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Counties Current
Rick Black Commissioner Working for Licking County
Bubb Commissioner
CCAO

July 5, 2023

Licking County Commissioners Rick Black and Tim Bubb at the Granville 4th of July Parade.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Reminder on OPERS guidance on poll workers

Ohio is now less than five weeks away from the August 8 special election. CCAO is sharing OPERS rules for poll workers to hopefully aid counties in recruiting poll workers for the upcoming election. The article is from last November but applies to this year as well.

As a reminder, individuals employed as election workers and paid less than $600 per calendar year for that service are not considered public employees, so retirees can earn up to that limit without any effect on their benefits and health care. However, election workers earning more than the exclusion amount must contribute to the retirement system. An election worker, for the purposes of participation in OPERS, is "an individual who performs services as a precinct election official or voting location manager for the board of elections for a day the election polls are open and training or preparation for such service."

Please refer to the article and OPERS if you have any additional questions.

SAVE THE DATE!
CCAO
Summer Symposium
August 16–18, 2023
Economic Development Strategies: Ohio Counties Reaching Forward
For County Commissioners, County Executives and County Council Members and Their Key Staff
Early Bird Registration Opens Early June
AREAS OF INTEREST
Economic Development Practices
Workforce Development Case Studies
Successful Landbank Practices
Expanding Broadband Services

Register today for CCAO's 2023 Summer Symposium!

Registration for CCAO's 2023 Summer Symposium is now open! Taking place at Cherry Valley Hotel in Newark from August 16 to August 18, the symposium is titled Economic Development Strategies: Ohio Counties Reaching Forward and will feature sessions on broadband, landbanks, case studies of economic development successes in counties around the state, and more.

Confirmed speakers for the event include Mark Barbash, Director of the Ohio Economic Development Institute; Shawn Carvin, Executive Director of the Ohio Land Bank Association; presenters from BroadbandOhio, AT&T, Charter Communications, and Ohio Transport Telecom; and Ohio cabinet directors Anne Vogel (Ohio EPA), Brian Baldridge (Agriculture), and Lydia Mihalik (Development). *Speakers may be subject to change*.

Registration for the event can be completed on CCAO's site and reservations at Cherry Valley Hotel can be made here.

Research and Education Foundation looks to the future; needs your help

As CCAO works to revitalize the Research and Education Foundation, plans are underway to raise the necessary funds to invest in the mission.

Already this year, the Foundation has undertaken a generous scholarship project, awarding five scholarships to Ohio students. We are also working on several research and educational projects that will serve our counties and the people of Ohio.

We would like to invite you to the County Classic to be held on Wednesday, August 16th at the Clover Valley Golf Club with a shotgun start at 1:00 p.m. Dinner will be served after the round.

Not a golfer? That's okay! We want to see you! You can support the foundation and it's work by purchasing a ticket to the dinner at 6 p.m.

Reserve your spot to play golf here. If you would like to attend the dinner only, you may do so here (if you will not be attending the rest of the Summer Symposium, make sure to check the "Dinner Only" box).

If you cannot attend, but still would like to support the Foundation, please send a check to:
CCAO Research and Education Foundation
209 E State Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215

If you have questions, please contact Tim Hoverman, CCAO Operations Manager at 419-513-0410.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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New federal law requires protections for pregnant workers

The Pregnant Workers Fairness Act (PWFA), a federal law, went into effect last week. The law requires certain employers to provide reasonable accommodations to a worker's known limits related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. The law applies to private and public employers with at least 15 employees.

The PWFA does not supersede state laws that may be more accommodating to pregnant workers. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has a brief overview about the new law that CCAO encourages county employers familiarize themselves with.

Additionally, CORSA has incorporated the provisions of PWFA into its Best Practices Personnel Policy, as well as other recently enacted federal law. Access to the Best Practices Personnel Policy is available to CORSA members only. If you have a question concerning protections guaranteed under PWFA, please contact CORSA staff.

County dog warden authority Attorney General opinion request filed

Recently, the Licking County Prosecutor requested an Attorney General Opinion regarding certain authorities of county dog wardens.

The request submits two questions to the Attorney General: first, are county dog wardens obligated to accept unregistered dogs that were dropped off by non-owners or may the dog warden limit county shelter usage to only dogs seized by the dog warden, and second, is it a valid permissive use of the county dog shelter to accept a registered dog if dropped off by someone other than the owner.

You may read the full opinion request on the Attorney General's website. CCAO will inform counties when an opinion has been issued.

NACo partners with Homeland Security on cyber protections

With an increase in cyber threats, ranging from phishing attempts to ransomware attacks, NACo has partnered with the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center, a body within the US Department of Homeland Security, to promote county cybersecurity practices.

NACo members can learn more about the partnership here.

CCAO, the CCAO Service Corporation, and CORSA will highlight more cybersecurity opportunities in the coming weeks.

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.

Funding available under the Lead Safe Ohio Program

The Ohio Department of Development has a number of opportunities available under the Lead Safe Ohio Program, funded through $150 million in state-level ARPA funding. Two are highlighted below.

County Allocation for Lead Mitigation and Prevention
A total of $95 million is available to conduct a number of lead abatement services, such as window and door replacement in a variety of settings. constructed before 1978. At least $200,000 is allocated to each county, with a full table of allocations included at the end of the document linked to above. Communities planning on applying for funds must complete a survey by August 1 and submit a grant application by September 14.

Community Housing Impact and Preservation Lead Abatement Program (CHIP-LAP)
A total of $5 million is available to leverage funding to current CHIP programs to assist with eliminating lead-based paint hazards. The supplemental funds will be available to acquire an X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF) analyzer or to re-source an XRF analyzer. This equipment will help grantees perform thorough and accurate lead risk assessments. Applications must be submitted by July 26.

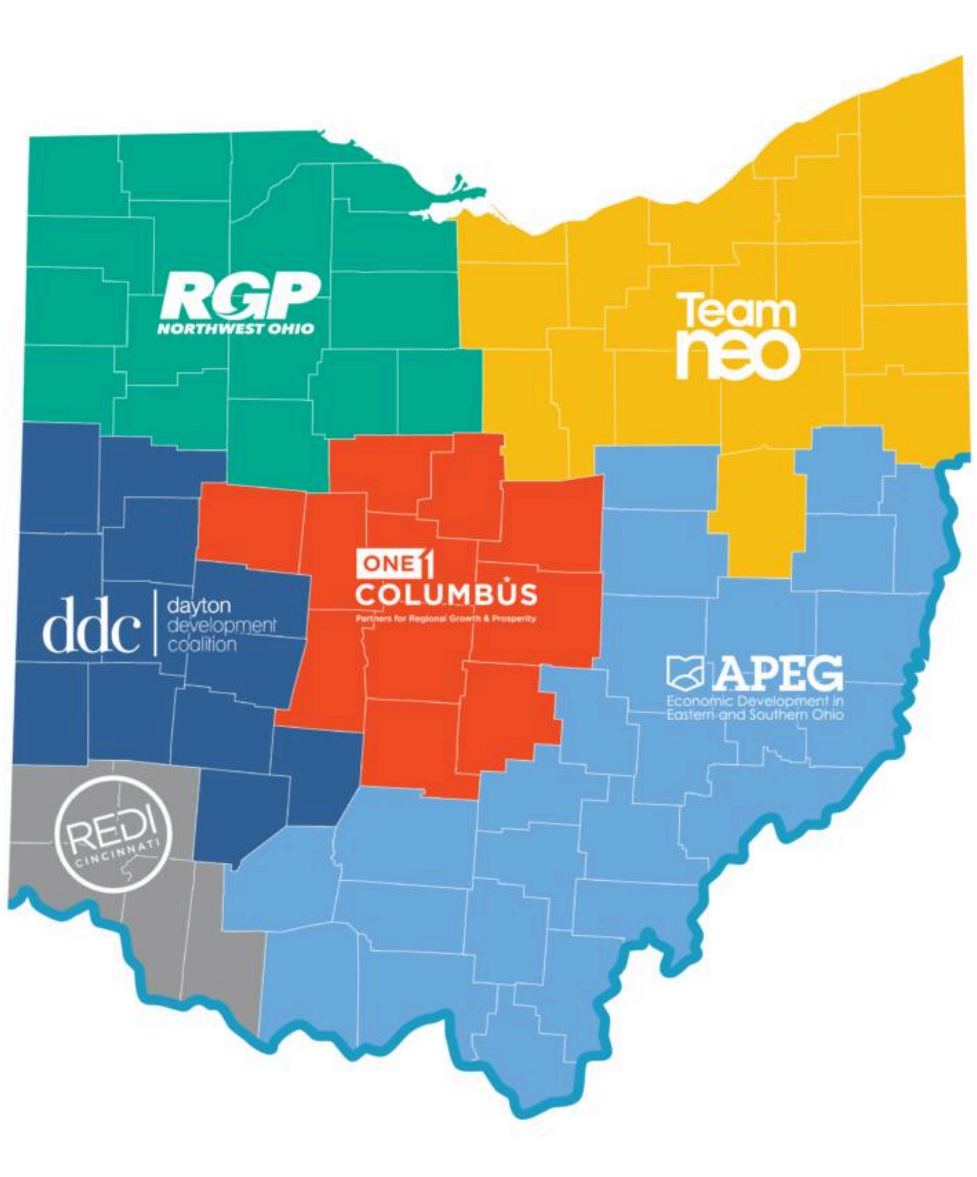
CCAO, JobsOhio to host webinar in July

On Wednesday, July 12, join members from JobsOhio and JobsOhio Regional Network Partners from around the state for an introduction to JobsOhio. During this presentation, JobsOhio will provide an overview of how the state's unique model is working to provide a ***Competitive Advantage for Ohio***. The presentation will provide two recent project examples showcasing successful regional and local collaboration.

Presenters will include representatives from JobsOhio and each regional partner:

- JobsOhio - Darnita Bradley, Senior Manager Local Government Affairs & External Engagement
- One Columbus - Kenny McDonald, President & CEO Columbus Partnership
- Team NEO – Renee Ligon, Senior Director Partnerships & Engagement
- OhioSE – Ed Looman, Manager of Engagement & Partnerships
- OhioSE – Destiny Bryson, Manager of Engagement & Partnerships
- Dayton Development Coalition – David Burrows, Vice President of Engagement
- Regional Growth Partnership – Mike Jay, Director of Strategic Networks
- REDI Cincinnati – Chase Mosijowsky, Manager of Business Engagement

Registration is free and can be completed here.


RGP NORTHWEST OHIO
Team neo
ONE COLUMBUS
ddc dayton development coalition
APEG Economic Development in Eastern and Southern Ohio
REDI CINCINNATI

Lt. Governor to participate in Northeast Ohio forum on artificial intelligence

On Wednesday, July 19, Lt. Governor Jon Husted will be speaking at the first OH | AI Forum regarding the impact that artificial intelligence may have on Ohio's education, economy, and workforce. The event is presented by OhioX and Innovate Ohio and will be held on the campus of John Carroll University in University Heights.

The forum will discuss current AI capabilities, forecast its future, and discuss how Ohio can best equip its students for the rapidly changing global innovative economy.

Registration for the event is free but limited. It can be completed here.

If you have trouble registering or have questions about the event, please contact OhioX at hello@ohiox.org.

OH | AI FORUM
CLEVELAND
presented by OhioX + INNOVATE Ohio
07.19.23

NACo offering cyberattack simulation training to NACo members

CCAO is highlighting three NACo cybersecurity offerings that it will host this year, all of which are cyberattack simulations. The simulations are designed and presented in partnership with the Professional Development Academy, risk managers, chief information security officers, chief information officers, and more.

Registration is open only to NACo members and a single event registration costs $150 per individual.

The second, scheduled for September 11 to Spetember 15, is a simulation of a ransomware attack. Ransomware attacks involve a virus typically disguised as a harmless file that prohibits access to vital and sensitive files until the owner pays a ransom to regain access. If the ransom is not paid, the files may be permanent erased or released to malicious third parties.

The third simulation is scheduled for December 4 to December 8 and will focus on the employee management aspect of cyberattacks and how an aware and conscious workforce can help prevent cyberattacks.

If you are interested in joining NACo to gain access to useful trainings such as these, please contact CCAO Assistant Director John Leutz, CCAO Service Corporation Manager Steve Caraway, or CCAO Boards Liaison and Events Manager Robin Garrett.

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.

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.

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

Henry County Commissioners roll up sleeves, report to work at landfill

13ABC.com, June 28, 2023

A worker shortage at the Henry County Landfill has prompted county commissioners to roll up their sleeves and clock-in.

It normally takes four full-time employees to keep things humming at the landfill. Due to illness, they are down two full-time employees, forcing the county's three commissioners to rotate part-time shifts.

"We shut down for a few days to try to decide what to do," said Glenn Miller, who has been a county commissioner for the past eleven years. "We as the commissioners decided we gotta get things back open."

The main landfill, which opened in the 60′s, has been closed for the last five years. The county still collects tires, cardboard, some trash and recycling. The landfill is owned and operated by the county commissioners.

Northeast District

Commissioners commit $1.5M to rural broadband, Eastgate to manage ConnectMahoning

The Vindicator, June 23, 2023

Mahoning County commissioners are allocating $1.5 million of American Rescue Plan Act dollars to expand broadband services to underserved rural areas within the county.

The money will fund a project called ConnectMahoning that will expand broadband infrastructure to areas most in need, the commissionersá office announced Friday. These are areas within Springfield, Goshen, Milton, Jackson and Smith townships.

Eastgate Regional Council of Governments will manage the ConnectMahoning project by issuing a broadband request for proposals, selecting a provider, and overseeing implementation of the system, the commissioners noted.

Commissioners will award Eastgate with a check presentation at 2 p.m. Monday at the Ohio State Extension Services office in Canfield. An agreement will be ratified Monday during a board of commissioners meeting to be held at 5 p.m. in Austintown Township.

Central District

Union County, Jerome Township clash over property tax revenue

Columbus Dispatch, June 20, 2023

A dispute between Jerome Township and Union County over how public improvements are financed has risen to the point that the township plans to place an issue on the November ballot aimed at giving it more control over how such money is spent.

The issue revolves around tax-increment financing (TIF) districts, which allow property taxes generated by new development to pay for improvements to the area, including roads and utilities.

Union County officials say the township's way of spending the money benefits developers more than public needs. Township officials say they want more autonomy to use the economic development tool.

The dispute is playing out as developers seek sites for homes and commercial developments in and near the booming county, putting pressure on communities to handle it.

Southwest District

Commissioners discuss sewer tap fee restructuring

The News Watchman, June 29, 2023

The Pike County Commissioners met with Kris Ruggles from Stand Associates, an engineering and design company, and Pike County Development Director Gary Arnett, Thursday morning. Ruggles has been working with the commissioners on many sewer projects in Pike County.

At the Monday, June 26 meeting of the commissioners, the board received a letter of agreement raising the fee for a sewer tap (for those on county sewer) to $10,000.

Commissioner Jeff Chattin interjected with discussion about the vagueness of the letter and what problems it could cause in the future.

"I think the thing that came up was the multi-dwelling situation," Chattin said at the Monday meeting. "How many dwellings or units are we going to allow for a tap?"

Chattin said what if he wanted to buy a tap and put 10 apartments onto one tap. Commissioner Jerry Miller said he didn't think that would be fair when you pay the same fee for a 900 square foot log cabin.

Southeast District

Muskingum County Commissioners Holds Meeting Regarding Water Projects

WHIZNews.com June 29, 2023

The Muskingum County Commissioners held a meeting on water projects coming up in the community.

Two projects in the area were discuss on the agenda including the Northfield Road, Arch Hill Road and Virginia Ridge, Irish Ridge water projects . Water Department Manager Don Madden met to talk about the Norfield Road, Arch Hill Road water project.

"We were trying to give the commissioners an update on both the projects being installed currently and those getting ready to start and ones that we are planning on as well. The Northfield Road, the Arch Field road water project the contractor is getting close to having all of the water line installed in the ground," Madden said.

Madden said that this project will finish later in the fall, due to a shortage in brass fittings that are not available until October. The shortage was caused by the overflow of projects across the country. Another large project that the county is undertaking is the Vrigina Ridge, Irish Ridge water project.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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JULY 12
CCAO-JobsOhio Webinar

JULY 21 - 24
NACo Annual Conference (Austin, Texas)

AUGUST 9
CCAO-CEAO Northwest District Meeting

AUGUST 11
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

AUGUST 16
County Classic Golf Outing

AUGUST 16 - 18
CCAO Summer Symposium (Newark, Ohio)

County Fair Dates:
You can access a full schedule here.

DID YOU KNOW?

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Declaration of Independence

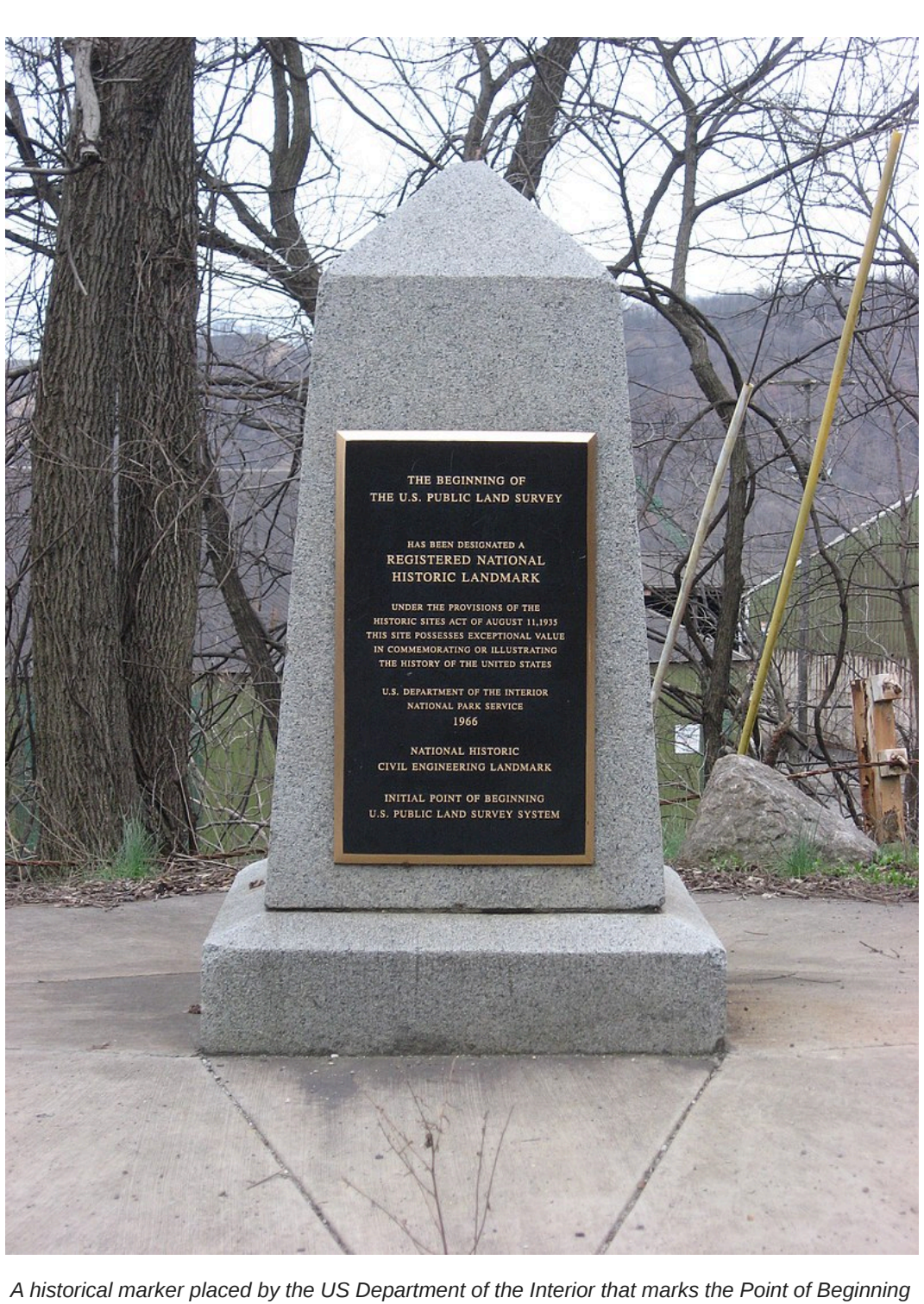
Ohio has a number of connections to the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence.

Six counties are named after signers of the Declaration:

- Adams County: John Adams, also the US President at the time of the county's organization.
- Carroll County: Charles Carroll, the longest-lived signer, who died shortly before the county's organization.
- Franklin County: Benjamin Franklin.
- Hancock County: John Hancock, president of the Continental Congress.
- Jefferson County: Thomas Jefferson, the principal author of the Declaration, the Vice President at the time of the county's organization, and later a US President.
- Washington County: George Washington, commander of the Continental Army, president of the Constitutional Convention, and the first US President.

Ohio's third governor, Samuel Huntington, was the nephew and adopted son of the Connecticut politician and Declaration signer of the same name. The Ohio Huntington oversaw the shift of the state capital from Zanesville to Chillicothe, served on the Ohio Supreme Court, and briefly served in both the Ohio Senate and the Ohio House of Representatives.

Finally, Virginia signer Richard Henry Lee served as the sixth president of Congress under the Articles of Confederation for 1785. Under his leadership, the Land Ordinance of 1785 was adopted which established the standardized system for surveying land into square townships, each divided into 36 sections. The "Point of Beginning" for the survey sits in East Liverpool of Columbiana County.


THE BEGINNING OF THE U.S. PUBLIC LAND SURVEY
HAS BEEN DESIGNATED A REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK
UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE HISTORIC SITES ACT OF AUGUST 21,1935 THIS SITE POSSESSES EXCEPTIONAL VALUE IN COMMEMORATING OR ILLUSTRATING THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE 1966
NATIONAL HISTORIC CIVIL ENGINEERING LANDMARK
INITIAL POINT OF BEGINNING U.S. PUBLIC LAND SURVEY SYSTEM

A historical marker placed by the US Department of the Interior that marks the Point of Beginning for the survey required under the Land Ordinance of 1785.

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