View this email in your browser

July 10, 2023

Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Brian Baldridge, Ohio Enviornmental Protection Agency Director Anne Vogel, and Lake Erie Commission Executive Director Joy Mulinex attended the CCAO joint Agricultural and Rural Affairs-Water Quality Task Force meeting last week. Thank you to the directors for speaking with CCAO members from across the state on important issues like water quality!

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

Secretary of State issues guidance on August election funding

On Friday, Ohio Secretary of State Frank LaRose and his office sent detailed instructions outlining how the state will cover August special election costs for State Issue 1 to boards of elections. Below is his message:

As we once again answer the call of duty and prepare for the August 8 special election, I couldn't be more thankful that Ohio has the best election officials in the country working together to make this election a success, not only as Republicans and Democrats but also as public servants.

To support you in this important work, the Ohio General Assembly has met its obligation to provide funding for election administration costs. These funds can be used to pay for expenditures such as overtime and temporary labor, election management, and ballot production and printing.

The legislature authorized $16 million in up-front funds and an additional $4 million in reimbursable funds as needed. Most importantly, boards of elections are guaranteed by law to be covered by the state for all permissible costs of administering the August 8 special election, in accordance with R.C. § 3501.17(F).

In consultation with the Ohio Association of Election Officials, the $16 million appropriation is being quickly distributed to all county boards based on a formula that includes prior comparable election expenditures and current voter registration counts. I've asked my team to expedite the release of these funds and to make these grants as flexible and easy to access as possible. I recognize that this election might require adjustments, as some counties spend more and others less. We're prepared to quickly reappropriate unspent funds and seek legislative approval to secure the additional funding as needed.

To receive your allocated amount, please review and sign the attached grant agreement and return the signed copy to 2023election@OhioSoS.gov. While we are working to get this funding out to boards as quickly as possible, please allow 1-2 weeks for the delivery of the checks. Please use the August Special Election Expense Report to report all expenses by October 13, 2023. Unused funds from all grants associated with the August special election must be returned to SOS by October 27, 2023.

We've faced some unprecedented challenges together these past few years, and, once again, you're being asked to step-up and serve. You continue to show the nation every day why Ohio is the gold standard in elections. Thank you for everything you do for our democracy – and please don't hesitate to reach out to us if you need assistance or have questions.

Yours in service,

Frank LaRose
Ohio Secretary of State

You can view the grant agreement here and the August Special Election Expense Report here (Excel file).

Additionally, on Friday, Secretary LaRose issued a directive to county boards of elections regarding the canvassing process for the August election.

If you have questions about the reimbursement process, please contact CCAO Policy Director Kyle Petty at kpetty@ccao.org or at 614-220-7977.

Update on Local Government Fund changes

With the passage of the state budget bill (House Bill 33) the Local Government Fund (LGF) will be reset in a couple ways.

First, the percentage of revenues from the state general fund taxes allocated to the Local Government Fund will change from 1.66% to 1.70%. This will be reflected in the July 10th payment.

Second, counties that have been subject for more than the last decade to a minimum floor of the lesser of $750,000 or the amount received in FY 2013 will receive $850,000 a year in their County Undivided Local Government Fund going forward. These dollars are distributed to townships and municipalities along with the county general fund in each impacted county. This increase will not be reflected in the July distribution due to the quick turn-around time from the adoption of the state budget, but the August 10th payment will include the newer level going forward plus what would have been received in July. Thus, the August payment will be slightly inflated.

CCAO also is working with the Ohio Department of Taxation to understand how tax reforms included in the state budget will impact state revenues, and therefore, alter the LGF. One tax change – the new extended sales tax holiday beginning August 2024, includes a requirement that the foregone sales tax revenue to counties, transit authorities, the Local Government Fund, the Library Fund, and the state general fund be reimbursed. Under the previous School Sales Tax Holiday, counties and the LGF along with the other entities were not made whole. Commercial Activity Tax revenues are not expected to be impacted until 2024. New income tax withholding tables are not expected to be released until later this fall, when they will start to impact the LGF. The full impact of the income tax rate reduction will not be felt until 2024.

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
Workforce Development Case Studies
Successful Landbank Practices
Economic Development Practices
Expanding Broadband Services

Register today for CCAO's 2023 Summer Symposium! Early bird pricing ends July 17

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, with early bird pricing ***ending on July 17***. 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.

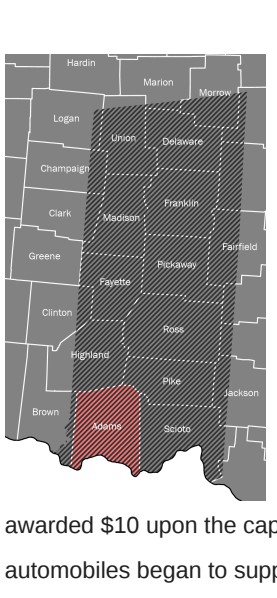
Reserve your spot to play golf here. If you would like to attend the dinner only, you may do so here (if you will not be attending the rest of the Summer Symposium, make sure to check the "Dinner Only" box).

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.

Happy birthday to Adams and Trumbull counties!

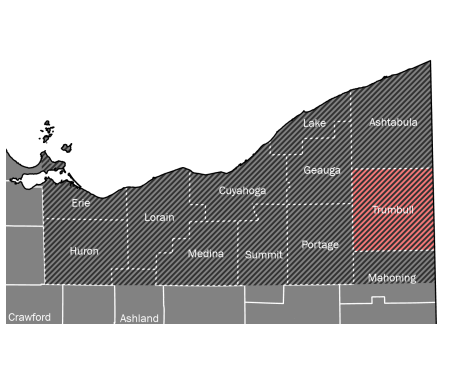
July 10th marks the birthday of two counties: Adams County turns 226 years old today while Trumbull County turns 223 years old. Happy birthday!



Adams County is named after John Adams, a Founding Father and the second US President. Tee county is the third oldest county in the state and one of nine pre-statehood counties. It was formed out of territory from Washington County and Hamilton County.

Adams County is home to a social club which dates back to 1853 and originally had a much different purpose. The Bentonville Anti-Horse Thief Society was founded in March 1853 as a vigilance society. Horse theft was a particularly impactful crime in the 19th century given the importance horses had for transportation and farming. Members were awarded $10 upon the capture of a thief or recovery of a stolen horse. As mechanical tractors and automobiles began to supplant horses, the Society shifted to a social club.

Trumbull County, another pre-statehood county, was named after Jonathan Trumbull, the governor of Connecticut during the Revolutionary War. It was named after him partly because the area was a part of the Connecticut Western Reserve before being attached to the Northwest Territory.



Trumbull County was the birthplace of one of the most famous trial lawyers in American history. Clarence Darrow was born in Farmdale in northern Trumbull County. He was admitted to the Ohio Bat at the age of 21 and practiced law in Ashtabula County until 1887, when he moved his practice to Chicago. Among the notable cases he worked were a case defending labor leader Eugene Debs after the Pullman Strike of 1894, defending murderers Leopold and Loeb in an early "crime of the century," and defending Tennessee school teacher John Scopes in a case regarding the legality of teaching evolution.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

Back to Top

Reminder on OPERS guidance on poll workers

Ohio is now less than four 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.

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

Back to Top

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.

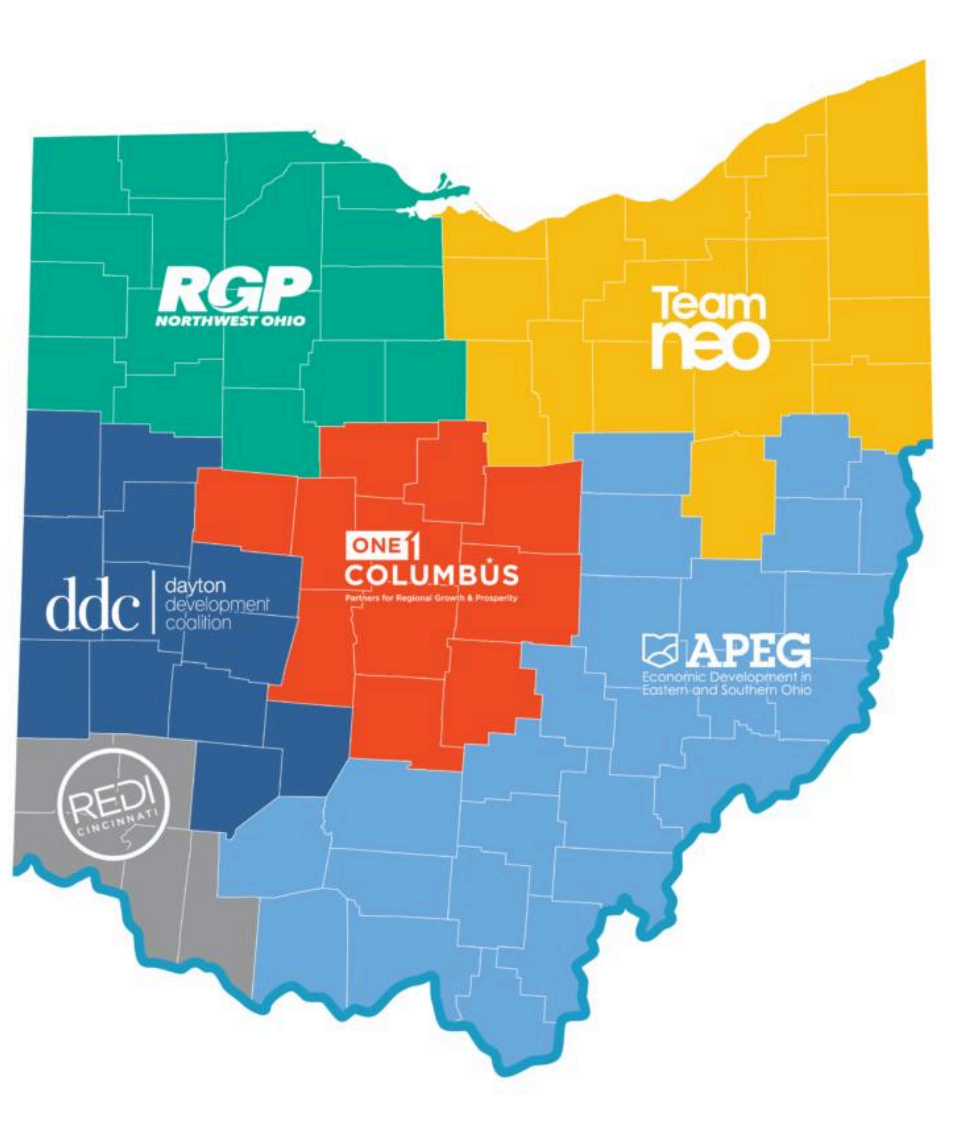
CCAO, JobsOhio to host webinar in July

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 Partners for Regional Growth & Prosperity
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. 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

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.

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 Bipartisan 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

Allen County neighborhood getting $2 million water line project
LimaOhio.com, July 4, 2023
An Allen County suburban neighborhood is set to benefit from a $2 million water line infrastructure project, according to a release from the Ohio Water Development Authority.

The Allen Water District is receiving a low-interest loan for just under $2.1 million from the Ohio Water Development Authority to be used in the Indianbrook neighborhood in Shawnee Township. The loan, according to the Ohio Water Development Authority, will fund "the construction of 21,900 feet of waterline along Tillamook, Tolowa, Algonkin, Kiowa, Agerter and Wapak Roads to replace undersized waterlines and eliminate dead ends."

The benefit for the Allen Water District in receiving this loan from the Ohio Water Development Authority rather than seeking funding from other sources is that little interest will be incurred over the life of this loan. The interest rate for this nearly $2.1 million loan will be set at 3.28 percent. Additionally, the repayment period for this loan will be stretched out over the next 20 years.

Northeast District

Commissioners eye projected sheriff's shortfall
The Tribune Chronicle, July 6, 2023
The Trumbull County Auditor's Office warned county commissioners that spending in the sheriff's office should be closely scrutinized, or it could face a more than $3 million budget shortfall at year's end.

Much of the projected excess spending in the sheriff's office is in its budget for employees, and line items such as the Public Employee Retirement System, the jail workers and hospitalization, commissioners were informed Wednesday during their weekly workshop meeting.

The sheriff's office employees and PERS line items are projected to have a combined shortfall of $820,627.62 by year's end, if spending trends continue as they have during the first half of the year.

Its budget in these two line items is $3.1 million for employees, with 58 percent already spent; and $247,957.12 in PERS, with 129 percent already spent.

The jail's shortfall in these same areas are projected to be $1,912,123.32.

Central District

Knox County getting national attention through workforce collaboration
Knox Pages, June 25, 2023
Knox County is part of a multi-county group working to recruit employees not only for businesses in their respective counties, but also counties throughout the network.

"It's getting national attention because it has never been done before," Brandy Booth, administrator of Opportunity Knox Employment Center, told the county commissioners on June 15.

Scott Boone, director of Knox County Job and Family Services, said he initially had reservations about recruiting employees for out-of-county employment.

"I was concerned how that would affect our relationship with Knox County employers," he said. "We've since talked about it, and it could be an opportunity rather than something that we fight about."

The idea behind the 16- to 18-county collaboration is that by recruiting for businesses that have a big footprint, such as Intel, individual counties will help local residents find jobs in addition to helping attract advance companies coming to the area.

Southwest District

New water plant to boost flow in eastern part of Scioto County
Portsmouth Daily Times, July 3, 2023
For the last week or so, residents have seen water breaks spring up in and around Sciotoville. Turns out, it's a lack of flow to the eastern part of the county that has caused it.

Scioto County Commissioners believe a collaboration with the City of Portsmouth on a new Franklin Furnace water station project will help fix the water problems in Sciotoville. It will also better serve the businesses and industry in the eastern part of the county, including but not limited to Sun Coke and Pepsi.

Davis said collaboration with Portsmouth city government is at an all-time high. They speak weekly, often with the city manager, Sam Sutherland.

"He said the reason they're having water breaks in Sciotoville is because the water demand is so high in Franklin Furnace right now they are really having to up the water pressure.

Southeast District

Commish address heated concerns in Freeport
Harrison News Herald, June 30, 2023
Two county commissioners, Paul Coffland and Dustin Corder, attended the Freeport Village Council meeting on June 14 to give an update on the current sewer project.

"Construction has started," Coffland began. "The schedule is through mid-2024 with final completion at the end of that year. We still need user agreements for 41 people."

Coffland gave Mayor Larry Wells several blank user agreements for him to hand out and also gave him the list of 41 people.

"My name's not on there," said Wells. "But I signed my user agreement."

"If you've signed one, let me look into it," Coffland said.

Coffland said he wanted to make sure that the public understands what the user agreement is for. "If they do not sign the user agreement, then they do not get a tap. We will not go to their property. As of now, no one is paying for a tap. But if you have to come back later and tap in, you will pay for that tap. You'll also have to pay for any damages to roadways and sidewalks," he explained.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

Back to Top

JULY 12
CCAO-JobsOhio Webinar

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

AUGUST 8
Special Election

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.

Copyright © 2023 CCAO, All rights reserved.

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