

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Infrastructure School: Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Guidebook webinar series

In January, the Biden Administration released a Guidebook to the programs available in the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The Administration is launching a series of twelve webinars over the coming weeks that will provide an in-depth look into the programs contained within each of the 12 major chapters in the Guidebook.

Please see the below for the full schedule. Registration links for the February sessions are below and registration links for the March sessions will be available later this month.

- Rail Road: Register Here
  Monday, Feb. 28 at 4 – 5 p.m.

- Roads, Bridges and Major Projects
  Thursday, March 3 at 4 – 5 p.m.

- Safety
  Tuesday, March 8 at 4 – 5 p.m.

- Clean Energy and Power
  Thursday, March 10 at 4 – 5 p.m.

- Water
  Tuesday, March 15 at 4 – 5 p.m.

- Resilience
  Thursday, March 17 at 4 – 5 p.m.

- Environmental Remediation
  Tuesday, March 22 at 4 – 5 p.m.

- Broadband
  Thursday, March 24 at 4 – 5 p.m.

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Governor DeWine announces $3 Million in H2Ohio Grants for Ohio River Basin Wetland projects

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine and Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Director Mary Mertz announced that $3 million in grants are available for projects that will improve water quality in the Ohio River Basin through the creation or restoration of wetlands.

ODNR is administering the Ohio River Basin H2Ohio Wetland Grant Program as part of Governor DeWine's H2Ohio initiative. Wetlands help improve water quality by trapping, filtering, and removing excess pollutants and nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorus, from the water before they flow into waterways and contribute to harmful algal blooms.

The Ohio River Basin H2Ohio Wetland Grant Program is funded as part of Ohio's 2022-2023 operating budget, which was passed by the Ohio General Assembly last year. This is the second round of funding available through the grant program, with $5 million awarded for 10 wetland projects in 2021, including the Hellbranch Meadows West Wetland Restoration Project in Franklin County.

Right now, there are more than 80 H2Ohio wetland projects underway or complete throughout the state. You can find a list of ODNR's H2Ohio wetland projects at h2.ohio.gov.

H2Ohio is DeWine's initiative to ensure safe and clean water in Ohio. It is a comprehensive, data-driven approach to improving water quality over the long term. H2Ohio focuses on encouraging agricultural best management practices, restoring, and enhancing wetlands, and replacing home septic systems to reduce nutrients that contribute to harmful algal blooms. For more information on the H2Ohio initiative, please visit h2.ohio.gov.

The Ohio River Basin H2Ohio Wetland Grant Program is a competitive, reimbursement grant program that provides up to 100 percent project funding for high-quality, wetlands-focused projects to address nutrient loading and contribute to water quality improvement. Applicants are encouraged to submit project proposals in the scope of approximately $50,000 to $500,000 for H2Ohio funding consideration.

Program priorities and criteria for grant applicants can be found on ODNR's website. The deadline to apply is April 1, 2022. Each application will be thoroughly reviewed before grants are awarded this spring.

ODNR will host a webinar to talk about the H2Ohio program, the Ohio River Basin grant requirements, and answer any questions regarding the application process. The Microsoft Teams event will be held from 12 p.m. – 1 p.m. on Feb. 28, 2022. To RSVP to this event, email H2Ohio Assistant Program Manager Rachel DeNoewer.

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Ohio Safety Congress & Expo virtual event March 9-10

The BWC will host the Ohio Safety Congress & Expo March 9-10, 2022 as an *online-only event* with dozens of learning sessions and a digital expo, allowing participants to chat virtually with vendors about new and existing products and services.

Many sessions will qualify for the 2-hour Group Retro and Group Rating annual safety training requirement.

By attending the safety congress, you will learn to:

- Prevent workplace injuries and illnesses.
- Achieve better outcomes for injured workers.
- Reduce workers' compensation claims costs.
- Keep Ohio's work force healthy and productive.

Registration is free and is now open.

If you have any questions, please call 1-800-644-6292 or check the Safety Congress website https://www.ohiosafetycongress.com/index.cfm

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2022 Ohio Land Bank Association Conference - April 27 through April 29

Ohio Land Banks Association and Greater Cleveland Habitat for Humanity announced that the 2022 Ohio Land Bank Association Conference will be held in Cleveland, Ohio at the Huntington Convention Center.

Pre-conference activities, including mobile tours, begin at 1 p.m. on Wednesday, April 27 with the official conference kick-off taking place on Thursday, April 28 and concluding on Friday, April 29, 2022.

Please visit the Ohio Land Bank Association website at www.ohiolandbanks.org for conference details.

You can register today using this link: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/11th-annual-ohio-land-bank-conference-2022-tickets-238342808757

If you have questions, please feel free to contact Sarah Norman at snorman@cuyahogalandbank.org

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County News

Licking County commissioner offers insight into Intel deal
Spectrum News, Feb. 13, 2022
Licking County Commissioner Tim Bubb joined Mike Kallmeyer to discuss, in part, what was done to help bring the Intel announcement to life.

Bubb said Licking County and central Ohio are in the bullseye nationally, and that it's a good opportunity for the region. He said it will have a domino effect: suppliers relocating to the area and as many as 50 companies estimated to move to central Ohio.

Stahl appointed to board of County Risk Sharing Authority
Fremont News Messenger, Feb. 23, 2022
The County Risk Sharing Authority (CORSA) announced that Ottawa County Commissioner Mark Stahl has been selected to serve on its board of directors.

According to a news release, Stahl was recommended by the selection committee and was unanimously appointed by the CORSA board of directors to fill the unexpired term of Commissioner Ryan Mack.

"It is an honor to be selected from member county commissioners to be a member of the CORSA governing board of directors," Stahl said in the release. "I look forward to supporting the mission of the CORSA board and member counties to provide property and liability coverage and risk management services. Ottawa County has been a member for many years and I am certainly proud to serve on this outstanding board as a commissioner from Ottawa County."

Ashtabula County Commissioners decide on ARPA funding uses
Star Beacon, Feb. 22, 2022
A meeting took place on Tuesday morning regarding the county's American Rescue Plan Act funds.
Ashtabula County is expected to receive $18.8 million over two years in ARPA funds.

County Administrator Janet Discher ran through a list of projects the commissioners had previously decided to fund via ARPA dollars, including work at the Ohio State Extension, funding for the Ashtabula County Airport, new deputies for the Ashtabula County Sheriff's Office and bonus pay.

Discher proposed using $5 million from the county's ARPA funds for payroll for this year. Commissioners recently agreed to use $10 million of the ARPA funds received by the county for revenue replacement. Discher said $5 million for payroll would come out of the $10 million allocated for revenue replacement.

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Did You Know? - Columbiana County

Columbiana County's earliest known inhabitants included the Native American "Mound Builders." In addition to earthworks, these groups left behind petroglyphs carved into rockfaces along the Ohio River near Wellsville.

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Dates to Remember

MARCH 11. 2022
CORSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

MARCH 17, 2022
GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING

MARCH 18, 2022
CCAO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

APRIL 6, 2022
OCCO LEGISLATIVE RECEPTION

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