View this email in your browser

October 30, 2023

Governor Mike DeWine joined Greene County officials at the groundbreaking of the county's new jail. The county received $15 million from the state to help facilitate the construction of a new jail. The facility is dedicated to former Greene County Sheriff Gene Fischer, who served as the county sheriff from 2003 until his death in 2021.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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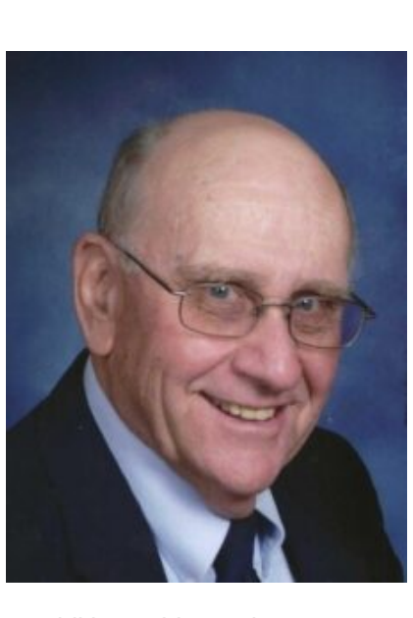
Former Seneca County Commissioner Kenneth Estep passes away



Kenneth Estep, a former Seneca County Commissioner, passed away last week at the age of 86. A lifelong native of Seneca County, Esper joined the U.S. Army after graduating from Old Fort High School in 1956.

During his time as a Seneca County Commissioner, Estep played an important role in the construction of the Seneca County Jail, the Seneca County community-based correctional facility, and several vital bridges across the county.

In addition to his service as a county commissioner, Estep also spent time as a Clinton Township Trustee, as a member of the Tiffin Farmers Co-Op Board of Directors, and numerous other social groups in the county.

You can read more about Estep's life here. His family has asked that memorial contributions be made to the Clinton Township Volunteer Fire Department, of which he was a founder.

Fall 2023 issue of County Leader available!

CCAO published the Fall 2023 edition of our quarterly magazine, County Leader, today! The 32-page issue features columns from CCAO President and Henry County Commissioner Glenn Miller and CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler, features on Ashtabula County's Storybook Trail and Logan County's new memory care unit at Logan Acres Retirement Community, a spotlight on the role of legal aid, as well as updates from CEBCO, CORSA, and the CCAO Service Corp and more!

Read it today!

Final week of Early Bird pricing 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).

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. You can view the entire tentative agenda here.

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.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Nominations open for 2024 Great Ohioan Awards

The Capitol Square Foundation is accepting nominations for the 2024 Great Ohioan Awards. The purpose of the awards is to commemorate the role that Ohioans have played in an event or events of lasting world, American, or Ohio significance. Nominations must be submitted by December 3.

The award was created in 2003 with an inaugural class of Neil Armstrong, John Glenn, and the Orville and Wilbur Wright. Other individuals honored since 2003 include Jesse Owens, Harriet Beecher Stowe, William Tecumseh Sherman, Jerrie Mock, Toni Morrison, Jim Lovell, and Judy Resnik. A full list can be found here.

To be considered for the award, candidates must meet the following criteria:

- Must be an individual Ohioan or a group of Ohioans who have made a significant or lasting contribution to history on a world, American, or Ohio scale;
- Must have been born in Ohio or lived in Ohio for a minimum of five years;
- At least 25 years have passed since the event in which the nominee particiapted occurred;
- There is a compelling reason why the Ohio Statehouse, rather than a different location, should be the location of the award.

Nominees must fall into one of the following categories:

- Inventions/Medicines/Science
- Literature/Journalism/Historiography
- Academics
- Communications/Education
- Entertainment/Sports
- Government/Military/Public Service/Religion

If you would like to nominate someone for consideration, you must complete the nomination form and submit a narrative explaining how the nominee meets the award criteria.

Nominations must be submitted to the Great Ohioan Committee via email (CSF@AssnOffices.com), fax (614-221-1989, Attn: Great Ohioan Committee), or by mail (Great Ohioan Committee, Ohio Statehouse, Room 16, Columbus, OH 43215). The deadline to submit nominations is December 3.

Ohio Domestic Action Plan 2023 open to public comments until November 17

The Lake Erie Commission recently held a public meeting regarding the Ohio Domestic Action Plan 2023.

You can access the recording of the meeting here, as well as a supplemental video focusing on two-stage ditches here.

A copy of the slides and more can be found on the Lake Erie Commission's page. The Commission is accepting public comments at dap@lakeerie.ohio.gov through November 17. If you represent a county in the Lake Erie Basin, CCAO encourages you to review the Domestic Action Plan draft and share your community's thoughts.

If you have questions regarding the Domestic Action Plan, please contact Policy Analyst James Kennedy.

Call for NACo Board of Directors letters of interest, registration open for 2024 NACo Legislative Conference

There are two important NACo notices to share.

NACo Board of Directors Letter of Interest
First, CCAO has issued its annual Call of Letters of Interest for the NACo Board of Directors. Per NACo and CCAO bylaws, the Ohio membership of NACo elects two members of the NACo board during CCAO's annual business meeting (December 7th).

Those individuals interested in running for one of these two positions must submit a 1-2 page letter of interest with Robin Garrett (rgarrett@ccao.org) ***no later than Monday, November 20***, at noon. Letters of interest will be circulated to NACo members on November 22.

During the annual business meeting, each NACo county will receive two votes and the top two vote-getters will be elected to terms that run from July 2024 to June 2025.

PLEASE NOTE: this election does not impact any other NACo board positions, such as members who may have received a presidential appointment or who are on the NACo Board by virtue of previously having served as NACo President.

If you have questions regarding the election process, please contact either Cheryl Subler or Robin Garrett.

NACo Legislative Conference Registration
The second NACo notice to share is that registration is now open for the 2024 NACo Legislative Conference held annually in Washington, D.C. The conference will take place from February 10-13. Registration, which can be completed here, will cost member counties $520 until December 9, $575 from December 10 through January 27, and $690 after January 28. Those figures for non-member counties are, respectively, $750/$810/$960.

A tentative schedule for the event is available here.

BroadbandOhio BEAD proposal Volume 2 open for public comment

BroadbandOhio announced last week that Volume 2 of its Initial Proposal for the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program is available for public comment. The volume focuses on the proposed sub-grantee selection progress.

The public comment period ends November 21, so please take time sooner than later to familiarize yourself with the document and the Executive Summary, which provides highlights of the major components. Comments can be submitted to broadbandohio@development.ohio.gov.

It is important that counties and the communities they represent make their thoughts known so that BroadbandOhio can ensure that the BEAD program is representative and beneficial to all parts of Ohio.

If you have questions regarding the BEAD program or broadband more generally, please contact either Kyle Petty or James Kennedy.

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.

OBM announces fourth annual Grants Summit

The Office of Budget and Management (OBM) will be hosting its fourth annual Ohio Grants Summit on November 29 and 30, from 9:00 a.m. to noon each day.

The event, which is free, brings state and local officials together to discuss the federal and state intergovernmental grant process. The event is also broadcast and archived on the Ohio Channel for those unable to come to Columbus.

The sessions this year are:

- **November 29:**
  - Tips for a Successful Grant Application
  - Proposed Updates to the Federal Uniform Guidance
  - Federal Grant Update
- **November 30:**
  - Closeouts and Continuing Responsibilities
  - Maximizing Federal Funds
  - Preparing for Infrastructure Funding

Registration for each day is separate and at no cost. You can register for November 29 here and November 30 here.

CCAO to host webinar with Department of Children and Youth Director Kara Wente

Next Wednesday, November 8, CCAO will be hosting a webinar focusing on the newly created Department of Children and Youth. The Director of the new department, Kara Wente, will be presenting.

The new department will operate programs and services previously housed at six other cabinet agencies and serve children prenatal to age 21. During this webinar, the department will share updates on the transition, the infrastructure for the new agency, and strategies and goals for serving our youngest Ohioans. Members will also have the opportunity to ask questions of Director Wente.

The webinar will be held at 9:00 a.m. on November 8, via Microsoft Teams. Registration is not required, and the meeting can be accessed via this link.

Two OEPA-related webinars upcoming, one on H2Ohio and one on mosquito control

Next Monday at 10:00 a.m., there will be a joint virtual meeting between the Ohio Department of Agriculture, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Ohio EPA, and the Ohio Lake Erie Commission to discuss the fourth annual H2Ohio report and provide an update on the initiative's progress.

Registration is not required. The meeting will be held via Microsoft Teams and can be accessed via this link.

Additionally, on November 16, the OEPA will host a webinar focusing on its Mosquito Control Grant for summer 2024. The webinar will share information regarding allowable uses (such as mosquito surveillance, control, and source reduction) and how to apply.

In past iterations of the program, local government entities have been eligible recipients, providing they receive a letter of support from their local health department.

The webinar is free and registration can be completed here.

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

HC commissioners approve agreements
Northwest Signal, October 25, 2023
The Henry County commissioners Tuesday approved several agreements.

One agreement is with the Lucas County commissioners for autopsies performed in 2024 by the Lucas County Coroner's Office.

The cost increased from $1,350 to $1,750.

The commissioners also approved a subgrant agreement between the Wood County Department of Job and Family Services and the Child Welfare Fellowship Project parties.

Wood County is the pass-through entity, and the Child Welfare Fellowship Program is a pilot project that includes the recruiting, hiring and training of college students to properly prepare them to be job ready in the child welfare field upon graduation.

A service agreement with Maximus was approved until March 31, 2027, for fiscal years 2023, 2024 and 2025. The cost is $8,250 per year for a total of $24,750 for a cost allocation plan.

Northeast District

Wayne County Health Department relocates offices to South Street
Daily Record, October 26, 2023
Health Department operations located at the 203 S. Walnut St. building in Wooster will be closed Nov. 6 and 7 to accommodate the move to a new building. The offices will be reopen Nov. 8 at 244 W. South St., the location of the American Red Cross.

The offices impacted are WIC, birth and death records, clinical operations and immunizations.

"We are very excited about moving our clinical, WIC program and administrative offices from 203 S. Walnut to our new location." said Health Commissioner Dr. Nicholas Cascarelli. "We are very appreciative of the American Red Cross and the Wayne County commissioners. This move doesn't happen without graciousness of the American Red Cross and the renovations don't occur without the Wayne County commissioners' investment and support."

The renovations include a community health clinic, offices for the WIC program and a remodeled reception area.

Central District

Knox County Intel Response: Preserving the rural character while accommodating growth
Knox Pages, October 23, 2023
One of the most-heard statements from Knox County residents is that they want to preserve the county's rural character.

Indeed, that is one of the bedrock goals of the Knox County Comprehensive Plan.

But the county is wrestling with the need for more housing. It seeks to attract new businesses that pay good wages. It is experiencing overall population growth.

And now, Intel is locating a $20 billion semiconductor facility — a site that could potentially grow to a $100 billion set-up — 15 miles from the southern county line.

Intel's facility brings the need for employees, suppliers, and all of the services that cater to those employees and suppliers.

The Knox County Growth Strategy report projects Knox County needs 611,332 square feet of commercial, manufacturing, and warehousing space to meet the current growth trend.

That jumps to over 4 million, depending on whether the county pursues a moderate or aggressive growth strategy in response to Intel.

Southwest District

Leap year costly for local governments
Journal-News, October 28, 2023
It only happens every 11 years that employees get a 27th paycheck due to leap years and other calendar anomalies, but it adds up to big bucks for local governments when it happens.

The various governmental bodies don't get hit with the extra pay period all at the same time — it depends on their individual pay policies — but all told 10 major governments serving Butler County residents pay a total of nearly $12 million for the extra paychecks. That amount is based on current payroll budgets and will be higher in future years when raises and other factors come in.

Here's when each jurisdiction has to pay the extra money to employees and how much based on current payroll:

- 2024: Fairfield at a cost of $1.5 million.
- 2025: The estimated increase in Monroe is $675,000.
- 2026: Hamilton's cost will be an estimated $2.4 million and Oxford $507,708.
- 2027: Butler County has the highest hit at around $4.27 million, Ross Twp. payroll is $43,925 and Trenton $225,000.
- 2032: Fairfield Twp. paychecks total $200,000, Middletown $1 million and West Chester Twp. around $600,000.

Southeast District

Meigs commissioners discuss electric aggregation
WV News, October 27, 2023
The Meigs County commissioners met in regular session Oct. 19 with several items on the agenda and a discussion of the proposed Resolution Electric Aggregation measure on the November 7 ballot.

The proposed resolution would give the Meigs County commissioners the authority to "aggregate the retail electric loads located in the unincorporated portions of the county, and for that purpose, enter into service agreements to facilitate for those loads the sale and purchase of electricity, such aggregation to occur automatically except where any person elects to opt out."

An electric aggregation is a grouping together of areas to get a better rate, and the commissioners emphasized that entering into a service agreement is not mandatory, but an opportunity for those who wish to do so. Those who decide to join can opt out at any time with no fee.

"We believe this is a good opportunity for the unincorporated parts of the county," said Commission President Jimmy Will. "This provides us with buying power to explore every option to save money."

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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NOVEMBER 3
CCAO Justice and Public Safety Committee Meeting

NOVEMBER 3
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

NOVEMBER 7
General Election

NOVEMBER 10
Veterans Day (observed)

NOVEMBER 11
Veterans Day

NOVEMBER 16
CCAO General Government Committee Meeting

NOVEMBER 17
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

NOVEMBER 23
Thanksgiving

DECEMBER 6 - 8
CCAO-CEAO Annual Winter Conference

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