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Counties Current
CCAO
County Commissioners Association of Ohio

October 16, 2023

At last week's CORSA Board of Directors retreat, the board elected its officers for the next year. Congratulations to President Dave Wilson (Guernsey County), Vice President Craig LaHote (Wood County), Treasurer Gary Merrell (Delaware County), and Secretary Diane Ward (Adams County)!

From left to right: Commissioner Merrell, Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Wilson, and Commissioner LaHote.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Registration 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.

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.

Two CCAO regional budget briefings remain

The CCAO policy team has enjoyed conducting 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. There are two events remaining, one on October 20, and the other on October 30.

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 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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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.

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.

(***PLEASE NOTE***: The event held in Medina County has changed to a new address, highlighted below. If you had previously registered for the event when it was to be held in Seville, please take note of the new location)

- Tuesday, October 17, 10:00 a.m. to Noon - Regions 2 & 5, held in Medina County at **6300 Technology Lane, Medina, Ohio 44256**.
- 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.

Governor DeWine announces distribution of federal opioid funds

Last week, Governor Mike DeWine announced the distribution of $100 million in federal State Opioid and Stimulant Response funds, a continuation of funds received last year.

More than half of the funds ($58.7 million) will be distributed to the 50 Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) boards. Key priorities for use of the funds include reducing overdose deaths, increasing access to treatment, supporting responsible prescription practices, and preventing underage use.

A list of funding amounts can be found here. Additionally, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services produced a guidebook that describes projects funded under the prior year of funding, which can be found here.

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 TODAY

TODAY, 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. Registration for the webinar is free and can be completed here.

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.

A list of the lead entities for each county can be found here, along with detailed program guidelines.

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.

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

Ohio is in a childcare crisis. One county has a solution

Ideastream Public Media, October 10, 2023

There's not enough child care in Allen County. It's an issue felt by many Ohio communities, as the state has fewer childcare workers in the labor force than any time the last two decades.

Local workforce organizations in northwest Ohio argue it's not just a problem for parents – it's a problem for the region's economy. That's why the state workforce program Ohio Means Jobs Allen County has started offering workshops for parents interested in becoming in-home care providers.

It's meant to be a "one stop shop" for all the safety trainings, documents and home inspections each prospective provider needs.

"We want people to get their child in that comfortable, safe environment and have the hours that we need to be able to help our employers," Patton said.

Northeast District

Partnerships are lifting Summit County, Ilene Shapiro says — and she's ready for more

Akron Beacon Journal, October 13, 2023

Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro believes an atmosphere of cooperation is driving the area toward a prosperous future, and she confirmed Thursday that she'll seek to continue playing a key role as she delivered the 2023 State of the County address at the John S. Knight Center in Akron.

A crowd of more than 900 people, including politicians, community leaders, small business owners and concerned residents, attended the luncheon event presented by the Akron Press Club. During a nearly hourlong speech, she highlighted promising partnerships as well as tough challenges.

"Together, we have fostered a culture of collaboration and innovation that is positioning Summit County as an adaptive, competitive leader in an increasingly fast-paced, digital world," Shapiro said, thanking the elected officials in attendance. Among those in the crowd were outgoing Akron Mayor Dan Horrigan and his presumptive successor, Akron City Councilman Shammas Malik.

Shapiro confirmed she will run for a third term in office next year, and touched on topics including public safety, gun violence, affordable housing, addiction and mental health. She also stoked anticipation for the region's potential economic boost next spring, when Ohio will be one of the best places on the planet to view a total solar eclipse.

Central District

Franklin County invests $2.5M in Israel bonds

Cleveland Jewish News, October 13, 2023

As the war in Israel continues, Franklin County Treasurer Cheryl Brooks Sullivan announced the county's purchase of $2.5 million in Israel bonds, effective Oct. 16.

The investment maintains the county's holdings of Israel bonds to a total of $25 million, the largest of any county in Ohio, according to a news release.

"We appreciate Treasurer Sullivan's Israel bond investment," said Jay Schottenstein, chairman of Israel Bonds Central Ohio Advisory Council, in the release. "This is a solid show of support for the State of Israel."

Franklin County was the first Ohio county to invest in Israel bonds in 2005, after the Ohio Revised Code was amended to allow foreign bond investment. It is among 15 Ohio counties that have invested in Israel bonds.

Southwest District

$76 million Greene County jail project to start construction this month

Dayton Daily News, October 10, 2023

Greene County will start construction on its new jail later this month.

County officials will formally break ground on the Greene County Gene Fischer Correctional Center on Oct. 27 at 2295 Greene Way Boulevard in Xenia.

The building will be attached to the county's Adult Detention Center and will include constructing the sheriff's administration offices and the coroner's office. Both offices will be connected to the Adult Detention Center, and with a 250-bed jail immediately to the east.

The Greene County jail project has been years in the making, as officials have long wanted to replace their aging jail on Market Street. Built in 1969, the facility has been under a consent decree since 1989, which limits the jail population due to the decrepit state of the building.

The county previously delayed construction on the jail, as state grant money prompted the county to revisit previous reductions in scope. Because of spiking construction costs, the county was faced with only building the jail, County Administrator Brandon Huddleson said.

Southeast District

Noble County Sheriff's Office Employs Latest In 911 Technology

Journal-Leader, October 10, 2023

Noble County Sheriff's Office is now implementing the latest in emergency 911 technology designed to save valuable time in the face of a life-threatening crisis.

The system, known as Rapid SOS, uses smartphone technology and provides the county's 911 dispatchers with nearly instantaneous notification with precise location information in the event a person dials 911 from a cell phone.

Rapid SOS will instantly pin the location of an emergency whether the caller is in a moving vehicle or stationary, said Noble County Sheriff Jason Mackie. The system notifies dispatchers of a potential problem before the actual call comes into the 911 system.

According to Noble County Sheriff Jason Mackie, Rapid SOS will allow people within the county's borders to contact 911 not only by voice, but by text as well. Dispatchers in turn can respond to the caller using text messages.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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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

NOVEMBER 7
General Election

NOVEMBER 10
Veterans Day (observed)

NOVEMBER 11
Veterans Day

DECEMBER 6 - 8
CCAO-CEAO Annual Winter Conference

DID YOU KNOW?

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Erie County

Tucked away in Charles Darwin's monumental 1871 work, *The Descent of Man, and Selection in Relation to Sex*, is Footnote 17 (or 18, depending on the edition). The footnote, which comes amid a discussion of how to approach humanity through the lens of race and species, cites a book titled *Origin and Antiquity of Physical Man* by an "H. Tuttle." Whether or not Darwin knew it at the time, he was citing the work of an Ohio Spiritualist named Hudson Tuttle.

Hudson Tuttle was born in Erie County in 1836. He had little formal education, instead claiming that his knowledge came to him from invisible spirits, such as from French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (died 1829) and German genius Alexander von Humboldt (died 1859). He married Emma Rood, a renown poet and educational reform advocate from Cleveland. They worked together on books of poetry and folklore, but Tuttle's main passion remained in scientific works guided by spirits of the dead.

As Tuttle wrote in the preface of his 1859 work, *Arcana of Nature*, "For years I have been led through the paths of science by invisible guides," and more explicitly in the preface of his 1871 work, *Arcana of Spiritualism*, "I have faithfully, carefully, and conscientiously presented my impressions as they have been given to me by my masters, the invisible spirits...I have been cheered by the presence of spirit-friends, and, bathed in their magnetism, been supremely blessed."

One wonders what Darwin would have thought if he knew he cited an uneducated writer from Erie County, Ohio, who claimed to receive his insights from the spirits of dead scientists.

Hudson Tuttle and his wife Emma. Portrait included in their work, Stories from Beyond the Borderlands *(1910).*

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