April 8, 2024

At its March meeting, the CCAO Board of Directors wore blue in recognition of Child Abuse Prevention Month, held annually in April. April 10 is designated as Wear Blue Day by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio.

You can learn more about Child Abuse Prevention Month on the Ohio Children's Trust Fund website.

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Notice of in-person Small County Affairs Committee meeting

The Small County Affairs Committee will be meeting in-person on Tuesday, April 30 at 10:30am. The meeting will take place at Parks Edge Event Center located in Jackson, Ohio. We will be joined by JobsOhio, the Office of Budget Management, and Ohio Southeast Economic Development to hear an update from the entities followed by a Q&A.

Lunch will be provided, please RSVP to Nedra Benson at nbenson@ccao.org as soon as possible for planning purposes.

The agenda for the meeting is below but may be subject to change.

1. **Welcome and Roll Call - 10:30 AM**
2. **Office of Budget Management Update - 10:35 AM**
   1. Assistant Director, Christina Frass
   2. Legislative Liaison, Jake Neff
3. **JobsOhio Update - 11:15 AM**
   1. Director of Government Affairs, Drew Cooper
   2. Manager of Government Affairs, RJ Mancini
4. **Ohio Southeast Economic Development - 12:00 PM**
   1. Vice President, Katy Farber
5. **Adjourn - 12:10 PM**
6. **Lunch - 12:15 PM**

A letter to NACo Members from First Vice President James Gore regarding presidential leadership and committee appointments

Thank you for your dedication to your county and counties across America through your membership in the National Association of Counties (NACo).

While you serve your county in vast ways, I ask you to strongly consider submitting your name for a leadership position at NACo. **Together, we can achieve results for our counties and the people we serve each and every day.**

These appointments are for:

- Policy Steering Committee chairs and vice chairs and subcommittee chairs and vice chairs
- Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) and Rural Action Caucus (RAC) chairs and vice chairs
- Standing Committee chairs and vice chairs
- Ad Hoc Committee, Task Force and Advisory Board chairs and vice chairs
- At-Large NACo Board Directors

Below is more information about each committee. Each term is for one year, July–July. Committee leaders must cover their own travel and conference expenses.

IMPORTANT: ***Policy steering committee membership is not a part of this application process.*** *State associations of counties are responsible for nominating general members of policy steering committees.*

To become a member of a policy steering committee you must contact your state association at rgarrett@ccao.org. She will submit the nomination to NACo.

To be considered for a presidential appointment to any of the following committees or as an at-large director for the NACo Board of Directors, you MUST complete the online application by 11:59 p.m. on April 26, 2024.

Policy Steering Committee Leadership

The 10 policy steering committees will each have a leadership team consisting of a chair, an appropriate number of vice chairs, and subcommittee chairs and vice chairs. Applicants who have been active members of the steering committee will be given preference in consideration for these appointments. The applicant should be willing to help coordinate leadership conference calls, develop meeting agendas and participate in outreach with federal officials, if necessary. These appointments are for one year.

LUCC and RAC Leadership

The Large Urban County Caucus and Rural Action Caucus will each have a chair and an appropriate number of vice chairs. Applicants who have been active members of these caucuses will be given preference in consideration for these appointments. These appointments are for one year.

At-Large Appointments to the NACo Board of Directors

Each president appoints 10 at-large directors to the NACo Board of Directors for a one-year term. These appointments are to add balance to the Board with respect to any inequities between urban, suburban and rural, gender, geography and minority representation. These appointments are for one year.

Standing Committees

The Standing Committees provide important feedback and facts to the NACo Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

- **Information Technology**. Advises on information technology issues and provides oversight on NACo information technology projects. (Appoints the chair and vice chairs for a one-year term.)
- **Programs and Services**. Advises the development and evaluation of programs and services for NACo members. (Appoints the chair and vice chairs for a one-year term.)
- **Membership.** Actively recruits and retains member counties, parishes and boroughs to advance NACo's number one performance priority of county official engagement. (Appoints the chair and vice chairs for a one-year term.)

Ad Hoc Committees, Advisory Boards and Task Forces

The Ad Hoc Committees are as follows:

- **Arts and Culture Commission.** Demonstrates how the arts can be used by county officials to promote economic development and provide solutions to many of the challenges that they face, through workshop sessions, field trips, special publications and its annual Arts and Culture awards, which recognize counties working to foster an environment where arts and culture can thrive to create more livable communities. (Appoints the chair and vice-chairs for a one-year term.)
- **FutureTech Subcommittee.** Provides a framework for gathering, managing and analyzing data to inform county decisions. (Appoints the chair and vice-chairs for a one-year term.)
- **Resilient Counties Advisory Board.** Provides information, guidance and support to the NACo Resilient Counties Initiative. (Appoints the chair and vice-chairs for a one-year term.)
- **Healthy Counties Advisory Board.** Provides information, guidance and support to the NACo Healthy Counties Initiative. (Appoints the chair and vice-chairs for a one-year term.)
- **Immigration Reform Task Force.** Educates Congress, the administration and NACo members on the impact of immigration on counties and helps advocate for NACo's priorities. (Appoints the chair and vice-chairs for a one-year term.)
- **International Economic Development Task Force.** Provides information, guidance and support for international economic development activities, including tools for county officials. (Appoints the chair and vice-chairs for a one-year term.)
- **Veterans and Military Services Committee.** Engages NACo and its members to develop and highlight county best practices and policies to promote innovative programs, services and benefits for military service members, veterans and their families. (Appoints the chair and vice chairs for a one-year term.)

The presidential appointments application form must be completed by anyone who would like to be considered for a leadership appointment on a steering, standing or ad hoc committee for the 2024–2025 presidential year. The online application form is available here.

The deadline for submitting your application is **11:59 p.m. on April 26, 2024**.

Thank you in advance for your interest in serving, and I look forward to receiving your application.

Please direct any questions to committee@naco.org, or you may also reach out to Robin Garrett at rgarrett@ccao.org to request a nomination to become a policy steering committee member or for further assistance.

Lorain County releases Strategic Action Plan

Last month, Lorain County released its Strategic Action Plan that will guide the county through 2035. The plan, accessible here, was developed after seven months of community engagement and was unveiled at the "Future Summit" two weeks ago.

The plan was prepared in conjunction with Future iQ, a strategic planning consulting company. The company has previously worked in Ohio with Lima and Trotwood, as well as several other local governments across the United States.

You can read more about the Strategic Action Plan here.

FINAL WEEK: 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. ***Please submit responses no later than April 10.***

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.

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner:

JobsOhio
Ohio's Economic Development Corporation

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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OACBHA Announces Leadership Transition

The following is a press release from one of the state associations for county levy-funded entities.

After 22 years of dedicated service to the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA), CEO, Cheri L. Walter, has announced her planned retirement. Since Cheri was appointed as the first CEO of OACBHA she has been integral in creating and leading the organization. Her retirement marks the end of an era, while opening the door to a new chapter and opportunities for OACBHA.

Cheri's service to OACBHA began as three former behavioral health associations decided to merge into one, to ensure that local ADAMHS boards were speaking with one voice. Cheri established the Association's office and worked with the executive council and the members to establish a working vision, mission, values, and goals as the Association began its work as one entity.

Throughout her tenure Cheri helped boards navigate the many changes to Ohio's behavioral health system. This included seeing seven Community Mental Health, seven Alcohol and Drug Addiction Services Boards, and 43 Mental Health and Addiction Boards become 50 combined Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards serving all 88 counties; the lifting of Medicaid from Boards to the state; Medicaid Expansion; dealing with Ohio's opiate and addiction epidemic; and working to address Ohio's mental health crisis. During her time as the CEO at OACBHA, she has helped Ohio's ADAMH Boards to continue to evolve and meet the demands of local communities.

Under Cheri's Leadership, OACBHA with its member Boards, created the Culture of Quality peer certification program, that provides for Boards to be certified by ensuring that they are meeting over 150 standards that look at fiscal, program, and operational functions, setting new benchmarks for board operations.

Cheri also worked to establish a yearly, nationally recognized opiate conference, and an annual recovery conference that allows individuals in recovery to celebrate and strengthen their recovery.

Throughout her career, Cheri has been open about her recovery, and has been an unwavering advocate for families and children needing help, along with celebrating individuals who have experienced mental illness and/or addiction who are now in recovery. Cheri has also worked to reduce stigma and normalize recovery.

OACBHA would like to express its heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to Cheri for her outstanding contributions and leadership. Her collaboration with behavioral health stakeholders and policymakers across Ohio has been instrumental in advancing our mission and achieving positive outcomes for Ohioan's dealing with mental health and addiction issues.

Cheri's retirement will take place in July 2024, with the beginning of the new state fiscal year.

After a months-long screening and interview process, the OACBHA Executive Council is pleased to announce that Liz Henrich has been selected to serve as the Association's next Chief Executive Officer. Henrich will assume the role in July.

Liz has been employed at OACBHA since the fall of 2006, most recently serving as an Associate CEO. During her tenure at OACBHA she has spearheaded advocacy activities, managed multiple grants, guided policy discussions, coordinated conferences and events, and established lasting relationships with partners and stakeholders. She has a wealth of expertise and experience working with Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health Boards and stakeholders throughout the mental health and addiction system.

Liz brings strong policy and operational knowledge to the role. She has a bachelor's degree in business from Carroll College in Helena, MT and a master's degree in public policy and management from the Ohio State University. Like many others, Liz's family experience with mental illness and addiction helps drive her passion for this work.

Cheri and Liz are committed to working with the OACBHA Membership to ensure a smooth and successful handover of leadership for the association.

ODJFS to host Gen Z career fair on May 8, employers encouraged to register

Ohio has more than 866,000 working-age individuals in the "Gen Z" generation (age 27 and younger). If your organization is interested in tapping the talents of young workers just starting their careers, consider participating in the statewide OhioMeansJobs.com Gen Z Virtual Career Fair.

The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services is hosting this event from 2-6 p.m. on **Wednesday, May 8**. Ohio employers of all sizes, industries, and from all parts of the state are invited to participate. You can advertise specific job openings and even interview candidates on the spot, for full-time, part-time, summer, or internship positions.

To learn more or to register, email EmploymentServices@jfs.ohio.gov by Wednesday, May 1. Counties are encouraged to register themselves and to share the notice of this event to employers in their communities.

The fair will take place during In-Demand Jobs Week, a statewide celebration of the jobs, industries, and skills that are in-demand in Ohio.

US Treasury Department releases new ARPA FAQs, to host webinars in early May

The National Association of Counties has informed CCAO that on March 29 the U.S. Department of Treasury released new FAQs related to their Obligation Interim Final Rule (IFR) for the ARPA State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF). See new FAQ section 17, "Obligation," addresses how recipients can obligate funds by December 31, 2024. **Funds that are not obligated 12/31/2024 must be returned to the US Treasury.**

Of note, the FAQs address the major concerns NACo voiced to Treasury concerning the Obligation IFR, particularly around payroll, reclassification of funds and the obligation estimates. Key highlights include:

Personnel Costs (FAQs 17.7-17.8)

- Counties may use SLFRF funds for personnel costs for **any eligible position through December 31, 2026, that was filed prior to December 31, 2024** – *This is a deviation from the Obligation IFR, which stated SLFRF funds may only be used to cover personnel costs for individuals responsible for reporting/compliance for SLFRF.*
- After December 31, 2024, if the county experiences turnover of personnel, it may continue to pay different personnel in the same job position (the position must have been established by December 31, 2024)
  - Counties are allowed to reorganize eligible positions after December 31, 2024, but **may not use SLFRF funds to cover any new positions after that date**
- If a county decides to use SLFRF funds for personnel costs, it is required to complete the following steps:
  - Estimate the amount of SLFRF funds the county anticipates using
  - Identify a reasonable justification for the estimate
  - Report that estimate to Treasury by January 31, 2025 (quarterly reporters) and April 30, 2025 (annual reporters)
  - Report on December 31, 2026, how much was actually spent on personnel costs – if the county does not spend up to the full estimate, **you will not be required to return the remainder of the SLFRF funds so long as they are expended for another SLFRF eligible purpose**
- Treasury considers personnel costs to include all salary and wages, covered benefits and payroll taxes

Legal and Administrative Costs

- As previously indicated by Treasury, recipients may obligate SLFRF funds in 2024 for use in 2025 and 2026 for legal and administrative costs, including personnel costs, related to the following: reporting and compliance requirements; single audit costs; records retention and internal control; property standards; environmental requirements; and civil rights.
- Eligible costs include reporting and compliance requirements, such **as monitoring the activities of a subrecipient** to ensure that the subaward is used for authorized purposes and providing relevant information to the subrecipients
- If you plan to obligate funds for legal and administrative costs, please review FAQs 17.10 – 17.13. **The deadline for reporting the estimate of future legal and administrative expenses in the Project and Expenditure Report has been extended to July 31, 2024 for quarterly reporters and April 30, 2025 for annual reporters.**

Subrecipients (FAQ 17.18)

- Subrecipients are not subject to the December 31, 2024 obligation deadline – *This remains the same from the Obligation IFR*
- Subrecipients do not have to take additional steps to obligate SLFRF funds after entering into a contract with a county

Revenue Loss

- The same definition of obligation applies to funds under the revenue loss category

Change Orders and Contract Contingencies (FAQ 17.16)

- Generally, SLFRF funds cannot be re-obligated after the obligation deadline of 12/31/2024, however, if a contract entered into before that date expressly provides for change orders or contingencies, the recipient may use SLFRF funds to cover increased costs attributable to such change orders or contingencies.
- Recipients may cover the cost of amendments to contracts if the amended contract is substantially the same scope and same purpose as the contract that was incurred by 12/31/2024.
- Recipients may estimate the amount that may be necessary to cover changes or contingencies through the expenditure period and include that amount in the final obligation for the project reported to Treasury as of 12/31/2024, and retain those funds to pay costs covered by the estimate.

Replacement Contracts (FAQ 17.17)

- After the obligation deadline, recipients are permitted to replace a contract or subaward that was entered into prior to 12/31/2024 under the three circumstances outlined in the Obligation IFR, which includes a contractor or subrecipient going out of business. The replacement contract must be within substantially the same scope and purpose as the original contract.

Excess Funds (FAQ 17.19)

- After the December 31, 2024 obligation deadline, a county may have excess funds that were obligated as of the obligation deadline, but not expended on a eligible activity
- If this is the case…**a county may reclassify the SLFRF funds from the original activity to another project that would be eligible under SLFRF guidance, including that the NEW project and costs associated MUST have been incurred by December 31, 2024**
  - **Example:** An Auditor decides a project is not in compliance given it was disproportionate to the amount of harm experienced. A county is allowed to withdraw SLFRF funds from the project and reclassify the funds to workforce training program that the county had initially financed with local funds but is an eligible SLFRF use. *Please note: in order to reclassify SLFRF funds the county must be able to show that these workforce training program costs were incurred prior to December 31, 2024 (eg., by entering into a contract).*

For a link to the revised FAQs, click here.

Treasury will host **recipient webinars on May 8 and 9, 2024** to further explain these and other clarifications. Recipients are strongly encouraged to attend one of these two webinars; the same material will be presented on each date. Recipients may use the links below to register for a webinar:

You can register for the May 8 (10:00am to 11:30am) webinar here, or the May 9 (1:00pm to 2:30pm) webinar here.

CCAO Members with questions should contact Senior Policy Analyst Jon Honeck, jhoneck@ccao.org, 614-220-7982.

Applications for Community Broadband Accelerator Program extended to April 15

The application period to participate in the 2024 BroadbandOhio Community Accelerator Program has been extended until April 15 (next Monday).

The program, conducted in collaboration with Ohio State Extension, is an intensive 10-week educational program designed to boost local communities in their knowledge and resources to better leverage state and federal broadband funding. The end goal of the program is for each "team" (made up of local governments) to produce a community strategic plan for broadband implementation.

Past participants of the Accelerator Program include Ashtabula, Defiance, Henry, Lucas, Monroe, Paulding, Shelby, and Tuscarawas counties have all participated in the past two years, as well as a team comprised of Athens, Hocking, and Perry County and a team comprised of Ohio River Valley counties (Adams, Brown, Clermont, Fayette, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto, and Vinton counties).

Among the topics covered in the program are:

- Community Needs Assessments
- Feasibility Studies
- Regulatory Issues
- Community Outreach & Engagement

A full schedule can be accessed here.

An overview of the program and a copy of the application is accessible here. Completed applications, as well as questions, should be send to Mark.Schade@development.ohio.gov.

US Supreme Court rules on public official private account social media rights

On March 15, the US Supreme Court unanimously decided *Linkde v. Freed* which centered upon whether or not a public official's use of a personal social media account constitutes "state action" governed by the First Amendment.

The case, as well as a companion case, both involved citizens filing First Amendment lawsuits after they were blocked from local officials' personal social media accounts. The issue hinged on whether private social media accounts are attributable to the government entity the official represents. If so, then blocking constituents would be unconstitutional.

The Court decided in favor of local officials in establishing a new constitutional test: in order to be an unconstitutional restriction of free speech, the account must be in use by an official who has authority to speak on behalf of the government entity AND must be exercising that authority when creating the social media post in question.

Generally, this means that if a county employee is using a private social media account and not making official posts with it, it may be permissible for them to block other users.

However, the determination is fact-specific, so broad characterizations of what officials may and may not do should be considered very carefully.

NACo and CCAO encourage counties to familiarize themselves with the Court's ruling. This may also be an appropriate time to reevaluate applicable social media policies that counties may have for employees.

Governor DeWine convenes first meeting of Work Group on Competency Restoration and Diversion

In early March, Governor Mike DeWine announced the creation of a work group made up of stakeholders, practitioners, and other experts to address the pressing challenges of heightened demand for forensic competency restoration and its effects on our local justice systems and state-run psychiatric hospitals. CCAO will be represented on the work group by Jackson County Commissioner Donnie Willis, and we are thankful for the Governor's partnership on this important issue. A full list of the task force members and additional information about the work group can be found here.

On April 3, the work group held its initial meeting and several Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services staff members gave a presentation that provided information on the current state of Ohio's state-run psychiatric hospitals and forensic competency restoration system. Additionally, the work group outlined the following mission tenets:

- Prioritize timely treatment and services;
- Ensure treatment recommendations are appropriate for the individual served and include a least restrictive setting;
- Make recommendations which enhance our ability to sustain a safe milieu for patients and staff; and
- Provide recommendations to our various stakeholders on data-driven decisions to optimize the competency restoration process.

The work group has a quick timeline to provide recommendations to the Governor, in case the recommendations need to be included in the upcoming executive budget proposal. To that end, the work group plans to meet every two weeks and future meetings will have a virtual attendance option.

If you are interested in attending the workgroup meeting in person or virtually, please contact CCAO Managing Director of Policy Kyle Petty at kpetty@ccao.org or 740-503-6088.

State offers accessibility support for county and independent fairs

The Accessible Ohio initiative, launched through Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities, is offering county and independent fairs support to make fairgrounds across the state more accessible and inclusive for guests.

Among the consultation services that Accessible Ohio provides (at no cost), include providing universal changing stations, wheelchair and mobility device rentals and charging stations, American Sign Language interpreters, and relief areas for service animals, among others.

To begin collaboration with Accessible Ohio, you can reach out to AccessibleOhio@ood.ohio.gov or by visiting their 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 Members invited to participate in Montrose Group's 2024 Development Opportunity

A limited number of members of the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) are invited to participate at no cost in the 3rd annual Montrose Group's 2024 Development Opportunity Forum on May 21, 2024, in Columbus, Ohio. The Montrose Group is a leading economic development and public policy advocacy organization, that advises over a dozen communities including several Ohio counties on public policy and economic development matters, companies on corporate site location, and developers on land use entitlements and economic development incentives across Ohio.

The Montrose Group's 2024 Development Opportunity Forum will provide interactive sessions so participants can:

- Learn about global companies and foreign direct investment in the US.
- Engage on how to develop mega-sites primed for billion-dollar projects.
- Discover how the collapse of the office market could create either a "Doom Loop" or an opportunity for the rebirth of aging office sites.
- Uncover how communities are meeting the demand for housing.
- Network with an unprecedented group of public and private sector leaders focused on corporate site location projects.

If you're interested in participating, you can register here. Please note that only the first 50 CCAO members who register will receive the no-cost registration. The Montrose Group 2024 Development Opportunity Forum will be held at the Grand Event Center at 820 Goodale Blvd. in Grandview Heights, Ohio 43212. Professional development credit for the economic development leaders through OEDI credit, lawyers, accounts, and real estate professionals.

If you have any question concerning the program or have trouble registering, please contact Dave Robinson at drobinson@montrosegroupllc.com.

GOPC, OEPA to host Brownfields Conference

On May 7, the Greater Ohio Policy Center, in partnership with the Ohio EPA, will be hosting the 2024 Ohio Brownsfields Conference. The conference will offer three tracks for attendees, each consisting of four panels. The tracks are "Creative Financing for Brownfield Redevelopment"; "The Importance of 'Community' in Brownfields Projects - Tools and Tips for Success"; and "Brownfield Remediation and the Ohio EPA Voluntary Action Program".

Registration is open through April 19 (next Friday) and costs $175 per attendee. The event will be held at the Conference Center at OCLC in Dublin.

You can register for the event here.

2024 Ohio Brownfields Conference
Tuesday, May 7th, 2024
The Conference Center at OCLC
Dublin, OH
https://www.ohiobrownfields.com/2024conference-information
Revitalizing Ohio's Brownfields
An Initiative of Greater Ohio Policy Center
Hosted by Greater Ohio Policy Center in partnership with the Ohio EPA
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

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.

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
Lucas County hires consultant to review performance of convention center and hotels
Toledo Blade, April 2, 2024

The Lucas County Economic Development Corp. voted unanimously Monday to hire an Illinois-based hospitality facilities consultant to review the performance of the Glass City Center and its attached hotels, the 217-room Hilton Garden Inn and 93-suite Homewood Suites.

The EDC wants to get a baseline of how the convention center and hotels are doing operationally and financially in the year they've been open since renovations, and get insight on improving business, especially during slower mid-week times, said Matt Heyrman, deputy county administrator.

"What we've seen in the reports we review every month so far is that we're doing excellent on weekends," Mr. Heyrman said. "And it looks to us like we're a little lighter in our market during weekdays and we're trying to understand why that's happening."

"I think more entertainment, leisure items are driving the weekends and we're concerned that maybe we're not picking up enough of the more traditional business or association items."

Northeast District
Mahoning County gives YSU police $250,000
Mahoning Matters, April 4, 2024

Mahoning County Commissioners Anthony Traficanti, David Ditzler and Carol Rimedio-Righetti granted $250,000 to YSU police. Commander of the Youngstown State University Police Academy Ed Villone announced they've used the $250,000 to enhance their training and equipment.

The funds, which came from the American Rescue Plan Act, went toward 25 ballistic shields and cases, as well as active shooter training for two years.

"Upon receipt of the ARPA funds, we wasted no time in procuring essential equipment to equip our law enforcement officers with the tools they need to effectively respond to active threats," said Commander Villone during a press conference at YSU with fellow faculty and the commissioners.

The money will go toward the next two years of active shooter rapid response training for the county's active service police and police academy recruits.

Central District
Richland County commissioners, judges agree on court staff salaries
Mansfield News Journal, March 31, 2024

The Richland County commissioners say there should be enough money in the 2024 budget to cover a request made in December by the county's two Common Pleas Court general division judges to provide what amounts to pay raises for 12 court employees.

The board on Thursday gave the judges approval to increase the employees' official work weeks from 36 hours to 40 hours after they also revised the pay scale for the court administrator's position.

During budget discussions in November, Judges Brent Robinson and Phil Naumoff proposed a 7% pay raise for court division employees, which was based on a wage study the court conducted using the formulas and point system that the consulting firm Clemens-Nelson and Associated has been using for other departments, including the court. Commissioners reduced the increase to 4% pending the results of the court study.

The judges sent a letter to the board in late December indicating they were looking to review the court's longstanding policy to pay general division staff for 36 hours while actually working 41 hours. They noted that the change would bring the general division in line with other divisions of Common Pleas Court and other courts and offices in Richland County.

Southwest District
Abraham Lincoln statue project receives $25K county contribution
Dayton Daily News, April 5, 2024

Organizers of a project to install an Abraham Lincoln memorial statue on the Dayton Veterans Affairs Medical Center campus say a funding boost from Montgomery County was "pivotal" in bringing the project forward.

The Montgomery County commission on Tuesday approved up to $25,000 through the community and economic development office for the installation of the 1,700-pound statue.

Ground was broken on land at the corner of Ohio and Kentucky Avenues in February to create a site for the statue, which will be installed this spring.

The finished site will include walking paths and can attract tourists that travel to see the National VA History Center and the Dayton National Cemetery on campus, according to project organizers.

"The purpose of this memorial is to provide a place for reflection and healing, opportunities for educating students and future generations, and to create a national tourist destination point," according to the Montgomery County commission.

American Veterans Heritage Center president Bill DeFries said the project has now exceeded its funding goals.

Southeast District
New Tax Levy 7, fall renewal levy expand senior services
The Athens Post, March 31, 2024

Athens County's Tax Levy 7 was passed March 19 to provide more funding for senior nutritional programs.

The new levy passed with over 58% of the vote, providing over $300,000 in additional funding toward senior citizens' facilities and services annually for five years. The levy primarily supports services like the Meals on Wheels program, which offers meals to home-bound senior citizens. The program serves approximately 110 seniors each month, with a waiting list of 60 citizens. The levy will eliminate the waiting list once the taxes are collected in 2025.

Eva Bloom, development director of Hocking Athens Perry Community Action, or HAPCAP, said the program provides five meals to lower-income or homebound seniors every week. The driver, who delivers the meals, also checks in on the resident in that resident's home.

"What we find is that, obviously having enough food is really important to someone's health, but so is that social connection," Bloom said. "Isolation can actually be a pretty negative impact on someone's health."

Bloom said for the general election in November, she hopes to have a renewal levy of the Senior Services levy, the current tax levy that supports seniors using the services Meals on Wheels provides, along with additional programs and senior facilities. She said funding under the current levy was not enough to sustain the program's services, which is why Tax Levy 7 was created.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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APRIL 8
Solar Eclipse

APRIL 10
2024 State of the State Address

APRIL 18-19
CCAO Board of Directors Retreat
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

APRIL 24
CCAO Webinar: Broadband

MAY 3
CCAO / CEAO Central District Meeting (Fairfield County)

MAY 6
CCAO / CEAO Northeast District Meeting (Harrison County)

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