December 27, 2022

Ashtabula County officials wore their ugly Christmas sweaters for their December 22 meeting.

County Clerk Nikki Hiller, Commissioners Denny Bittle, Michael Welch, and Jim Justice, Solid Waste District Director Jim Skora, and Deputy County Clerk Sherri Maneese all took part in the holiday tradition.

If you are having issues viewing Counties Current in your email, click [View this email in your browser] at the top of the email.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Ohio Public Defender releases memo on reimbursement rate and administrative code changes

The Office of the Ohio Public Defender (OPD) recently released its most recent update to counties regarding the indigent defense reimbursement rate and an update on recent amendments to certain Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) rules.

In the office's April 2022 memo, it shared that county reimbursement submissions were exceeding projects for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023 and that the reimbursement rate would likely be approximately 90% instead of the originally-projected 100%. With half of SFY 2023 complete, OPD still estimates the reimbursement rate will be 90%, but that figure is subject to change based on reimbursement submissions from counties.

The OPD memo also discusses amendments to two OAC rules relating to public defenders and indigent defense.

The first, an amendment to OAC 120-1-06, pertains to when expenses related to building renovations utilized by a public defender office may be reimbursed to the county.

The second is multiple amendments to OAC 120-1-10, which changes the requirements related to trial experience for appointed counsel to qualify for reimbursement and makes changes to the definition of lead counsel for trials. OPD has published quick reference guides regarding these rule amendments.

Please review the memo and if you have any questions, please contact Laura Austen, Deputy Director of Policy & Outreach for OPD, at either 614-466-5394 or outreach@opd.ohio.gov.

URGENT: Only two weeks remain to review broadband maps; BroadbandOhio to host virtual Q&A sessions in January

The Federal Communications Commission recently released new broadband maps that **will be used to determine the amount of funding Ohio will receive to expand broadband access throughout the state**. To improve the maps and ensure Ohio receives as much support as possible, we need your help!

You can view the current map through the link above or directly at BroadbandMap.fcc.gov.

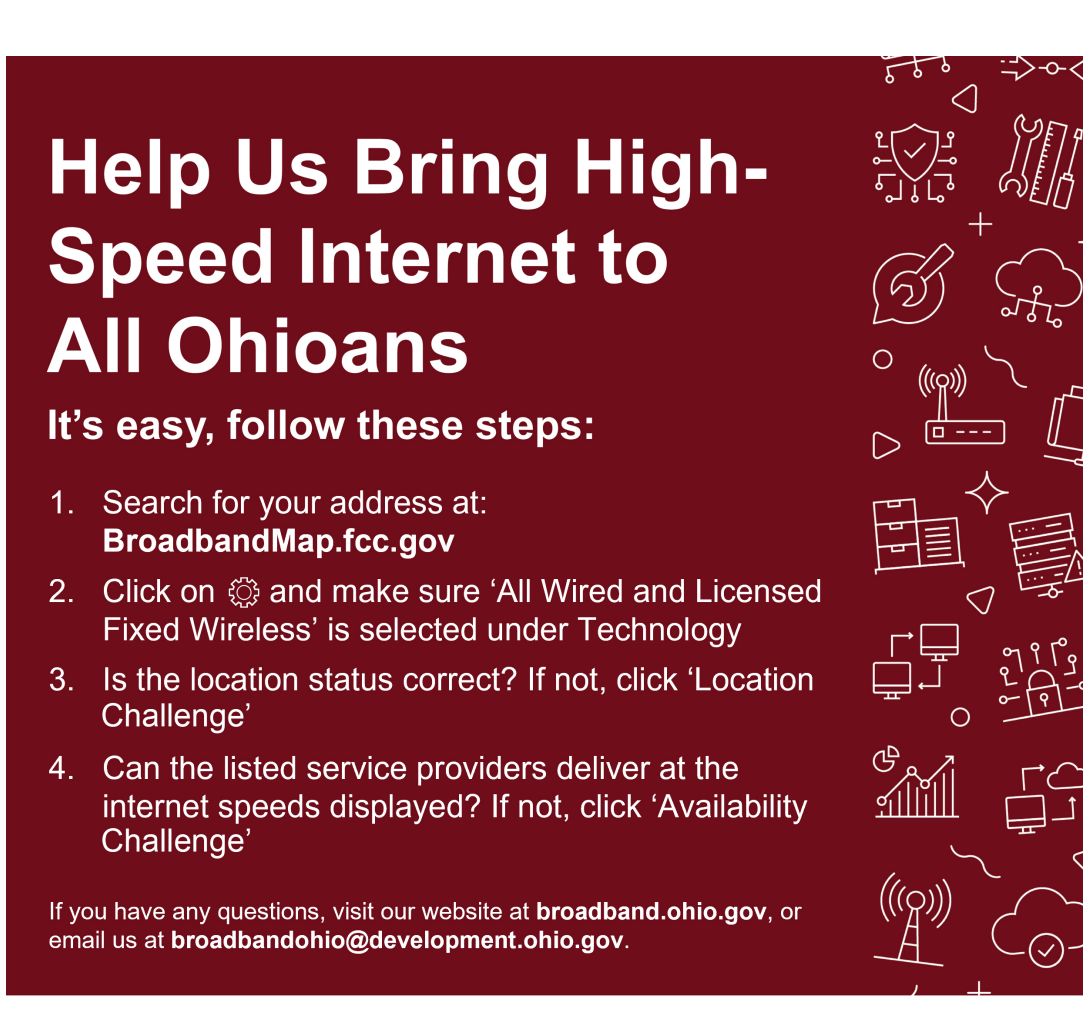
By Jan. 13, 2023, we need as many Ohioans as possible to check the federal maps, and if there is an inconsistency, submit supporting information. The FCC has released both an FAQ and the poster displayed below.

BroadbandOhio will additionally be hosting two virtual Q&A sessions to assist Ohioans on the process. The first will be held on January 4 and the second will be held January 10. Registration is not required. You can access the sessions at 10 a.m. each day through the links below.

- January 4, 10 a.m.
- January 10. 10 a.m.

BroadbandOhio is urging Ohioans to do the following, in addition to reviewing the maps for their area:

1. Share the email below with all listservs that reach your community, as well as your broader network in Ohio.
2. Share the attached poster on social media, in your office building, and in commonly used spaces in your community.
3. Talk to as many people as you can. The more people who know, the better!



Help Us Bring High-Speed Internet to All Ohioans

It's easy, follow these steps:

1. Search for your address at: **BroadbandMap.fcc.gov**
2. Click on ⚙ and make sure 'All Wired and Licensed Fixed Wireless' is selected under Technology
3. Is the location status correct? If not, click 'Location Challenge'
4. Can the listed service providers deliver at the internet speeds displayed? If not, click 'Availability Challenge'

If you have any questions, visit our website at **broadband.ohio.gov**, or email us at **broadbandohio@development.ohio.gov**.

Ohio Department of Development | BroadbandOhio

Reimbursement for psychotropic drug reimbursement must be submitted by February 15

The Psychotropic Drug Reimbursement Program for County Jails will continue in SFY 2023 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023). OhioMHAS will provide reimbursement to counties for the cost of certain drugs dispensed to inmates of county jails in Ohio. Reimbursement for SFY 2023 shall be submitted by the county sheriff's office for the following periods identified below. Failure to submit reimbursement requests by the identified dates will result in the request being denied.

- July 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022 – submitted by February 15, 2023

The total reimbursement amount available for SFY 2023 is $3 million. Of the total amount, $1,500,000 is available for each reporting period. A county jail will receive reimbursement based on their jail's percentage of the total amount of reimbursement requested across all jails participating in the program. For example, if a county jail accounts for 1% of the total amount requested for the reporting period, the jail would receive $15,000.00.

Attached is the Guidelines and Assurances and the Entry Form. Both documents must be submitted to jailreimbursement@mha.ohio.gov by the deadline to be eligible for reimbursement. More information about the Psychotropic Drug Reimbursement Program can be found on the OhioMHAS website.

OhioMHAS will upload payment amounts for each jail in the Grants and Funding Management System. Once processed, the ADAMH Board will receive the funds. For jails that are in multiple ADAMH Board counties, the payment upload will be processed to the Board in the county where the jail is located.

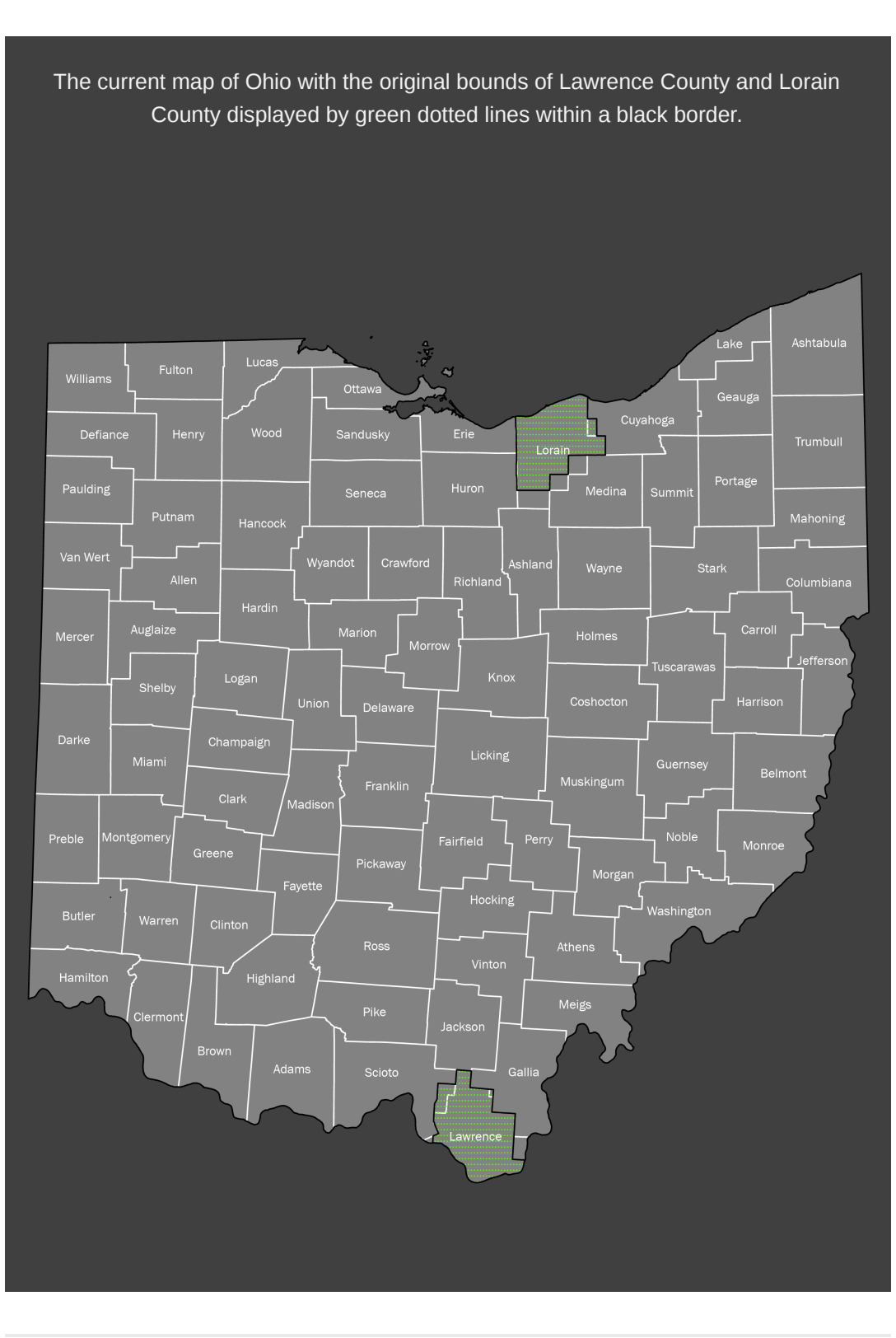
Please reach out to Chris Nicastro, Chief of the Bureau of Criminal Justice Services in the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, with questions. You can contact him at 614-466-9969 or christopher.nicastro@mha.ohio.gov.

Happy birthday to Lawrence County and Lorain County!

Two counties celebrated birthdays in the last week. Lawrence County turned 207 on December 21 and Lorain County celebrated its bicentennial on December 26!

Lawrence County was created in 1815 out of parts of Gallia and Scioto counties. It is the southern-most county in the state. The county is named after James Lawrence, a naval captain during the War of 1812. He famously commanded his men, "Don't give up the ship!" during the fateful Battle of Boston Harbor in 1813. The county seat of Ironton was the home of one of the earliest professional football teams, the Ironton Tanks. The Tanks are an ancestor of the current NFL team the Detroit Lions, as when the Tanks folded, its players were largely absorbed by the near-by Portsmouth Spartans, which later became the Detroit Lions.

Lorain County was created in 1822, meaning it celebrated its bicentennial this year. Lorain County is the 72nd county to eclipse the 200-year mark. According to tradition, the county was originally to be named Colerain but Herman Ely, who had founded and named the county seat of Elyria, suggested Lorain as a reference to the Lorraine region of France. One of Lorain County's most well-known institutions is Oberlin College, founded in 1833. Oberlin was one of the first colleges in the country to admit African Americans (1835) and women (1837). It is the oldest co-ed liberal arts college in the United States and has the oldest continually operating music conservatory in the country.


The current map of Ohio with the original bounds of Lawrence County and Lorain County displayed by green dotted lines within a black border.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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NACo begins accepting applications for 2023 Achievement Awards

On December 19, NACo officially put out the call for applications for NACo Achievement Awards. The award program, entering its 53rd year, celebrates outstanding county government programs and services.

Achievement Award winners will be featured in County News, NACo's primary newsletter, and will be honored at NACo's Annual Conference. The recognition is also useful for highlighting important projects to your local community.

The awards cover 18 program categories, such as Children and Youth, Criminal Justice and Public Safety, Health, Human Services, Planning, Transportation, and more.

In 2022, Ohio counties received 28 Achievement Awards. You can view a full list of NACo Achievement Award winners dating back to 2009 at NACo's award database.

The deadline to submit applications is April 7, 2023, with applications received before March 3 receiving $25 off the application fee.

Ohio Eclipse Planning Taskforce releases summary document of locally identified needs

In the spring of 2022, the State of Ohio Eclipse Planning Taskforce sent county EMA directors a jurisdictional needs assessment to collect data and information about planning concerns, needs, and barriers. This assessment allowed the taskforce to utilize data driven metrics, whole community engagement, and evidence-based best practices for Ohio's eclipse response planning efforts to form objectives to better assist each county's preparedness efforts.

The taskforce used the survey to produce a report on needs that the state must address in the lead up to the April 2024 solar eclipse. You can access a copy of the report here.

The taskforce will now be working with state agencies to address the needs identified by county EMA directors.

Auditor of State releases summary of the federal Financial Data Transparency Act

Congress recently passed the Financial Data Transparency Act (FDTA) as part of the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act. The FDTA is intended to improve data transparency through new standards that require financial information to be automated, searchable, and machine-readable. Full implementation of the legislation may take up to four years.

The Auditor of State's office created a summary to provide an overview of what to expect as the law moves forward. The office will also post additional guidance on its website (www.ohioauditor.gov) as it is released. A link to the bill's text is available in the PDF linked above.

If you have questions regarding the FDTA and how it may impact your county, please contact Tom Hancock, Legislative Director for Auditor of State Keith Faber, at 614-728-7171 or TEHancock@ohioauditor.gov.

County Occupational Estimates Reports published by ODJFS

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Bureau of Labor Market Information recently published 2021 County Occupational Estimates Reports. These reports can be helpful to anyone exploring new careers. They show estimated employment counts for the top occupations in each county, along with the typical education, work experience, and training required for each, and whether the occupation is a STEM career and/or an Ohio Top Job.

This information may be useful for county OhioMeansJobs affiliates and county JFS services to help Ohioans find careers that are best suited for them.

Governor announces latest round of Crime Reduction grants

Last Friday, Governor Mike DeWine announced the 11th round of awards under the Violence Crime Reduction Grant Program.

Among the 13 law enforcement agencies that received grants in the latest round, six were county entities:

- Columbiana County Sheriff ($101,983)
- Crawford County Sheriff ($53,928)
- Cuyahoga Metropolitain Housing Authority Police Department ($411,615)
- Franklin County Prosecutor ($1,598,042)
- Montgomery County Sheriff ($185,000)
- Muskingum County Prosecutor ($349,169)

The grant program has thus far awarded $79 million to law enforcement agencies. Approximately $21 million remains to be awarded.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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Visit the Grants and Funding Opportunities page on the CCAO website for a detailed listing of open grant programs.

Schedule and program for OHPELRA's annual training conference released

The Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association (OHPELRA) will be hosting its 39th Annual Training Conference from February 5-7 at the Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center in Lewis Center, Ohio.

Sessions will include public sector recruitment challenges, fostering relationships between unions and management, discipline and investigation fundamentals, tips for collective bargaining, and more. You can view the complete program here.

OHPELRA has submitted the conference to the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on Continuing Legal Education for approval for applicable sessions to count for Continuing Legal Education hours. An update on the status of the request will be provided when available.

Registration can be completed here and will cost $399 for OHPELRA members and $499 for non-members. Single day registrations will cost $200 and $275 for members and non-members, respectively.

Special hotel room rates have been secured as well, expiring on January 11. Please consult the program linked above for more details.

PNC Bank to host economic forecasting webinar

On January 12, PNC Bank will be hosting a webinar entitled, "Forecasting Ohio's Economic and Political Climate." The webinar will focus on Ohio's economy, the work of the State Treasurer's office, and upcoming legislative changes that may affect the state's economic landscape.

The webinar will be hosted by Robert E. Dailey, the Executive VP and Managing Director of PNC Public Finance and will feature as speakers Robert Sprague, the Ohio Treasurer of State, kurt Rankin, a senior economist for PNC, and Brian Hicks, the President and CEO of Hicks Partners, LLC.

Registration for the webinar is free and can be completed here.

CCAO recommends counties register staff for the webinar to hear from experts on what the state can expect in the new year.

State and Federal grant overview

There are a number of state and federal grants whose application deadline is in January that CCAO believes would be beneficial to counties and the communities they serve. They are as follows, ordered by application deadline:

- **STATE**: Ohio Drug Law Enforcement Fund Grant (Deadline January 5)
    - To defray the expenses of a drug task force incurred by performing functions related to illegal drug activity.
- **FEDERAL**: Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration (January 5)
    - To provide assistance to entities to encourage conservation, restoration, research, and management of fish and wildlife resources in the Great Lakes Basin. NOTE: Only available to counties in the Lake Erie Basin.
- **FEDERAL**: Farm to School Grant (January 6)
    - To assist entities through grants and technical assistance in implementing farm-to-school programs that improve access to local foods.
- **FEDERAL**: Affordable Connectivity Outreach Grants (January 9)
    - Two separate programs, one to increase awareness of the Affordable Connectivity Program among low-income households and one to facility the promotion of the program by providing assistance in completing the application.
- **STATE**: Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant (January 15)
    - To assist small, volunteer fire departments with the purchasing of equipment and funding of projects.
- **STATE**: Serving, Educating, and Empowering Fathers (January 20)
    - To support the well-being of Ohioans by strengthening families and promoting stability by serving fathers who are eligible for TANF.

You can see other grant opportunities at CCAO's Funding and Grant Opportunities page.

ARPA and BIL RESOURCES

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This section of Counties Current will be a permanent fixture for the foreseeable future to help counties with the ins and outs of the American Rescue Plan Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. These two laws provide a once-in-a-generation investment.

Resources for ARPA Reporting and Compliance

The most recent version of the US Treasury Reporting Guidance was published September 20, 2022. Counties and other local governments with populations greater than 250,000 or ARPA distributions greater than $10 million are required to file Project and Expenditure Reports no later than 30 days after the end of each quarter throughout the grant period. Other recipients will file Project and Expenditure Reports annually by April 30.

Members are urged to consult resources from US Treasury, NACo, and the Ohio Office of Budget and Management for more information about reporting and how to use ARPA funds. CCAO maintains a list of ARPA links and resources, including a comparison of state and federal procurement laws, at the ARPA Resources page.

Ohio Ethics Commission issues statement regarding stimulus funds

Last week the Ohio Ethics Commission released a statement ensuring that public officials are aware that stimulus funds, such as those received under the federal American Rescue Plan Act and the funds that communities will receive under Governor Mike DeWine's Appalachian investment program, are public funds and that conflict of interest laws must be observed.

To that effect, the Commission also recirculated its Advisory Opinion No. 2009-006, issued in 2009 regarding stimulus funds made available to governments under the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. It provides a more in-depth examination of potential conflicts of interest with stimulus funds, including a discussing regarding vendors.

CCAO encourages members refamiliarize themselves with this Advisory Opinion and conflict of interest laws to ensure good stewardship of ARPA and Appalachia funds.

Guidance and overview of available BIL funding available from NACo and the Ohio Department of Transportation

NACo and ODOT each host a resource page providing information to counties about the Bipartican Infrastructure Law. The pages are rich with information including multiple tables providing overviews and links to funding opportunities, a timeline of upcoming grant programs, and much more.

The NACo website can be found here and the ODOT website can be found here.

CCAO strongly encourages counties to frequently visit the sites and apply for funding through the myriad of programs to bring valuable federal funds to Ohio communities.

COUNTY NEWS

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Each week Counties Current highlights the happenings in our counties in the words of their local media. One county from each of the CCAO's five districts is highlighted.

Northwest District

Crawford County Council on Aging recognized

Crawford County Now, December 14, 2022

The Crawford County Council on Aging, Inc. is receiving accolades for its efforts in helping the county's senior citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The agency earlier this month received the 2022 Project Collaboration Award from the Ohio District 5 Area Agency on Aging during its annual meeting Dec. 1 at the Mid-Ohio Conference Center in Mansfield.

"We stayed open the entire time during COVID," said Cassie Herschler, executive director of the Crawford County Council on Aging. "We really went through a lot that year meeting the needs of our clients. It was nice that we got the award."

Herschler and five others from the agency attended the luncheon, during which highlights of the year were shared with nearly 250 service providers, board members, advisory council members, staff, and others in attendance from North Central Ohio.

Northeast District

Ashtabula County to retain ownership of Geneva-on-the-Lake Lodge

News5Cleveland, December 21, 2022

The battle for ownership of the lodge of Geneva-on-the-Lake is over, and Ashtabula County came out on top.

The county had been negotiating the terms of a new agreement with the state for more than one year.

The Lodge is a gateway nestled in the center of Ohio wine country and sits on the shore of Lake Erie.

Back in 2021, a provision to a House bill sought to turn the building into a state-managed facility, and for a while, it looked like the Ohio Division of Natural Resources would take over. With legislation passed last week, Ohio lawmakers agreed to pay off $14 million and outstanding debt and leave the property under county ownership.

"It's a critical development here for us here in Ashtabula County. We're incredibly grateful for all the parties that have helped make it possible to get to this point, and we just hoped that the governor can sign off on things so that it will be seen through," said Ashtabula County Commissioner J.P. Ducro, IV.

Central District

Knox County commissioners approve 2023 spending plan

Knox Pages, December 17, 2022

The Knox County Board of Commissioners approved on Thursday a $21.97 million general fund budget for 2023, a 7.4% increase over 2022.

"This is the fourth year in a row we passed a balanced budget. We do not have deficits," Commissioner Thom Collier said. "We have reduced our debt significantly over the last several years."

Anticipated revenue comes in at $22.44 million, about 3% higher than 2022. The largest revenue stream at 51% is the county sales tax ($11.5 million). The general property tax accounts for $4.84 million (22%) in revenue.

Of the $21.97 million appropriated, the justice expense category accounts for 46%. Justice includes the county prosecutor, court system, sheriff's office and jail, and public defender.

Southwest District

Commissioners talk funding sources, meet with EMS company

News Watchman, December 13, 2022

The Pike County Commissioners met with representatives from Portsmouth Ambulance, Monday morning in regular session.

MedCare, who currently provides EMS service to Pike County, informed the commissioners in August that MedCare would be terminating their service in 180 days.

The initial conversation that took place before the meeting with the representatives from Portsmouth Ambulance was whether to budget the money or not in the new budget appropriations.

Commissioner Tony Montgomery thinks that the funding for EMS has to be budgeted.

"That strains us. This year we're going to have to take out of wherever — reserves, county general or something," Montgomery said. "Next year if we try to keep that budget under estimated revenue, we can do it, but it's going to hurt somewhere."

Southeast District

Commissioners approve letter of support for MWB group seeking funds to continue Vision to Learn program

Telegram News, December 16, 2022

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners recently approved a letter of support on behalf of Make Wellston Beautiful, Inc. (MWB) to help bring the Vision to Learn program's services back to the area once again in 2023.

In reading the request from MWB during a meeting held Dec. 6, Commission President Jon Hensler read, "Under this grant, Vision to Learn would expand services as part of its major-scale operation, with more than 30,000 eye exams in Appalachian Ohio planned to serve students throughout all 32 counties." He continued, "Vision to Learn has provided over 3,600 eye exams and approximately 3,000 pairs of eyeglasses to students in 16 counties in Appalachian Ohio since launching in our region in fall 2021."

The Vision to Learn program is offered through the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO). Locally, as Commissioner Hensler explained, these vision services have been provided to children from Wellston, Jackson, Coalton, and Hamden thus far.

"They did five days of eye exams, and saw 136 kids," he said, citing information from Wellston Mayor Charlie Hudson. "More than 65 children from Jackson County's Amish community have been seen, and Vision to Learn will replace glasses one time for any damages or breakages free-of-charge to families."

DATES TO REMEMBER

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DECEMBER 26 - JANUARY 1
KAWNAZAA

DECEMBER 31
NEW YEAR'S EVE

JANUARY 1
NEW YEAR'S DAY

JANUARY 16
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR DAY

JANAURY 20
CCAO BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

DID YOU KNOW?

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Perry County

The coldest recorded temperature in Ohio occurred on February 10, 1899, in Milligan, a small community in Perry County. That bitter morning, the temperature reached -39 degrees Farhenheight. Milligan is located in a small valley created by the Moxahala Creek, which traps cold air from the surrounding heights.

The cold day was a part of the Great Blizzard of 1899.

The Remarkable Ohio historical marker recording the Great Blizzard of 1899's effect on Milligan, Ohio. The marker lies on OH Route 93, near the Moxahala Creek that helped create the cold spot.

The Great Blizzard of 1899 not only brought Ohio's coldest-ever temperature, but also dropped snow in Florida. Pictured above is a snowball fight on the steps of the Florida State Capitol.

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