April 15, 2024

CEBCO recently celebrated its 20th anniversary! During their annual meeting on April 5, those in attendance heard from State Senator and former Madison County Commissioner Bob Hackett, who was instrumental in CEBCO's establishment, former CCAO Executive Director Larry Long, and a keynote address by former Youngstown State President and former Ohio State University football coach Jim Tressel.

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

Less than one month to share the Ohio Counties Scholarship opportunity

The application deadline for the 2024 Ohio Counties Scholarship is fast approaching!

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 their 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, visit: www.ccao.org/scholarship.

If you have not already done so, please consider sending out a press release to your local outlets and sharing on social media. We've included a social media graphic and sample verbiage for a press release. In addition, many counties share the scholarship with local schools as an outreach tool.

Social Media Graphic

Sample Press Release

If you have any questions, please reach out to CCAO's Steve Caraway at scaraway@ccao.org

OSU Extension, CCAO conducting land use survey; 29 counties have not answered

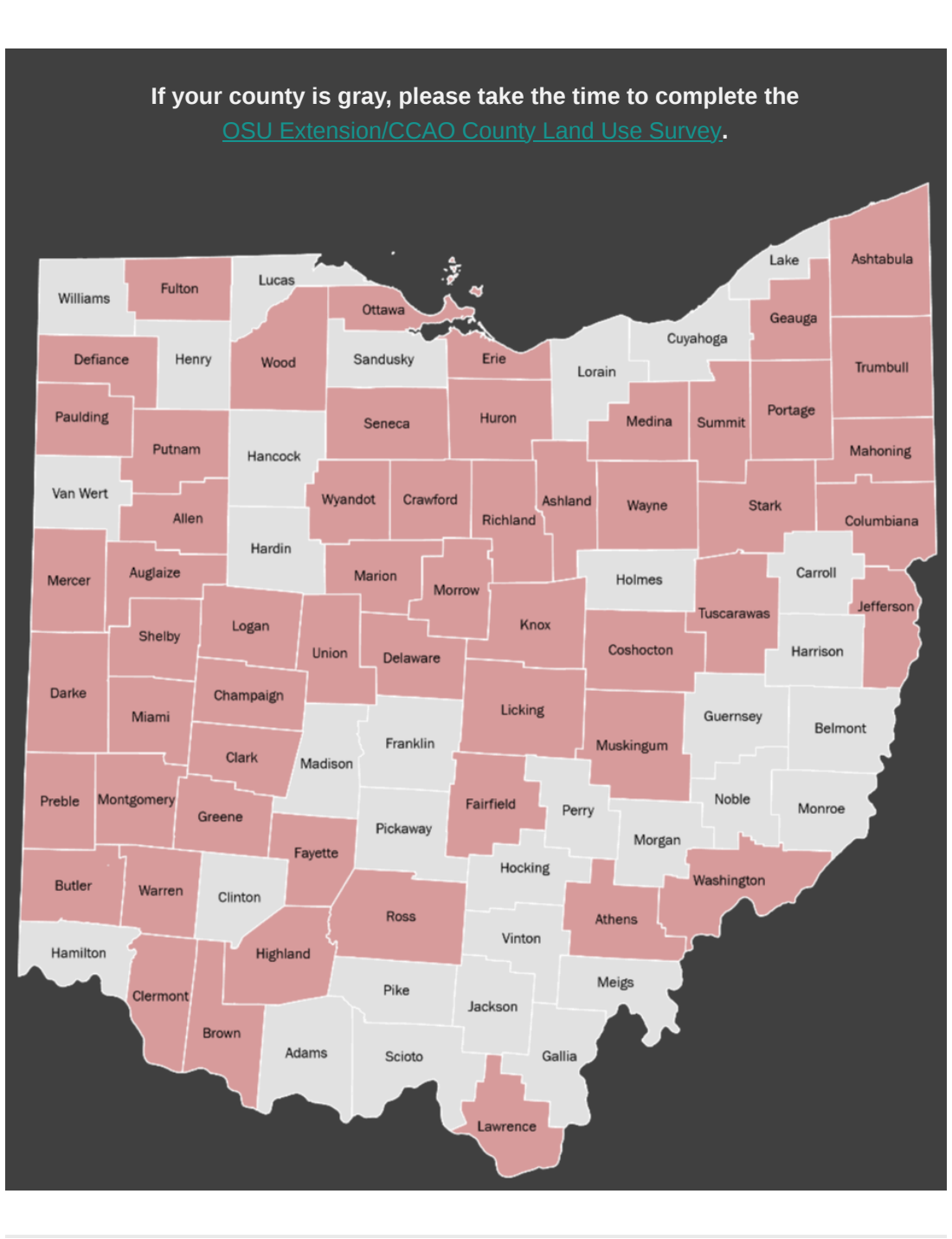
OSU Extension is conducting a survey in collaboration with CCAO regarding county land use policies. The intent of the survey is to collect information about how counties utilize planning and land use tools such as zoning. ***Please note:*** It is helpful to complete the survey even if your county doesn't have county zoning, as it touches on other related areas such as utilities as well.

One of the end products of the survey will be a map visualizing county land use policies and other measures, such as renewable energy siting restricted areas. The map, along with a companion map that Extension is working on developing with the Ohio Township Association, will be useful to both community leaders and the private sector to be able to at-a-glance see land use policies across the state.

This project will be the most useful if we receive responses from every county. Thus far, Extension has received survey responses from 59 counties and is awaiting responses from the remaining 29 counties. If your county is shaded in gray in the map below, you have ***NOT YET*** provided a response to the survey.

Please work with the appropriate staff member to complete the survey for your county. If you have questions about the survey or need help completing it, please contact Ellen Essman, Senior Research Associate and Government Affairs for OSU Extension, at essman.23@osu.edu.

If your county is gray, please take the time to complete the OSU Extension/CCAO County Land Use Survey.



County soil and water districts enroll more than 1.8 million acres into H2Ohio

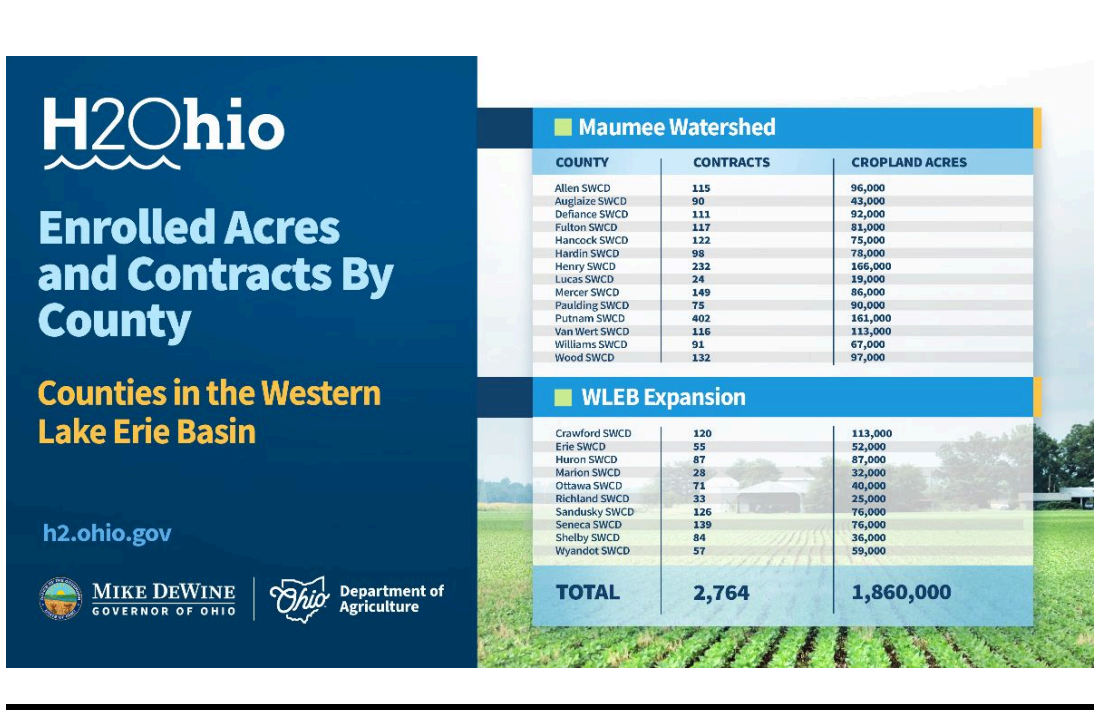
Governor Mike DeWine and the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) recently announced that more than 1.8 million acres are now enrolled into H2Ohio, a comprehensive water quality plan designed to address complex issues affecting Lake Erie. The results of the most recent signup period show a 32 percent increase in enrolled acres when compared to previous sign ups.

ODA recently completed an open enrollment period for 14 counties in northwest Ohio within the Maumee River Watershed. Farmers in this area were eligible to re-enroll acres into Best Management Practices (BMPs) that were nearing the end of their original contract term, which began in 2020. Additionally, farmers could use this opportunity to enroll new acres. Of the total number of producers currently enrolled, 90 percent of producers who signed up originally decided to re-enroll. Approximately 25 percent of all producers in the new Maumee enrollment are new to H2Ohio.

Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts report that all counties eligible for re-enrollment saw an increase in enrolled acres.

Ten additional counties that make up the Western Lake Erie Basin (WLEB) have also been engaged in H2Ohio, and approximately 800 farmers in this area have enrolled 600,000 acres into BMPs. These counties have H2Ohio contracts that extend through 2025, so ODA focused on re-enrollment in the original 14 counties for this sign-up period. In all, more than 2,600 producers are enrolled in the H2Ohio initiative.

You can read more about the recent successes of H2Ohio here.


H2Ohio
Enrolled Acres and Contracts By County
Counties in the Western Lake Erie Basin
h2.ohio.gov
MIKE DEWINE GOVERNOR OF OHIO
Ohio Department of Agriculture

Maumee Watershed

COUNTY	CONTRACTS	CROPLAND ACRES
Allen SWCD	115	96,000
Auglaize SWCD	90	43,000
Defiance SWCD	111	92,000
Fulton SWCD	117	81,000
Hancock SWCD	122	75,000
Hardin SWCD	98	78,000
Henry SWCD	232	166,000
Lucas SWCD	24	19,000
Mercer SWCD	149	86,000
Paulding SWCD	75	90,000
Putnam SWCD	402	161,000
Van Wert SWCD	116	113,000
Williams SWCD	91	67,000
Wood SWCD	132	97,000

WLEB Expansion

COUNTY	CONTRACTS	CROPLAND ACRES
Crawford SWCD	120	113,000
Erie SWCD	55	52,000
Huron SWCD	87	87,000
Marion SWCD	28	32,000
Ottawa SWCD	71	40,000
Richland SWCD	33	25,000
Sandusky SWCD	126	76,000
Seneca SWCD	139	76,000
Shelby SWCD	84	36,000
Wyandot SWCD	57	59,000
TOTAL	2,764	1,860,000

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

Back to Top

Auditor of State issues bulletin on payment re-direct schemes

Last week, Auditor of State (AOS) Keith Faber released a bulletin to provide guidance to governments regarding payment re-direct schemes and business email compromise schemes. The bulletin is similar to an advisory issued last March, but the Auditor issued the bulletin due to increased reports of cybercrime activity targeting governments.

NOTE: Failure to follow the guidance may result in an AOS finding if a loss occurs , and the employee is considered liable as a result of negligence or performing duties without reasonable care.

The bulletin gives four real examples of successful or attempted scams on local governments:

- **Spear phishing:** More than $700,000 was stolen from a recreation district because of a payment re-direct scheme. Emails were received by the district, from an email account slightly different than the original vendor email account, which contained erroneous payment instructions to the "vendor." The district followed the instructions and transferred $713,094 to the fraudulent account, without independently verifying the identity of the requester or the new banking account.
- **Spear phishing:** A city fell victim to a "spear phishing" scheme resulting in theft of nearly $219,000 when the finance department received emails from someone pretending to be an existing vendor. The email persuaded the employee to change the bank account routing information the city had for the vendor. Vendor verification protocols were not followed, which could have prevented this fraud.
- **Investment account change request:** A college fell victim to a spear phishing attack that included convincing branding and logos of a financial institution causing the college to change account information on a $6 million account. Realizing a day later due to Daily Cash Monitoring protection that the money was not in its account the college was able to recover the funds through the activation of the Financial Fraud Kill Chain.
- **Fraudulent check and Electronic Funds Transfer/ACH scheme:** A city reported three instances of fraudulent checks submitted for payment to their bank and two instances of attempted ACH fraud. Though none of these instances were successful and the city did not experience a loss, this is another example of attempted fraud.

The rest of the bulletin discusses ways to identify and prevent these scams.

Counties are tasked with safeguarding millions in taxpayer dollars, so it is vital that county fiscal staff familiarize themselves with the bulletin.

If you have any questions regarding the information in this bulletin, send an email to the AOS Special Investigations Unit at PaymentSchemeQuestions@ohioauditor.gov.

ODOT launches survey to update rural consultation process

Every five years, the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is required to update its rural consultation process. This process allows ODOT to most effectively solicit the input of local elected officials (and other partners) who represent non-metropolitan/rural areas of the state. This input is of great value to the department's statewide planning efforts, but particularly in the development of Ohio's long-range transportation plan (Access Ohio) and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) – both of which will be in-development in FY 2025.

ODOT is asking for responses to their brief (nine questions) survey by June 12. The survey is located here.

The ODOT Statewide Planning team will review all responses and incorporate them into its updated Rural Consultation Process document, which will in-turn guide the development of Access Ohio 2050, the STIP and several other statewide model plans the department will be working on over the next few years.

If you have any questions concerning this process, please contact ODOT Regional Planning Coordinator Nate Brugler at Nathaniel.Brugler@dot.ohio.gov.

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.

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.

Department of Agriculture secures first Farmland Preservation commitments of 2024

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) recently announced that 139 acres have been added to the Farmland Preservation Program. These are the first two commitments of 2024.

- The Swingle Family (Medina County) - 47 acres
- The Boeck Family (Greene County) - 92 acres

Agricultural land is a key part of Ohio's landscape. Preserving this land is essential. An agricultural easement in Farmland Preservation is a voluntary agreement between the landowner and ODA, where the landowner agrees to perpetually maintain the land predominately in agricultural use. In exchange, the landowner is either compensated or may be entitled to a tax deduction.

In partnership with ODA, local sponsors Western Reserve Land Conservancy and Tecumseh Land Trust respectively played significant roles in securing these agreements.

Since the Office of Farmland Preservation began in 1998, 711 farms totaling 105,997 acres have entered into agreements. This enables Ohio to continually be a top producer, aiding not just Ohioans, but all Americans.

Funds from the purchase of these easements are invested in the local economy by the landowners who use them by expanding their farming operations, purchasing new equipment, reducing debt, adding conservation practices, planning for retirement, sending their children to college or for other purposes. When the state purchases a farmland easement, the proceeds are plowed into Ohio's economy and our agriculture industry is preserved for future generations.

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 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.

Secretary of State to host free cyber security conference for small businesses, local governments

On April 26, the Secretary of State, in partnership with the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, is holding a free conference to discuss cyber threats and solutions.

The event will be held from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the Ohio Union and feature experts from the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation, the Cybersecurity Infrastructure Security Agency, and a keynote address by FBI Most wanted-turned cyber security consultant Brett Johnson.

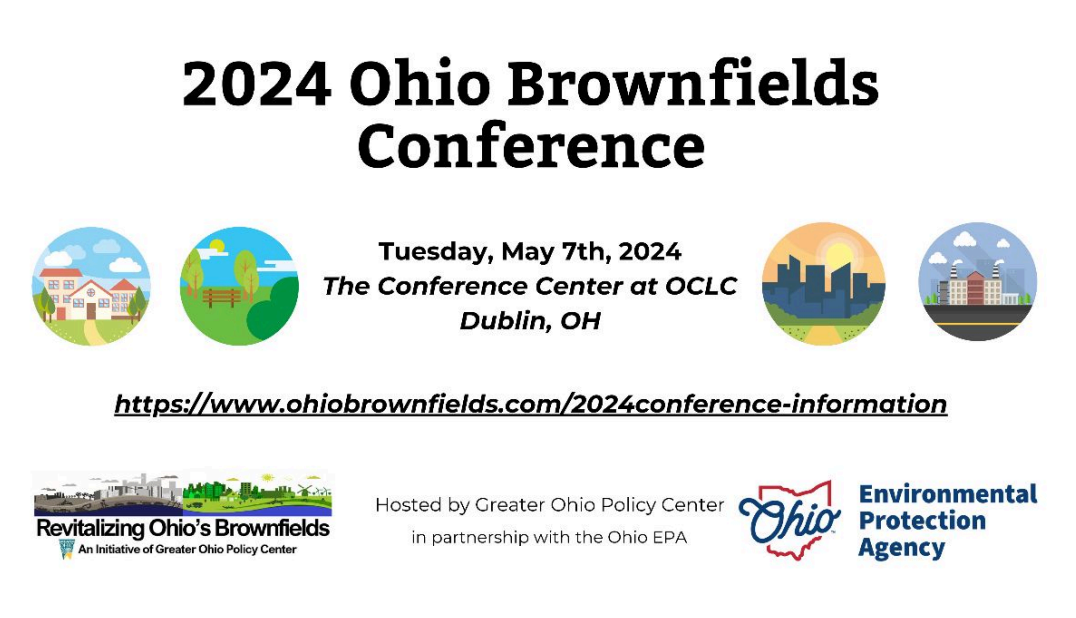
You can RSVP for the event here.

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 (this 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

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

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 (IRF) 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.

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.

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, and on occasion other stories may be highlighted as well.

Northwest District

Foster care pilot program helps during family shortage in Ohio

WTOL, April 11, 2024

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine spent part of his State of the State address this week highlighting Sandusky, Seneca, Ottawa and Wyandot counties for partnering to create special treatment foster homes.

He said the pilot programs will help children with the most complex needs stay out of group homes and get into a family home. DeWine said more than 1,800 foster children are living in group settings because there aren't enough foster families willing or comfortable to help with children who have complex needs.

Yet, the four counties have created a money-saving program that can be replicated statewide, allowing for more specialized treatment homes in Ohio.

"A new pilot program that will help more counties to recruit and support special treatment foster homes by providing one-on-one support for families, 24/7 on-call casework and crisis counseling, and specialized training," DeWine said.

Northeast District

Cuyahoga County plans to close troubled Jane Edna Hunter building in 2027

Cleveland.com, April 13, 2024

Cuyahoga County is planning to close a troubled social services building within the next three years.

During a Tuesday committee meeting, county officials presented a timeline for consolidation of various county buildings over the next several years. The newly announced timeline came up during a proposed 17-year, $91 million lease of the former Plain Dealer building at 1801 Superior Ave. for a new Board of Elections headquarters and office space for Health and Human Services Department staff.

The county-owned social services building, Jane Edna Hunter Center, has functioned as a drop-off point for many children in the care of the Division of Children and Family Services. However, the building was never meant to house children, and allegations of child abuse, staff abuse, poor food quality and more have followed.

County officials are now hoping to close that building in 2027, according to documents presented at a Tuesday County Council committee meeting. In January, County Executive Chris Ronayne told cleveland.com he plans to close the center, but this is the first time officials have attached a year to that.

Once the county has moved out of the building, officials are hoping to sell it, county spokeswoman Kelly Woodard said in an email.

Central District

Perry County commissioners discuss grant opportunities, new security camera

Perry County Tribune, April 3, 2024

The Perry County commissioners met on March 13 for their weekly meeting. Commissioners Ben Carpenter, Dan Kinsel, and Scott Owen were present.

The most important discussion at this meeting was about the potential for new grant opportunities from the Perry County Park District and a collaborative grant for the Perry County Board of Developmental Disabilities (PCBDD) and Perry County Children Services.

Starting with the Perry County Park District, Chair Scott Moore, Vice Chair Fred Redfern, and Naturalist Jessie Bennett were there to discuss the new grant opportunities with the commissioners.

At the meeting the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) let the commissioners know of an opportunity for a new grant known as the "Changing Lives Grant Program." If awarded, this grant program would give $20,000 worth of reimbursed funding to an OPRA member who offers new parks and recreation services. The deadline for this grant has now passed, but it was still available at the time of the meeting and a few days after.

The spending involved with this grant would first be covered by the commissioners and later reimbursed if they allowed the park district to move forward with their plans.

Southwest District

Courthouse elevator repair may take three weeks

Portsmouth Daily Times, April 10, 2024

Anyone who has been to the Scioto County courthouse lately knows one thing. One very urgent thing that makes almost everyone's life and work more difficult there.

The elevator is out. And there are 85 marble steps to climb to the third floor where the Scioto County Commissioners meet.

"Eighty-five. I counted them," said Commissioner Cathy Coleman.

The commissioners have declared the issue an emergency and awarded a bid to OTIS to repair the elevator, which is also the inspector of record.

"When we have emergencies, we have to take action," said Commissioner Scottie Powell "We can't let the public, the courts, the clerks — really everybody — this building serves take a hit because we're waiting and waiting and waiting. Eventually, we can't wait any longer."

There were two competitive bids, but one of the bidders did not meet the qualifications.

"The particular company that bid on this was OTIS," Powell said. "They are our contract of record. They're giving us a timeline of three weeks from now. From the time we send the check, three weeks."

Southeast District

Jefferson County Recorder urges veterans on avoiding fee scams for DD214 forms

WTOV9, March 31, 2024

Jefferson County Recorder Scott Renforth and the Ohio Recorders' Association are urging veterans to be aware of exploitative practices -- like charging for services that are available for free.

Companies are soliciting veterans in Ohio to purchase a copy of their DD214 form for a fee ranging from $79 to $99.

While this practice may be legal, Renforth and other county recorders across Ohio want veterans to know about the free services they are entitled to.

"Any veteran throughout the state of Ohio and in Jefferson County, we encourage them to come here (Jefferson County Courthouse) file their DD214," Renforth said. "There is no cost to them. Once we have it on file, they can come and get as many copies as they want. We will certify and do whatever they need to do at no cost."

The DD214 form is essential for veterans to access benefits such as VA loans, disability compensation, and reduced medical costs.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

Back to Top

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)

DID YOU KNOW?

Back to Top

Crawford County

Crawford County is named after Colonel William Crawford, a soldier in the Revolutionary War and a personal friend of George Washington.

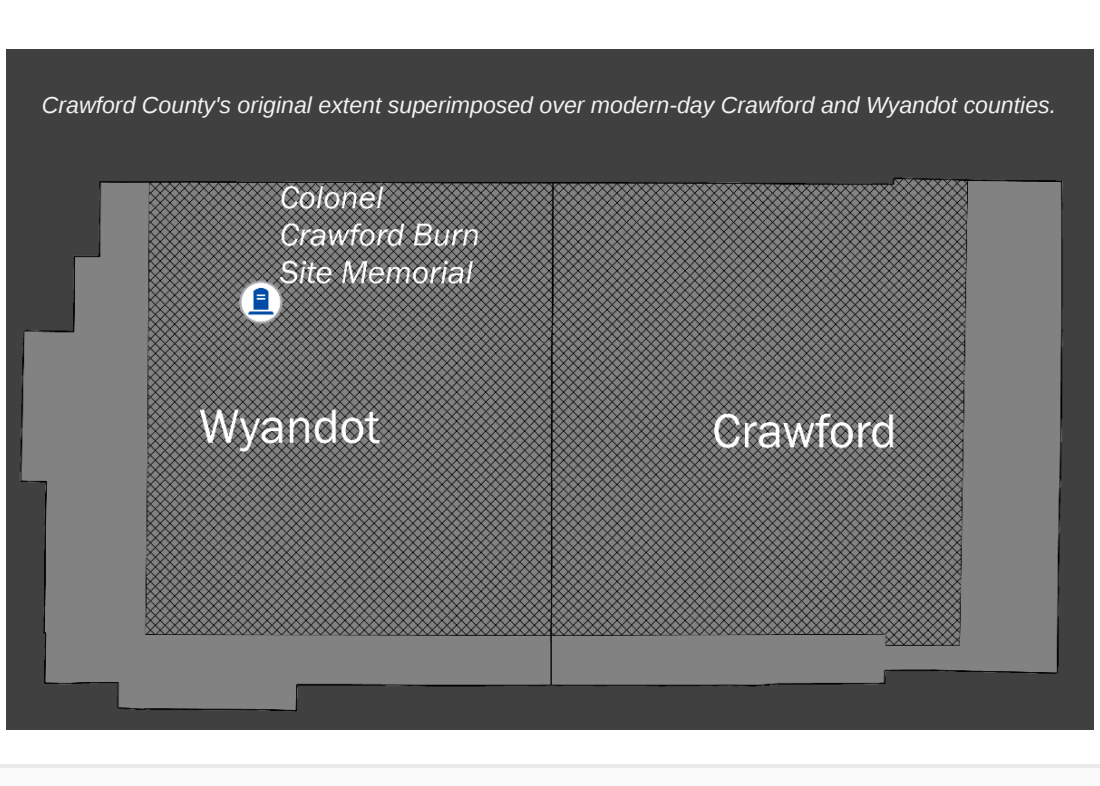
In 1782, in the waning days of the Revolution, Crawford led a force to attack Delaware and Wyandot villages after the British hired Indians in the area to harass pioneers in the American frontier. The expedition ultimately failed, and Crawford was captured by the Delaware and executed in the area that is now Northwest Ohio. A monument is placed at the site of his execution.

However, due to quicks of county development, the monument to Crawford County's namesake is no longer in Crawford County; rather, it is in neighboring Wyandot County.

When Crawford County was established in 1826, it consisted of much of modern-day Crawford and Wyandot counties. The site of Colonel Crawford's execution was in the northwest corner of the new county. But 19 years later, the western portion of Crawford County was separated off into the new Wyandot County.

While Crawford County gained land to the south and east, it forever lost the monument to its namesake.

Crawford County's original extent superimposed over modern-day Crawford and Wyandot counties.



Copyright © 2024 CCAO, All rights reserved.

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