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February 21, 2023

Lake County Commissioner John Plecnik at the Cleveland Kurentovanje Festival, a Slovenian festival that celebrates the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

Commissioner Plecnik is pictured with a kurent, a creature from Slovenian lore that is said to chase away winter.

Photo courtesy of Commissioner John Plecnik

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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New Member Training to be held next week, register now!

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.

Commissioners new and experienced will have the opportunity to learn from their peers and subject matter experts on areas such as budgeting, purchasing, conducting public meetings, and more!

Register by now for the full training at a price of $300 and for single-day (any of the three days are eligible for single-day registration) for $200. A draft agenda for the training has also been released. Please note that time slots and sessions are subject to change.

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

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

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.

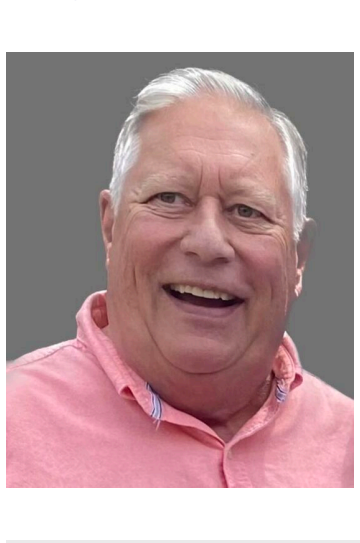
To foster participation, the results of this survey will be shared with those employers who respond one month before the results are shared generally.

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!

Former Seneca County Commissioner Tim Berlekamp passes away



On Sunday, February 12, former Seneca County Commissioner Tim Berlekamp passed away at the age of 73.

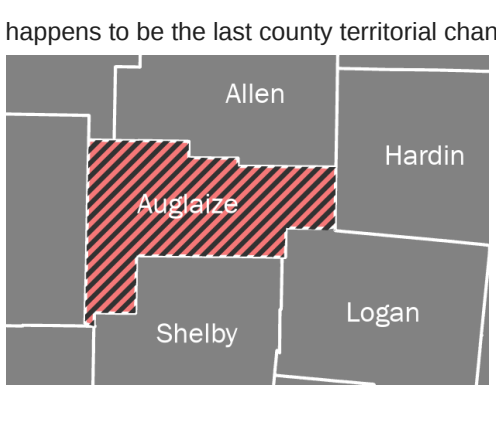
Tim served in the US Navy for five years during the Vietnam War and afterwards served the public as a farmer, an air traffic controller, in different roles in the solid waste industry, and as a Seneca County Commissioner.

Tim's obituary can be read here.

Happy birthday to Auglaize County and Medina County!

Last week two counties celebrated their birthdays. On February 14, Auglaize County turned 175 years old and on February 18, Medina County turned 211 years old.

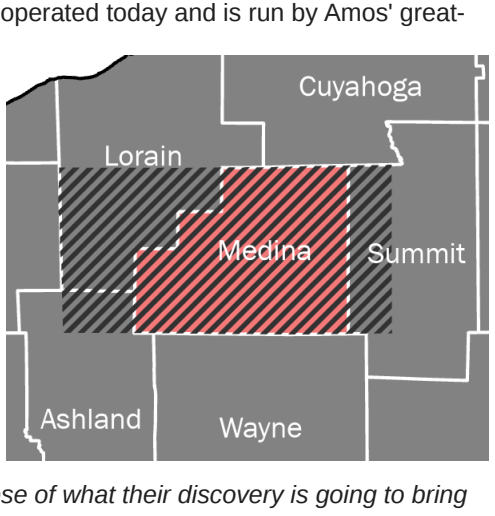
Auglaize County was formed in 1848 from land previously belonging to Allen County and Mercer County. The county only underwent a single territorial change after its creation, which also happens to be the last county territorial change as tracked by Historical County Boundaries Project (and was the Did You Know from the August 15, 2022, edition of *Counties Current*). The county is named after the local river of the same name, although the exact means of "Auglaize" is disputed. The two most common claims are that it is derived from the French for "clay-filled waters" or from the Shawnee for "fallen timbers."



Medina County was born in 1812 from land that had not previously belonged to any county but had been administered by Portage County. The county (and its county seat of the same name) is named after Medina, Saudi Arabia, one of the holiest sites in the Muslim faith.

Medina County was home to one of Ohio's most unsung sons, Amos Root. Root was an innovator in beekeeping, developing a method to harvest honey from a beehive without destroying the beehive itself. The Root company manufactured beekeeping equipment until the company transitioned to candle-making after a local Medina County priest requested the company make liturgical candles for his services. Root Candles is still operated today and is run by Amos' great-great grandson.

Root's revolutionizing of the beekeeping industry was not his only notable achievement. He also wrote the first eyewitness accounts of flights by the Wright brothers in Dayton. Regarding the effect that the brothers' innovations would have for the future, Root wrote:



"[T]hese brothers have probably not even a faint glimpse of what their discovery is going to bring to the children of men. No one living can give a guess of what is coming along this line, much better than any one living could conjecture the final outcome of [Christopher] Columbus' experiment."

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Secretary of State issues directive to county boards of elections

Last week, Secretary of State Frank LaRose issued Directive 2023-03 to county boards of elections regarding provisions in House Bill 458 of the 134th General Assembly.

Among the provisions in the bill were changes to the types of identification documents that Ohioans can use for voter registration and voting. The directive provides a chart that gives an overview of what documents were acceptable before the bill and what are when the bill becomes effective.

Directive 2023-03 also provides a summary of changes made to the absentee and early voting schedule and other administrative law changes.

December 2022 Ohio Labor Market Review available

The December 2022 Ohio Labor Market Review is now available!

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services' Bureau of Labor Market Information produces this report monthly. It includes current and historical data on employment by industry, hours, and earnings. It also includes civilian labor force estimates of employment and unemployment, selected unemployment compensation data, job openings and labor turnover ratios, and other information.

Economic developers, researchers, economists, and workforce professionals use this data for a variety of things:

- To evaluate the economic health of Ohio's labor market.
- To guide fiscal and monetary policy decisions.
- To forecast tax revenues.
- To guide decisions on business locations, sales, and purchases.
- To compare employment, hours, and earnings across industries or the economy as a whole.
- To determine the employment base of states and areas for bond ratings.
- To analyze phases of the business cycle.

To view this report and other labor market information, visit OhioLMI.com. If you have questions, please call (614) 752-9494 or email contactlmi@jfs.ohio.gov.

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 survey and provide the state your opinion.

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.

CCAO and ODJFSA to host webinar on the ending of the Public Health Emergency

On February 24, CCAO will host a webinar presented by Joel Potts, the Executive Director of the Ohio Job and Family Service Directors' Association (ODJFSA) regarding the end of the federal Public Health Emergency. You can access the registration link here.

We urge our members to attend this webinar.

Since March of 2020, two major human services programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, sometimes referred to as food assistance or food stamps) and Medicaid, have operated under different federal rules as a result of the Public Health Emergency. These special procedures are coming to an end in March and April.

In March, Ohioans receiving SNAP benefits will no longer receive an emergency allotment (at least an extra $95 a month per household), which will result in the loss of $126 million in Ohio currently going to local grocery stores each month.

CMS will allow Ohio to begin removing people from the Medicaid rolls in April.

Potts will help CCAO members understand these rule changes and what the state and county JFS agencies will do to manage the transition.

We urge CCAO members to attend this webinar. These changes will have profound impacts on ***every community*** in the state. It is gravely important that commissioners, county executives, and county council members are aware of these upcoming changes so they can help support their county JFS workforce during these times.

Ohio Safety Congress & Expo opens registration

Registration is open! The 2023 Ohio Safety Congress & Expo® (OSC23®) will be live and in-person at the Greater Columbus Convention Center, March 8-10, 2023. This year, a select number of sessions will also be live-streamed.

With over 100 educational sessions and continuing education, there is something for everyone at OSC23®. Choose between 10 educational tracks, including one for government employee safety. ***Training satisfies the BWC 2-hour safety training requirement for Group Rating and Group Retro members.***

Registration is free!

New for 2023 – The Knowledge Hub located on the South side of the Expo Marketplace. Participate in live demonstrations and experience workshops on a new level.

For more information and to register, visit www.ohiosafetycongress.com.

GOPC to host Brownfields Conference in May, registration now open

The Greater Ohio Policy Center (GOPC) will host the 2023 Ohio Brownfields Conference on May 9, 2023 in Columbus! Early bird registration is open until the end of February. Register today to lock in a discounted rate.

The conference will feature an exhibitor hall for attendees to connect and network with remediation and redevelopment professionals. Information on educational panels has been announced and can be found on the OhioBrownfields.com website. Accreditation is in process for Continuing Learning Education (CLE) credits through the Ohio Supreme Court and AICP credits through the American Planning Association.

The lunchtime Keynote will be Tom Murphy, former mayor of Pittsburgh and current senior resident fellow and Canizaro/Klingbeil Families Chair for Urban Development at Urban Land Institute (ULI). During his time as mayor, Murphy initiated a public/private partnership strategy that leveraged more than $4.5 billion in economic development activity for the city. Murphy also developed strategic partnerships to transform more than 1,000 acres of blighted, abandoned industrial properties into new commercial, residential, retail, and public uses.

Full more information about the 2023 Ohio Brownfields Conference, please visit OhioBrownfields.com. Please direct any questions about registration or sponsorship to Aaron Clapper (aclapper@greaterohio.org or 740-221-9584).

Grant writing assistance and resources available

Grants are a valuable resource for counties to utilize, but knowing how best to develop competitive applications can be difficult and the learning curve cause counties to lose out on grants. Luckly, federal agencies and nonprofits offer resources to assist in developing competitive applications. Federal agency websites point to internal and external sources and many conduct free training and targeted one on one or small group technical assistance. Here are some current resources to explore:

- Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Abuse
- Great Lakes Community Action Partnership
- Local Infrastructure Hub
- National Wildlife Federation
- Rural Community Assistance Partnership
- State and Community Energy Programs-Tools and Resources
- US Department of Transportation
- USDA Rural Development
- 10,000 Communities Initiative

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.

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

County commissioners highlight plans to vacate, renovate courthouse

Delphos Herald, February 7, 2023

Allen County Commissioners, Brian Winegardner and Cory Noonan, on Monday, highlighted 2022 in their annual State of the County address at the City Club in Lima.

Commissioner Brian Winegardner started things off by discussing the budget.

"That is truly a challenge. In the private sector, you could make more products or adjust pricing. We can't do that. We have a certain number that we have to work with and we have to stay within that number. One of our main focuses this year was the retention and recruitment of potential new employees. I think we've been able to accomplish that," Winegardner said.

Commissioner Noonan told Lima Rotarians that a long-term goal for the county is to completely renovate the Allen County Courthouse before the county's anniversary in 2031.

Northeast District

Residents Weigh In on Both Sides of Solar Issue

Business Journal Daily, February 16, 2023

With the Kensington Solar Project pending in Summitville, four Columbiana County townships asked county commissioners to ban large solar and wind farms in their areas.

At this point, the only proposed project in Columbiana County is in Franklin Township, where 2,264 acres owned by four property owners are listed as a part of the project proposed by Liberty Power, a subsidiary of Algonquin Power of Oakville, Ontario, Canada.

Those for and against the project from Franklin Township were the most vocal who attended a public hearing Wednesday morning.

Commissioners took no action following the hearing, giving people until Feb. 24 to submit any additional written testimony they want considered. However, two of the commissioners passed a resolution last year voicing their concerns about the slated solar project taking away from agricultural and forested land, as well as inhibiting the future expansion of Summitville.

Central District

Commissioners back residential building code enforcement in Crestline

Mansfield News Journal, February 14, 2023

The Richland County Building Department is now enforcing the residential building code in Crestline.

Commissioners voted unanimously Tuesday to approve a service contract with the village effective Feb. 14.

According to department Director Kara Russell, she was approached by Crestline officials to take over enforcement of the residential code, noting her office already handles commercial code building permits.

"They're just going to contract with us to just basically be their department," she explained. "It will be the same set up that we have now. People will just apply to us. We collect the fees. There's no charge between the Village of Crestline and the county. They just pay for our services through the fees that we collect."

Southwest District

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

Dayton Daily News, February 15, 2023

Miami County spent approximately $5 million of its anticipated $20.8 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds last year focusing on pandemic impacts on small business and non-profits along with water and sewer extension projects.

In 2022, the county commission approved $741,774 for 39 small business grants and another $149,995 for 20 nonprofit grants. Also authorized was $250,000 for volunteer fire/EMS departments for equipment; about $700,000 for county building HVAC and ionization projects; and $1.46 million for salaries and benefits and reimbursement for detention facilities at the sheriff's office.

The county also is funding water and sewer line extension projects to underserved or unserved areas of the county. Funding is being used for several internal county government projects intended to improve processes, aid in retaining employees and promote transparency and access for the public.

Among other projects is $340,000 for a childcare services study.

Southeast District

Holmes County commissioners get first look at comprehensive plan

The Daily Record, February 13, 2023

Holmes County Commissioners got their first look at the comprehensive plan presented by Lauren Falcone of the Poggemeyer Design Group, the company hired to develop the plan for the county and the village.

The plan, Shaping Our Future, came together through the efforts of a steering committee of residents, representatives of the county, the village, and a planning consultant (Falcone).

Falcone gave a brief PowerPoint presentation highlighting the contents of the plan to the commissioners on Monday. She also was expected to give a presentation to Millersburg Village Council Monday evening.

Commissioner Dave Hall said the document will serve as a guide for establishing public policy in land use, economic development, housing, transportation, downtown development and historic preservation, as well as infrastructure, capital improvements, safety services, agriculture preservation, cultural and natural resources and tourism.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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FEBRUARY 24
CEBCO BOARD MEETING

FEBRUARY 24
CCAO WEBINAR: OHIO JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION (register here)

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

MARCH 31
CEBCO ANNUAL MEETING

DID YOU KNOW?

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Ohio Presidents

Ohio is well-known as the "Mother of Presidents," producing eight US presidents. With the exception of William Henry Harrison, who served one month in 1814 before dying of an illness, all of Ohio's presidents served from 1869 to 1923, a 44-year-period during which Ohioans were in the White House for 28 years.

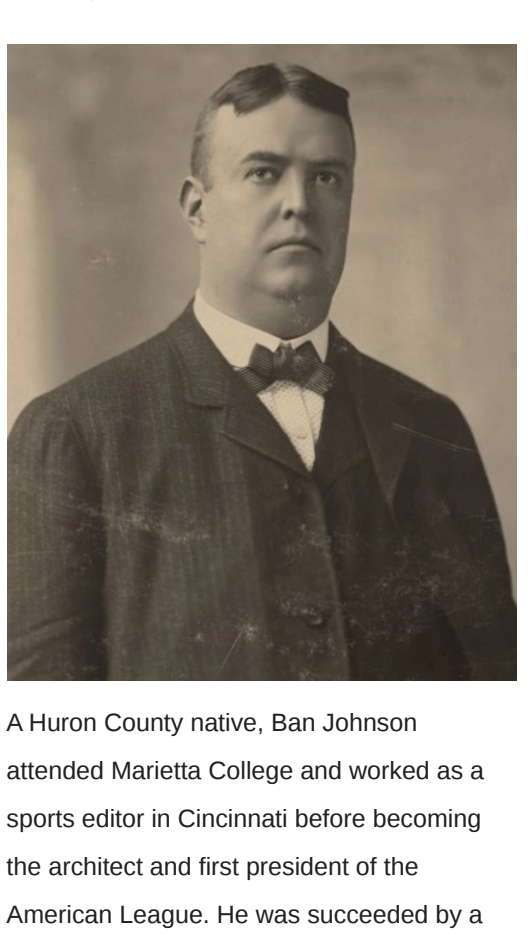
But did you know that Ohio also produced the first two presidents of the American League?

The American League of Baseball Clubs was the brainchild of Norwalk, Ohio, native Ban Johnson. Johnson attended Marietta College but did not graduate, eventually becoming the sports editor of a Cincinnati newspaper. He befriended two prominent Cincinnati sports figures (Charlie Comiskey, the then-manager of the Cincinnati Reds and the future founder of the Chicago White Sox, and John Brush, the then-owner of the Reds).

His connections led to his election as president of the Western League, a flailing minor league, in 1894. Over the next seven years, Johnson deftly maneuvered the Western League into a position where it renamed itself the American League in 1900 and declared itself a major league in 1901.

Ban Johnson led the AL until 1927 when he was forced to resign. After a short interim period where Detroit Tigers owner Frank Navin served as acting-president, team owners elected Ernest Barnard as league president.

Bernard was born in West Columbia, West Virginia, a small town just across the Ohio River from Meigs County. He later moved to Delaware, Ohio, graduated from Otterbein, and worked as the sports editor for the Columbus Dispatch. In 1903, Bernard was hired to work in the front office of the professional team in Cleveland. He worked for Cleveland from 1903 to 1927, when he stepped down to serve as the American League president. During his tenure with the club, Cleveland was known as the Naps (in honor of the team's star second-baseman Napoleon Lajoie) from 1903 to 1914 and the Indians beginning in 1915 after they traded Lajoie. The team is currently known as the Guardians.



A Huron County native, Ban Johnson attended Marietta College and worked as a sports editor in Cincinnati before becoming the architect and first president of the American League. He was succeeded by a fellow Ohioan, Ernest Barnard.

Ernest Barnard (left) with baseball's first Commissioner, Keneshaw Mountain Landis (himself a native of Butler County). Barnard lived in central Ohio before starting his career in professional baseball with the Cleveland Naps in 1903.

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