February 26, 2024

Last week, CCAO Policy Analyst James Kennedy (right) welcomed Director of Agriculture Brian Baldridge (left), Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Director Anne Vogel (middle) to CCAO's offices for a webinar about the H2Ohio program, along with Lake Erie Commission Executive Director Joy Mulinex (not pictured) and H2Ohio Wetlands Program Manager Eric Saas (not pictured).

A recording of the webinar and a copy of the slide deck and be found on CCAO's webinars archive**.**

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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CCAO releases analysis of CCAO-BSSA Jail Project Survey

CCAO is happy to share the analysis of a survey conducted in conjunction with the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association concerning county jail projects.

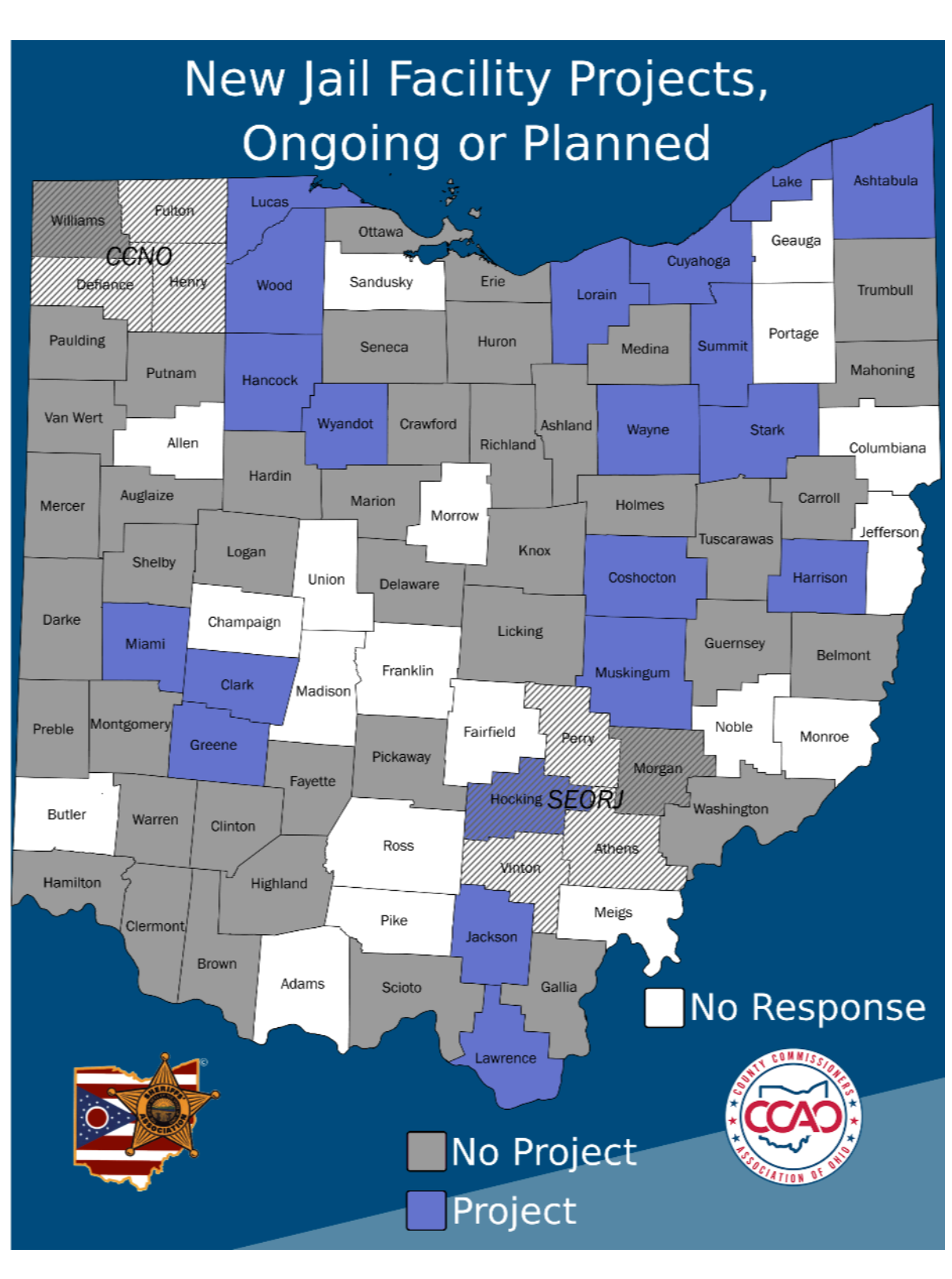
The survey, conducted from December 2023 through January 2024, is an update on a similar survey conducted in 2019. The original survey found a statewide need of $1.4 billion for jail construction, renovation, expansion, and repair. The new survey has found that figure increased to $2.2 billion.

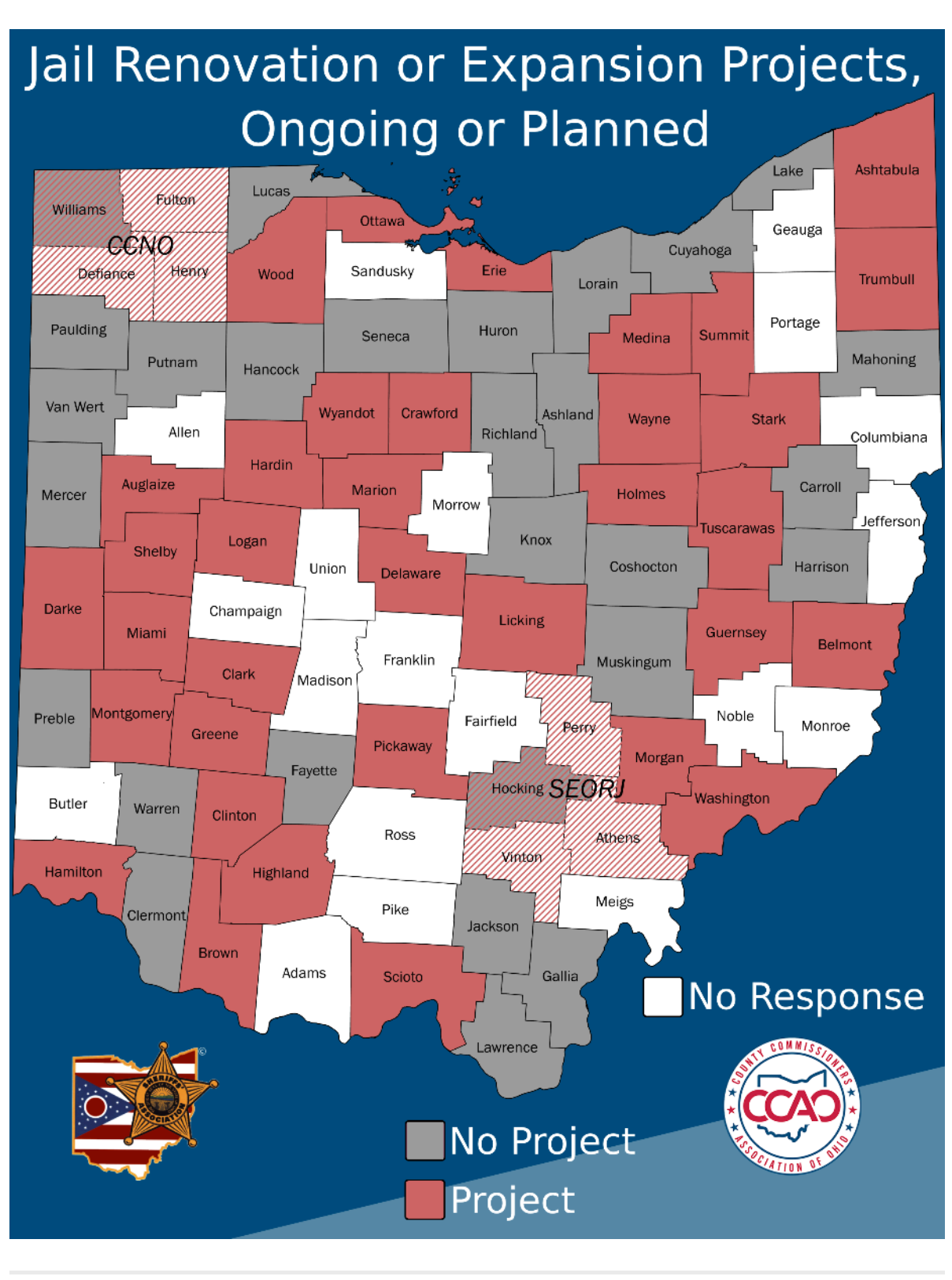
In addition to the significant increase during the gap between the two surveys, the new survey found that individual project costs were coming in 41.5% higher than the initial quote, on average.

County jails are facing pressures due to the rising need for drug addiction and mental health service provision to keep inmates healthy and an increasing population of female inmates. Those two factors, along with the need to enhance safety for corrections staff, are the primary drivers of jail projects.

The survey's findings support CCAO's request for $250 million through the capital budget for jail construction and renovation. This funding is currently contained in House Bill 2, recently passed by the House. CCAO encourages our members to engage with your senators concerning jail needs in your county and the findings in the CCAO-BSSA survey.

If you have questions concerning the survey, please contact CCAO Research Analyst Nick Ciolli at nciolli@ccao.org.





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:

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STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Residential Broadband Program challenge window open again, to last until April 19

The challenge process has begun for the second round of the Ohio Residential Broadband Expansion Grant program and will continue until April 19.

The challenge process is an important part of the program as it ensures that broadband maps are accurate so funds can be better allocated to where they're needed.

You can access the maps, challenge forms, and other necessary information on BroadbandOhio's website.

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.

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.

Registration is free and can be completed here.

Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation bringing Ohio Safety Congress to Columbus in March

Get ready to attend the 2024 Ohio Safety Congress & Expo® (OSC24®) on March 27-29 at the Greater Columbus Convention Center where you will LEARN, SOLVE, and CONNECT with leading experts! Knowledgeable presenters will focus on issues directly related to the challenges you face each day. Find your favorite sessions in the full educational program. ***Sessions will apply toward the BWC 2-hour annual safety training requirement for Group Rating and Group Retro members***.

In addition, the keynote line-up consists of two diverse speakers, Brett Culp and Eduardo Garcia. They both have amazing messages you won't want to miss.

Can't make it to Columbus? A select number of the sessions will be livestreamed so you can watch from anywhere!

Don't miss this opportunity to strengthen your workplace safety practices and protect your most valuable asset – your employees. Please attend OSC24® and take steps toward a safer, healthier, and more productive workplace.

All Ohio Future Fund now accepting grant applications

The Ohio Department of Development opened the application portal for the All Ohio Future Fund as of Friday, February 16.

The $750 million fund was created in the state budget to support economic development and site preparation. Applications are competitive and will be accepted on a rolling basis until funding is depleted. Applicants are advised to review the Indication of Interest checklist, narrative form, and data form for guidance on submitting a site development proposal.

More information is available on the program website. If you have questions concerning the All Ohio Future Fund, please contact CCAO Senior Policy Analyst Jon Honeck.

Guidelines released, application window to open on Friday for fairs grant program

Last week, the Department of Development released the guidelines concerning the County and Independent Fairs Grant Program, created as part House Bill 33, the state's main operating budget. The program is funded with $10 million in FY 2024. All county and independent agricultural societies that hold an annual exhibition to promote agricultural interests of the county and the state will be eligible to apply.

This program focuses funding on capital expenditure projects with the purpose of increasing fair access or economic impact within their local fairgrounds. Eligible projects the grants can be used for include but are not limited to:

- New/upgraded machinery/equipment.
- Technology improvements.
- Property/Structure – Construction, improvements, or enhancements.
- Property/Structure – Repairs or renovations.
- Assets with useful life of more than one year.
- Road/access improvements.
- Upgrades to electrical or sanitation systems.
- Grandstand purchases or renovations.
- ADA accommodation improvements.

The application portal will open on March 1, 2024 (this Friday), and will close on April 30, 2024. The award amount will be granted equally among eligible applicants or by total project cost; whichever is less. The applicant, if granted funding, will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the Department of Development within 60 days of receiving notification. The funds will then be awarded after completion of the project and as a one-time payment.

Additional information, including reporting guidelines and where to apply for the program, are available on the Department of Development's website.

Grant writing workshop to be held in Columbus on March 21 & 22

On March 21-22, Grant Writing USA will host a workshop in Columbus on how to write grant applications for governmental grants and grants from foundations.

The first day will feature instruction on how to articulate the community need, how to develop credibility as an applicant, and how to justify your need. The second day will include instruction on how to develop a grant budget, how to condense your grant summary into a one-pager, and how to locate and track grant opportunities.

Registration costs $495 per attendee but using the code "ASSN" at registration will save your county $30 per registration.

You can register and learn more about Grant Writing USA 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, and on occasion other stories may be highlighted as well.

Northwest District

Maui Sands owners in talks with county officials

Sandusky Register, February 15, 2024

Sinmier LLC, the current owners for the long-closed Maui Sands water park, are in talks with Erie County officials about obtaining demolition funds to improve the property.

An announcement of an agreement isn't expected anytime soon, several officials told the Register.

"We're in conversations," said Caleb Stidham, Erie County's treasurer, and a member of the board of the county's land bank. "We're not ready to announce we've been able to make any decisions."

Stidham and Matt Old, an Erie County commissioner, explained there could be money available to help Sinmier if the company made a serious proposal, including local demolition funds and additional state demolition funds that the county could apply for.

A mix of options has been discussed, including salvaging the hotel, said Eric Wobser, CEO of the Greater Sandusky Partnership.

Northeast District

Lake County commissioners amend public comment rules — again

News Herald, February 21, 2024

The Lake County commissioners recently adopted a resolution amending established rules for the orderly presentation of public comments during regular meetings — again.

Commissioners John Plecnik and Richard Regovich voted in favor of the measure. Commissioner John Hamercheck voted not to approve the resolution.

The action now ensures that remarks are restricted to one portion, curtailed from five to three minutes, per individual, per meeting. However, the "baseline" time may be extended at the discretion of the board president.

The previously uncapped set second portion — which took place at the conclusion of agenda items, departmental reports, and old and new business — has been eliminated.

The board emphasized that public comment is freely welcomed in a manner that does not disrupt, delay or interfere with necessary business.

Central District

Can county commissioners raise or lower taxes?

Perry Tribune, February 14, 2024

Article by Perry County Commissioner Ben Carpenter

Everyone who owns land in Perry County has received their real estate tax bills, and I am sure no one is happy about the increases they are seeing.

I hope to provide facts about real estate taxes that may shed light on how increases happen and dispel the myth that your county commissioners are responsible for raising or lowering these taxes. In a nutshell:

Can county commissioners raise or lower taxes?

- The board of county commissioners has no authority to raise or lower your taxes.
- The county treasurer has no authority to raise or lower your taxes.
- The County Auditor has no authority to raise or lower your taxes.
- The County Auditor is responsible for conducting the appraisal process on the value of your property.

If you disagree with the county auditor's value appraisal you can file a request for revision at the auditor's office to make your case with the Board of Revisions. Here is a link to the county auditor's PDF outlining how filing a request works and best ways to present your case.

Over the past few years, you have seen real estate values increase dramatically. Increases in property values, however, do NOT mean that the corresponding property taxes will increase proportionally.

In 1976, the Ohio General Assembly, through House Bill 920, created a process for assessing real property values and their corresponding property tax rates. Whether property values increase or decrease in a neighborhood, tax rates are adjusted to prevent significant changes in the taxes owed. This is known as the "effective tax rate." Generally, tax bills will remain constant even though the property value may have increased or decreased. Tax bills may see modest increases based on inside millage, new levies, or even new construction. Keep reading for an explanation of "inside millage."

Southwest District

Miami County OKs annexation, but urges residents to fight, state to change law

Dayton Daily News, February 23, 2024

The Miami County commissioners Thursday voted "reluctantly" to approve the annexation of 296.236 acres in Bethel Twp. to Huber Heights after being told there was no legal means to deny the annexation petition.

With the vote, the petition filed by Jill Stemen Tangeman, agent, on behalf of landowners GLJ Holding Co. (204.215 acres); Gary Lavy (56.153 acres); and Carol Marchelletto (35.867 acres) will next go to the Huber Heights City Council for consideration.

Miami County Commission President Greg Simmons said commissioners met Wednesday with an annexation lawyer from Bricker Graydon of Lebanon and were advised denying the petition would be futile.

In 2022, the 2nd District Court of Appeals ordered the county commission to approve a 260.360-acre annexation request in the same area of the township in southern Miami County, saying there was no legal reason for commissioners to deny it.

But the Huber Heights council did not vote on that petition within legal time limits, and now the issue is before the parties again.

With the opinion and legal advice, county Commissioner Wade Westfall said the commission again will encourage the Ohio General Assembly "to have a robust discussion" about annexations that affect local residents and their transportation, schools and other services.

"The board is profoundly disappointed and concerned with the inaction of the State of Ohio and its legislative representatives to preserve the rights of township residents impacted by Expedited Type 2 annexations (such as the 296.236 acres)," the commissioners said in a written statement.

Southeast District

Reporting good news: Arbaugh Project receives funding

Jackson-Vinton Courier, February 22, 2024

During Tuesday's Vinton County Board of Commissioner's meeting, commissioners announced that the county received a grant for $431,750 through the Appalachian Community Development Grant Program to be used for the Arbaugh Road water project along with $421,250 Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Grant Program funding and in-kind work and engineering from LE-AX Water District for a total project cost of $881,000 — that's big money.

The Arbaugh Project consists of areas in Vinton and Brown Townships that a water company does not yet serve.

LE-AX Water District General Manager John Simpson said the water line though the line will serve about eight homes and may offer opportunities for economic development down the line as folks tap into this infrastructure.

"Line will help eight homes, but there is some other potential along the way — once water is available people will build," he said.

Simpson said the project is on the fast track — plans are partially drawn, and the engineers are working on the final layout and easements, too — so the bids will go out within the next 60 days. Folks will start moving dirt around later this year so that the project can be 2-mile water line that will go over hill and dale should be completed by spring of 2025.

"We are definitely going to fast-track this as much as we can," Simpson said.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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MARCH 1
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

MARCH 15
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

MARCH 20
Northwest District Meeting, Fulton County

MARCH 21
CORSA Renewal Meeting

MARCH 21
CCAO General Government Committee Meeting

MARCH 22
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

DID YOU KNOW?

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Sandusky County

Fremont, the seat of Sandusky County, is home to one of the first presidential libraries in the United States.

In 1873, Rutherford B. Hayes moved into a family estate in Fremont called Spiegel Grove. He would be elected president three years later. After he died in 1893, his son, Webb Hayes, began making plans to open a library and museum dedicated to his father, one that would make President Hayes' papers and books publicly available.

Spiegel Grove became the home of the Hayes Memorial when it was created on Memorial Day 1916. More space was needed and over the years several additions have been made to better serve the public through library and exhibit space. The complex has since been renamed the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center.

The Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center, like the William McKinley Presidential Library and Museum in Stark County and the Garfield National Historical Site in Cuyahoga County are not part of the presidential library system maintained by the National Archives and Records Administration.

You can learn more about the Rutherford B. Hayes Presidential Center at its website.

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