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September 11, 2023

CCAO is happy to announce County Benefits+, a new partnership with Aflac to provide a supplemental benefits program to counties! Read on below to learn more about the exciting new program.

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 | Dates to Remember

ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

Back to Top

CCAO unveils County Benefits+!

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio is thrilled to announce the launch of a pioneering initiative aimed at enhancing the lives of the county workforce in Ohio. **County Benefits+,** is a new partnership between CCAO and Aflac. Through this partnership, assisted by NACo's Public Promise Insurance, county leaders and their employees will now have access to Ohio's premiere supplemental benefits program.

In an era when attracting and retaining talent has never been more challenging, **County Benefits+** goes beyond a traditional supplemental benefits program by offering an all-encompassing solution that caters to the specific needs of both the county workforce and the leadership that support them. With the increasing costs of healthcare in America, supplemental benefits are built to help employees cover unforeseen expenses that a core medical benefit offering may not. These unforeseen medical events often add financial hardship to the lives of county employees and their families.

CCAO Executive Director, Cheryl Subler, praised the partnership, "**County Benefits+** represents an exciting collaboration between our organization and the largest supplemental benefits provider in America, Aflac. Members of the county workforce are asking for these supplemental benefits, and through this program, we aim to help counties attract and retain their employees. By combining our resources and the Aflac expertise, we have built a program that provides exceptional supplemental benefits to support county employees. This program was built solely for the 88 counties in Ohio, and we are thrilled at the program that we have structured."

Highlights of the **County Benefits+** program include:

- **Wide Range of Voluntary Supplemental Benefits:** Benefits that employees can elect to offset additional costs associated with Critical Illness, Accidents, Cancer Diagnosis, Hospital Stays, Pet Insurance, ID Theft, and Life Insurance. These provide cash payments that cover expenses such as copays, deductibles, and other unforeseen expenses.
- **State-wide Underwriting:** Aflac has agreed to strong state-wide plans and rates for the state of Ohio specific to county governments. This reduces the hassle of obtaining quotes and pulling large amounts of data for voluntary benefits.
- **No County Costs:** The benefits program is voluntary with each employee purchasing only the products they want.
- **One-on-One Enrollment Support:** Every county employee will have an opportunity for a face-to-face or virtual discussion with a certified enrollment counselor.
- **HR Team Support:** The program includes an administration, billing and payroll support feature. In addition, the certified enrollment counselors are able to assist HR teams with driving home key messages during their one-n-one consultations.
- **Enhanced Communication:** Communication materials and education campaigns are very easy to provide to your staff.
- **County focus:** This program is built 100% for the county workforce. It is built to strengthen the benefits package your county is already offering and support your teams in the battle to attract and retain talent.

Please take this opportunity to assess the value that a new or revised supplemental benefits program can bring to your county team. Email countybenefits@ccao.org or call Service Corporation Manager Steve Caraway at 614-220-7998.

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 via the link above, will begin at 10 a.m. at the Barn Restaurant 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 tomatoes 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.

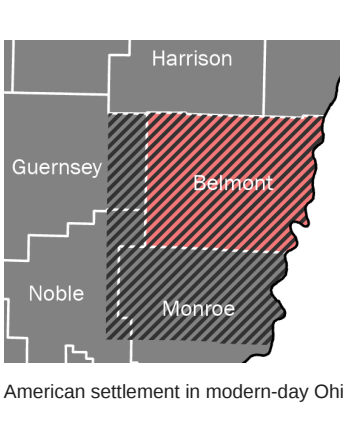
The registration fee for the meeting is $24.75 per person and $18 per person for the self-guided tour (for a total of $42.75 for individuals attending both the meeting and the tour).

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, 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!

Happy birthday, Belmont County!



Last week, on September 7, Belmont County celebrated its 222nd birthday! The youngest of Ohio's nine pre-statehood counties, Belmont County was created out of land formerly belonging to Jefferson and Washington counties. "Belmont" is a French toponym for "beautiful mountain," fitting for the county's Appalachian landscape.

While many know that Marietta, the county seat of nearby Washington County, was the first permanent American settlement in modern-day Ohio, less well-known is that the first European settlement in modern-day Ohio was located in modern-day Martins Ferry in Belmont County. Since there was no lawful charter for the site, it was intermittently abandoned and has thus been known by various names. It has been called Hoglinstown, Mercertown, Norristown, Jefferson, Martinsville, and finally, in 1865, Martins Ferry.

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!

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

Back to Top

Laura Abu-Absi named next OJFSDA Executive Director

Last Friday, the executive committee of the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors Association (OJFSDA) named Assistant Executive Director Laura Abu-Absi as the new Executive Director, effective October 23. The move comes after current OJFSDA Executive Director Joel Potts informed OJFSDA he will be resigning in October to take a position with the newly created Ohio Department of Children and Youth.

Prior to joining OJFSDA in 2015, Laura worked for five years with CCAO as a Senior Policy Analyst with a focus on health and human services issues. She also has worked for the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, and as a legislative aide in the Ohio House of Representatives.

"Congratulations to Laura on her leadership position. I am confident she will do an excellent job representing Ohio's 88 county departments of job and family services directors at the state and national levels as well as working with her membership to develop innovative solutions and foster collaboration," said CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler. "Laura's clear vision and dedication to get the job done despite big challenges always has impressed me and will enable her to excel in her new position."

CCAO is excited to continue to work with Laura in her new role to ensure that counties have the resources to provide vital JFS services to their residents.

Congratulations Laura!

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, 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, particularly those in unserved and underrepresented 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, more than $45 billion is available to state and local communities to expand and enhance broadband services. We want to ensure that Ohio gets as much money as possible.

Please share this information with those in your communities and take measures to facilitate comment by those 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.

FEMA Disaster Relief Fund low on funds, NACo calls for outreach to urge support for replenishment

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recently issued a 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 can only 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 counties can modify to reach out to their 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 counties to consider contacting their federal representatives and Ohio's senators for their support. Natural disasters happen suddenly and severely strain 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 contact NACo's Legislative Director for Justice and Public Safety, Brett Mattson, at bmattson@naco.org.

Accessible Ohio Specialists available to meet with county leaders

The Accessible Ohio initiative, housed in Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), creates the first-ever coordinated effort in Ohio to support Ohio's cities, counties, state agencies, attractions, and venues to be accessible and inclusive for all Ohioans. The program seeks to foster a sense of community and belonging, strengthening the state for all its citizens.

Accessible Ohio Specialists are available to work directly with local partners to identify barriers to access and establish goals for accessibility through customized consultations. Consultations are free and can help counties learn how to make county buildings more accessible. Specialists are based in one of four regions and can be found below.

- Shelly Burkhart, Northwest: shelly.burkhart@ood.ohio.gov
- Brianna Potter, Northeast: brianna.potter@ood.ohio.gov
- Tanya Vela, Southeast: tanya.vela@ood.ohio.gov
- Julia Wagner, Southwest: julia.wagner@ood.ohio.gov

You can learn more about Accessible Ohio on OOD's website.

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.

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.

New round of Body-Worn Camera Grants announced; webinar to be held on September 13

Last week, the DeWine-Husted Administration announced the opening of a third round of grants under the Body-Worn Camera Grant Program. The program is funded with $5 million and seeks to achieve Governor Mike DeWine's goal of "most, if not all, law enforcement agencies in the state" establishing a body camera program.

All local law enforcement agencies are eligible to apply, with award priority going to applicants who will outfit officers who regularly interact with the public and do not already have functional cameras.

The Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS) will host a webinar on September 13 at 10 a.m. to provide information on the program and how best to complete the grant application. CCAO highly encourages interested members to register for the webinar. Registration is free and can be completed here.

Applications must be submitted by October 5 through the Online Grants Management System.

If you have questions regarding the grant program, don't hesitate to contact the OCJS's grants administration contact for your region or contact CCAO Managing Director of Policy Kyle Petty at kpetty@ccao.org or 614-220-7977.

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 to promote primary prevention and reduce 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.

The Department of Development will host a webinar for counties to discuss the Lead Safe Ohio program, the Brownfield Remediation Program, and the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program, both authorized under the state's operating budget. Registration for the webinar 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.

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

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.

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

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

County kicks off courthouse celebration
The Daily Standard, September 7, 2023
A weeklong celebration of Mercer County Courthouse's 100th anniversary gets underway Saturday at the courthouse lawn, promising a profusion of family-friendly events and learning opportunities.

Organizers have already hosted multiple events this year to mark the milestone in county history. The anniversary of the courthouse built in 1922 and dedicated on Labor Day of 1923 will culminate with a series of activities designed to inspire patriotism and local pride.

"Mercer County is a special place," said county prosecutor and lead organizer Erin Minor. "If you've ever lived anywhere else you know why people say that. Our communities are safe. We come together when families are in times of need."

The courthouse, Minor said, stands as an impressive, enduring symbol of those values as well as strength, durability and the permanence of Mercer County.

"Let's celebrate our country, let's celebrate Mercer County, let's celebrate our courthouse, hopefully learn a little bit about the courthouse history but also just have fun," she said.

Northeast District

County gives OK for new requirement for projects
The Vindicator, September 8, 2023
The Mahoning County commissioners on Thursday approved a new requirement for public works projects.

A bidder's affadavit will be included in bid packets for all such Mahoning County projects.

Mahoning County Prosecutor Gina DeGenova explained that the commissioners approved a resolution in 2000 that governed the rules for bidding on public works projects.

It required prospective bidders to provide information regarding the quality of their workmanship, reliability, timeliness and credentials.

That resolution, however, did not provide a "specific means for collecting the information from each bidder."

So the prosecutor's office researched the matter and came up with a way to collect the information — creating a bidder's affidavit.

"In this affidavit, what we will be asking prospective bidders to provide is information that is sanctioned" under Ohio law that will verify whether the bidder "is responsible. And what is the experience of the bidder, the bidder's financial condition, conduct and performance on previous contracts, facilities, management skills and ability to execute the contract properly," DeGenova said.

Central District

Commissioners OK security upgrades, declare September Recovery Month
Mansfield News Journal, September 7, 2023
The Richland County commissioners have accepted a nearly $1 million proposal from Schmidt Security Pro of Mansfield for new security cameras and security systems at six county-owned facilities. The board also voted at its meeting on Tuesday to allocate a portion of the county's American Rescue Plan allocation to pay for the equipment and installation on a project that Matt Hill from County Auditor Pat Dropsey's Information Technology Department has been working on since February of 2022.

As discussed this past March, the project includes replacing 228 current security cameras as well as badge readers and access controls, necessary software and cloud services for the access controls and the cameras at the county courthouse, the Peoples and Longview buildings, the county dog shelter and the Prosecutor's and Board of Elections offices. It also included glass-break sensors on ground level windows and handicapped access at the Longview Building.

Hill said he received proposals from Schmidt and Koorsen Fire and Security, which have been reviewed since June.

Southwest District

Butler County taxing bodies could save taxpayers $39M next year
Journal News, September 8, 2023
If all of the school districts and governmental agencies accepted Butler County Auditor Nancy Nix's proposal and declined tax windfalls from a 37% property value hike, it would mean a $39 million taxpayer savings.

The state-mandated median property value hike is 37% for next year, and while state lawmakers tried to pass "band-aid" legislation to lessen the blow, it didn't work. Nix had another idea — asking taxing bodies to forego the windfall higher values will produce.

Real Estate Director Mike Stein calculated what giving the tax break would mean for the governments and schools that use tax dollars to provide services and sent the information to officials so they can mull the idea. The largest potential savings to taxpayers would be $10.6 million for the Lakota Schools and $5.7 million for the countywide levies.

The countywide figure is for the commissioners' general fund, Children Services, Developmental Disabilities, the mental health board and senior levy. Nix estimated if the county commissioners did not collect the general fund increase, there would be a savings of roughly $40 per home, "but it is very dependent on the value of the home."

Southeast District

Health department commits to relocation
Marietta Times, September 2, 2023
The Washington County Health Department has signed a statement of commitment to relocate from its current site, 342 Muskingum Drive, to the former WASCO Workshop building next door at 340 Muskingum Drive.

The actual move date depends on how quickly plans and construction for modifying the new space proceed.

The memorandum of understanding for the move was approved at Thursday's regularly scheduled meeting of the Washington County Commissioners and was signed by commissioners James Booth and Charles Schilling and president Kevin Ritter. Signing the agreement for the health department were Jeff Jones, president of the Washington County Health Department board, and Joshua P. Lane, the department's interim co-administrator.

The department joins 911, Civil Air Patrol, the county engineering and sewer departments and the Southeast Ohio Building Department on the tenants list for the former WASCO site.

The statement of commitment between the county commission and the county health department notes that the proposal is not a temporary move for the health department, and with that understanding the health department can proceed with grant applications in an effort to help minimize the remodeling/construction costs for both the Washington County Commission and Washington County Township Trustees. The townships fund about 40% of the county health department's budget, Schilling said.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

Back to Top

SEPTEMBER 15
CCAO Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee Meeting

SEPTEMBER 18
Department of Development Webinar on Brownfields, Demolition, and Lead Safe Ohio

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)

OCTOBER 10
CCAO Regional Budget Briefing - Portage County

OCTOBER 16
CCAO Regional Budget Briefing - Highland County

OCTOBER 20
CCAO Regional Budget Briefing - Delaware County

OCTOBER 30
CCAO Regional Budget Briefing - Allen County

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

DID YOU KNOW?

Back to Top

Gallia County

One of the United States' greatest hikers hailed from Guyan Township in Gallia County. Emma Rowena Gatewood rose to prominence in 1955 when, at the age of 67, she became the first woman to hike the Appalachian Trail (a distance of 2,050 miles) alone and in one season. She would repeat the feat in 1957 and 1964, and in 1959 she hiked the Oregon Trail from Independence, Missouri to Portland, Oregon. She is also credited as a founder of the Buckeye Trail.

You can learn more about Grandma Gatewood here.

The Ohio Historical Society marker honoring her, found in the Village of Cheshire, reproduces a poem she wrote.

If you will go with me to the mountains,
And sleep on the leaf carpeted floors
And enjoy the bigness of nature
And the beauty of all out-of doors.
You'll find your troubles all fading,
And feel the Creator was not man
That made lovely mountains and forests
Which only a Supreme Power can.
When we trust in the power above
And with the realm of nature hold fast
We will have a jewel of great price
To brighten our lives till the last.
For the love of Nature is healing
If we will only give it a try
And the reward will be forthcoming
If we go deeper than what meets the eye.

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