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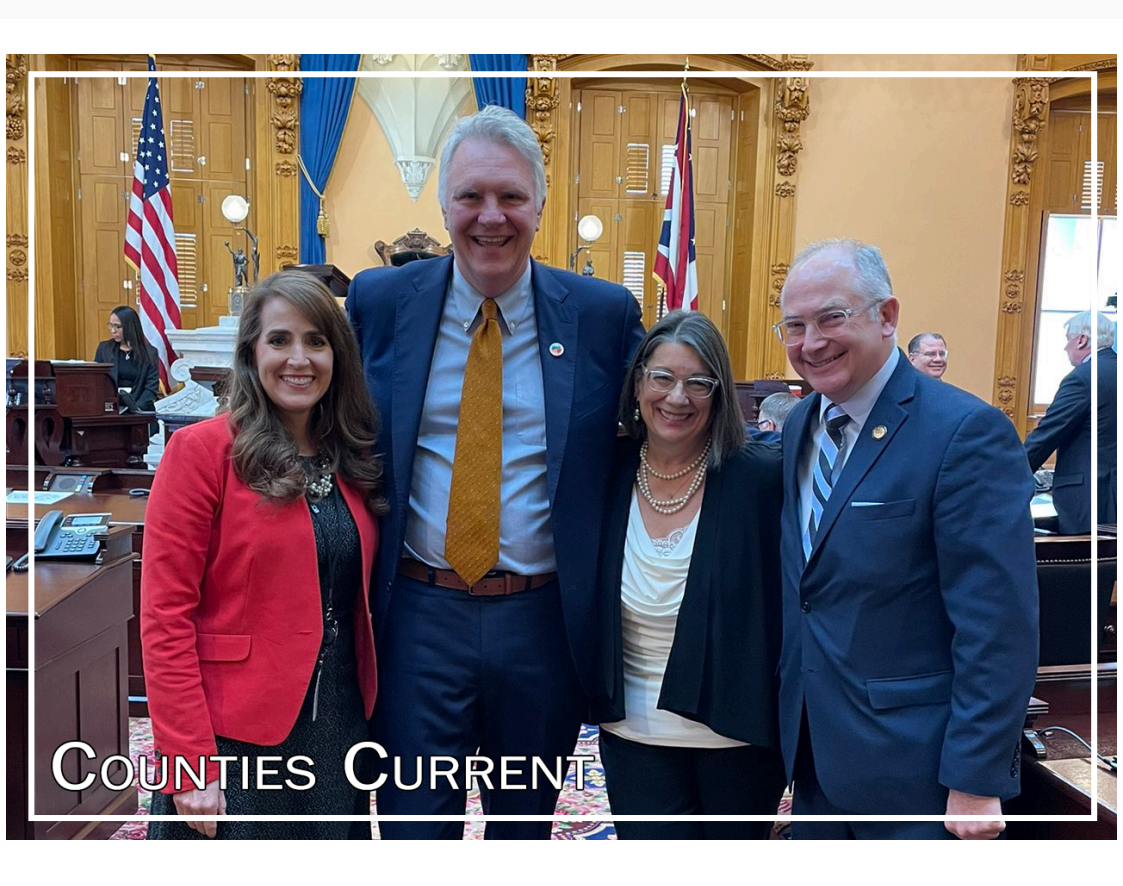

February 6, 2023

Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne with Senators Teresa Gavarone, Nicki Antonio, and Kent Smith before Governor Mike DeWine's State of the State address.

Photo courtesy of Chris Ronayne

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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CCAO and OHPELRA launch Recruitment and Retention survey

CCAO and the Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association (OHPELRA) have joined together to conduct a survey of public employers across Ohio to help identify strategies that they are utilizing to retain and recruit employees during the current labor market. It is vital that public employers maintain robust workforces to provide services to their residents. By learning what colleagues in other parts of the state are doing to retain and recruit, public agencies can find what strategies would work for them in their own unique situation.

To foster participation, the results of this survey will be shared with those employers who respond one month before the results are shared generally.

This survey is open to all public employers, from county agencies, townships, school districts, state agencies, and everything in between.

You can access the survey here.

Thank you for your help in bolstering Ohio's public workforce!

Ohio Public Defender releases latest memo to counties regarding SFY 2023 reimbursement rate

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 December 2022 memo, it shared that the agency projected the reimbursement rate would likely be approximately 90% instead of the originally-projected 100%. The agency continues to project a reimbursement rate of 90% through the rest of the state fiscal year, due in part to compensation rate increases above what was originally estimated.

Additionally, the memo clarifies the signature requirement for financial disclosure of indigent clients due to the rise in telephone and video conference use for these meetings. If these meetings are done virtually, the applicant's signature on the financial disclosure form is not required to initiate representation and will not be required for reimbursement, so long as the individual who obtains the information from the defendant completes the form with this format at the end:

"Information received via telephone/video by _____________ (the person taking down the information would write their name immediately following the statement)."

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, or Alice Hill, Reimbursement Program Administrator (614-644-1589, alice.hill@opd.ohio.gov).

Executive Budget introduced, overview available from CCAO Policy Team

Last week, Governor Mike DeWine released his operating budget proposal. Several Association priorities were addressed in the proposal, including a modest restoration of the Local Government Fund, continued support for county jail construction and renovation, and full funding for indigent defense. CCAO encourages our members to engage with their representatives and senators to stress the importance of these and other county priorities to ensure they remain in the budget as it moves through the legislative process.

The CCAO Policy Team has provided a detailed overview of county-related provisions in the budget.

Former Defiance County Commissioner Otto Nicely passes away

Last week, former Defiance County Commissioner Otto L. Nicely passed away at age 79. Otto had a long history of public service. He served in the US Army military police from 1964 to 1966, he worked as the Superintendent for the Defiance County Highway Department, served as Defiance County Commissioner for more than 20 years, as a Noble Township Trustee for 14 years, and as a Noble Township volunteer fireman for 27 days. Otto also served on his county's Board of Development Disabilities and on the NACo board of directors.

Otto is survived by his loving wife of 58 years, Donna Nicely of Defiance, his daughters, Cristina (Jarod) Kammeyer and Lora Nicely, his brother, Theodore (Phyllis) Nicely, his sister, Sally (Ferrel) Lee, sisters-in-law; Donna M. Nicely, Beverly Nicely, and Rose Nicely, his brother-in-law, Henry Gerken, and many nieces and nephews.

Memorials are suggested to CHP Defiance Area Hospice, or St. Jude Children's Hospital.

Save the Date! New Member Training to be held February 27 - March 1

New Member Training is coming February 27, 28 and March 1 at the DoubleTree in Columbus! All members, new and experienced, are encouraged and invited to attend.

Early-bird registration pricing is available until February 19! Register by February 19 for the full training at a price of $250 and for single-day (any of the three days are eligible for single-day registration) for $150. After February 19 these prices will increase to $300 and $200, respectively.

You can reserve rooms at the DoubleTree for a reduced price through the CCAO's event portal, accessible here. Reduced rates are only available until February 13.

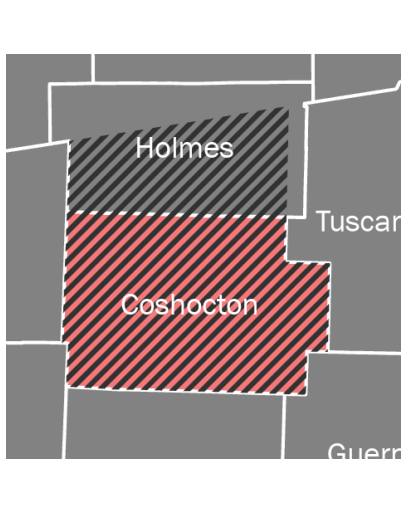
Registration can be completed here or through the link on the event page on CCAO's website.

A draft agenda for the training has also been released. Please note that time slots and sessions are subject to change.

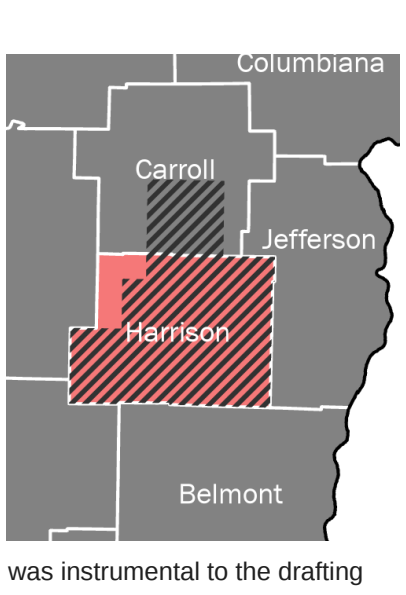
We hope to see you in Columbus for the event! If you have questions, please contact Robin Garrett at rgarrett@ccao.org.

Happy birthday to Coshocton County, Harrison County, Pike County, and Wyandot County!

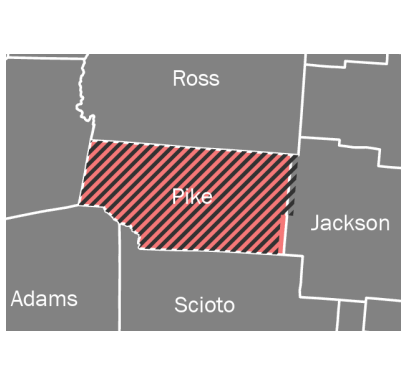
Four counties celebrated their birthdays last week. On January 31, Coshocton County turned 213 years old while on February 1, Harrison County, Pike County, and Wyandot County turned 210 years old, 208 years old, and 178 years old, respectively.



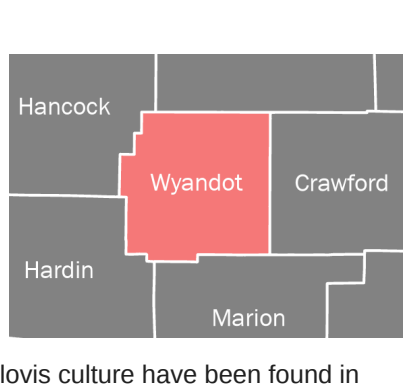
Created out of parts of Muskingum and Tuscarawas counties, Coshocton County draws its name from the Delaware Native American Tribe word for "union of waters." George Washington Crile, a medical pioneer, hailed from Coshocton County. Crile is credited with conducting the first successful direct blood transfusion, helping to make the use of X-ray machines mainstream, and co-founding the Cleveland Clinic.



Harrison County was created out of land previously belonging to Jefferson and Tuscarawas counties. It is named after William Henry Harrison, who was the commanding officer during the battle of Tippecanoe and who would later be elected as the ninth president of the United States (and who bears the unfortunate distinction of the shortest-serving president after dying due to illness just a month after taking office). Harrison County was the birthplace of several notable figures during the American Civil War: Edward Stanton, Secretary of War for the Lincoln Administration; John Bingham, a congressman who was instrumental to the drafting and passage of the 14th Amendment; and the Custer brothers, George and Thomas, who both served with distinction during the war who later died during the Battle of Little Bighorn.



Pike County was created out of portions of Adams, Ross, and Scioto counties and is named after Zebulon Pike. Pike was known for, among other achievements, being the American-discoverer of what is now known as Pikes Peak in Colorado (he also, coincidentally, was the father-in-law of one of William Henry Harrison's sons). The area that is now Pike County was home to nearly every major indigenous culture group in the eastern North American continent, with artifacts attesting to significant Adena Cultural Group (between 1000 and 800 BCE), Hopewell Culture Group (300 BCE to 600 CE), Fort Ancient Culture Group (1000 CE to approximately 1600 CE), and is believed by some archeologists to be the birthplace of the Shawnee tribe.



Wyandot County was created out of land formerly belonging to Crawford, Hancock, Hardin, and Marion counties. It is one of the few counties to never have had its borders changed since its establishment. It is named after a Native American people in the area and translates roughly to "people of the peninsula." Wyandot County is home to Sheridan Cave, an important Paleo-Indian archaeological site. Artifacts from the Clovis culture have been found in the cave dating back to 10,000 BCE (the Clovis culture is commonly believed to be the first peoples in the North American continent). Remains of ancient mega-fauna have been found in the cave, including the stag-moose (8' in length and 1,500 pounds heavy), the giant short-faced bear (10' on its hind legs and 2,000 pounds heavy), and the giant beaver (up to 7' in length and 270 pounds heavy).

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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OneOhio Recovery Foundation seeking applicants to join Expert Panel

The OneOhio Recovery Foundation, established to help distribute funds from opioid lawsuit settlements to local projects, is seeking applicants for its Expert Panel. Members of the panel will consult with and offer guidance to both the statewide Board and the 19 regional boards as they consider projects for funding. Ohioans with expertise in addiction prevention, treatment and recovery, pain management, public health, and other related fields are encouraged to apply.

The Board will appoint six members of the nine-person Expert Panel with the other three appointed by the governor and the attorney general. Members will serve without compensation.

If you are, or you know somebody who would be, interested in applying, you can do so here.

Ohio Department of Health launches survey to support State Health Assessment and State Health Plan updates

The Ohio Department of Health has released a survey to gather information and provide insights regarding health-related priorities, strengths, challenges, and emerging trends that will help inform the next iteration on the State Health Assessment and the State Health Plan.

The current State Health Plan can be viewed here while the survey can be completed here. We encourage counties to complete the surbey and provide the state your opinion.

Maternal and infant health program launched by Medicaid

Last Monday, the state officially launched Comprehensive Maternal Care, a community-based, statewide program aimed at improving the health and well-being of mothers, infants, and families covered by Medicaid.

To participate, obstetrical practices are required to measure and engage with patients and families through advisory councils or other means to hear firsthand accounts of how access to care, cultural competence, and communication methods affect patient outcomes. Practices must use patient input to improve the patient experience and reduce disparities. They also must consider and link patients to resources that address broader factors of health, such as housing, food instability, and transportation. Additional criteria for participation include:

- Using the Pregnancy Risk Assessment to quickly identify women in need of a first prenatal appointment and ensure timely access appointments and services needed.
- Engaging community supports and evaluating the mother's and family's experiences throughout treatment.
- Ensuring patient involvement and care continuity with their providers.
- Formally assessing practice strengths and patient needs annually to ensure resources, and best practices available are employed and achieving healthier outcomes

Ohio Medicaid estimates investing $5 million in CMC by the end of its first year, reaching over 14,000 pregnant and postpartum patients and enrolling 77 medical practices that are currently caring for pregnant and postpartum patients.

SNAP emergency allotment to end in February

On January 5, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services sent a letter to county JFS directors regarding the end of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) emergency allotments. You can read the full letter here. A summary is provided below.

As part of the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic, states were allowed to request emergency allotments for households participating in SNAP. These allotments would end either at the conclusion of the federal public health emergency or until the state ended the program. Ohio has been providing the emergency allotments since March 2020.

Under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, states are no longer permitted to issue emergency allotments after February 2023, meaning households receiving SNAP benefits will receive only their normal allotments.

In many cases this will cause a dramatic decrease in the SNAP allotment individuals and households will receive. For example, the minimum allotment for an individual under SNAP is $23 per month. During the period of emergency allotments, such an individual has been receiving an additional $258 per month, for a total of $281 per month. Beginning in March, this individual will receive only the original $25, an approximately 91% decrease.

For those households on SNAP, particularly those who had not been receiving SNAP before the pandemic, the cessation of emergency allotments will have a substantial effect on their monthly budgets.

This will be a difficult time for residents of your counties and for your job and family services staff. We encourage our members to read the letter attached above and begin coordinating with the applicable county departments to help inform your community about the impending change to minimize the surprise that this may have on Ohioans.

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.

Ohio Workforce Association posts upcoming training opportunities

The Ohio Workforce Association has posted a number of upcoming professional development course opportunities for the coming months. All sessions are virtual and cost $195 per attendee. If you are interested in registering for any of the sessions, you can do so by calling Mona Zink at 330-244-3508.

- **Turning Conflict into Collaboration** (February 27)
  - Conflict is natural within the workplace and a predictable part of working with others. Yet unresolved conflict negatively affects morale, motivation, communication, attitudes and productivity. If handled appropriately, conflict can lead to positive, cooperative situations.
- **Effective Organizational Leadership: Engage and Execute** (March 23)
- **Generations Working Together** (April 20)
  - If you interact with several generations of employees or customers and want to improve productivity, communication cohesiveness and morale, you will gain a new perspective from this highly engaging program presented by the facilitator in costume and language style of each generation.
- **Coaching Accountability** (May 17)
  - Participants will discuss and develop action plans for coaching one of the most difficult employee mindsets: resistance to change and responsibility. They will learn to encourage accountability for innovation, creative problem solving and collaboration in today's empowered team environments.

Federal grants available to modernize transit fleets

The Federal Transit Administration announced that $1.7 billion is available to support state and local efforts to buy or modernize buses, improve bus facilities, and support workforce development.

More than $1.2 billion is available under the Low or No Emission Program, which provides funding for governments to purchase or lease zero-emission or low-emission transit buses, along with required support facilities. The remaining $470 million is available under the Grants for Bus and Bus Facilities Competitive Program.

The FTA will be hosting two informational webinars in February regarding the programs. The first will be a general session on February 16 and the second will focus on rural and tribal applications on February 28.

The application window closes on April 13, 2023. You can find more information on the FTA's website.

SAM.gov, federal grant portal, walkthrough available

Last month, the US General Services Administration hosted an online forum to help walk state and local officials through how to use SAM.gov. The website is the primary portal for intergovernmental assistance from the federal government to state and local governments.

The Administration has made the presentation slide deck and the recording of the session available for download, as well as a one-page guide.

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.

Federal legislation increases ARPA flexibility for infrastructure, disaster response, and CDBG projects

The federal Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 was signed into law on December 29, 2022. The legislation contains important updates to how counties and other local governments may use their ARPA funds. First, the Act codifies the standard allowance included in the US Department of the Treasury's Final Rule that permits counties to use up to $10 million for the provision of government services under the "revenue loss" eligibility category without having to demonstrate losses through a complicated formula. This codification means that the Treasury Department cannot alter the standard allowance in any subsequent rulemaking.

The Act also permits counties to use the greater of $10 million or 30 percent of their total ARPA allocation for federal infrastructure projects, responding to natural disasters, or Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) projects. Counties must expend these funds no later than September 30, 2026, rather than the standard date of December 31, 2026. Eligible natural disaster responses include emergency relief and the negative economic impacts of natural disasters, including temporary emergency housing, food assistance, financial assistance for lost wages, or other immediate needs. CDBG projects must meet the requirements of Title 1 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974.

Some of the federal infrastructure programs eligible for ARPA match include the National Highway Performance Program; Bridge Investment Program; Surface Transportation Block Grant Program; and, the Rural Surface Transportation Grant Program. More information, and a complete list of eligible transportation programs, is available from NACo at this link.

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

Council, commissioners join forces

LimaOhio.com, February 2, 2023

The City of Lima and the Allen County Commissioners are embracing the idea of working together. Allen County Commissioners invited the City of Lima to its agenda meeting Thursday morning.

This is not the first effort of the two government offices to come together. The city of Lima invited commissioners to city council on Dec. 19, 2022. The two entities discussed their ongoing partnership and the projects they continue to work on collaboratively.

"We want the public to know that we do work together," said Mayor Sharetta Smith. "We hear a lot about relationships around the city and myths about how we do not get along and that we do not collaborate. It (the partnership) is important for economic development. We want people to know we have a healthy functioning government that is not afraid to talk with one another and do what is best for all of the citizens."

The city staff, council members and the county commissioners' office also discussed their ongoing communication.

Northeast District

Trumbull County Fair Board asked to dream bigger

Tribune Chronicle, February 1, 2023

Trumbull County Fair Board members are being asked to dream bigger about use of the fairgrounds, including possibly having the current 4-H facility redesigned to be used as an expo center that can be used year-round.

Commissioner Denny Malloy, during the commissioners weekly workshop, said he wants to explore using the 4H facility as a place that county residents can rent anytime for meetings and various activities.

The fair board has made an estimated request for $1,139,068 from the county's portion of the American Rescue Plan Act funds. The request is to use $95,565 for a roof for the 4-H horse barn, $18,515 for a roof of the annex building, $759,000 to make the 4-H building handicapped accessible, $253,000 to make the commercial building's restrooms accessible and $12,988 for parking lot improvements.

Central District

City considers turning public transit system over to Fairfield County

Lancaster Eagle-Gazette, January 29, 2022

City officials are talking to the Fairfield County commissioners about taking over the Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit system.

Commissioner Steve Davis wants to hire RLS and Associates near Dayton for $49,000 to look into the possibility and assess the county's transportation needs and issues.

"Kind of give us an idea of how we're doing there or how we might do better," he said. "And then part two of that study would be an analysis of what would be involved in changing the governance structure for Lancaster-Fairfield Public Transit. So say, for example, moving it from being a city department to becoming a county department."

Southwest District

COVID relief: How Clark County is spending federal ARPA funds, 2023 update

Springfield News-Sun, February 2, 2023

Clark County officials are using the county's $26.1 million in federal American Rescue Plan funds to complete or start 41 projects within the county.

Ethan Harris, the economic development director for Clark County, said the county's specially-designed ARPA committee decided that spreading funds to more projects would bring "the largest impact" to Clark County and its communities.

Of its planned ARPA expenditures, 10 of them come with a price tag of $1 million or more. Harris said the projects were selected based on the needs of Clark County, including issues that were highlighted by the pandemic's impact.

Southeast District

Single bid for Holmes CR61 bridge project is about $1M from Menuez

Daily Record, January 30, 2023

The Holmes County commissioners received one bid for a bridge replacement on County Road 61 in Mechanic Township.

V.O. Menuez & Son of Millersburg submitted a bid of $947,955.98. The engineer's estimate for the project was $964,995, according to discussion at Monday's Holmes County commissioners meeting.

Deputy Engineer Josh Galbraith and Matt Chanay of the engineer's office were on hand for the bid opening. The engineer's office will review the bid and advise the commissioners accordingly.

Galbraith said the bridge is located on Holmes County Road 61, just south of County Road 19 over the Doughty Creek in Mechanic Township. He said the overall condition of the bridge necessitated the need for replacement.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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FEBRUARY 10
CORSA BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 11 - 14
NACo LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE (Washington, D.C.)

FEBRUARY 24
CEBCO BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 24
CCAO WEBINAR: OHIO JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION

FEBRUARY 27 - MARCH 1
NEW MEMBER TRANINING (CCAO BOARD MEETING ON THE 27TH)

DID YOU KNOW?

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Huron County

Sean Swarner, a native of Willard in Huron County, is one of just 73 people ever (and one of 20 Americans) to complete the "Explorer's Grand Slam." The Grand Slam consists of reaching the peak of the Seven Summits (the highest mountain of each continent; a collective 25.26 miles high) and reaching the North and South poles.

While the Grand Slam is an astounding accomplishment in itself, it is made even more remarkable in Swarner's case as a two-time cancer survivor with one functioning lung. He was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin's Lymphoma at age 13 and was given three months. It went into remission only for him to be diagnosed with Askin's sarcoma, a cancer of the lungs. This time he was given two weeks to live. He was given a clean slate on his 17th birthday.

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