February 12, 2024

Delaware County Commissioner Barb Lewis, CCAO President and Tuscarawas County Commissioner Chris Abbuhl, and Shelby County Commissioner Julie Ehemann at the 2024 NACo Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

Association and Member News | State and Federal News | Education and Grants | County News | Did You Know? Job Postings

Statehouse Report and Counties Current Archive | Dates to Remember

---

ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

Back to Top

Last Call: Ohio representative needed for NACo Board of Directors

Last week, Clermont County Commissioner David Painter resigned his seat on the NACo Board of Directors. CCAO will facilitate the selection of his replacement to represent Ohio member counties with our national association.

As you may recall, Commissioner Painter and Montgomery County Commissioner Debbie Lieberman were elected to serve on the NACo Board during the CCAO Annual Membership Business Meeting at the CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference in December.

If you are interested in filling Commissioner Painter's unexpired term, please submit your letter of interest to CCAO Boards' Liaison and Events Manager Robin Garrett at rgarrett@ccao.org by end of day February 14. Letters of interests will be shared with the CCAO Board of Directors, and the Board will vote on an interim replacement February 16.

If you have any questions, please contact Robin.

Former Parma Heights Mayor selected to serve unexpired Cuyahoga County Council District 4 term

In late January, the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party selected Mike Byrne, former Parma Heights Mayor, to fill the unexpired Cuyahoga County Council District 4 seat vacated by former council member Scott Tuma upon his election as City of Parma Law Director.

Byrne served on Parma Heights City Council from 1998 to 2010 and as Parma Heights Mayor from 2011 to 2021. Prior to serving on city council, he worked in the Cuyahoga County Department of Public Works (under its previous name "Central Services").

Byrne will serve the remainder of the District 4 term, which expires at the end of the year. He is not seeking reelection to the seat.

Welcome to the CCAO, Council Member Byrne!

Frank Hirsch, longtime Ross County Commissioner, passes away

Earlier this month, former Ross County Commissioner Frank Hirsch passed away at the age of 83.

A life-long resident of Ross County, Hirsch was the third-generation owner and operator of Hirsch Fruit Farm. Active in his community, he served as the president of the Adena Regional Medical Center, the Ross County Farm Bureau, the Ohio Fruit Grower's Society, and more.

In 1988, he was elected as Ross County Commissioner and served in that role for 24 years. While commissioner, he served as CCAO's board of directors' treasurer for many years.

You can read Frank's full obituary here.

Lucas County Commissioner Gerken receives OACBHA award for advocacy

In late January, the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) held its annual awards luncheon, during which it presented awards to leaders across Ohio who have worked to ensure that mental health and addictions services and supports are available to all Ohioans.

The 2023 President's Partnering for Quality Award was presented to Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken for his "continual efforts to ensure that local Mental Health and Recovery Boards have the tools necessary to support community members, including his advocacy related to needed statutory changes and adequate funding for services and support".

Also receiving awards were Senator Nathan Manning for Legislative Excellence, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections Director Annette Chambers-Smith for Distinguished Leadership, and John Dellick for Advocate of the Year.

Congratulations to Commissioner Gerken and the other awardees!

Commissioner Gerken received his award from Scott Sylak, Executive Director of the Lucas County Mental Health & Recovery Services Board and OACBHA President.

Northwest District to hold meeting on March 20, Central District to hold meeting on May 3

Northwest District
On March 20, Fulton County will host the quarterly meeting of the Northwest Ohio Commissioners and Engineers Association. The meeting will take place at the Fulton County Administration Building in Wauseon.

The meeting will feature announcements from CCAO, CEAO, CEBCO, and CORSA, and culminate in a tour of the recently renovated Fulton County Courthouse.

To register for the Northwest District Meeting, please complete this form and send to Jessica Schuette via email at jschuette@fultoncountyoh.com, via fax at 41-337-9285, or mail to 152 S. Fulton Street, Suite 270, Wauseon, OH 43567. Registration must be submitted by March 6.

Central District
The Central District will host a regional meeting in Fairfield County on May 3.

The event will feature a breakfast and a welcome by Central District President and Delaware County Commissioner Gary Merrell, followed by an update from CCAO. Then, each Fairfield County Commissioner will give a brief presentation on one of their areas of focus:

- Commissioner Jeff Fix: Fairfield County's Land Use Planning Process
- Commissioner Steve Davis: Expanding Transit to Meet Workforce Challenges
- Commissioner David Levacy: The Fairfield County Workforce Center and Training Programs.

The event will conclude with a tour of the county's workforce center and a lunch.

Registration can be completed here. Please RSVP no later than April 22 so that appropriate preparations can be made. If you have difficulties registering, please contact Fairfield County Administrator Aundrea Cordelia at aundrea.cordle@fairfieldcountyohio.gov.

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner:

sedgwick®

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

Back to Top

CCAO produces federal advocacy issue handout for the NACo Legislative Conference

As commissioners, county executives, and county council members travel to Washington, D.C., for the 2024 NACo Legislative Conference, CCAO has put together a handout providing an overview of key federal advocacy issues that members can utilize as they meet with Ohio's senators and congressmembers.

The document, accessible here, lists seven federal policies that NACo and CCAO believe would benefit counties:

- Renewal of the Affordable Connectivity Program;
- Elimination of the Medicaid Inmate Exclusion Policy;
- Extension of the obligation deadline for ARPA funds;
- Increased federal investments in housing;
- Elimination of the Windfall Elimination Provision and the Government Pension Offset Provision;
- Increased broadband funding through the BEAD program; and
- Increased support for vital human services programs.

We hope the information provided is helpful to our members, both those attending the conference and those not.

OEPA extends comment period on underground injection proposed rules

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has extended the public comment period for its proposed administrated rules regarding underground injection control updates to February 19. The rules are being reviewed as part of the state's requirement that all administrative rules be reviewed at least once every five years.

The proposed rules can be accessed on the OEPA's website, as can the Business Impact Analysis of the proposed rules.

If you would like to submit comments, please send your written comments on these rules to ddagw_rulecomments@epa.ohio.gov and CSIPublicComments@governor.ohio.gov.

Auditor of State issues bulletin on historical cost estimate calculations for capital assets

Last week, Auditor of State Keith Faber issued Bulletin 2024-001, regarding using the consumer price index (CPI) to estimate historical costs of capital assets.

The bulletin, accessible here, provides a guide on how political subdivisions which use the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles for their fiscal reporting can calculate the historical cost of a capital asset, as may sometimes be required.

As noted in the bulletin, it is important to remember that the base year for these calculations is 1967, whereas the base year for calculations pertaining to local government official compensation changes is 1982.

If you have any questions regarding the information in the, please contact the Auditor of State's Local Government Services staff at (800) 345-2519 or contactlgs@ohioauditor.gov.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

Back to Top

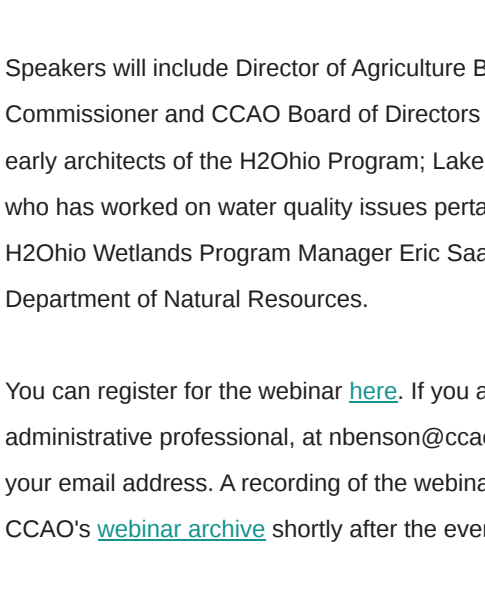
Visit the Grants and Funding Opportunities page on the CCAO website for a detailed listing of open grant programs.

CCAO to host webinar with H2Ohio Program leaders

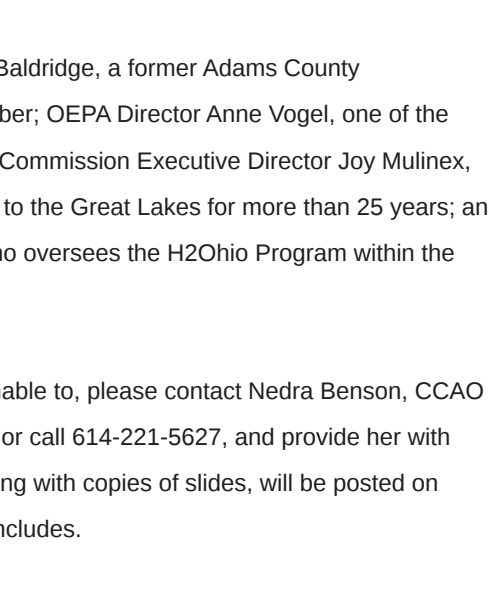
On Thursday, February 20, CCAO will be hosting a webinar regarding the H2Ohio Program, which received unprecedented funding levels in the most recent state operating budget. This funding will be distributed among four entities with the goal of reducing harmful algal blooms within the Western Lake Erie Basin and other water quality projects across the state through the new Rivers Initiative. Funding flows through the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Agriculture, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and the Lake Erie Commission. The Directors and their staff will be providing project updates along with funding opportunities throughout the current state fiscal year.

Speakers will include Director of Agriculture Brian Baldridge, a former Adams County Commissioner and CCAO Board of Directors member; OEPA Director Anne Vogel, one of the early architects of the H2Ohio Program; Lake Erie Commission Executive Director Joy Mulinex, who has worked on water quality issues pertaining to the Great Lakes for more than 25 years; and H2Ohio Wetlands Program Manager Eric Saas, who oversees the H2Ohio Program within the Department of Natural Resources.

You can register for the webinar here. If you are unable to, please contact Nedra Benson, CCAO administrative professional, at nbenson@ccao.org or call 614-221-5627, and provide her with your email address. A recording of the webinar, along with copies of slides, will be posted on CCAO's webinar archive shortly after the event concludes.



Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Brian Baldridge



Ohio EPA Director Anne Vogel

Lake Erie Commission Executive Director Joy Mulinex

H2Ohio Wetlands Program Manager Eric Saas

Department of Development releases application forms for All Ohio Future Fund, to begin accepting applications Feb. 16

Late last week, the Department of Development released application forms for funding under the All Ohio Future Fund. The Department will begin accepting proposals on February 16 (next Friday) and proposals will be accepted, reviewed, and approved on a rolling basis until funding is depleted.

The newly released forms include a checklist for submitting an "indication of interest," a guide with the requirements of the narrative portion of the application, and the form where applicants must provide data details of the proposal.

On a similar topic, on February 15, the Montrose Group will be hosting a webinar on industrial park development. Part of the webinar will discuss the All Ohio Future Fund and may be of interest to counties. You can register for the webinar here. The organization has also released an overview of the program's guidelines that members may find useful.

If you have questions concerning the All Ohio Future Fund, please contact CCAO Senior Policy Analyst Jon Honeck.

CCAO, Ohio Housing Finance Agency to host webinar on housing tax credit program

On March 7, CCAO, in conjunction with the Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA), will host a webinar to educate members on a new tool that local governments can utilize to improve single-family housing stock in Ohio: The Single-Family Housing Tax Credit (SFHTC).

Created in the state's most recent operating budget, the SFHTC allows for a maximum of $50,000 tax credit per dwelling to projects aimed at developing or rehabilitating housing in Ohio communities. Counties play an important role in the SFHTC program, as the lead applicants for the programs must be a county, township, municipality, regional planning commission, community improvement corporation, or economic development corporation.

OHFA has produced a one-page handout with an overview of the program and more detailed information about the SFHTC, including the allocation plan and underwriting guidelines, can be found on the Agency's website.

Housing is one of the most pressing issues that the state is facing, so CCAO is happy to offer this educational opportunity on one of the new roles that counties can play in alleviating the housing crunch.

A link to register for the webinar will be distributed in the coming days and will be included in future editions of Counties Current.

Land Bank Association to host webinar on commercial property redevelopment

On February 27, the Ohio Land Bank Association will host a webinar on how to redevelop commercial property.

As the Land Bank Association sees a shift in the urban development landscape to more commercial property redevelopment, it has asked two of its members from the Lucas County Land Bank to present case studies and best practices for other counties that may venture into the field.

The speakers are Stephanie Shackelford, Senior VP for Projects and Planning & CIO, and Josh Murnen, Senior VP for Real Estate & General Counsel, both of the Lucas County Land Bank.

Registration is free and can be completed here.

Second round of America-250 grants open for applications

The Ohio Commission for the United States Semiquincentenial (also known as America 250-Ohio) recently announced that it was opening the second round of its grant program to fund educational and commemorative programing regarding the 250th anniversary of the independence and founding of the United States.

Applications for grants must be submitted by March 15.

There are two different levels of funding available:

- **Buckeye Impact Grants**
    - Up to $50,000 available per grant.
    - Intended for projects with statewide, regional, or significant local impact.
- **Trillium Local Activity Grants**
    - Up to $5,000 available per grant.
    - Intended for projects with a local or community-wide impact.

A wide variety of entities are eligible for the grants, including individuals. Individuals must apply through a fiscal agent or sponsor.

America 250-Ohio released a document with more information regarding the program, including details on eligible and ineligible use of funds.

If you have questions regarding the program, please contact grants@ohiohumanities.org.

COUNTY NEWS

Back to Top

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

911 Final plan approved

Times Bulletin, February 9, 2024

Van Wert County's new 911 plan received approval from the 911 Review Committee on Thursday (Feb. 8).

In a meeting in the basement of the Van Wert County Sheriff's Office, the committee unanimously approved the 27 page plan.

Sheriff Tom Riggenbach says some legislative changes mandated the creation of a 911 Program Review Committee, a separate body made up of six people, including the Van Wert County Sheriff, Van Wert Mayor, a Van Wert County Commissioner and three other elected officials from other municipalities or townships in the county.

"This committee was required to have this plan approved and submitted to the county Program Review Committee by March 3rd, I believe," Riggenbach said.

"We're in a good position to submit this over to the commissioner's office which is responsible by statute for chairing the county 911 Program Review Committee. We'll get that sent over to them so that we can get a date set for the Program Review Committee to go through this new process and make a decision on what's been put together, and any questions answered," the sheriff said.

Northeast District

Stark County Jail receives national accreditation

The Alliance Review, February 10, 2024

The Stark County Sheriff's Office is the third county jail in Ohio to receive accreditation from the American Correctional Association.

The achievement follows inspection of three key areas – facility safety and security; healthcare for inmates; and quality of inmate services.

The jail was evaluated against 154 ACA core standards with specific compliance criteria. Overall, the jail received a score of 95.2% compliance with standards.

The accreditation was announced by the ACA Accreditation Review Panel at the Winter Conference of the American Correctional Association in Washington, D.C.

Central District

County auditor presents local food pantries with funds from Dollar General settlement

Marion Star, February 6, 2024

Marion County Auditor Joan Kasotis recently played a role in directing funds from a settlement between Dollar General Corporation and the Ohio Attorney General's Office toward two food pantries.

The Salvation Army and Richland Road Church of Christ in Marion were each granted $2,484 as part of the initiative.

In 2023, Dollar General found itself in legal hot water as a result of pricing discrepancies unearthed by Ohio county auditors and weights and measures inspectors. The investigation brought to light pricing errors ranging from 16% to a 88%, surpassing the permissible 2% error rate set by Ohio law.

Following a lawsuit, a $1 million settlement ensued, with $750,000 earmarked for county-level food pantries. Although Dollar General did not admit wrongdoing, the settlement includes provisions for enhanced pricing practices moving forward.

Southwest District

MC Commissioners hear treasurer's quarterly report

Miami Valley Today, February 7, 2024

Jim Stubbs, treasurer for Miami County, shared his quarterly report during the Commissioner's Meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 6.

Stubbs shared that finances and interest rates in the county were sound.

"I really appreciate the job that you do in keeping us informed and keeping the county in good fiscal shape," Commissioner Greg Simmons said.

On Dec. 14, 2023, the commissioners approved the 2024 budget and issued the following statement:

"Due to the diligent budget review by the commissioners and all county elected officials, the operating budget of Miami County will increase by only 5.5%. In consideration of the inflationary challenges facing the national economy, this modest increase required an unprecedented level of review by county elected officials and staff. The approved budget also includes a 4.0% raise in general fund salary accounts for all non-union county employees."

In that document, they shared that the 2024 appropriations for all county funds, including the general fund, are $146,248,593.31. The projected revenues for all county funds, including the general fund, is $113,757,940.96.

Southeast District

Washington County Commission discusses bills

Marietta Times, February 9, 2024

Washington County Commissioners discussed bills, one of which they were none too pleased with, during the commission meeting on Thursday morning.

During the discussion of bills commissioners considered a request by the Washington County Health Department for the commissioners to pay late fees and finance charges for a bill being paid late.

"So the narrative is they received it on (Jan..19), paid it on the (Jan..24) and the check was cashed on Jan. 29," Booth said.

The Health Department was asking the commission to pay a $39 late fee and $34.89 in finance charges, according to Booth.

"It's been a long standing policy of this board not to pay late fees." Booth said. "I don't see anyone here from the Health Department. As far as I'm concerned I think there should have been some conversation and we need to know more about this."

Commissioner Kevin Ritter made a motion to table discussing paying the late fees and finance charges.

"I'm just fed up with this nonsense. If they're not going to show up and explain why it's on the agenda, then it can stay tabled for the rest of the year as far as I'm concerned," Ritter said

---

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

Back to Top

FEBRUARY 9 - 14
NACo Legislative Conference

FEBRUARY 15
CCAO General Government Committee Meeting

FEBRUARY 16
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

FEBRUARY 19
Presidents Day

MARCH 1
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

MARCH 15
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

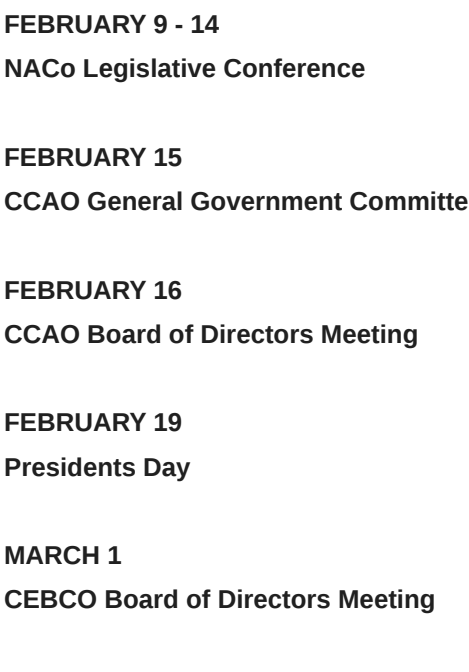
MARCH 20
Northwest District Meeting, Fulton County

DID YOU KNOW?

Back to Top

Champaign County

The Champaign County native Charles Foster Jones holds a unique place in US military history in a little-known campaign during World War Two.



Jones was born and raised in St. Paris, a Champaign County Village. After graduating high school, he briefly attended Puget Sound University in Tacoma, Washington, before moving to Alaska when the Klondike Gold Rush erupted in 1898.

Over the years, he worked a number of different jobs until he and his wife Etta moved to the Aleutian Island of Attu in 1941. Jones worked as a radio technician and weather observer while Etta worked at the island's school.

The island of Attu, shown in a map below, is the western-most part of Alaska. It was invaded by the Japanese military on June 7, 1942. Jones destroyed his radio to prevent it from being used and, after he refused to repair it, he was executed by the Japanese and his wife was taken as a prisoner of war.

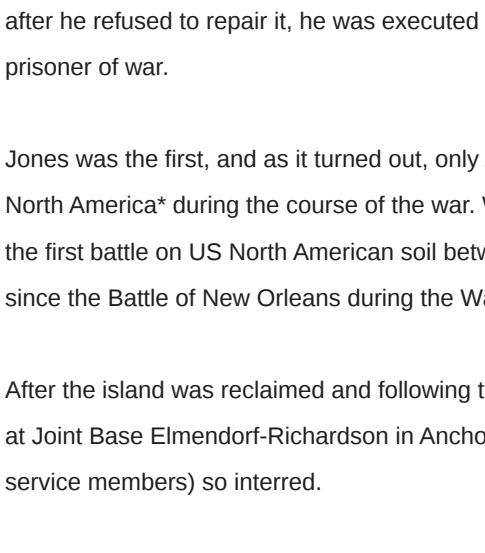
Jones was the first, and as it turned out, only American civilian to be killed by Japanese forces in North America* during the course of the war. When the US retook Attu the following May, it was the first battle on US North American soil between a foreign military and the American military since the Battle of New Orleans during the War of the 1812 - and is still the most recent.

After the island was reclaimed and following the war, Jones' body was reinterred in the cemetery at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, the only civilian (excluding family members of service members) so interred.

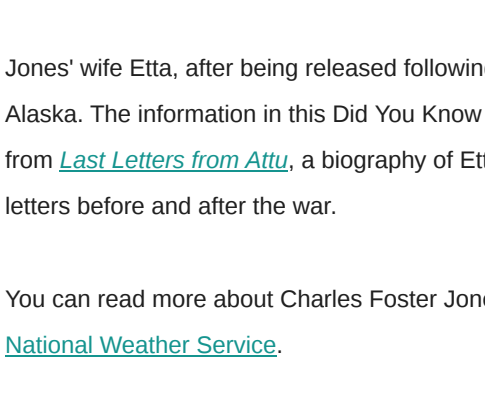
Jones' wife Etta, after being released following the war, moved to Florida and never returned to Alaska. The information in this Did You Know is drawn from two articles, both themselves drawn from *Last Letters from Attu*, a biography of Etta by her great-niece, largely drawn from Etta's letters before and after the war.

You can read more about Charles Foster Jones in an article about the book and in post by the National Weather Service.

**The total number of American civilian casualties in WWII varies by source. Jones is regarded as the only civilian killed by Japanese forces in North America primarily due to Hawaii (where the surprise attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, killed at least 68 civilians) not geographically being a part of any continent and the Fu-Go balloon bomb incident in 1945 that killed six in Oregon involving a unexploded bomb that had laid dormant for several weeks being accidently triggered when moved.*



Charles Foster Jones' gravestone at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage.



A map of the Aleutian Islands. Attu, where Charles Foster Jones was killed, is on the far west.

Copyright © 2024 CCAO, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list.