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December 18, 2023
The Scioto County Courthouse's Christmas tree.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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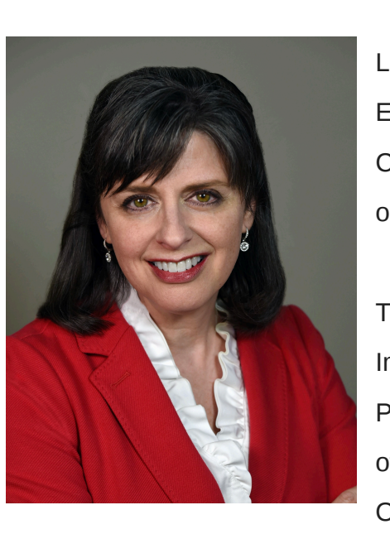
Thanks again for making a great Winter Conference!

The 2023 CCAO / CEAO Winter Conference concluded on December 8, and it was another successful event! The associations welcomed more than 500 visitors from across the state, including commissioners, county council members, county executives, county engineers, staff from across county departments, and vendor partners.

To view some photos from the event, please visit our Facebook!

Additionally, in an effort to ensure our events continue to provide value to members, we have created a post-event survey to learn what worked and what we can improve on for next year. You can complete the survey here.

CCAO Executive Director Subler appointed to the Ohio Public Works Commission



Last week, Senate President Matt Huffman appointed CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler to the Ohio Public Works Commission for a term beginning on January 1, 2024, and ending on December 31, 2027.

The Public Works Commission is responsible for the State Capital Improvement Program and the Local Transportation Improvement Program, funded by general obligation bonds and a small portion of the state gas tax, respectively. It also administers the Clean Ohio Conservation Program, also funded through bonds.

Cheryl has worked for CCAO since 1996, including the past three as the Association's Executive Director. Prior to joining CCAO, she worked at the Ohio Township Association. Cheryl is also a Past President of the Ohio Lobbying Association.

Congratulations Cheryl!

Sign on as an official America 250-OH community!

As 2026, the United States' 250th anniversary, approaches, CCAO is encouraging counties to complete the process to be designated an official America 250-OH Community.

Thus far, seven counties have signed on as official communities:

- Fairfield County
- Hardin County
- Lawrence County
- Medina County
- Miami County
- Muskingum County
- Preble County

To begin becoming an official community, each community must designate a primary contact for the application, then complete the application and pass the attached resolution.

You can learn more about the process at America 250-OH's website. If you have questions about the process, contact Taylor Tomu, Community Engagement & Outreach Specialist at ttomu@ohiohistory.org.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Supreme Court of Ohio offers conflict resolution services for public officials

Government Conflict Resolution Services (GCRS) is a program offered by the Supreme Court of Ohio to provide flexible and practical assistance in resolving and preventing conflict among public officials on various matters including, but not limited to, budget issues, public records requests and other organizational issues, without court involvement.

GCRS is provided at no cost to public officials and will take place at a location agreed upon by the parties.

There are three services offered through GCRS:

Neutral Evaluation: The parties to a dispute present their claims and/or defenses and describe their evidence to a neutral third party. The third party then shares their impressions about the strengths and weaknesses of each side.

Mediation: A neutral third party called a mediator helps the parties communicate and negotiate with each other to help them reach a voluntary agreement regarding the dispute.

Facilitation: A process that focuses on the tasks needed to run a productive and impartial meeting. A neutral third-party moderates discussion and is primarily aimed at assisting individuals refine communication and organizational skills so they can work more efficiently with each other in a group setting.

You can acquire more information, as well as forms to request services, on the Supreme Court of Ohio's website.

Mallinckrodt bankruptcy opioid dollars to require reporting

CCAO was recently made aware that counties (and other local governments) will be responsible for reporting how they spend every dollar from the Mallinckrodt bankruptcy. These dollars are sent to counties through the National Opioid Abatement Trust II (NOAT II)). **This is different than the settlements flowing through BrownGreer, the National Settlement Administrator**. The NOAT II website can be found here.

On Wednesday, November 29, your county should have received credentials from NOAT II to log in to the NOAT II Beneficiary Abatement Use Reporting Tool. Once in the Reporting Tool, the county will be prompted to reporting forms. Please direct all reporting related inquiries to reporting@noatii.com.

Ohio counties have received two Mallinckrodt payments to date. Copies of the payment spreadsheets are below.

NOAT II Payment 1 March 2023

NOAT II Payment 2 November 2023

Please contact Kyle Petty (kpetty@ccao.org) with any questions.

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.

Ohio to issue more than $4 million in grants for adult day centers, capacity building

For older adults that wish to remain at home but need a higher level of supervision or care, adult day centers often bridge the gap that would otherwise result in costly transitions to a facility or institution. Many family caregivers also depend on adult day services to provide the care their loved ones need while working or otherwise engaging with their community. Studies show that older adults who regularly attend an adult day program have a better quality of life and increased positive health outcomes, especially for those with dementia or other cognitive disabilities.

Prior to the pandemic, adult day services cared for over 400,000 individuals in the US according to the National Center for Health Statistics, but much like other healthcare providers, the sector took a huge hit during the Covid-19 shut down. While hospitals, nursing homes, and urgent care centers continued to operate, adult day centers were closed for most of 2020 and into 2021 to contain the rate of infection among their vulnerable attendees. Due to the massive loss in revenue and attendance, hundreds of adult day centers have been forced to close or limit their services. A LeadingAge Ohio survey conducted during the Covid-19 shut down found that 83% of adult day participants in Ohio were forced to seek a higher and more expensive level of care and 74% of family caregivers reported having to choose between working or caring for their loved one previously enrolled in a day program.

Adult day providers are still working tirelessly to mitigate pandemic related losses, and the state of Ohio has allocated over $4 million in ARPA funds via HB45 which would support the development of new adult day centers and / or expanding the capacity of existing adult day centers. Additionally, Ohio's Healthy Aging Grants administered by the Ohio Department of Aging provide a unique opportunity for county commissioners to support services for older adults, including adult day services. While the Office of Budget & Management has yet to post the funding opportunity, it is anticipated in the coming weeks. Once posted, organizations will have a relatively short time frame—possibly as little as six months—to expend the awarded funds. For this reason, LeadingAge Ohio is working with other organizations, including the County Commissioners Association of Ohio, to raise awareness about the funding opportunity.

To learn more about the forthcoming adult day funding, please reach out to LeadingAge Ohio Workforce Director, Randi Hamill, at rhamill@leadingageohio.org.

ARPA and BIL RESOURCES

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US Treasury clarifies the definition of "obligation" for ARPA funds

Under the American Rescue Plan Act and subsequent Treasury regulations, counties and other recipients of ARPA – Local Fiscal Recovery Funds must obligate funds by December 31, 2024. Unobligated funds must be returned to Treasury. This deadline also applies to all ARPA funds including spending under the revenue loss category. Funds are considered "obligated" if an order has been placed for property and services and the government has entered into contracts, subawards and similar transactions that require payment. When the county has provided funds under a contract or agreement to a subrecipient organization, it is considered to have been obligated. The obligation deadline does not apply to the activities of the subrecipient organizations.

In November, the Treasury department issued an updated rule to clarify when a county or other ARPA grant recipient can obligate funds for certain administrative personnel expenses. These administrative expenses must be related to federal requirements that affect the county as a result of receiving or expending ARPA funds. Examples of these types of administrative requirements include:

- Reporting and compliance;
- Single audit costs;
- Records retention and internal control;
- Property standards;
- Environmental compliance;
- Civil rights and nondiscrimination laws.

For these types of administrative expenses, the county will have to develop an estimate of expected expenditures for 2025 and 2026, document a reasonable justification for the estimate, and report these amounts to Treasury by April, 2024, with an explanation of how the amount was determined. ***Please note that this update does not support the obligation of ordinary county program personnel costs to ARPA funds beyond the 12/31/2024 deadline under current ARPA rules***. An allocation or budget resolution does not suffice to demonstrate obligation. This is an issue that NACo is continuing to address with the US Treasury Department.

More information on this topic is available from NACo. The updated Treasury rule is available here.

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

Lucas County commissioners, common pleas court budget problems

WTOL, December 11, 2023

We're just a day away from learning more about the Lucas County 2024 budget, but it sounds like not all departments are getting what they asked for this Christmas.

There was an earlier dispute between Lucas County Commissioners and the Common Pleas Court on how much money should be given to them for next year.

The criminal justice system makes up the majority of the Lucas County annual budget, but the courts were unable to come to an agreement with the Lucas County Commissioners.

After failing to agree, the county commissioners requested and held a public hearing on Monday, just 24 hours before the upcoming annual budget is set to be announced.

During the meeting, the Lucas County Commissioners made a motion to approve the 2024 annual budget. On Tuesday, more will be announced about what the entire budget will be approved for.

Northeast District

Justice tax renewal set for March primary ballot

The Vindicator, December 15, 2023

The Mahoning County Commissioners on Thursday approved putting the 5-year renewal of the Criminal Justice Tax on the ballot for the March 19 primary election.

It is a .75% sales tax that funds the Mahoning County Sheriff's Office and jail, Coroner's Office, 911 and the Prosecutor's Office.

The commissioners held two public hearings to present information about the issue, with Sheriff Jerry Greene, County Prosecutor Gina DeGenova and County Administrator Audrey Tillis presenting information on the tax. One member of the public attended each hearing.

Tillis said Thursday all of the departments that use that sales tax "are doing a good job of being accountable for the resources the citizens of Mahoning County have offered to operate their offices."

Central District

County wants to buy Colonnade building but wants state help on cost

Lancaster Eagle Gazette, December 15, 2023

The Fairfield County commissioners this week agreed to buy the Colonnade Medical Office Building at 1550 Sheridan Drive if the state helps with the purchase price.

The asking price is $3.6 million, but the county wants the state to pay at least $600,000. The deadline for applying for state funds is in April.

County commissioner Steve Davis said the county is asking for state help to help better the county's return on investment.

Davis said Dr. Troy Edwards and his wife, Greer, own the building. He said he was not sure if others have an ownership stake in or not. He said the sellers know the sale won't go through without substantial state financial assistance.

The building houses the county health department and other non-county entities. The county pays $149,000 in rent and taxes annually.

Southwest District

Ice-less ice-skating coming to Brown County

Maysville Online, December 9, 2023

Brown County's Courthouse Square Association Inc. is hosting its first ever ice-less ice-skating event on Saturday, Dec. 16, from 3-6 p.m.

President of the association Carol Myers said the event and everything provided is free for the whole family and expects a large turn-out.

"It's going to be on the courthouse square, I believe it will be on Cherry Street because it's flat. They (company from Columbus Ohio) will bring the material and put it down, it is some kind of solid material that's white and fits together real tight," Myers explained.

The material is synthetic and can be skated on just like ice, according to Myers. Around the edges of the rink will be strips of AstroTurf where chairs and benches will be placed for those who would rather watch than skate according to Myers.

"I think is is really neat, I have never seen this done actually but it is supposed to be just like the real thing," Myers said. According to Myers 100 pairs of skates of varying sizes will be provided at the event.

Southeast District

More than a half-million dollars in funding announced for local airports

WTOV9, December 11, 2023

The Ohio Valley received some good news last week, as it was the recipient of over a half million dollars for local airports.

Sen. Sherrod Brown announced the funding.

The breakdown includes $144,000 for the Barnesville-Bradfield Airport in Belmont County, as well as $144,000 for the Jefferson County Airpark.

The Harrison County Airport in Cadiz will receive $113,000 as will the Monroe County Airport in Woodsfield.

Brown says funding smaller community airports is important for expansion.

"Small airports, but they help students that might want to figure out a way to make a living doing that down the road," he said. "They help commerce and transportation, and so 2 years ago when Sen. (Rob) Portman and I teamed up on the bipartisan infrastructure, we insisted on investment not just in broadband, which will clearly help students and businesses and medical services for people in rural Ohio and Appalachia generally, but we also included bi-partisan investment in airports."

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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DECEMBER 25
Christmas

JANUARY 1
New Years Day

JANUARY 8
Date by which boards of county commissioners must hold organizational meeting

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