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October 10, 2023

Last week, Former Tuscarawas County Commissioner Kerry Metzger, Tuscarawas County Commissioners Kristin Zemis and Chris Abbuhl, and State Senator and former Tuscarawas County Commissioner Al Landis took part in the groundbreaking of a new multi-purpose building to house the county's board of elections and more!

Photo courtesy of WJER Radio

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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CCAO Nominating Committee named, accepting nominations for officers, board

Last week, CCAO President Glenn Miller appointed five members to serve on the Nominating Committee:

1. Tim Bubb, Licking County (Chair)
2. Ron Amstutz, Wayne County
3. Judy Dodge, Montgomery County
4. John O'Grady, Franklin County
5. Beth Seibert, Allen County

The CCAO Code of Regulations entrusts the committee with the responsibility of nominating candidates for the offices of president, first vice president, second vice president, secretary, treasurer, and eight members of the Board of Directors for a two-year term of office.

In addition, the Committee will fill any vacancies in the event that members previously elected to serve in 2023 will not be returning to office or where a member forfeits office for non-attendance. The CCAO Code of Regulations provides that the Board of Directors is composed of up to 35 members: five officers, 15 elected board members, nine members appointed by the president, and the six most recent past presidents who still hold the office of county commissioner, elected executive, or member of the legislative authority of any charter county.

The Code of Regulations specifies that in order to be eligible to be nominated as an officer, an individual must be from a member county and has served a term of at least one year on the CCAO Board of Directors. In addition, the Code of Regulations limits the number of consecutive years a person can serve as either Treasurer (not more than three consecutive years) or Secretary (not more than one consecutive year). Finally, persons serving in the offices of Treasurer and Secretary must be of different political parties.

In addition, only one representative from a member county can serve on the Board of Directors.

The Code of Regulations assumes that the Nominating Committee will nominate the then-sitting Second Vice President for the office of First Vice President, and the then-sitting First Vice President for the office of President. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor for these two positions. As a note, the CCAO President may serve more than one term as long as the years are not consecutive.

Nominations other than the Nominating Committee's for the offices of Secretary, Treasurer, First Vice President and President, will only be accepted from the floor at the election.

In addition, the Nominating Committee should place on the ballot the names of all eligible candidates who have requested to be nominated to the office of Second Vice President. The person receiving the highest number of votes at the election conducted during the annual business meeting would be elected to the office of Second Vice President.

The eight members whose terms to the Board expire this year include: Commissioners Tony Anderson (Fayette), Terry Boose (Huron), Sabrina Christian-Bennett (Portage), Jeff Fix (Fairfield), Dick Gould (Greene), DeAnna Holliday (Lawrence), Matt Old (Erie), Donnie Willis (Jackson).

The CCAO Code of Regulations provides the six most recent past presidents who still hold the office of county commissioner, executive, or county council and who elect to serve as a member, on the Board of Directors may have a seat. In 2024 those individuals will include: Glenn Miller (Henry), Debbie Lieberman (Montgomery), Tim Bubb (Licking), Julie Ehemann (Shelby), Mike Halleck (Columbiana) and Lenny Eliason (Athens).

The CCAO Board of Directors typically meets nine times a year, and attendance and participation are vital. While there are circumstances where an individual cannot attend a meeting, this should not be the norm. I must stress the fact that we need people who are committed to attending and engaging in a majority of the meetings.

The Nominating Committee Report will be published on the web at www.ccao.org on November 22. The Business Meeting for election of officers and board members is scheduled for Thursday**,** December 7, 2023. Nominations will be accepted from the floor as described above.

If you are interested in serving on the Board for a two-year term or as an officer, please complete the attached Nominating Committee Request Form. You may request consideration for more than one office. Also note that if you request consideration to serve on the Board for a two-year term and/or as an officer and are not nominated, your name will automatically be submitted for a Presidential Appointment to the Board of Directors. ***Please fill out and return the attached candidate questionnaire with your CCAO Nominating Committee Form.***

Finally, both forms must be returned no later than **November 1, 2023**, to the committee chair: **Tim Bubb, 551 Kensington Dr., Heath, OH 43056, or by email at tbubb@lickingcounty.gov.**

In addition, **mail copies to CCAO, 209 E. State Street, Columbus, OH 43215-4309, in an envelope marked: NOMINATING COMMITTEE – ATTENTION: Robin Garrett or you may email your forms to rgarrett@ccao.org.**

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Tim Bubb at (740) 334-5387, or call CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler at (614) 746-8507.

Please remember the Code of Regulations requires each member county to designate an Official Representative and Alternate to cast the county's vote at the Annual Meeting or any special meeting of the Association.

The designation of the Official Representative and Alternate for a county organized under the statutory form of county government is by resolution of the board of county commissioners. In the case of a county organized as a charter county, the elected executive designates, by a letter signed by the executive, the Official Representative and an Alternate. Please note in designating the Official Representative and Alternate, a member county may name only a county commissioner, executive or council member.

A memo explaining the process along with a sample *Designation of Official Representative and Alternate Resolution* and a sample letter for County Executives can be found on the CCAO Website at www.ccao.org. ***If you have not already done so, please send a copy of your resolution or letter designating your Official Representative and Alternate to Robin Garrett, CCAO, 209 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-4309 or at rgarrett@ccao.org so that we may maintain a record of the names in our files for voting purposes.*** Should you have any questions or to confirm that we have received a copy of your resolution or letter, please contact Robin Garrett at 1-614-307-6399 or at rgarrett@ccao.org.

Registration now open for CCAO-CEAO Winter Conference!

Register today!

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio and the County Engineers Association of Ohio invite you to the CCAO/CEAO Annual Winter Conference! The event will be held December 6 - 8 at Hilton Columbus Downtown (402 North High Street, Columbus, OH 43215). You can reserve rooms now, at a rate of $142/night, plus applicable taxes.

Registration for the event itself can be completed here. Registration is $495 through November 6, after which the cost increases to $595.

Sessions will cover topics such as community-based solar, broadband, cybersecurity and more! Attendees will also have the opportunity to hear from guest speaker retired Rear Admiral Peter Cressy, who will share leadership strategies used by President George Washington.

Additionally, for the future you imagine, you will have the opportunity to secure an appointment for a one-on-one meeting with a dedicated Empower Retirement Plan Advisor during this year's conference. Registration details for these appointments are coming soon!

If you prefer to print a copy of the registration forms for affiliate associations, click here. For the county registration and or sponsor form, click here, and for the spouse or guest registration form, click here.

When you register for the first time, you will automatically be prompted to establish a username and password. If you have already created a username and password and you happen to forget your password, an automated 'Forgot My Password' utility will send a new temporary password to your email address on file (be sure to check your spam folder if you don't receive it right away). If you still have issues logging in, please contact Nedra Benson at 614-221-5627, or by email at nbenson@ccao.org. She will be happy to assist you in updating your username and password.

OCERP and Empower celebrate National Retirement Security Month

The Ohio County Employee Retirement Plan (OCERP) and Empower are celebrating National Retirement Security Month this October, and we recognize everyone has questions about money.

Getting answers starts with asking questions, and when you have questions about your financial future, who better to ask than a financial professional? Reach out to an OCERP retirement advisor today!

Webinars also offer a valuable opportunity to learn, and OCERP and Empower have several scheduled for the rest of the year that you can attend for free!

Upcoming topics include an Introduction to OCERP (October 12), a Social Security Overview for County Employees (October 19), Cyber Security (October 25), and more.

CCAO to host regional budget briefings

The CCAO policy team is excited to announce 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 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"

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Attorney General issues opinion regarding delegation of records commission, microfilming board duties

Last week, Attorney General Dave Yost issued Attorney General Opinion (OAG) 2023-009 which concerns the ability of county records commissions and county microfilming board to delegate their duties to boards of county commissioners.

The Opinion cites prior OAGs that determined that, if a public office requires officers to exercise judgment or discretion and there is no explicit statutory authority to delegate its duties, it may not delegate or contract away its obligations.

Because both the county records commission and the county microfilming board have rulemaking authority, which is equivalent to having to exercise judgment or discretion, the OAG finds that these entities are not permitted to delegate their duties to the board of county commissioners. Additionally, regarding the microfilming board, the OAG finds that neither the board nor the county recorder, who serves as the board's chief administrator, may delegate that authority to the board of commissioners.

According to the Opinion, the only way to transfer the duties of the records commission and the microfilming board is through the process established in R.C. 307.847, which transfers those duties to the county automatic data processing board.

CCAO encourages counties read the full opinion for a more detailed explanation of its findings and the court cases it cites. You can find the opinion at the link above or the Attorney General's Opinions page.

Times announced, registration open for DAS NG 9-1-1 regional briefings

This month, 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. Registration can be completed here. If you have questions regarding the program or have difficulty registering, please contact Ohio9-1-1@das.ohio.gov or call 614-728-2114.

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, 10:00 a.m. to Noon - Regions 2 & 5, held in Medina County at 4355 Greenwich Road, Seville, OH 44273.
- Wednesday, October 18, 10:00 a.m. to Noon - Regions 7 & 8, held in Athens County at 701 E. State Street, Athens, OH 45701.
- Thursday, October 19, 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. - Regions 3 & 6, held in Warren County at 406 Justice Drive, Lebanon, OH 45036.
- Friday, October 20, 10:00 a.m. to Noon - Region 1, held in Allen County at 951 Commerce Parkway, Lima, OH 45804.
- Monday, October 23, Noon to 3:00 p.m. - 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.

Federal outreach: Reduction in veteran EMS transportation rates

CCAO recently became aware of a proposed rule change by the US Department of Veterans Affairs that members may wish to discuss with their federal legislators.

The proposed rule would reduce reimbursement rates for ambulance services at or below Medicare rates for when an ambulance transports a veteran to a Veterans Affairs (VA) facility and provide no reimbursement if the veteran is transported to a non-VA facility.

If the rule takes effect, it will likely reduce access to emergency health care for veterans, especially those living in rural areas. It may also put additional financial strain on counties by shifting the financial obligation from the federal government to local governments.

Legislation has been introduced in both the House and the Senate to address the issue. CCAO encourages members reach out to your federal representatives to bring the issue to their attention, particularly Representative Greg Landsman (Hamilton and Warren Counties) and Senator Sherrod Brown, as they serve on their respective chambers' Veterans Affairs Committee.

Additionally, the Seneca County Board of Commissioners recently wrote a letter to the editor regarding the issue that other counties may wish to echo.

CCAO, OACBHA issue Joint Recommendation on Changing ADAMH Board Governing Board Size

Ahead of tomorrow's effective date of the changes to section 340.02 of the Revised Code that were included in HB 33, that will allow for a determination of the number of members that will be appointed to the governing board of ADAMH Boards, CCAO and the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) have collaborated and agreed upon recommendations for implementation of the new requirements. The following is a summary of the governing board requirements, both new and unchanged, and the joint CCAO-OACBHA recommendations.

A standalone PDF version of this article can be found here.

Summary of Requirements

Governing board size:

- County commissioners are authorized to determine the size of governing boards with options of 9, 12, 14, 15 or 18 members. In a joint-county district, all county commissioners must jointly determine board size. In a joint-county district, the decision among the boards of county commissioners must be unanimous.
- To change the size of an existing governing board, the board(s) of county commissioners must send a representative to a meeting of the governing board to solicit feedback on the change and must consider the feedback received. If the commissioners decide to proceed with a change after considering the feedback received, the board(s) of county commissioners must adopt a resolution specifying the selected board size and notify OhioMHAS of the size that has been selected in order to implement the change.
- A change in board size may not occur more frequently than once every four calendar years.
- When a board size decreases, the reduction in board members must be implemented by not filling vacancies as they occur.
- No action is required of existing 18 and 14 member boards that will stay with the current number of members.

Governing board appointments:

- 1/3 of members must be appointed by OhioMHAS and 2/3 by the county commissioners.
- The current requirement for the members of a joint-county ADAMH Board's governing board to be appointed by each county in as nearly as possible the same proportion of each county's population to the total population of the ADAMH Board's service district, with at least one member appointed from each county, remains unchanged.
- Also unchanged is the requirement for governing boards to reflect the composition of the population of the ADAMH Board's service district as to race and sex.
- The requirement for certain categories of appointments to be filled by the appointing authorities remains. If a governing board size provides for fewer than 6 appointments by OhioMHAS, the board(s) of county commissioners will also be responsible for ensuring these appointments are made. These categorical appointments are:
    - At least one person who has received or is receiving mental health services;
    - At least one parent or other relative of a person who has received or is receiving mental health services;
    - At least one person who has received or is receiving addiction services;
    - At least one parent of other relative of a person who has received or is received addiction services;
    - At least one clinician with experience in the delivery of mental health services;
    - At least one clinician with experience in the delivery of addiction services;
        - The clinician requirements may be fulfilled by a single board member if that person meets both qualifications.

Joint CCAO-OACBHA Recommendations

In consideration of the questions and considerations that will occur with the implementation of the new requirements, CCAO and OACBHA make the following joint recommendations:

- If an ADAMH Board is currently a 14-member governing board or will change to a 14-member governing board, it is recommended that to comply with the new requirement for 2/3 of members to be appointed by the county commissioners and 1/3 by OhioMHAS, 9 appointments should be board(s) of county commissioners' appointments and 5 should be OhioMHAS appointments. This split provides for county commissioners to appoint 64% of members which is as close to the required 66% as possible.
- If a change will be made to the size of a joint-county ADAMH district's governing board, it is recommended that, prior to deciding which county will appoint new members or lose them through attrition, the entity should determine if the existing board appointments are proportional to county size as currently required. This determination will inform what alterations need to be made with the forthcoming change in board size and allow the entity to factor in any needed re-basing.
- If either a board of county commissioners or an ADAMH Board is interested in a change in the size of the existing governing board, it is recommended they communicate about a potential change prior to engaging in the statutory process required to implement a change.

Please contact CCAO Outreach & Member Engagement Manager Rachel Reedy, rreedy@ccao.org, 513-543-3723, with any questions about the requirements or these recommendations.

Federal advocacy requested! ARPA obligation definition

NACo has requested that counties reach out to their federal senators and urge them to work with the Senate Appropriations Committee to have the Treasury Department clarify the definition of "obligation" as it pertains to American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) dollars.

The issue arises out of a difference between how the Treasury final rule defines "obligation" and a wider definition of how the US Government Accountability Office defines "obligation" as it pertains to the US federal government.

NACo, along with California Senator Alex Padilla, Illinois Senators Tammy Duckworth and Dick Durbin, and Texas Senator John Cornyn, are seeking to have Treasury adopt the language below to the final rule.

CCAO respectfully requests our members reach out to Senator Sherrod Brown and Senator J.D. Vance and urge their support for the NACo effort.

"FAQ 13.17. In the definition of "obligation" in the final rule, what does Treasury mean by "similar transactions that require payment?"

As stated in the final rule, obligation means "an order placed for property and services and entering into contracts, subawards, and similar transactions that require payment." See 31 CFR 35.3.

As stated by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, "An obligation is a definite commitment that creates a legal liability of the U.S. government for the payment of goods and services ordered or received, or a legal duty on the part of the U.S. government that could mature into a legal liability by virtue of actions on the part of another party that are beyond the control of the U.S. government." See GAO-23-106647, February 2023.

As contemplated by these definitions, Treasury recognizes that recipients may obligate funds through means other than contracts or subawards. In these circumstances, recipients must follow state or local law and their own established practices and policies regarding when they are considered to have incurred an obligation and how those obligations are documented. Other examples of obligations include, but are not limited to:

- *A recipient's legislative body approving a plan or resolution on how to spend its ARPA award;*
- *A recipient's ARPA-eligible subrecipient agreement executed prior to December 31, 2024, including when the distribution of funds by the subrecipient is after December 31, 2024, but before December 31, 2026;*
- *Payroll costs for ARPA-eligible services rendered by a recipient's employee, including administrative services, after December 31, 2024, and before December 31, 2026;*
- *Payroll costs for audit-related work provided by a recipient's employee through the full reporting cycle of the grant; and,*
- *A recipient's internal memorandum of understanding or directive executed prior to December 31, 2024, between departments to implement ARPA-funded programs through December 31, 2026."*

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.

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.

Development to host Demolition Program webinar next Monday

Next Monday, at 10:00 a.m., the Department of Development will host a webinar regarding the Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Program that was funded through the state operating budget.

The webinar will cover program guidelines, eligibility requirements, the application process, and feature a Q&A session where Development staff will respond to specific questions. As a reminder, the program is intended to help communities prepare sites that are not brownfield sites for redevelopment. Each county has a portion of the total $124 million appropriation reserved for it. You can read more about the program in CCAO's Budget CAB on page 27.

Registration for the webinar is free and can be completed here. Development has also provided a walkthrough document if you encounter trouble registering.

Grant round-up: State grants

From time to time, *Counties Current* highlights grants that are available to county entities or other local governments that counties may encourage to apply to benefit their communities. You can view more grant opportunities at CCAO's Grants and Funding Opportunities page.

Reentry Coalition Expansion Grant

- Summary: To fund direct services for individuals recently released from incarceration.
- Funding: $500,000 available
- Application Deadline: October 21

Nonpoint Source Pollution Control

- Summary: To fund projects that restore streams and water resources by reducing nonpoint source pollutants.
- Funding: $2.7 million available
- Application Deadline: November 9

Innovating Inclusive Supports

- Summary: To fund programs focused on systemic gaps, improving access to adult day and employment services, and continuum of supports.
- Funding: $250,000 in each fiscal year
- Application Deadline: November 10

Grade Crossing Elimination Program

- Summary: To fund projects that eliminate existing public, at-grade railroad-highway crossings.
- Funding: $100 million
- Application Deadline: No set deadline, but early applications are encouraged.
- ***NOTE***: County engineers must be the applicant for counties, townships, and municipalities.

Save the Date! Fishel Downey to host labor and employment law seminar in November

On November 29, the law firm of Fishel Downey Albrecht & Riepenhoff, LLP, will be hosting a seminar on labor and employment law.

The seminar, being held at the Quest Conference Center in Westerville, is recommended for local government administrators, HR professionals, prosecutors, department heads, supervisors, and more. Attendees will learn about the latest in discipline, civil service law, and policy updates and review.

The cost for the event is $175 per attendee, although entities that register two or more will receive a discounted rate of $150 per attendee.

Continuing legal education credit has been requested for attendees.

Registration is not yet open; CCAO will note in a future edition of *Counties Current* when registration begins.

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

Sales tax receipts rise

The Courier, October 3, 2023

Hancock County's sales tax receipts for the first nine months of 2023 rose 4.2% from a year earlier, to $14.4 million, Hancock County Auditor Charity Rauschenberg said this week.

An increase in sales tax is a good sign not only for county government finances. It represents a healthy economy because it signals that consumers are spending more.

But Rauschenberg cautioned against reading too much into the numbers yet.

The August sales tax receipts reflect consumer spending in early summer because that's when they were actually collected.

"We have to remember that we are a couple months behind what consumers are actually doing (today)," she said. However, the numbers "still look good," she said.

Northeast District

Trumbull grants 43 ARP requests

The Vindicator, October 6, 2023

Approximately $5 million of the estimated $10.3 million remaining of American Rescue Plan Act funds was promised to 43 organizations during Tuesday afternoon's Trumbull County commissioners workshop.

Commissioners Mauro Cantalamessa, Niki Frenchko and Denny Malloy worked through the approximately 80 requests the commissioners had remaining in its portal to identify "the low-hanging fruit" of requests that they definitely could approve.

They also identified requests they were not able to agree should receive a share of the money but wanted to look at again at a later date when they had more information or a smaller ask from the requests. There were approximately $19 million in requests against $10.3 million available.

Malloy asked County Auditor Martha Yoder to reach out to village of Green and Lordstown to see if they want to submit an application for some of the ARP money. Yoder said she will reach out to Mecca, West Farmington, Gustavus, as well as to the leader of the USS Oklahoma nonprofit to obtain information for the commissioners to review.

Central District

County 911 official shares the view from behind the phones

Perry County Tribune, October 4, 2023

From dealing with people in life-threatening emergencies to fielding prank phone calls, the job of the 911 dispatcher can be a stressful one. At the most recent Coffee With Some Commissioners breakfast hosted by the Perry County commissioners on Sept. 26, Perry County 911 official Sherry Emmert offered a look inside the world of those who pick up the phone when we dial those well-known digits.

Emmert, who started with Perry County 911 in February 2016 as a dispatcher, is stepping into the job of Director Rita Spicer, who is retiring in about two months. She told an audience at Dodson's on Broadway in New Lexington that in terms of its 911 service, "Perry County is different from a lot of our surrounding counties." For example, it still relies partly on volunteers to respond to emergencies, and still alerts them that they're needed by setting off a siren.

"People come in who aren't from here and when they hear the siren go off, they think it's a disaster siren," Emmert said. "No, that's how we (call) our volunteers." Many people, she added, may not realize how much these volunteers contribute to the county.

"A lot of these people take time, and stop what they're doing, and for free, go and save lives," she said. "So we're still kind of old school, and that's the way it kind of has to be for now, because of our finances and things like that."

Those financial issues can make it a challenge to meet emergency service needs in a sprawling county like Perry, she said.

Southwest District

Solar eclipse: Darke County expects tourists to triple population in April 2024

Dayton Daily News, September 30, 2023

A rare total solar eclipse will be visible to people within a 124-mile-wide band in Ohio on Monday, April 8, 2024, and Darke County will be right at the center of this line as the eclipse starts its path over the state.

Along with that rare event will be coming thousands of travelers to see the moment the moon passes between the sun and Earth, with some estimates suggesting county populations could double or even quadruple in size. For a place like Darke County with a population of just over 50,000, they are preparing to see up to an extra 150,000 people.

"This is a once in a lifetime event, and I think that's what drives the unpredictability of the influx of the population," said Jordan Francis, health commissioner for the Darke County Health District. "The last time this happened was 1806, and the next time a total eclipse will occur (over Ohio) is 2099, so this is literally a once in a lifetime event."

Visitors bureaus are encouraging travelers to "come early and stay late" over the weekend leading up to the solar eclipse on April 8, which is expected to happen at approximately 3:08 p.m. that day.

Southeast District

Commissioner pleased with work made by county grant department (wtap.com)

WTAP, September 27, 2023

Washington County's grant department has been making strides since its inception in early 2022.

The grant department is made up of Rob Grant and Phillip Schaffer.

The department has acquired grant money for public health, law enforcement, and broadband in Washington County.

County commissioner Charlie Schilling said the commission was motivated to launch a grant department to compete for available monies at the state and federal level.

Schillings talks about the competitive nature of the grant process.

"The grant process comes in cycles. We might not see the same type of relevancy over the next few years and the grants might be harder to obtain. When you have that experience and the same type of connection with state and federal government, I think it's important to have these type of departments in place to make sure we are working with all entities inside the county."

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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OCTOBER 12 - 13
CORSA Board of Directors Retreat

OCTOBER 16
CCAO Regional Budget Briefing - Highland County

OCTOBER 19
CCAO General Government Committee Meeting

OCTOBER 20
CCAO Regional Budget Briefing - Delaware County

OCTOBER 27
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

OCTOBER 30
CCAO Regional Budget Briefing - Allen County

NOVEMBER 3
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

DECEMBER 6 - 8
CCAO-CEAO Annual Winter Conference

DID YOU KNOW?

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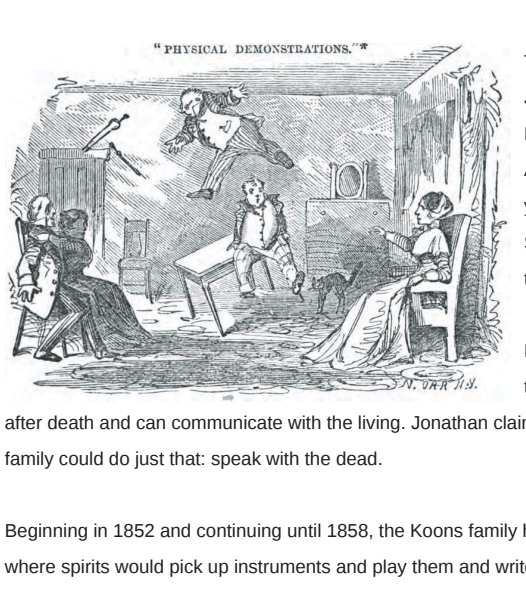
Athens County

Something strange was allegedly happening on a small Athens County farm in 1852.


"PHYSICAL DEMONSTRATIONS."

The Koons family, led by patriarch Jonathan, had moved to the Millfield area in Dover Township, Athens County, in 1835. Seventeen years later, Jonathan adopted to Spiritualism, a religious movement that swept the nation in the 1800s.

Key to spiritualism was the belief that an individual remains aware after death and can communicate with the living. Jonathan claimed that he and the rest of his family could do just that: speak with the dead.

Beginning in 1852 and continuing until 1858, the Koons family hosted sessions at their farm where spirits would pick up instruments and play them and write ethereal messages. While many of the spirits who Koons claimed to channel were ambiguous, anonymous spirits, he also claimed he received communications directly from angels of Heaven through the unmanned playing of floating trumpets.

In 1858, after pressures from both accusations of being frauds and from a busy "performance" schedule, the Koons moved to Illinois, leaving the Athens County farm behind.

The Koons family's six-year stint communicating with angels and the dead was not Ohio's only brush with the strange, mystical world of Spiritualism. Did You Know the rest of the month will share other stories of Ohio's place in the supernatural traditions of America.

You can read more about the Koons family in Athens, Ohio native Sharon Hatfield's Enchanted Ground: The Spirit Room of Jonathan Koons.

Jonathan Koons, self-claimed spirit medium for the angels and the dead.

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