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November 20, 2023

The Licking County Commissioners unveiled a new historic brick sculpture on the front façade of their Administration Building today. The commissioners also rededicated the Administration Building with a presentation featuring building architect Orville Varasso and retired commissioner and former CCAO President Don Hill. CCAO Assistant Director John Leutz and former CCAO Executive Director Larry Long attended the ceremony.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Ohio county employees graduate from the August-November session of NACo Leadership Academy

Congratulations to the 25 county employees who graduated from the NACo Leadership Academy in August! The county staff came from nine different counties across the state, with Fairfield County leading the way with ten employees completing the academy in August.

The Leadership Academy is a 12-week online program that helps develop practical leadership skills in county employees to help improve the results that counties provide their residents.

The next cohort begins on January 8. The cost of attendance is $1,995 per enrollee for NACo members, with counties sending 10 members receiving a discounted rate totaling $15,000.

Please visit the Academy's webpage for more information on the program, including how to register and more detailed information regarding the cost.

Congratulations to the Ohio county employees who have completed the Academy!

Highland County receives CDBG funding for sanitary sewer replacements

Last week, Governor Mike DeWine and the Department of Development Director Lydia Mihalik announced five awards for public infrastructure, funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant.

One of these awards went to Highland County. The award, totaling $750,000, will allow the county to assist the village of Greenfield with replacing sanitary sewer lines. The project is expected to benefit 4,339.

The remaining four awards were issued to villages in Paulding, Shelby, Union, and Van Wert counties. You can read more about them here.

Less than a month until the 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.

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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Administrative rules proposed for All Ohio Future Fund

Last week, the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) filed administrative rules regarding the All Ohio Future Fund with the Register of Ohio. This is one of the early steps in the process that programs must undergo before the state can start utilizing funds.

The proposed rules, visible here, are not final but do offer insight into how the state anticipates it will use the funding allocated to the fund.

As stated by the proposed rule, the All Ohio Future Fund will be used to make loans or grants (as determined by the agency responsible for securing Controlling Board release of funds, likely to be either OBM itself or the Department of Development) to "eligible applicants" for the purpose of site development. Eligible applicants include counties and other local governments and government entities, as well as nonprofit and for-profit organizations. Funds can be used for public roadwork, water and wastewater design and engineering, demolition, wetland mitigation, utility connectivity, and other "one-time" enhancements.

For all projects, the applicant must provide proof to the state agency that the county in which the project is located supports the project. If a project is located in multiple counties, it is likely that all counties will have to provide proof of support before funds can be awarded, but it is not explicitly stated in the proposed rule.

Recipients of funds will be required to submit periodic reports describing the status of the project, but the frequency and nature of these reports are not enumerated in the proposed rule.

The agency issuing the awards is also permitted to "recapture" funds if the entity or business the funds are being used to facilitate is not under an agreement to use the site within five years of the award's issuance.

OBM will be hosting a public hearing regarding the proposed rule on December 11. CCAO's Jobs, Economic Development, and Infrastructure (JEDI) Committee will be meeting on December 1 to discuss CCAO's comments on the proposed rules. If you have thoughts on potential changes, please send them to Senior Policy Analyst Jon Honeck.

House State and Local Government Committee releases license review report

Last week, the House State and Local Government Committee issued its Occupational License Review Report to the Speaker of the House, the Senate President, and the Governor.

The committee is tasked with reviewing all occupational licenses over a six-year period and making recommendations regarding any changes to licenses, such as altering the duration of licenses, altering the fee one must pay to obtain the license, and eliminating licenses, among others. The Occupational License Review Report is not legislation; any recommendations made by the report are not effective unless authorized by legislation that goes through the legislative process.

In addition to recommendations regarding specific licenses, the committee made two general recommendations: one regarding the scope of the committee's duties in reviewing licenses and the other regarding general continuing education requirements. The former consists of a recommendation that the purview of the committee be broadened by allowing it to review any license/permit/registration that requires personal qualifications, as opposed to those that meet certain requirements in addition to personal qualifications. This recommendation comes after several state agencies found that licenses they offer do not meet all the current requirements for review, and thus the committee is not permitted to review them. These include pawnbroker licenses, notary public licenses, and more.

The second general recommendation concerns continuing education (CE) requirements. The committee recommends that CE requirements be limited to occupational and safety information that addresses a concrete and particular risk or danger that licensed individuals may face. This recommendation is specifically made in light of "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" (DEI) topics currently satisfying CE requirements for a variety of licenses. The committee recommends that such DEI topics only be approved for CE requirements if the topic is demonstrably essential for the license holder.

You can view the complete report, which includes specific recommendations per licenses, here.

NOTICE: Senate Select Committee on Housing to hold hearing in Washington County on December 4

On Monday, December 4, the Senate Select Committee on Housing will hold its second field hearing, this time in Marietta.

The hearing will be held 10:00 a.m., on the campus of Washington State Community College in Graham Auditorium (710 Colegate Dr. Marietta, OH 45750) and is open to public testimony. If you would like to testify, you must complete this document and submit both it and your testimony to Senator Michele Reynolds' senior legislative aide Chloe Green by Thursday, November 30. You can reach Green at chloe.green@ohiosenate.gov or 614-466-8064.

The committee plans to hold at least one hearing in other regions of the state, although dates and locations are not set yet. CCAO will keep membership informed as the committee continues its travels.

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.

NOTICE: Brownfield remediation grant webinar to be held ***TODAY***

TODAY at 10:00 a.m., the Department of Development will be hosting a webinar regarding the second round of the Brownfield Remediation Grant Program authorized in the state budget. You can register for the webinar at the bottom of this page.

Development has also provided detailed program guidelines and a list of the lead entities for grant applications in each county. CCAO encourages counties to attend the webinar to learn more about how the program will work and take advantage of an opportunity to ask questions directly to Development staff.

Grant applications will be accepted from December 1 to April 1. More information regarding the program can be found on Development's website.

CCAO to host Issue 2 webinar on November 29

Following the passage of Issue 2 in the November General Election, cannabis will be legal for recreational adult use in Ohio starting December 7. To help members understand the potential impacts the legalization of adult use cannabis will have on their role as employers, CCAO is hosting a webinar with attorney David Riepenhoff, who will discuss the implementation of Issue 2 as an initiated statute, as well as the potential impact in the workplace for employers.

The webinar will provide employers/appointing authorities with information relating to enforcement of their employment policies, as well as drug testing, training and sample information that can be shared with their employees pertaining to the implementation of the initiated statute. The webinar will also include a question and answer period.

The webinar will be held on November 29, beginning at 9:30 a.m. You can register for the free webinar here.

Appalachian Community Grant Program open for second round of applications

Applications are now being accepted for the second round of Appalachian Community Grants! There is $420 million remaining after the first round of planning and development grants were awarded earlier this year.

The grants are available only to projects in one or more of Ohio's 32 Appalachian counties. The program is intended for projects that will make a lasting significant impact on Appalachian communities by revitalizing downtowns, enhancing quality of life, and helping to rebuild local economies.

More information is available on the Department of Development's website. Additionally, the Governor's Office of Appalachia will be hosting a question-and-answer session on December 1 (registration is not open yet, please watch *Counties Current* in future weeks for the registration link).

Grant applications must be submitted by Friday, December 8.

Ohio BUILDS
Small Communities, Big Impact
A Plan for Appalachia
$500 Million Investment in Ohio's 32 Appalachian Counties
Mike DeWine Governor of Ohio
Jon Husted Lt. Governor of Ohio

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.

Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to host webinar on brownfields

On December 5, the OEPA will host a webinar focusing on what local officials should know about brownfield sites, including information on land use restrictions, potential liability concerns, and provide information regarding brownfield remediation funding.

Registration for this webinar is free and can be completed here.

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

Commissioners accept bid for Baughman Ditch project

LimaOhio, November 16, 2023

One ditch project is one step closer to completion. The Allen County Commissioners approved the bid from Beaverdam Contracting, Inc. for the Baughman Petitioned Ditch Project on Thursday morning.

"We have the Baughman Petitioned ditch project," Allen County Assistant Drainage Engineer Nathan Davis said. "This is the second phase of this project. This would be the storm sewer portion of the project. We have completed all the wetlands portion of the project, which went very well. That was fully funded by the two grants that we received."

The cost of the contract is reportedly $1,389,207.

"We do still have some remaining monies from the H2Ohio grant that will be put forward toward this, the storm sewer project," Davis said.

Northeast District

Cuyahoga Council likely to send Health and Human Services levy to voters in March

Cleveland.com, November 14, 2023

Cuyahoga County voters are all but certain to have the option to renew the county's 4.8-mill Health and Human Services levy when they cast ballots in March.

The levy funds the county's social safety net, subsidizing dozens of departments and programs throughout the county, such as the Office of Homeless Services, universal pre-K, the Division of Senior and Adult Services, the Division of Children and Family Services, Juvenile Court, MetroHealth and more, according to county budget documents.

Cuyahoga County Council's Committee of the Whole advanced legislation Tuesday that would place the levy renewal on voters' ballots. While that legislation still needs final approval, council members made clear the county cannot operate without it. Council members did not criticize the levy Tuesday, nor during the October County Council meeting when it was introduced.

"There isn't any question we're going to put this on the ballot," said Councilman Dale Miller, who chairs the finance committee and who has been overseeing some budget hearings.

Central District

Liberty Township residents push to exclude solar panel developments

Newark Advocate, November 13, 2023

Liberty Township residents are awaiting a decision from Licking County Commissioners on the township's request to exclude large solar panel developments from coming into their community.

Two Liberty Township trustees and more than 30 residents from Licking and Knox counties made their case at a public hearing Wednesday before the county commissioners, who have 90 days to make a decision.

The commissioners have the authority to declare a township, or even the entire county, an exclusionary zone for large solar fields, which are defined as producing 50 megawatts or more. Smaller solar fields can be subjected to local zoning.

Trustees and residents behind the request said the solar panel developments ruin the scenic landscape, take away farmland, decrease property values and are contrary to what residents want in their township.

Southwest District

Commission approves sites for revitalization

Daily Advocate, November 16, 2023

With additional funds available from the first round of demolition and site revitalization in the county, Commissioner Matt Aultman declared the first round of funding from the Ohio Department of Development (ODD) could clear more than 32 properties when the funding is finally depleted.

Commissioners Aultman, Larry Holmes and Marshall Combs approved a second list of properties to be addressed with the remaining funds from the first round.

According to Aultman, many of the properties are old farmhouses that have had no maintenance and have deteriorated over time. Once of the properties is a house that had been destroyed by fire. The 11 properties sent to ODD for approval are located from one end of the county to the other.

The properties include 209 N. Miami St., Bradford; 850 Braffetsville-North Road; 128 W. Union St., Hollansburg; 200 N. Main St., Hollansburg; 1298 U.S. Route 36; 4096 Richmond-Palestine Road; 935 Peters Road; 1132 Verona-Pitsburg Road; 4857 Delisle-Fourman Road; 7189 Delisle-Fourman Road; and 12862 U.S. Route 127.

Aultman pointed out that new housing is already being erected on some of the properties that were completed in the early part of the demolition and revitalization that took place.

Southeast District

Jefferson County Commission supports Market Street Bridge replacement

WTRF News, November 17, 2023

The Muskingum County Commissioners have filed a notice of appeal for a variance to the current industry zone, following a decision by the Zoning Board last month.

On Oct. 12, the Zoning Board reviewed a presentation from the county and Muskingum County Sheriff Matt Lutz featuring information on the new facility plans. The county had filed an application to build the new jail on Pershing Road, on the site of the former Mosaic Tile property. The board said the county met the four criteria of the zoning application but denied the county's request.

The pending appeal could take anywhere between two weeks to six months to be approved or denied.

The Pershing Road property is owned by the land bank and has been cleared to provide a suitable environment for new construction. The county now has the option to purchase this land within the next 17 months.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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NOVEMBER 23
Thanksgiving

DECEMBER 1
CCAO JEDI Committee Meeting

DECEMBER 6 - 8
CCAO-CEAO Annual Winter Conference

DECEMBER 25
Christmas

JANUARY 1
New Years Day

DID YOU KNOW?

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Columbiana County

Columbiana County produced one of the 19 members of the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame inaugural class in 1978. Helen Grace McClelland earned the honor through heroic and dedicated service as an Army nurse in both World Wars.

McClelland joined the American Ambulance Service in France in 1915, a volunteer medical service that joined the Western Front two years before the United States formally joined the war effort. As a surgical nurse on the Belgian/French border, she saved the life of a fellow nurse, Beatrice McDonald, when their camp took German artillery fire. McClelland became one of just three women to receive the Distinguished Service Cross during the war; she also received the British Royal Red Cross.

After the war, she worked for the Pennsylvania Hospital, eventually becoming the Head of Nursing. She briefly returned to national service during World War II when she helped with the planning and organization of the 52nd Evacuation Hospital, a US military hospital located in the South Pacific.

Helen Grace McClelland passed away in 1984, six years after her induction into the Ohio Women's Hall of Fame, at the age of 97. She is buried in Fredericktown, Ohio.

Helen Grace McClelland in 1919, shortly after the end of the First World War.

McClelland at the induction ceremony for the inaugural Ohio Women's Hall of Fame class.

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