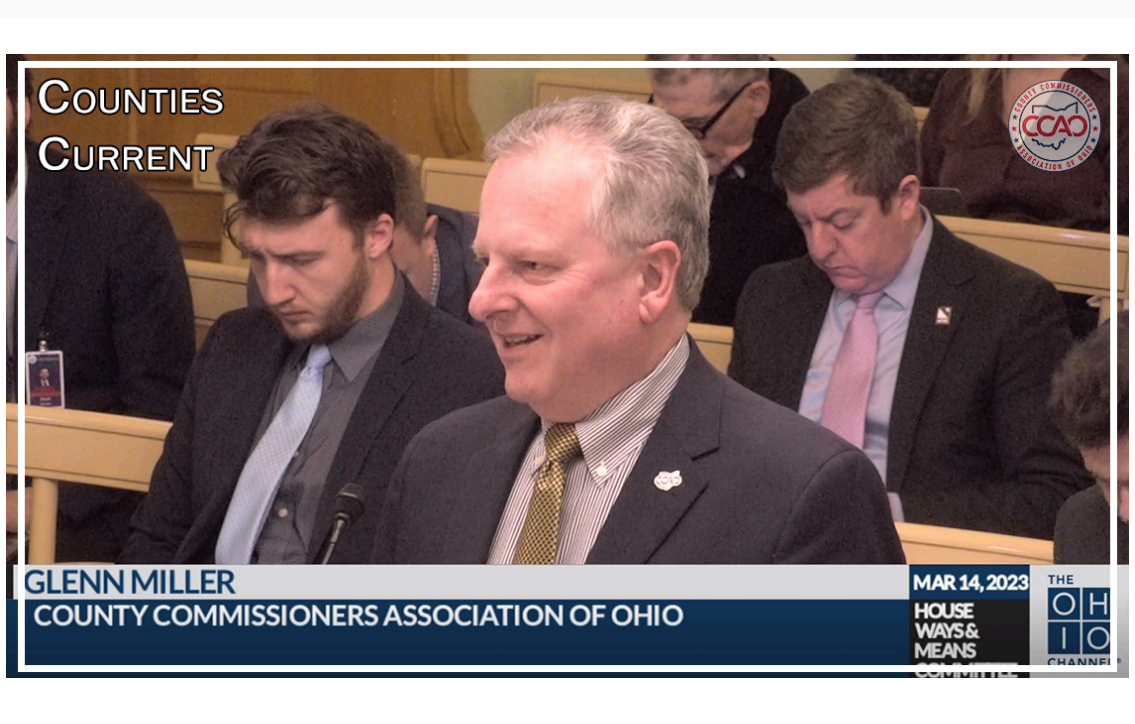


March 20, 2023

Last week, Henry County Commissioner and CCAO President Glenn Miller testified in front of the Ohio House Ways & Means Committee in opposition to House Bill 1.

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

Association and Member News | State and Federal News | Education and Grants | ARPA and BIF Resources | County News | Did You Know? |
Job Postings

Statehouse Report and Counties Current Archive | Print Version | Dates to Remember

---

ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

Back to Top

CCAO President Glenn Miller testifies on behalf of CCAO in opposition to House Bill 1

House Bill 1 (Representative Adam Mathews) received its third hearing on Tuesday of this week. CCAO President and Henry County Commissioner Glenn Miller gave opponent testimony to the House Ways and Means Committee. President Miller provided the committee important context about how the changes to the property tax system proposed in the bill would affect county budgets and county services. His testimony recommended that the property tax provisions of HB 1 be removed from the bill so they can be considered separately as part of a study committee or similar process that allows more time for deliberation.

In particular, President Miller informed the committee that, generally, the board of county commissioners must adopt a resolution to allow access to the ballot for voted county levies. Additionally, he told the committee that the county budget commission has the authority to roll back millage rates if it determines that the funds are not required to provide the level of services. These two provisions of the Revised Code already provide proper oversight to ensure that county taxpayers are not subject to excessive and unnecessary property taxation. You can view President Miller's testimony to the committee on the Ohio Channel. His testimony begins at 1:14:00.

You can read a more detailed breakdown of the bill in last week's *Statehouse Report*.

Ohio Council of County Officials Legislative Reception now open for registration

Registration for the 2023 Ohio Council of County Officials (OCCO) Legislative Reception is now open! The event will be held at the Statehouse Atrium from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on April 19. The event is free to attend and is a great opportunity to get to know your legislators and statewide office holders.

Registration can be completed at CCAO's website. If you have any questions about the event, please contact Robin Garrett, CCAO Boards' Liaison and Events manager at rgarrett@ccao.org.

First responder wellness grant program increased by $20 million; sixth round of awards announced

On Wednesday, Governor Mike DeWine announced that an additional $20 million would be dedicated to the First Responder Recruitment, Retention, and Resilience grant program. The additional funds will come from the state-level ARPA allocation for the Ohio Violent Crime Reduction Grant program which has concluded after funding every qualifying request.

The increase will bring the total size of the program to $95 million, of which $61 million has been awarded. That sum includes $11.9 million that was awarded on Wednesday. The following county entities received awards in the latest round:

- Coshocton County EMS ($457,658)
- Portage County Sheriff's Office ($1,670,867)
- Vinton County Sheriff's Office ($95,978)

Northwest Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association to host meeting on March 29

On March 29, the Northwest Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association will host its quarterly meeting in Crawford County

The meeting will begin at 9 a.m. with a greeting from Representative Riordan McClain and the Crawford County commissioners and engineer at 9:45 a.m.

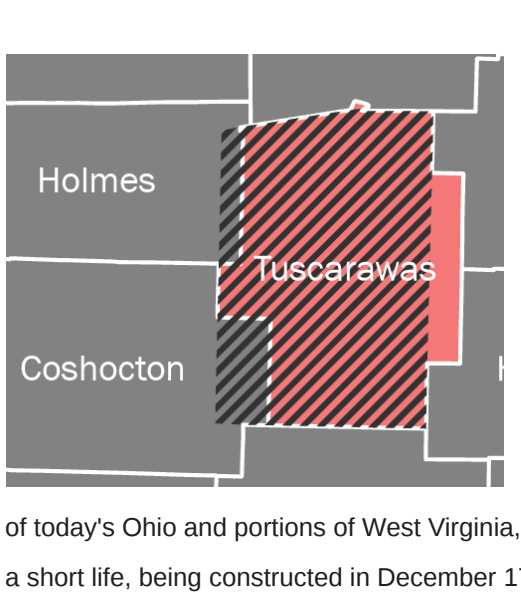
Lt. Governor Jon Husted, a stalwart ally of counties, will join the meeting from 11:20 a.m. to 12:10 p.m. to meet with commissioners and engineers and discuss a variety of subjects.

The event will also feature discussion with representatives of Rumpke Recycling, a tour of Advanced Fiber (a local company that converts recycled material into fibers for insulation projects and other purposes), and a tour of Crossroads Candles (a local company that produces candles with glass windows allowing a chance to watch the candle-making process).

You can access the agenda and the registration form here. The deadline to apply is March 24 (the Friday before the meeting) and registration costs $18.

Happy birthday Tuscarawas County and Erie County!

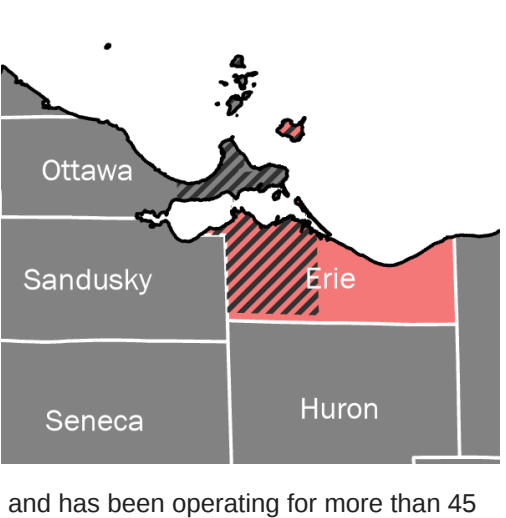
Last Wednesday, the Ides of March (March 15), saw two counties celebrate birthday. Tuscarawas County turned 215 years old, and Erie County turned 185 years old.



Tuscarawas County gets its name from a word in the Delaware Native American language meaning either "old town" or "open mouth," likely a term applied to the river of the same name. The county was created out of land formerly belonging to Muskingum County.

Tuscarawas County is home to the only Revolutionary War fort built in the Ohio Country (the term used at the time to refer to an area consisting of today's Ohio and portions of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Indiana). Fort Laurens had only a short life, being constructed in December 1778 as a potential staging ground for an American staging ground for an attack on Detroit. It was abandoned on August 2, 1779.

Erie County was created out of Huron County and draws its name from the Erie tribe of Native Americans that were originally in the area. The tribe itself took its name from their word for "wildcat."



Erie County is home to NASA's Plum Brook Station (part of the larger Glenn Research Center), also known as the Spacecraft Propulsion Research Facility. Among the high-profile tests and innovations that the facility worked on was the Centaur rocket, itself part of the greater Titan launch system. Possibly the most famous (and successful) space probes ever launched rode to space on Centaur rockets. The Voyager 1 probe, launched in 1977, was the first man-made object to exit the Solar System and has been operating for more than 45 years and is likely to keep operating for possibly another decade. It is approximately 14.8 billion miles from Earth.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

Back to Top

Supreme Court of Ohio offers conflict resolution services for public officials

Government Conflict Resolution Services (GCRS) is a program offered by the Supreme Court of Ohio to provide flexible and practical assistance in resolving and preventing conflict among public officials on various matters including, but not limited to, budget issues, public records requests and other organizational issues, without court involvement.

GCRS is provided at no cost to public officials and will take place at a location agreed upon by the parties.

There are three services offered through GCRS:

Neutral Evaluation: The parties to a dispute present their claims and/or defenses and describe their evidence to a neutral third party. The third party then shares their impressions about the strengths and weaknesses of each side.

Mediation: A neutral third party called a mediator helps the parties communicate and negotiate with each other to help them reach a voluntary agreement regarding the dispute.

Facilitation: A process that focuses on the tasks needed to run a productive and impartial meeting. A neutral third-party moderates discussion and is primarily aimed at assisting individuals refine communication and organizational skills so they can work more efficiently with each other in a group setting.

You can acquire more information, as well as forms to request services, on the Supreme Court of Ohio's website.

Auditor of State issues advisory to state and local governments on phishing scams

Auditor of State Keith Faber recently issued an advisory to state and local government employees regarding an increase in cyberscams targeting public offices.

These scams are referred to as "re-direct schemes," wherein emails impersonating government vendors or other government employees request to have payments sent to a different bank account which the scammer controls.

CCAO encourages counties review the advisory, as well as other cybersecurity information the Auditor of State provides, to ensure that you do not fall victim to a scam and lose taxpayer funds. More information regarding cybersecurity best practices can be also be learned from CORSA.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

Back to Top

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

Grant opportunity round up

CCAO has posted several new grant opportunities on our Grants and Funding Opportunities page that counties may choose to pursue. Below is a brief description of some.

- Residential Substance Use Disorder Treatment Grant
  - To assist local governments with developing implementing correctional facility-based substance abuse treatment programs.
  - Deadline: April 3
- RecoveryOhio Law Enforcement Fund
  - To providing funding to help defray costs of drug task forces.
  - Deadline: April 17
- Ohio Parenting and Pregnancy Program
  - To increase awareness of and increase availability of services to pregnant women and parents, as well as other relatives caring for children less than 12 months old.
  - Deadline: May 1
- Family-Based Alternative Justice Program
  - To build capacity for diversion and alternate justice programs for parents in order to mitigate the harmful effects that the incarceration of a parent has on children.
  - Deadline: May 1
- Community Oriented Policing Services Hiring Program
  - To provide funding directly to law enforcement agencies to hire additional career law enforcement officers.
  - Deadline: May 11

Lake Erie Commission to host event on the Ohio Domestic Action Plan in April

On April 20, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission will be hosting a virtual event to review progress made on the Ohio Domestic Action Plan and kick off updates that will occur on the plan during 2023.

Among action items currently included in the Domestic Action Plan are H2Ohio support for home sewage treatment system remediation, establishing science-based agricultural best management practices and supporting farmers to implement them, and integrating the role of watershed planning at the local level to help better reduce nutrients efficiently.

You can find more information about the Lake Erie Commission and Ohio's Domestic Action Plan here.

Glenn College of Public Affairs MAPS recommendations for local government leaders

The John Glenn College of Public Affairs at the Ohio State University hosts a number of Management Advance for the Public Service (MAPS) professional development courses annually. The Glenn College has released a list of eight upcoming courses that it believes will be of particular value for local government leaders.

The first four local government MAPS courses are listed below. You can find the rest of the local government leaders MAPS courses here and a complete listing of courses here.

Understanding Cost-Benefit Analysis

- Participants will learn how concepts in cost-benefit analysis can help decisionmakers and policymakers think more clearly about the impacts of policy options they have at their disposal and the trade-offs they pose.
- March 16, Virtual (Zoom)
- Six Continuing Legal Education credits

Strategic Inclusive Leadership

- Participants will explore the moral and business cases for DE&I work and how diversity leads to more inclusive workplaces, stronger performing teams and a competitive advantage.
- April 4, Virtual (Zoom)

Foundations of Community Engagement

- As a community leader, it is important for you to have a good understanding of the purpose, approaches and tools for engaging your community, and working effectively with your leadership team to promote community engagement. During this session, participants will learn best practices for community engagement.
- April 11, Virtual (Zoom)

Building a Succession Pipeline

- This course approaches succession planning as an organizational responsibility, where everyone can and is expected to play a role in successful succession practices. Participants explore the importance of succession management and how everyone in the organization is already contributing to how it is done today.
- April 18, OSU Columbus Campus

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

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

Back to Top

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

Back to Top

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

Erie County to test outdoor emergency sirens March 22

Morning Journal, March 15, 2023

As part of Severe Weather Awareness Week, from March 19-25, Erie County will participate in the statewide tornado drill by testing its outdoor emergency sirens at 9:50 a.m., March 22, according to a news release from Tim Jonovich, director of the Erie County Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security.

The county sirens are activated by the Erie County Sheriff's Office any time there is a tornado warning issued by the National Weather Service, or the reported sighting of a tornado/funnel cloud by public safety personnel or the report of property damage or injuries caused by severe storms/tornado/funnel cloud, Jonovich said.

Erie County operates 44 outdoor severe weather warning sirens as part of the countywide severe weather warning system.

Northeast District

Cuyahoga County Council considering Pay-to-Stay renter protections to help prevent evictions

Cleveland.com, March 14, 2023

Cuyahoga County Council is considering adding Pay-to-Stay protections in the county code that would prohibit landlords from evicting tenants for making late rent payments.

Eight local municipalities already have such protections, but the new ordinance would extend the safeguards county-wide and affirm a tenant's right to remain in their home if they're able to pay all past due rent as well as "reasonable" late fees. The legislation defines reasonable as no more than $25 per month or up to 5% of the monthly rent.

Tenants would have the right to make those payments – and any court costs – up until their eviction hearing. It would not prevent landlords from evicting tenants for reasons other than nonpayment.

Central District

Knox County commissioners hear 2022 results for workforce development, arts consortium

Knox Pages, March 16, 2023

From first-time visits to GED diplomas achieved, numbers were up in virtually all categories last year at Ohio Means Job, Knox County's workforce development center on Coshocton Avenue.

Brandy Booth, workforce administrator, told the county commissioners on Thursday that center visits were up by 1,169 in 2022 compared to 2021. She attributes the increase to the massive advertising campaign OMJ launched covering billboards, sponsored content on social media, radio, and other avenues.

The upward trend continues with 569 visitors in February 2023 compared to about 300 in February 2022.

Southwest District

Butler County communities breaking ground on $75M in projects funded by pandemic rescue money

Journal-News, March 12, 2023

Butler County communities are making headway on spending $68.5 million in coronavirus relief funds the county commissioners have awarded, and decisions are still outstanding on $7 million more.

President Joe Biden signed the $1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan Act into law March 11, 2021, and it allocated $350 billion to help local governments with pains caused by the coronavirus pandemic. When the commissioners learned they had nearly $75 million to spend they invited other governments and agencies to pitch them ideas.

The county received an eclectic array of funding requests — totaling more than $200 million — including economic development and educational endeavors, help for the homeless, propping up small businesses, park and bike trail expansion and countywide broadband to name a few. They ranged in price from $24 million for new advanced aviation and manufacturing training centers in Middletown and Hamilton to $125,000 for healthcare worker training.

Southeast District

Harrison conducts survey for ticks, Lyme disease

The Times Leader, March 18, 2023

As spring approaches, the Harrison County Health Department is working to stay ahead of tick season and ensure residents' safety by conducting a survey regarding what its appropriate response should be.

For the last few years, the county has continued its trend of retaining the No. 1 spot for highest number of Lyme disease cases per capita in the entire state of Ohio.

According to the Ohio Department of Health's statistics, the county had eight reported cases in 2022.

Though that number may be lower than some surrounding areas, based on population the county remains at the top of the list for incidents.

DATES TO REMEMBER

Please view the CCAO Calendar for a comprehensive list of events to note.

Back to Top

MARCH 23
CCAO General Government meeting

MARCH 24
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

MARCH 29
NW Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association meeting
Group Rating Annual Meeting

MARCH 31
CEBCO Annual Meeting

APRIL 19
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting
OCCO Legislative Reception

DID YOU KNOW?

Back to Top

Athens County

Athens County is named after Athens, Greece, one of the most important classical societies. Democracy, philosophy, and drama all flourished during Athens' Golden Age (480 BCE - 404 BCE).

Due to the county's classical connection, it should come as no surprise that it has the most townships with Greco-Roman names of any county in the state.

- **Alexander Township**: Likely named after Alexander the Great of Macedon, who created the short-lived but expansive Macedonian Empire in 336 BCE, although "Alexander" is also an alternate name for Paris, the Trojan prince who sparked the Trojan War.
- **Athens Township**: Same name origin as the county
- **Carthage Township**: A Phoenician city in modern-day Tunisia, Carthage was the main geopolitical rival to Rome from 264 BCE to 201 BCE.
- **Rome Township**: Named after Rome, the seat of the Roman Republic and Roman Empire.
- **Troy Township**: Named after the quasi-mythical kingdom in Asia Minor that features prominently in the ancient Greek epics the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* and the Roman epic the *Aeneid*.

Two townships in neighboring counties also bear classical names and belonged to Athens County before their current counties were created:

- **Homer Township** (Morgan County): Named after the quasi-historical Greek epic poet to whom the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are traditionally ascribed.
- **Scipio Township** (Meigs County): Named after the Scipio family in ancient Rome, the most famous member of which was Scipio Africanus, the man who defeated Carthage in the Second Punic War.

Finally, while not associated with the ancient Greco-Roman world, Athens County has another township with a name bearing significance in the ancient world:

- **Canaan Township**: Named after Canaan, the ancient territory in the Levant to which Abraham immigrated to in the Biblical book of Genesis and which eventually came under Israelite dominion in the Biblical books of *Joshua* and *Judges*.

Copyright © 2023 CCAO, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.