March 11, 2024

Wayne County Commissioners Jonathan Hofstetter, Sue Snail, and Ron Amstutz recently got an inside-look at the Wayne County Courthouse's clock tower.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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CCAO conducting survey on municipal inmates in county jails

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio is conducting a membership survey to gauge how counties across the state are approaching an emerging issue in their county jails: the housing of municipal inmates.

CCAO has heard from some members that their jails, already crowded, are having additional strain placed upon them by municipalities in their counties sending inmates to the county jail instead of a municipal holding facility. While some counties may have agreements in place regarding the municipality paying to house inmates at the county facility, others may not.

To better evaluate the issue and potentially work with the General Assembly on a legislative solution to this issue, CCAO is asking members to respond to this survey to better educate the Policy Team on the scope of the issue.

If you have any questions regarding this survey, please contact Kyle Petty, Managing Director of Policy or Nick Ciolli, Research Analyst.

2024 Ohio Counties Scholarship now available

Throughout the state, there will be one scholarship offered to students in each CCAO District (Central, Southwest, Southeast, Northwest and Northeast). The award amount is $2,000 and is payable to the student when our office has received confirmation of your attendance at a university, community college, training program or vocational school. Applicants should plan on a career in public service in Ohio. Last year, we had over 100 applicants from 53 of Ohio's 88 counties! This year, we are looking forward to even more applicants.

The deadline to apply for this scholarship is Friday May 3, 2024.

To download scholarship materials, please visit ccao.org/scholarship

If you have questions, please email scholarships@ccao.org.

Central District to hold meeting on May 3

The Central CCAO/CEAO 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:

RUMPKE

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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SERB releases Wage Settlement Report, finds majority of public-sector contracts featured wage increases

Last week, the Ohio State Employment Relations Board (SERB) released its annual Wage Settlement Report. The report analyzes the overall wage increase percentage and other monetary incentives that were included in public-sector labor contracts in Ohio during calendar year 2023.

The 14-page report contains a lot of good information regarding contracts from across the state and is worth reading. For those who do not have the time, CCAO is highlighting a few notable points.

- About 87% of labor contracts negotiated feature wage increases, with an average of 3.75% in 2023, 3.09% in 2024, and 2.93% in 2025.
- County jurisdictions had the highest negotiated percentage wage increase in 2023 and 2024 (4.20% and 3.27%, respectively).
- The bargaining unit that received the highest percent wage increase across all three years was "Police (Safety/Security)".

SERB defines the county jurisdiction as "all county-level employers," and defines the police bargaining unit as any bargaining unit that includes uniformed police officers, sergeants, lieutenants, captains across all jurisdictions, county sheriff deputies, corrections officers, security guards, park rangers, safety dispatchers, and E911 dispatchers.

You can view past Wage Settlement Reports and other SERB publications on the board's website.

OneOhio Recovery Foundation set to release RFP today, to host webinar series on abatement strategies through March

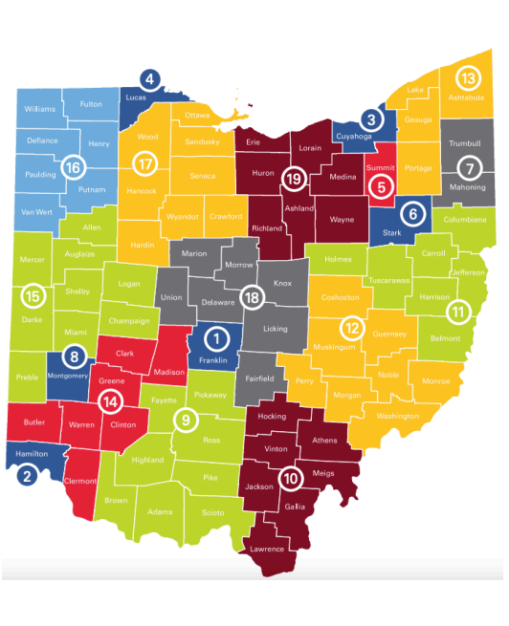
The OneOhio Recovery Foundation, created to administer the majority of opioid settlement funds that come to Ohio, has launched the first round of grantmaking, set to distribute $51 million across the foundation's regions.

The Foundation has released the Request for Proposals for the first round and has opened the OneOhio Grant Portal for registration. The portal will not begin accepting applications until April 2, but prospective applicants can use the period before April to familiarize themselves with the RFP and the grant portal. After the application itself opens on April 2, entities will have until May 3 (roughly one month) to submit applications.

The Foundation also announced it will hold webinars it to support applicants as they prepare funding requests. Each webinar will focus on an abatement strategy that grant applicants may apply for funding under. The next webinar will take place ***TODAY***, March 11. The complete schedule is:

- March 11 (2:30pm) - Recovery Supports
- March 20 (10:30am) - Prevention

In addition to these webinars, the Foundation will also be hosting regional information sessions to provide more information to individuals and entities interested in learning more about the grant cycle.



These events will be held in-person and do not appear to have an option for virtual attendance. The current schedule is:

- March 15 (Noon): Region 2 Session
- March 18 (5:00pm): Region 7 Session
- April 11 (3:30pm): Region 1 Session
- April 22 (10:00am): Region 17 Session

The address of each of these sessions, as well as the registration link, can be found on the Foundation's website.

Please visit the OneOhio Recovery Foundation's website for more information concerning the grants and the webinar series. If you have any questions concerning the grants, please contact Apply@oneohiofoundation.com.

OACHBA, Auditor of State release Behavioral Health Handbook

The Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities, in partnership with the Auditor of State, recently released an updated copy of their Behavioral Health Handbook. The handbook is a comprehensive reference guide that identifies and explains the laws and regulations that address the operational duties and responsibilities of Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Boards in Ohio including a detailed overview of fiscal and auditing requirements.

As noted by Auditor of State Keith Faber in the handbook, the Auditor of State's review does not constitute a legal opinion, so counties and ADAMH boards should still consult with their county prosecutor or other legal counsel with legal questions concerning the content of the handbook.

CCAO encourages our members to familiarize themselves with the handbook as recent law changes regarding ADAMH boards and the ongoing review of property tax law at the state level has increased the importance of an up-to-date familiarity with the functions of these key levy agencies.

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 Bureau of Workers' Compensation bringing Ohio Safety Congress to Columbus on March 27-29

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.

OEDA, along with the Department of Development and the Montrose Group, to host All Ohio Future Fund webinar next week

Next Monday, March 18, the Ohio Economic Development Association, in conjunction with the Department of Development and the Montrose Group, will host a webinar about the $750 million All Ohio Future Fund.

The All Ohio Future Fund is intended to increase Ohio's inventory of project-ready economic development sites. Counties can play a prominent role in the fund, as counties are not only eligible applicants but also must approve of any application for funds from an entity within their jurisdiction.

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

Ohio Land Bank Association to hold 13th Annual Conference in April

The 13th Annual Ohio Land Bank Conference will be held at the John S. Knight Center in Akron, Ohio, from April 24-26.

This year's conference covers a diverse range of sessions, from housing strategies and urban revitalization to leadership development. Highlighting practical knowledge for community revitalization, the event also features engaging receptions and a number of unique mobile tours, fostering networking and collaboration among attendees.

For more details on session topics and scheduling, visit the event's official site.

State accepting county and independent fairs grant applications

The Department of Development is now accepting applications for 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 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.

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.

County-Legislature Relationships

Ohio senate leader visits Ashtabula County

Star Beacon, March 5, 2024

Ashtabula County business and political leaders had a chance to share thoughts with Ohio Senate President Matt Huffman on Monday morning.

Huffman shared a bit of his personal history and then opened the floor for questions, concerns and general information.

Several area business and economic development leaders expressed ideas regarding bureaucratic challenges in state government, ways to improve education and ideas to improve state services.

Huffman said he has been a lawyer based in Lima for 40 years and has been involved in state government since 2006. He said he believes the state legislature has improved the climate for business and countered the notion of Ohio as a "Rust Belt" state.

"Ohio is actually a very wealthy state," Huffman said.

He said local government leaders ideally run for state offices to continue to improve state government with quality people who can use their expertise to benefit more people.

Northwest District

Activate Allen County keeps Lima healthy

LimaOhio, March 3, 2024

Kayla Monfort often hears from residents who feel ignored, so the co-director from Active Allen County started organizing block parties to bring resources to people where they live.

The parties offer bounce houses, live music and free food as an incentive for people to take health assessments or get a referral for health problems that may otherwise go untreated — and rebuild trust between residents and social service agencies.

"Sometimes they don't want to go to the hospital, or they don't want to go certain places for services," Monfort said, "so we bring a lot of those services to them in the form of block parties."

The community health collaborative formed in 2012 to improve poor health outcomes in Allen County, which has seen its ranking on key health metrics rise from 83rd to 60th out of Ohio's 88 counties since Activate's founding.

Monfort and co-director Josh Unterbrink act as liaisons between partner agencies such as Mercy Health, Lima Memorial Health System and Allen County Public Health to implement a community health improvement, which is updated every three years, and track their progress toward meeting those goals.

Northeast District

Approval of updated 911 final plan moves forward

Morning Journal News, March 3, 2024

Approval of the updated Columbiana County 911 final plan now rests with the municipalities and townships across the county.

The plan requires approval by the county commissioners and then municipalities and townships representing 60 percent of the county population before being submitted to the state by the April 3 deadline.

The county's six-member 911 Program Review Committee voted unanimously last week to approve the plan after adding in the financial costs for each of the five Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and the county Emergency Management Agency which is a back-up location. The PSAPs include the county sheriff's office, and Salem, Columbiana, East Liverpool and East Palestine police departments.

County Emergency Management Agency Deputy Director and 911 Coordinator Brian Rutledge reviewed what was tweaked in the plan since the last meeting, including the numbers for PSAP costs. The numbers represent the costs of dispatchers, utilities and other costs each of those entities must pay for their 911 location. Those costs are shouldered by those communities, not county 911.

Central District

Coming home after prison is tough. For rural Ohioans, it can be even harder

WYSO, February 27, 2024

Brenda Hart was released from West Central Community Correctional Facility in Marysville, 30 miles north of Columbus, in November. But she wasn't able to go home, at least not in the way she hoped.

She couldn't find housing in Marengo in Morrow County. Hart had to look 40 minutes away to Marion, where the nearest homeless shelter is. It's helped her get back on her feet, but she wants to be back to her hometown.

"That way I can be closer to my mom. My mom has lung cancer," Hart said.

Each year, around 18,000 Ohioans leave prison and return to their communities. They have to find housing, secure employment and rebuild a sense of stability. It's a difficult transition. And it can be even harder for those returning to a small town.

The infrastructure needed to assist people like Hart just isn't in Morrow County, said Tori Dimick, a reentry coordinator at Southeast Healthcare. She hopes to build a better support system for the formerly incarcerated with the help of a number of county organizations and agencies.

Southwest District

Commissioners, Extension representatives recognize Highland County 4-H Week

WCPO 9, March 1, 2024

Highland County commissioners David Daniels, Brad Roades and Terry Britton proclaimed March 3-9 as Highland County 4-H Week during their Wednesday, March 6 meeting.

Accepting the proclamation were Ohio State University Extension Educators of 4-H Youth Development Kathy Bruynis and Danielle Combs, along with local 4-H members Sydney Hamilton, Kathryn Ogden and Maddy Wiseman.

According to Bruynis, all three 4-H members are Junior Leaders, camp counselors and serve on the Ohio 4-H Teen Leadership Council.

Hamilton received a round of applause from those in attendance, as Bruynis announced that Hamilton is being inducted into the Ohio 4-H Teen Hall of Fame Saturday, March 9 during the Ohio 4-H Conference.

The Extension educators described Hamilton as "a one-of-a-kind camp counselor, mentor and leader [who] has become an excellent role model for all 4-H members through her participation in Teen Leadership Council, statewide camps and 4-H committees" in a Facebook post.

Daniels asked how Hamilton qualified for that honor.

"I think being a well-rounded 4-H member and just trying to help the next generation come up and be able to have same opportunities that I've had in 4-H," Hamilton said. "I'm just helping out where I can."

Bruynis said that only four teens from across the entire state are selected each year, and Hamilton is the second individual from Highland County to receive this recognition. (Sara Newsome was inducted into the Hall of Fame in March 2022.)

Southeast District

Belmont County DJFS looks to improve services

Times Leader, March 4, 2024

Jeff Felton, Belmont County Department of Job and Family Services director, told county commissioners last week that his office is implementing a new practice model called "Practice in Action Together."

"Our statewide association, Public Children's Services Association of Ohio, has been working for a couple of years on a practice model for child welfare, which we don't currently have throughout the state," he said.

Felton said the new model focuses on building relationships between clients and Children Services staff.

"It really is a relationship-driven model. It's the way we should practice mutual respect, mutual decision making. It's really a collaborative effort between ourselves and the families that we serve because, ultimately, parents want their kids to do well. They want them to do well in school. They want them to be safe. They may be struggling with addiction, their own history of trauma. These barriers get in the way, and the more we act in an authoritative manner, the more we're pushing these things away rather than acting in a much more collaborative effort with our families. So that's the basics behind this model is to really work collaboratively with mutual respect, dignity, honesty and openness," Felton noted.

He said building relationships with the parents and getting to know them better is especially important.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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MARCH 11
CCAO Justice and Public Safety Committee Meeting

MARCH 15
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

MARCH 19
Ohio Primary Election

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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Coshocton County

The small Coshocton County community of Chili was the birthplace of an American health pioneer.

In 1864, the Crile family of Chili welcomed a son, George Washington Crile. He would go on to study medicine at what is now Case Western Reserve University (then called Wooster Medical College) and completed additional studies in the European capitals of London, Paris, and Vienna.

Crile served in the medical corps during the Spanish-American War and World War I. After World War I, he was one of the founders of the Cleveland Clinic, still regarded as one of the best medical facilities in the world.

As a surgeon, Crile performed the first successful direct blood transfusion, helped innovate the field of balanced anesthesia, and was an early advocate for the use of X-ray machines.

In honor of his achievements, Crile had a cargo ship, the SS George Crile, named after him during World War II and has a small lunar crater named after him.

You can read more about the life of George Washington Crile here.

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