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September 5, 2023

Portage County Commissioner Sabrina Christian-Bennett and Representative Gail Pavliga (Portage County) at the 163rd Portage County Fair.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Congratulations to the winners of the inaugural CCAO Research and Education Foundation scholarships!

In July, the CCAO Research and Educational Foundation presented five high school seniors across Ohio with $2,000 scholarships. One scholarship was offered to students in each CCAO district, payable directly to the student when CCAO received confirmation of attendance at a university, community college, training program or vocational school. Those that applied also planned a career in public service in Ohio.

After receiving more than 90 applications from 50 counties and a thorough review process the panel awarded scholarships to:

- Northwest: Anisha Chopra, Erie County
- Northeast: Michael Telakowicz, Ashland County
- Central: Brooklyn List, Pickaway County
- Southwest: Riley Raynard, Scioto County
- Southeast: Kendall Polen, Tuscarawas County

We are looking forward to growing the scholarship program and focusing on other initiatives in the future. If you would like to support the foundation, you can donate online or you can send a personal or campaign account check, made payable to: CCAO Research and Educational Foundation, 209 E. State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215.

CCAO to host five regional budget briefings

The CCAO policy team is excited to announce five regional meetings to bring together CCAO members and key staff from across the state and discuss pertinent policy issues and funding included in the state operating budget.

The events will begin at **9:30 a.m. and end at 1:15 p.m**. Lunch will be served. You are welcome to attend any of the events listed below. An event agenda is also included below.

Please RSVP to Nedra Benson at nbenson@ccao.org or 614-221-5627 and specify which event you plan to attend. Please also include any dietary requirements in your RSVP.

We look forward to seeing you soon!

- **OCTOBER 2 – SOUTHEAST REGION**
  - Theo's Restaurant: 632 Wheeling Ave, Cambridge, OH 43725
- **OCTOBER 10– NORTHEAST REGION**
  - Reed Memorial Library: 167 East Main Street, Ravenna, OH 44266
- **OCTOBER 16 – SOUTHWEST REGION**
  - Rocky Fork Lake East End Overlook Restaurant: 6452 Lucas Ln, Hillsboro, OH 45133
  - ***Please note Rocky Fork Lake East End Overlook Restaurant does not have handicap accessible restrooms available.***
- **OCTOBER 20 – CENTRAL REGION**
  - Delaware County Byxbe Meeting Room: 1610 State Route 521, Delaware, OH 43015
- **OCTOBER 30 – NORTHWEST REGION**
  - Allen County OhioMeansJobs: 951 Commerce Pkwy, Lima, OH 45804

Event Agenda

9:30 am – 10:00 am	Registration & Networking
10:00 am – 11:00 am	State Budget Overview Presentation Part 1
11:00 am – 11:10 am	Break
11:10 am – 12:10 pm	State Budget Overview Presentation Part 2
12:10 pm – 1:15 pm	Lunch with county updates and "Ask the Policy Team"

Agenda for Northwest Ohio District Meeting set, RSVP today!

The Northwest Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association has released the agenda for the upcoming September 27 district meeting in Archbold, Ohio.

The event, the agenda for which can be accessed here, will begin at 10 a.m. at the Barn Resturant located at 22611 State Route 2, Archbold, OH 43502. The district will hold its business meeting, hear from CCAO and CEAO, and then hear a presentation from Nature Fresh Farms, which operates a large tomato farm in Delta, Ohio, and harvests tomatos year round.

Over lunch, CEBCO and CORSA will provide announcements. Then the meeting will hear from Jeanette Smith, the director of Sales and Marketing for Sauder Village, a living-history museum, followed by a self-guided tour of Sauder Village.

The registration fee for the meeting is $24.75 per person and $18 per person for the self-guided tour (for a total of $42.75 for individuals attending both the meeting and the tour).

To register, please complete this form and make checks payable to the Northwest Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association. Please send the form and checks to Jessica Schuette, Clerk, Fulton County Commissioners, 152 S. Fulton Street, Suite 270, Wauseon Ohio 43567, send via fax to 419-337-9285, or via email at jschuette@fultoncountyoh.com.

Registration and payments must be received by September 20.

We hope to see you there!

Membership survey: Projected indigent defense budget

CCAO is working with the Office of the Public Defender to collect county projections on indigent defense budgets to help the statewide office set reimbursement rates. Please take a few minutes to complete the survey, available here, by September 31. The survey includes an option to upload files if you would like. Please note that due to limitations in the survey software, only Word documents and PDFs are able to be uploaded. If you would like to provide an Excel document, please either save it as a PDF or email it directly to CCAO Research Analyst Nick Ciolli at nciolli@ccao.org.

The more information that we can provide OPD, the more accurate of a reimbursement rate the office can set. Thank you for your help!

OSU Extension increases county share of educator compensation

Recently, the Ohio State University Extension Board of Directors decided to increase the cost share between the counties and the Extension office. This increase will add $1,000 to the county share for educators employed in each county. The increase begins in FY 2024, currently in progress.

The $1,000 increase will bring the county cost share to $32,750 for the first educator and $42,750 for each additional educator. As a reminder, the salaries of Extension educators are split between the counties, the State OSU Extension office, and Smith Lever Funds. Local Extension offices will begin these discussions with commissioners during their annual budget hearings.

Below is a table listing the history of educator cost that counties have been responsible for since CY 2016.

OSU Extension Educator Cost, County Share, 2016 - 2023

Calendar Year	First Educator	Additional Educators
2023	$32,750	$42,750
2022	$31,750	$41,750
2021	$31,000	$41,000
2020	$31,000	$41,000
2019	$30,000	$40,000
2018	$30,000	$40,000
2017	$29,000	$40,000
2016	$28,500	$40,000

Summer edition of County Leader available now!

CCAO recently published the Summer 2023 edition of our quarterly magazine, County Leader. Inside, you can read an overview of recently-passed state budget and its impacts on counties, meet the winners of the inaugural Ohio Counties Scholarship, learn more about Holmes County Commissioner Dave Hall, and more!

County Leader also includes insights from CORSA, CEBCO, and the CCAO Service Corporation. Learn how CEBCO is expanding, meet CORSA's newest board of directors member and learn about CORSA grant opportunities, and read about how to secure your county against emerging cyberthreats. Additionally, CORSA Loss Control Manager Frank Hatfield provides an overview of the recent Attorney General Opinion regarding off-site arrestee medical treatment policies.

Read on!

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Department of Administrative Services planning NG 9-1-1 regional briefings

In October, the Department of Administrative Services will be holding regional meetings to discuss rollout plans for Next Generation 9-1-1. The meetings are open to 9-1-1 coordinators, public safety answering point (PSAP) directors, local GIS representatives, and other local stakeholders.

The meetings will be held in the state's Homeland Security regions, with some regions combined for the purposes of holding the meetings. The meetings will discuss DAS' deployment plan, the GIS data that will need to be collected, expected timelines for money from the new fee to flow, and more. The schedule is below:

- Tuesday, October 17 - Regions 2 & 5, held in Medina County at 4355 Greenwich Road, Seville, OH 44273.
- Wednesday, October 18 - Regions 7 & 8, held in Athens County at 701 E. State Street, Athens, OH 45701.
- Thursday, October 19 - Regions 3 & 6, held in Warren County at 406 Justice Drive, Lebanon, OH 45036.
- Friday, October 20 - Region 1, held in Allen County at 951 Commerce Parkway, Lima, OH 45804.
- Monday, October 23 - Region 4, held in Franklin County at 4200 Surface Road, Columbus, OH 43228.

The presentation at the Franklin County meeting will be recorded and shared online.

CCAO will share more information as it becomes available.

BroadbandOhio's BEAD program proposal open for public comment

As part of the state's efforts to secure federal funding to help extend broadband services to every home and community in the state, BroadbandOhio has opened Volume I of its initial proposal for Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funding to public comment.

Volume I outlines the existing funding within Ohio, a list of locations designated "unserved" and "underserved" in the FCC Broadband Map, and more details. BroadbandOhio is looking for comments that would assist the agency in addressing issues beyond connectivity, such as affordability, device access, and digital skills.

The agency wants to hear from all Ohioans, but particularly those in unserved and underrepresentated populations. These include Ohioans on low-income or fixed incomes, veterans, individuals with disabilities, aging Ohioans, non-native English speakers, and other unserved communities.

Helping BroadbandOhio refine its BEAD proposal is vital to securing federal funding. Under recent Congressional actions, there is more than $45 billion available to state and local communities to expand and enhance broadband services. We want to make sure that Ohio gets as much of that money as possible.

Please share this information with those in your communities and take measures to facilitate comment by those in your communities who may not currently have broadband services.

You can learn more about the public comment period on BroadbandOhio's website. Comments on the draft should be sent to BroadbandOhio@development.ohio.gov by September 22.

Contractors Association unveils Ohio Local Government Bidding Clearinghouse for highway projects

The Ohio Contractors Association (OCA) recently unveiled the Ohio Local Government Bidding Clearinghouse (OLGB Clearinghouse) after identifying a desire on the part of both local governments and contractors to enhance awareness of available bidding opportunities for highway projects. For governments, drawing more bidders increases competition which can result in the best pricing for the public funds they are entrusted to manage. Contractors, in their search for bidding opportunities, wish to quickly and efficiently identify projects on which to bid on a much larger geographic scale than is currently practical. With those two goals in mind, OCA is now hosting the OLGB Clearinghouse.

The OLGB Clearinghouse is intended to serve as a compliment to the newspaper notices, which are mandated in the Revised Code. It is important to note that this service is not electronic bidding. The goal is to provide cost-free project awareness which serves as an initial screening for contractors to identify projects of interest and then make the identified contacts to further pursue a project and as a quick means of publicizing the availability of a government's project to the maximum number of bidders possible with key information so that interested bidder can follow-up for more detailed information.

More details on the OLGB Clearinghouse can be found at its website.

WANT TO MAKE MORE BIDDERS AWARE OF YOUR HIGHWAY PROJECTS?
The Ohio Local Government Bidding Clearinghouse lets the contracting community know about your next highway project.
Get your projects on the road to success by advertising to contractors through the Ohio Local Government Bidding Clearinghouse (OLGB). This new clearinghouse provides any Ohio governmental entity cost-free project awareness to increase the number of bids for your next highway project.
Find out about the OLGB Clearinghouse at:
www.olgbclearinghouse.org
Or scan the QR code.
SCAN HERE
Bid
The OLGB Clearinghouse provides a quick means of exposing the availability of your project to the maximum number of bidders; provides an initial screening for contractors to identify projects of interest; and identifies contacts to further pursue your project.
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FEMA Disaster Relief Fund low on funds, NACo calls for outreach to urge support for replenishment

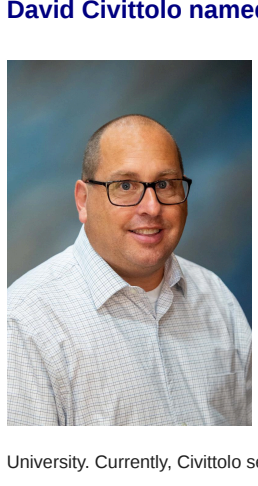
The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently issued notice that its Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) is nearly out of money. Due to the lack of funds, it is implementing Immediate Needs Funding, which means it will only be able to fund debris removal and emergency protective measures. All other recovery projects will be put on hold until the DRF receives more funding.

NACo has drafted a letter template that can be modified by counties to reach out to your congressional delegations to urge support for a supplemental funding package to replenish the DRF. NACo also provided a letter sent by several other national local government groups (such as the National League of Cities, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council of State Governments, and more) to Congressional leadership.

CCAO asks that counties consider contacting your federal representatives and Ohio's senators to ask for their support. Natural disasters happen suddenly and put a severe strain on local governments as they try to manage the aftermath and keep communities safe. The loss of federal funding to aid those efforts could be the difference between life and death.

If you have questions concerning the letters or the DRF, please reach out to NACo's Legislative Director for Justice and Public Safety, Brett Mattson, at bmattson@naco.org.

David Civittolo named Director of OSU Extension



Last week, the Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES) announced that Professor David Civittolo will serve Interim Associate Dean and Director of OSU Extension and Interim Chair of the Department of Extension in the effective September 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024 or until a new Associate Dean and Director/Chair is appointed. This position is subject to Board of Trustees approval.

Civittolo earned a B.A. in Criminal Justice in 1989 and a M.P.A. in Public Administration in 1991 from Bowling Green State University. Currently, Civittolo serves as Associate Professor and Assistant Director, Community Development and field specialist in OSU Extension conducting statewide community economics programs. Prior to this role, Civittolo served OSU Extension as Interim Assistant Director, Community Development; as a full-time Community Development field specialist with a focus on community economics; Extension Education and Research Area (EERA) leader, Western Reserve; and Medina County Extension Director.

Civittolo will continue several key initiatives and provide leadership while the university launches the national search for the next Associate Dean and Director of OSU Extension. In these interim roles, Civittolo will:

- Assume supervision of the OSU Extension administrative leaders and staff.
- Serve on the CFAES VP Cabinet and assist with college strategic planning and implementation of strategic priorities.
- Participate and provide leadership on the college's External Relations Team.
- Review and streamline OSU Extension Leadership appointments to align with the college.
- Provide input and oversight to the OSU Extension budgeting process.

Congratulations David!

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.

Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities to host county-only webinar on accessibility grants

On September 6, the Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities and the program manager for Accessible Ohio will be hosting a webinar solely for counties to discuss Accessible Ohio and grants available to local governments to increase accessibility for people with disabilities.

The webinar is being held only for counties and will feature a short presentation before moving to a dialogue session so the agency can learn about then needs that counties have in the accessibility space. CCAO highly encourage counties to take this opportunity to speak directly with the state body that will be administering these grants to inform them what their local needs are.

Registration is at no cost and can be completed here. We hope to have a robust conversation on September 6.

Ohio EPA to host webinar on water pollution control program on Wednesday

This Wednesday, the Ohio EPA is hosting a webinar on the water pollution control loan program. The program is the state's largest source of public funding for wastewater system planning, design, and construction and is now open for nominations.

The webinar will share information about the variety of projects that can be funded through the program, the different types of loans and associated incentives offered by OEPA, and important milestones in the loan review and approval process. It will also highlight special items of interest, such principal forgiveness funding and loans for stormwater projects. Applications under the program are due by September 25. You can learn more about the program itself here.

The webinar will begin at 1:30 p.m. on September 6. Registration is free and can be completed here.

CCAO and Bricker Graydon LLP to host Levy and Bond Campaign Guidance webinar on September 15

The Auditor of State released its much-anticipated Levy and Bond Campaign Guidance on August 23, 2023. The Guidance follows the November 2021 criminal prosecution of a public school superintendent and four elected board of education members regarding expenditures of public funds and a levy campaign.

Although the Guidance has a public school focus, the laws at issue prohibit covered public entities -- including non-chartered counties -- from using public funds to support or oppose a levy or bond issue. This support and opposition can occur in a number of unexpected ways, and the Guidance assists public employees and officials in operating within the requirements of Ohio law. You can read the AOS Levy and Bond Campaign Guidance here.

CCAO is offering its members an opportunity to learn more about the AOS Guidance and what it means in an upcoming webinar presented in partnership with Bricker Graydon LLP, whose attorneys have been monitoring this issue since 2021.

Please join us!

AOS Levy and Bond Campaign FAQs Webinar
Date: Friday, September 15, 2023
Time: 9:00 – 10:00 AM

Registration is free and can be completed here.

Treasurer of State and Auditor of State hosting fiscal officer educational event in October

On Tuesday, October 26, the Center for Public Investment Management (CPIM), a joint body of the Ohio Treasurer and the Ohio Auditor, will be hosting an event on the role of fiscal officers.

The event, titled "Leadership in Public Finance and Economic Development," will provide information and training tailored to the role that government fiscal officers play in economic development planning. Up to six hours of continuing education credits are available through the event.

Members of CPIM do not have to pay any cost to attend the event, as it is covered in the annual $100 fee. Non-members may still attend the event but must pay a $100 registration fee.

Registration can be completed here. More information, including course descriptions and speakers, are expected in the coming weeks.

Registration now open for inaugural Ohio Workforce Association training conference

The Ohio Workforce Association (OWA), in partnership with the International Association of Workforce Professionals, is hosting an inaugural workforce training conference on September 21 and 22.

Registration for the event, to be held at the Nationwide Hotel and Conference Center in Lewis Center, Ohio, is open now and can be completed here. Registration fees are $395 for registrants before August 31, $355 for OWA member directors, WDB staff, and IAWP members, and $425 for registrants after August 31.

Tentative sessions include business services innovations, self-care for professionals, highlighting of innovative Ohio Means Jobs Center services, and more!

More information regarding the event, including how to book hotel rooms at a reduced rate, can be found on OWA's website.

County allocations for Lead Safe Ohio available, applications due October 12

Earlier this year, Governor Mike DeWine signed House Bill 45 into law, providing $150 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding for lead poisoning prevention and mitigation. The Ohio Department of Development has allocated $95 million of that total to promote primary prevention and reducing immediate and presumed lead hazards in residential properties, congregate care settings, and childcare facilities built before 1978.

The Lead Safe Ohio program will achieve this goal by funding lead safe renovation, lead abatement, and supportive measures in all 88 Ohio counties. Each county has been allocated an amount under the program. You can view your county's allocation here. Applications are due by October 12.

More information is available 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. 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

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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.

NACo provides analysis of new allowable uses and guidelines for ARPA funds

On August 10, the US Department of Treasury released a new Interim Final Rule (IFR) for ARPA funding in light of an amendment that recently passed which expanded the allowable usages for the funds. All of the existing allowable usages are unchanged.

NACo has provided an analysis of the new IFR, available here. Additionally, last week NACo held a membership call to discuss the IFR. The slide deck is available here and a recording is available here.

The new IFR added three new allowable uses, discussed in turn.

Emergency Relief from Natural Disasters
Counties may now use ARPA funds to provide relief from natural disasters or mitigate the negative economic effects of a natural disaster. The eligible uses are broad, as long as they are tied to the natural disaster. The NACo analysis has a lengthy, but non-exhaustive, list of allowable usages.

Additionally, ARPA funds can be used to mitigate the threat of future natural disasters. Examples of eligible usages include structure elevation, structural retrofitting, and others.

Surface Transportation Projects & Community Development Block Grant Projects
ARPA funds can now be used for surface transportation projects and CDBH projects, subject to some limitations. These limits include a limitation on contribution, a prohibition on supplanting funds, and a compliance with other laws.

Counties may only use an amount equal to the greater of $10 million or 30% of the county's total ARPA allocation for transportation and CDBG projects. For example, if a county received a total allocation of $58 million, 30% of that is $17.4 million. That is the maximum amount the county can use for these two types of projects. It can be split between the two in any proportion as long as the total does not exceed $17.4 million.

Counties must use ARPA funds to supplement, not supplant, other funds being used for the project. For example, if a county is working on a surface transportation project and has already allocated $4 million for it, it cannot withdraw that $4 million and replace it with ARPA funds. The ARPA funding can be added to it to enhance the project, but not to keep the project scope the same while withdrawing local funds.

Generally speaking, using ARPA funds for surface transportation projects and CDBG projects must comply with other applicable laws. This includes certain environmental laws, procurement laws, and more. The NACo analysis provides more detail on this issue.

Finally, funds used for surface transportation or CDBG must be expended by September 30, 2026. This is earlier than the deadline for other usages (December 31, 2026).

Please utilize the resources linked to above to help gain an understanding of the guidelines for the new allowable usages.

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.

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

15 Lucas County correctional officers receive enhanced training

Toledo Blade, August 31, 2023

The Lucas County Sheriff's Office is announcing the graduation of 15 correctional officers from a specialized course that enhances staff training.

The graduates are allowed to carry firearms while on duty and to transport inmates, the office announced in a social media update.

During the expanded course, the officers received firearms safety training, instructions on using firearms and force policies, and training at firearms range in the first week. They also received instruction on critical first aid, court operations, inmate transportation, searches, and subject control and weapon retention in the second week.

The 80-hour class expands upon a state-approved 40-hour specialized course that enhances correctional staff training and then took it a step further by creating an 80-hour plan to train these officers, the announcement said.

Northeast District

County's new fund saves money

Akron.com, August 31, 2023

Summit County Council Aug. 28 during committee meetings moved the establishment of an internal lease fund of $2 million to the list of routine items to be approved at its next meeting.

The Internal Lease Fund will be used to pay for the procurement of equipment on behalf of county departments, which will repay the fund over the useful life of the equipment.

Sarah Buccigross, assistant director of finance and budget, said the fund will help the county save on financing costs as well as administrative costs that come with leasing purchases. Buccigross said the main focus of the funds would go toward copiers, personal computers and possibly some vehicles.

Chief of Staff Brian Nelsen said historically, departments across the county have entered into lease agreements for equipment, which do not always have the best interest rates. He added that many times the equipment is still useful at the end of the leases, but then another lease agreement is needed.

Nelsen said instead of leasing the equipment the fund would be available to make purchases on behalf of the department, and then turn around and lease back to the departments, which would repay a monthly charge out of their budget to replenish the fund.

Central District

Richland Soil & Water discusses Black Fork ditch petition revisions for Shelby

Richland Source, August 30, 2023

The potential for a revised Black Fork ditch petition was discussed Wednesday at the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District board of supervisors meeting.

Representatives from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency attended the meeting at the board offices on Longview Avenue.

Also in attendance was Shelby Mayor Steve Schag and members of the community.

Erica Thomas, director of RSWCD, invited ODNR and EPA representatives to attend the meeting, hoping their input and direction may help petitioners craft a revised petition.

"The wording on the original petition was written very broadly," Thomas said.

"I can see from the state agency standpoint that it was probably very hard to figure out what the group was actually proposing," she said.

Southwest District

County Auditor invoices Chillicothe for jail costs

Chillicothe Gazette, August 28, 2023

Recently, a new cost-sharing agreement for the cost of the Ross County Jail was brought up by Sheriff George Lavender, Ross County Auditor Jeff Lehner and Chillicothe Mayor Luke Feeney. This agreement would have the city paying for some of the cost of city inmates in the jail.

The city and county previously had an agreement that ended in 2010.

As an agreement has not yet been reached Lehner recently sent an invoice to the city for July of this year. On the invoice 1,036 city inmate days, including partial days, are recorded. The city per diem rate is set at $58 with $25 for a partial day a share of the cost totaling $59,692 for July of 2023.

The invoice gives the city 30 days to make the payment to the Ross County Sheriff's Office. In this email, Lehner also attached an itemized list of inmates that were housed at the jail from the Chillicothe Police Department during the time period.

Southeast District

Belmont County commissions $2 million for broadband expansion: A leap toward rural connectivity

WTOV9, August 23, 2023

Commissioners in Belmont County announced a major investment in infrastructure that could eventually get everyone connected.

A hot topic in rural areas in the Ohio Valley has been broadband expansion.

"It's a $2 million loan that we will be providing using some federal money we received as result of the pandemic," Commissioner JP Dutton said.

"Those loan funds will be paid back, and they will get a second life for Belmont County residents. So, in a sense, those $2 million can then become $4 million for projects -- $2 million obviously for broadband expansion and then $2 million into the future for later projects."

That money is coming from untouched ARPA funds. The commissioners will be loaning it to Belmont County GIG, a community-based provider that's already invested millions to build fiber optic network cables to help advance its project in the county.

"We were impressed. I mean they are putting fiber optic cable into the ground rather than on poles. We think that's a better product," Dutton said.

The Belmont County Port Authority is also taking part. It will function as the intermediary for the loan.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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SEPTEMBER 8
CORSA Annual Meeting

SEPTEMBER 21
CCAO General Government Committee Meeting

SEPTEMBER 21-22
CCAO Board of Directors Retreat and Board Meeting

SEPTEMBER 27
NW District Meeting (Fulton County)

SEPTEMBER 29
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

OCTOBER 2
CCAO Regional Budget Briefing - Guernsey County

OCTOBER 6
Central District Meeting (Knox County)

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

DID YOU KNOW?

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Perry County

Tucked away in southern Perry County is the village of New Straitsville. Just south of the village is cave called Robinson's Cave which, while perhaps unremarkable amid the county's Appalachian terrain, holds an important place in American history.

Robinson's Cave's acoustics allow for large groups to hear each other clearly. This feature made the cave appealing to coal miners who wanted to organize in an era when violent repriasials against labor unions was common. The first meeting in the cave is believed to have occurred in 1870, with miners gathering frequently throughout the next 20 years.

The cave was the spot where the National Federation of Miners and Mine Laborers was established, which would later merge with another union to the become the United Mine Workers, which exists to today and represents tens of thousands of workers across the nation.

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