May 8, 2023

Congrats to the new CEBCO Board leadership, elected at the CEBCO Board Retreat last week!

President: Tony Bornhorst, Shelby County Commissioner
VP: Cory Noonan, Allen County Commissioner
Secretary: Lew Hilkert, Williams County Commissioner
Treasurer: Harry Brady, Huron County Commissioner

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Less than two months remain to utilize the children services workforce recruitment and retention grant

The window for spending a one-time $15 million grant awarded by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services to county public children services agencies (PCSAs) last year will **close June 30**.

The workforce recruitment and retention grant, which is managed by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio, was allocated to counties by formula in June 2022 to improve recruitment and retention of frontline workers. ODJFS offered counties a number of options for spending the grant, including various types of incentives and bonuses, tuition payment and loan reimbursement, culture and climate initiatives, flexible/hybrid work options, and more. Many of these options were identified in an OSU report on the children services workforce released by PCSAO in February 2022. The grant provided a rare opportunity to offer bonuses and make purchases outside the normal course of business.

Some county agencies have spent their entire allotment, while others have scheduled retention bonuses to be paid by the end of June. According to PCSAO, grant funds **must be entirely expended by June 30**, with final reports and grant closeout due September 10.

PCSAO added that one-time funding presents unique challenges, particularly when in the form of a grant. JFS and Children Services Board directors worked closely with commissioners last year to identify the most feasible, flexible and sometimes creative spending options for the county, but given the ongoing workforce crisis, plans evolved.

With a hard deadline of June 30, commissioners can help ensure that the entire local allocation is expended by working with PCSA directors to shift unspent funds to other allowable grant expenses or to relinquish unspent funds to other counties that can use them.

Save the date for CCAO's 2023 Summer Symposium!

From August 16 to 18, CCAO will host Economic Development Strategies: Ohio Counties Reaching Forward, the 2023 Summer Symposium. It is open to county commissioners, county executives, and county council members, as well as their key staff.

Among the areas of interest that the symposium will focus on are successful landbank practices, economic development practices, workforce development case studies, and expanding broadband services.

Early bird registration will open in early June.

SAVE THE DATE!
CCAO
Summer Symposium
Economic Development Strategies: Ohio Counties Reaching Forward
For County Commissioners, County Executives and County Council Members and Their Key Staff
August 16–18, 2023
CHERRY VALLEY HOTEL
2299 Cherry Valley Rd SE
Newark, OH 43055
Reservations $99 plus tax
Early Bird Registration Opens Early June
AREAS OF INTEREST
Economic Development Practices
Workforce Development Case Studies
Successful Landbank Practices
Expanding Broadband Services
PLUS:
CCAO Golf Outing to benefit the Research & Educational Foundation!
Continuing Conversations with Lawmakers, and more.

Spring edition of County Leader now available!

CCAO published the Spring 2023 edition of our quarterly magazine, County Leader, last week. The 34-page issue features columns from CCAO President and Henry County Commissioner Glenn Miller and CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler, features on Miami County Commissioner Wade Westfall's role as president of the Midwest Ohio Baseball League, and a spotlight on the role of county sanitary engineers, as well as updates from CEBCO, CORSA, and the CCAO Service Corp.

Read it today!

Open Enrollment - Managed Care for workers' compensation

CCAO members participating in our workers' compensation programs benefit from significant premium savings every year. **Sedgwick Managed Care Ohio** has been a key partner with our programs since 1997, and Open Enrollment for managed care organization (MCO) selection is May 1-26, 2023.

CCAO continues to endorse Sedgwick MCO as the clear MCO of choice for our members, and here are the two most important reasons why we encourage our members to select Sedgwick MCO:

Results – the data is clear

- Claims managed by Sedgwick MCO incur ***10.9% fewer lost days*** per claim than claims managed by other MCOs *(BWC Public Data 22-05025, 2021-2022 claims as of 12/13/2022)*. Fewer lost workdays translates to less costly claims and fewer staffing problems to solve.
- Sedgwick MCO reduced medical costs for their clients by an ***additional 17.2%*** below BWC fee schedule in 2022 *(Sedgwick MCO Billing Data, Bills processed in 2022)*. All MCOs reduce medical bills to the BWC standard fee schedule, but this additional Sedgwick reduction enhances premium savings and discount options.

Service – making things simple

- Workers' compensation claims can become complex. Sedgwick MCO works closely with their client employers and with the injured employee to navigate the BWC system and the medical treatment process until the claim is resolved.

Your MCO plays a vital role in your ability to control claim costs, care for injured employees, and preserve options for premium savings. If you are one of the 68 Counties that are already active with Sedgwick MCO, no action is required. If you are not, please **click here** to learn more about Sedgwick and enroll. For more information, call Lance Watkins at Sedgwick MCO at 614-376-5524, or email at Lance.Watkins@SedgwickMCO.com.

Southeast Region meeting to be held on May 19, first 40 registrants will tour Utica Shale drill

On May 19, 2023, the Southeast Region meeting will begin at 9:30 a.m. Members of the CCAO/CEAO Northeast Region have been invited to attend the meeting as well. The meeting will be held at the Encino Utica Shale warehouse located at 1015 Waynesburg Road N.E., Carrollton Ohio, 44615. Gates will open at 9 a.m. with directed parking.

A light breakfast will be offered. Industry updates followed by a panel discussion will take place before a box lunch. After lunch, attendees will board a charter bus for a short ride to tour an active well site being drilled in Carroll County. This particular well is being drilled to 18,000 feet. Those proceeding to the well site need to be able to climb stairs, arrive wearing closed toe shoes (steel toes if you have them), and with no loose dangling jewelry. Fire resistant equipment will be provided, as well as ear protection.

Registration will be necessary as the safety officer will ***only permit 40 registered individuals to attend***. Registration will be on a first come first served basis. If the tour proves to be in high demand, Encino has advised that another tour date could be scheduled at a later time to accommodate those who are unable to attend the tour on May 19.

Please register here.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Consent decree issued to reduce phosphorus in Maumee River

A federal judge has approved a consent decree to help reduce the harmful nutrients that play a part in toxic algal blooms in Lake Erie. The Ohio EPA must submit a final plan to limit phosphorus runoff into the Maumee River watershed to the US EPA by June 30; the US EPA will then have 90 days to approve the plan.

If the US EPA does not approve the plan, it must create its own, which would be subject to challenge by the Lucas County Board of Commissioners and other plaintiffs in the litigation that led to the consent decree.

You can read more about the ruling and its implications here.

Resource created for Ohio students to learn pathways to jobs, faster

On May 1, Ohio Lt. Governor Jon Husted launched a new resource that provides information to students, parents, and teachers about the different career pathways available to high schoolers. The "Find Your Career Pathway" video and toolkit aim to guide students in their educational journey to land a successful career right here in Ohio.
The resource helps encourage Ohio students, parents, and schools to start conversations earlier about the best pathway to a successful career in Ohio.

The video features five students from around the state sharing their experiences in each pathway. The highlighted pathways include:

- **Career Technical Education** – provides students of all ages with the academic and technical skills, knowledge, and training necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners.
- **Pre-Apprenticeships** – teaches entry-level technical and job-readiness skills for an apprentice occupation to prepare students for a formal Registered Apprenticeship training program upon graduation.
- **College Credit Plus** – helps students earn college and high school credits simultaneously by taking college courses from local colleges or universities while in high school.
- **Industry-Recognized Credentials** – demonstrates the knowledge and skills students gain through hands-on learning in a specific job or industry.

In addition to the video, an accompanying toolkit was developed to share additional information on the various pathways and other resources that can help students and families learn more about each.

For more information about the "Find Your Career Pathway" video and toolkit, visit Workforce.Ohio.gov/CareerPathways.

Updated comparison of state and federal procurement law available

Bricker Graydon has shared a revised comparison of Ohio procurement law and federal uniform guidance. The document is intended to provide a comparison of the procurement rules and regulations prescribed by both federal law and state law, as they relate to Ohio counties using ARPA funds. Counties must comply with both state and federal law, where possible. Where federal requirements are more restrictive than state law, federal law must be followed. Where state law is more restrictive than federal requirements, state law must be followed.

The key revision regards state term contracts (page 8), which counties may participate in but Bricker Graydon suggests exercising caution and reviewing Auditor of State training materials before doing so.

The information presented in the chart was prepared by Bricker Graydon LLP as a service to CCAO. This information is intended solely for informational purposes of CCAO and its members and is not intended to constitute legal advice to, and may not be relied upon by, any party. Readers should engage legal counsel to provide legal advice related to any specific transaction.

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 performance audit webinar

On June 9, CCAO will host a webinar with the Auditor of State regarding the Auditor's performance audit program.

Performance audits examine the efficiency and effectiveness of government programs and functions with the goal of making them better. While financial audits determine whether public funds are spent legally and managed in accordance with accounting principles, performance audits examine whether funds are spent wisely and if programs achieve their intended purpose. The webinar will help county officials learn more about how a performance audit can help your entity.

Registration is free and can be completed here.

SPBR to host virtual seminar on civil service

On Thursday, June 1, the Ohio State Personnel Board of Review (SPBR) will hold a Virtual Civil Service Commission Seminar, primarily for municipal civil service commission board members and supporting staff.

The Seminar is a prime opportunity to enhance one's knowledge and skills as they pertain to civil service.

Registration is free and can be completed here.

Upcoming Ohio EPA webinar

CCAO would like to inform our members of an upcoming webinar that the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency is hosting.

The webinar will take place on May 17, at 1:00 p.m. It will cover the Construction Stormwater General Permit and recent changes related to it. The webinar will give an overview of the changes and has ample time reserved for Q&A. The webinar fulfills continuing education units for one hour for Registered Environmental Health Specialists, Environmental Health Specialists in Training, and Wastewater Operation Certifications. Registration is free and can be completed here.

SAM.gov, federal grant portal, walkthrough available; grant writing resources 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.

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. Luckily, 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

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

Paulding commissioners receive updates during audit committee session

Crescent News, May 6, 2023

Paulding County commissioners attended a county audit committee meeting during a recent session, receiving an update on several county matters.

Paulding County Auditor Claudia Fickel reviewed several county finance categories, reporting that the county's first-quarter sales tax receipts are up 72.4% when compared to the same time in 2022.

First-quarter general fund receipts have increased by 35% when compared to the comparable 2022 amount while general fund expenses have increased by 2.3% during that time, according to Fickel.

Commissioner Mark Holtsberry told the committee — which met for the second time this year — that the courthouse window replacement project will be starting in August.

Northeast District

Ashland County commissioners to consider city petition for 91-acre annexation

Ashland Source, April 27, 2023

Ashland could grow by 91 acres soon.

The city, along with around 16 out of 29 property owners, has petitioned the Ashland County Board of Commissioners to annex land out by U.S. Route 250 and Interstate 71.

Commissioners Denny Bittle and Jim Justice voted unanimously on Thursday to approve a July 6 hearing date for the request. Commissioner Mike Welch was absent Thursday.

Commissioners said they were unaware of the petition and therefore deferred questions.

Ashland Mayor Matt Miller said the annexation has been in the works for several years. The process, according to state law, is to gather at least 50% of the affected property owners' signatures before filing the petition to the county board of commissioners.

Central District

Municipalities consider joining county land bank

Columbus Messenger, April 20, 2023

Municipalities in Madison County are starting to consider membership in the newly formed Madison County Land Bank.

The Madison County commissioners formed the land bank late last year and filed paperwork with the Ohio Secretary of State. Since then, a governing board has taken shape and is working through the start-up phase.

A land bank is a public authority or non-profit organization that acquires unproductive properties for the purpose of returning them to productive use in the community. Land banks acquire land through tax foreclosures, municipal government transfers, auctions, donations, and open-market purchases. By Ohio law, land banks can acquire properties for little to no cost through foreclosures and can hold properties tax-free. The idea is to turn around the abandoned or blighted properties as quickly as possible.

Madison County's land bank board is getting the word out to city and village officials, explaining how land banks work and what they can expect should the land bank acquire a property in their area. The board is asking municipalities to pass memorandums of understanding (MOU) so that everyone is one the same page when it comes to land bank operations.

Southwest District

Commissioners meet with state, national representatives

News Watchman, April 27, 2023

The Pike County Commissioners met with representatives from the governor's office, the Ohio attorney general's office, Sen. JD Vance's Office and Rep. Brad Wenstrup's office Monday morning at the Pike County Government Center.

Commissioner Tony Montgomery told the representatives about the sewer extension project extending the sewer from Zahn's Corner east to Scaggs Lane.

Montgomery called this Pike County's "biggest project."

"We're asking for funding," Montgomery said. "It (the project) is pretty aggressive, but we have to do it. The engineering is done."

Commission Jeff Chattin explained with the aid of a map that with drastic elevation changes in that area going any further east would involve a "pretty big" lift station.

Southeast District

County to move forward with jail design

Zanesville Times Recorder, May 2, 2023

Rebuffed by the state for jail funding, the Muskingum County Commissioners will continue to move forward with designing a replacement for the Muskingum County Jail.

The commissioners had hoped that the county would land some of the $50 million Jail Safety and Security Grant funding from the state budget, but were not awarded any despite having funded a jail feasibility study last year.

Instead, the bulk of the money went to projects in Greene, Lucas and Wayne counties, along with smaller allocations to projects in eight other counties.

"There is a need, so we need to continue to move forward," said Muskingum County Commissioner Cindy Cameron.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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MAY 10
Central District Meeting

MAY 11
General Government Committee Meeting

MAY 12
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

MAY 19
Southeast District Meeting

MAY 29
Memorial Day

JUNE 9
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

DID YOU KNOW?

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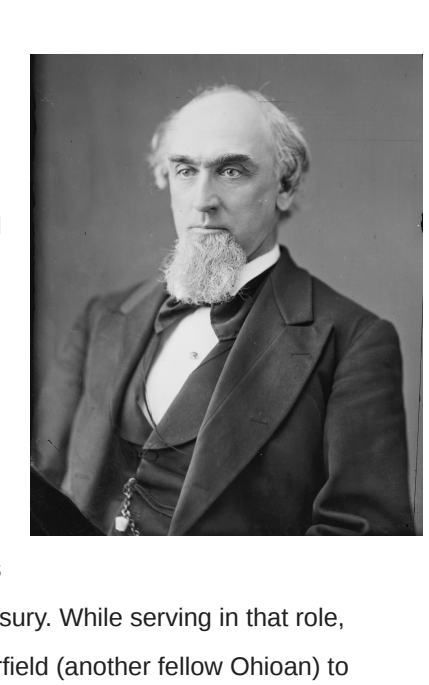
Logan County

May 8th is World Red Cross and Red Crescent Day, an annual celebration of the principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent. An Ohioan played an important role in the United States joining the international organization.



William Lawrence was a life-long public servant. He served the Logan County/Union County area for years, starting as the Logan County Prosecutor, as a Ohio House Representative, an Ohio Senator, a Union County judge, and as a member of the US House of Representatives.

During his time in the US House, Lawrence authored a bill that was later used as the basis for the creation of the US Department of Justice.

In 1880, he was appointed by President Rutherford B. Hayes (a fellow Ohioan) to serve as the first Comptroller of the Treasury. While serving in that role, Lawrence petitioned Hayes' successor, President James Garfield (another fellow Ohioan) to support the creation of the American Red Cross in conjunction with famed American nurse Clara Barton. The petitioning was successful, and the American Red Cross was formally established on May 21, 1881.

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