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September 25, 2023

CCAO was happy to host Representative Bob Peterson and Senate President Matt Huffman at our Board of Directors Retreat last week. Members spoke with Representative Peterson and President Huffman about several issues facing counties, such as jail funding, indigent defense, and housing policy.

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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"

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

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Public employer workers compensation rate reduction for 2024

Ohio's public employers will pay nearly $8 million less in premiums next year to the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) thanks to a rate cut that will go into effect Jan. 1, 2024.

This 3.9% rate reduction was made possible by declining injury claims and relatively low medical inflation costs by Ohio's counties, cities, public schools, and other public taxing districts.

"I applaud Ohio's employers for their dedication to workplace safety," said Governor Mike DeWine. "This commitment allows us to continue reducing rates for employers so that they can invest these savings back into their employees and workplaces."

Approved by BWC's Board of Directors at this month's board meeting, the reduction improves the already historically low rates for Ohio's employers. Overall, the average rate levels for the 257,000 private and public Ohio employers in the BWC system are at their lowest in over 60 years.

"We are always looking for ways to save Ohio's employers money," Administrator Logue said. "Thanks to organizations' improvements in workplace safety, we are able to continue dropping rates for both private and public employers."

The reduction represents a statewide average. The actual premium change for an individual county will differ based on multiple factors, including employer type or classification, payroll levels, recent claims history, and their participation in various BWC programs.

NACo Housing Task Force releases final report and policy recommendations

Earlier this summer, the NACo Housing Task Force, co-chaired by Franklin County Commissioner Kevin Boyce, released two reports based on its work. The first is its final report, and the other is a document detailing best practices and policy recommendations for county leaders.

CCAO recommends counties review these documents and view the recording from the NACo Annual Conference where the task force presented the document, as housing will likely continue to be an issue facing counties for the next several years.

Secretary of State issues directive, advisory regarding election security and pollbook reimbursement

Secretary of State Frank LaRose recently issued a directive and an advisory that counties could be aware of.

In August, the Secretary of State issued Directive 2023-16, regarding election security. Among the topics discussed in the directive are $10,000 in Help America Vote Act Security Funding each county board of election can receive from the Secretary of State and the security provisions, both cyber and physical, that county boards must fulfill.

Also in August, the Secretary of State issued Advisory 2023-03, regarding acquiring electronic pollbooks with state funding. The key takeaway is that counties must provide documentation of acquisitions to the Secretary of State no later than May 1, 2024, if they wish to receive reimbursement.

CCAO encourages counties familiarize themselves with these publications to ensure boards of elections remain in compliance with security requirements and to ensure you receive reimbursement for electronic pollbook acquisition.

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.

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.

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.

New round of Body-Worn Camera Grants accepting applications through October 5

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.

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.

Applications open for local sponsor certification for Agriculture Easement Purchase Program

Applications to be certified as a local sponsor for the Agriculture Easement Purchase Program are being accepted through October 13. Soil and water conservation districts, land trusts, cities, townships, and counties may apply.

Selected local sponsors will be allocated a portion of the funding available through the program to use to purchase agricultural easements on Ohio farms. These easements preserve the land for agricultural purposes.

You can learn more about the program and the application process on the Department of Agriculture's website. If you have questions, please contact the Department of Agriculture's Farmland Preservation Office at 614-728-6238 or farmlandpres@agri.ohio.gov.

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.

ARPA and BIL RESOURCES

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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.

COUNTY NEWS

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Each week Counties Current highlights the happenings in our counties in the words of their local media. One county from each of the CCAO's five districts is highlighted.

Northwest District

Henry County commissioners award bid for McClure sidewalk project

Northwest Signal, September 22, 2023

The Henry County commissioners Thursday awarded the bid for a sidewalk project in McClure to Schimmoeller Construction in Kalida.

The bid was in the amount of $49,736.70 and was the lowest of five bids submitted for the project, which had an engineer's estimate of $48,000. The project includes installing 517 square yards of Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant concrete sidewalks.

McClure received $50,000 in Community Development Block Grants for the project, which is why the commissioners are awarding the bid.

Northeast District

Ronayne nominates Portage County official for Treasurer post

Cleveland.com, September 20, 2023

Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne has nominated his choice to take over the county treasurer role.

The nominee is Brad Cromes, a certified government financial manager and current Portage County Treasurer, according to a news release from the county and a social media post from Cromes.

Cromes' resume includes partnering with local banks to create a home-improvement loan program and developing a Financial Wellness Fair that connected residents to financial advisors, according to a news release from Cuyahoga County.

Cuyahoga County's charter requires the treasurer to have at least five years experience managing finances for a government entity; Cromes was Portage County's treasurer for eight years.

Central District

Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission study to target Intel impact outside central Ohio

Columbus Dispatch, September 12, 2023

Planning has been in earnest near the Intel site in New Albany, but now officials are trying to see just how much the $20 billion project will change the lives for those living a county or two away.

The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission wants to provide professional services and help for communities within a 40-minute drive of the Intel site in New Albany in Licking County with transportation and land use plans, targeting Knox, Marion and Morrow counties in particular for what their needs will be as the region grows.

MORPC has issued a request for proposals for that work, which it wants to begin in November.

The Ohio Department of Transportation has already been working on similar planning, but within 20 minutes of where Intel plans to spend $20 billion on the project, which is expected to draw nearby suppliers and the jobs and traffic and housing needs that come with that.

Southwest District

Monroe Township gas stations OD'D by MC Commissioners

Miami Valley Today, September 23, 2023

The Miami County Board of Commissioners authorized legislation to construct two gas stations for the Monroe Township area of Tipp City during its Thursday, Sept. 21, meeting.

The commissioners approved the annexation of 4.88 acres of land at the northeast corner of Kessler-Cowlesville Road and South County Road 25A for the construction of a Sheetz gas station.

Nate Green, managing director of economic development for the Montrose group representing Sheetz, discussed the benefit of the Tipp City community.

"I think this will be a great reuse of the property and will bring a lot of people, but also bring new income tax to Tipp City," Green said.

Additionally, the commissioners approved an annexation of 1.6692 acres allotted for a QuikTrip gas and convenience store, which will relocate Knickerbocker Pools at 4025 S. County Road 25A.

Southeast District

Commissioner Dane Shryock honored as Coshoctonian; other chamber awards presented

Coshocton Tribune, September 20, 2023

A longtime community servant as a police detective and county commissioner was named Coshoctonian at the recent annual awards and banquet by the Coshocton County Chamber of Commerce.

Former chamber president Kirby Hasseman in his presentation speech said one just needs to look at the life of Dane Shryock to find clues, as Hasseman called them, as to why Shryock has been a successful champion of the county and deserved the highest local honor viewed as a lifetime achievement award.

The first Coshoctonian was Edward E. Montgomery in 1983. Last year's winner was Bob Bigrigg .The goal is to recognize an individual's long-term contributions to the well-being and economic climate of the community.

Other awards were given on the night and special recognition was given to Madison Miller for being named Miss Ohio 2023.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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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 9
Columbus Day - Legal Holiday

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

DECEMBER 6 - 8
CCAO-CEAO Annual Winter Conference

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

DID YOU KNOW?

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Hopewell Culture

Last week, the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) designated the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks as a World Heritage site. The Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks is a collective of sites in Licking, Ross, and Warren counties.

The Hopewell Earthworks site is the first UNESCO World Heritage site in Ohio and the 23rd in the United States.

The Hopewell culture dominated from about 100 BCE to 500 CE in Ohio, West Virginia, and Kentucky. It is named after the family that owned the land of the sites in Ross County. As a pre-literate culture, it is unknown how the Hopewell referred to themselves.

You can learn more about the Hopewell people on the National Park Service's website.

An aerial view of "Mound City," one of the Hopewell sites newly designated as a World Heritage site. It can be found in Ross County.

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