April 22, 2024

The Hancock County Commissioners with the cornerstone bearing their names on the county's new Judicial Center. See the article below for more details!

Photo courtesy of Hancock County

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

Hancock County sets cornerstone of new Judicial Center

Last Thursday, the Hancock County Commissioners were all on site of the construction of their new 47,000 square foot Judicial Center in downtown Findlay to witness the setting of the cornerstone of the building. They officially broke ground on the work site in June 2023 and expect to see the three-story building completed by the end of the year.

This new court facility will complement the traditional court operations of their historic county courthouse just a block away. The following court operations will soon be housed in this new venue:

- Probate & Juvenile Court,
- Juvenile Probation offices,
- Court Appointed Special Advocate - Guardian ad Litem
- Domestic Relations Court,
- Adult Probation offices.

The facility will provide four new Hearing Rooms for magistrates and one new courtroom for the Probate/Juvenile Court judge.

The building will be named in honor of the late Allan H. Davis, who served in Hancock County and was the longest serving Probate & Juvenile Court judge in Ohio history.

Artist's rendering of the finished building.

The construction in progress.

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

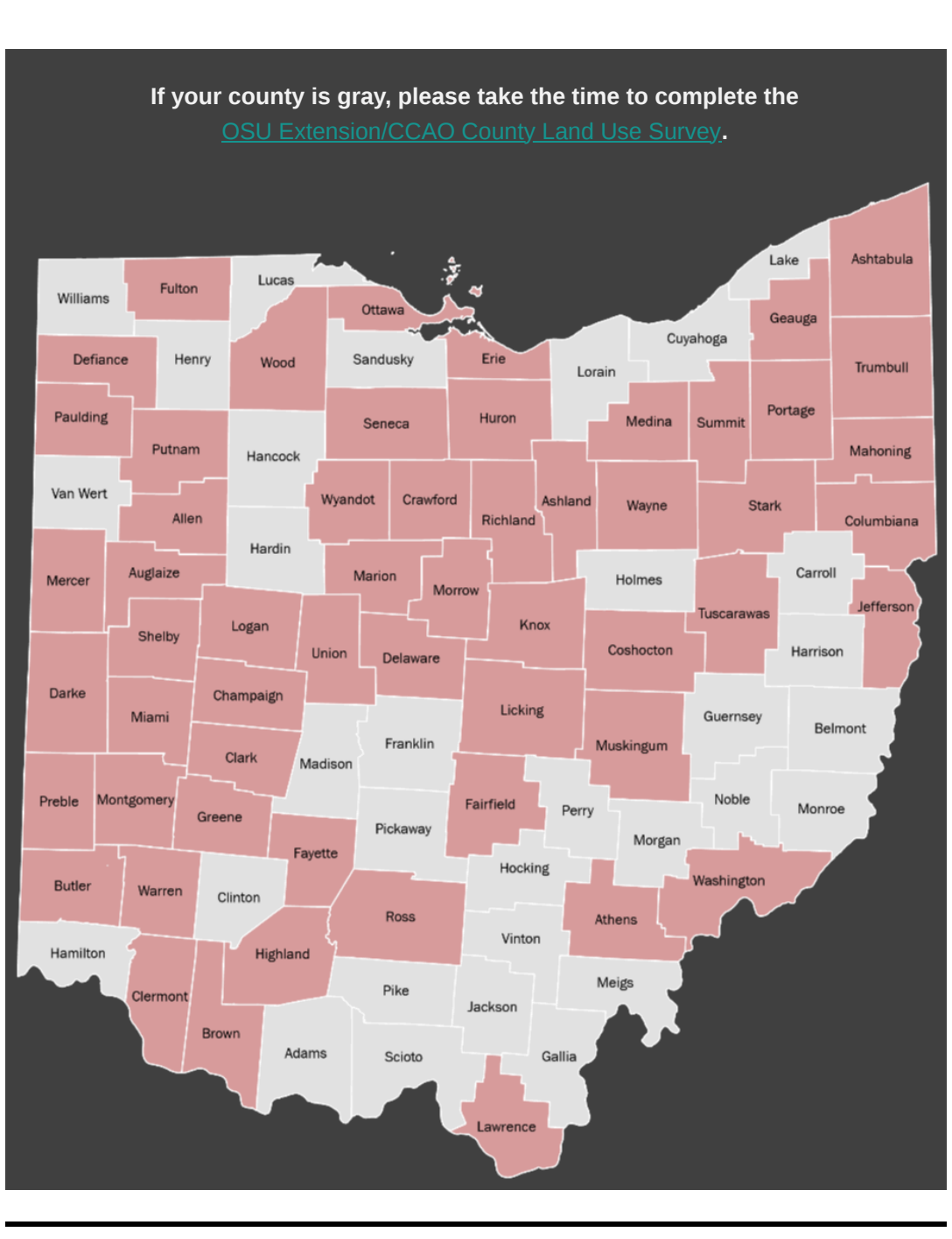
OSU Extension, CCAO conducting land use survey; 29 counties have not answered

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.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

Back to Top

State aid for Indian Lake counties approved; Governor seeks SBA declaration

Last week, the Ohio Controlling Board approved nearly $4 million in disaster relief for the Indian Lake region that was hit by a deadly tornado in March. Logan County will receive $3.75 million and Auglaize County will receive $187,500, with the funds being used for debris removal, safety and security operations, and to repair damage to municipal electrical systems and municipal buildings.

The funds come from the State Disaster Relief Program, a reimbursement program for when storm damage does not meet the threshold for federal assistance. The Department of Public Safety expects the funds to flow to communities in the coming weeks.

Additionally, Governor Mike DeWine requested that the federal Small Business Association (SBA) issue a Rapid Disaster Declaration for Logan County.

If the SBA approves the request, the agency would make low-interest loans available to businesses and individuals to help with the cost of repairing or replacing real estate and personal property damaged or destroyed by the tornados. It would also allow the Governor to activate the state's State Individual Assistance Program which provides additional support to homeowners and renters. The Individual Assistance Program can only be used in the event of an SBA declaration.

State opens H2Ohio program to farmers across the state

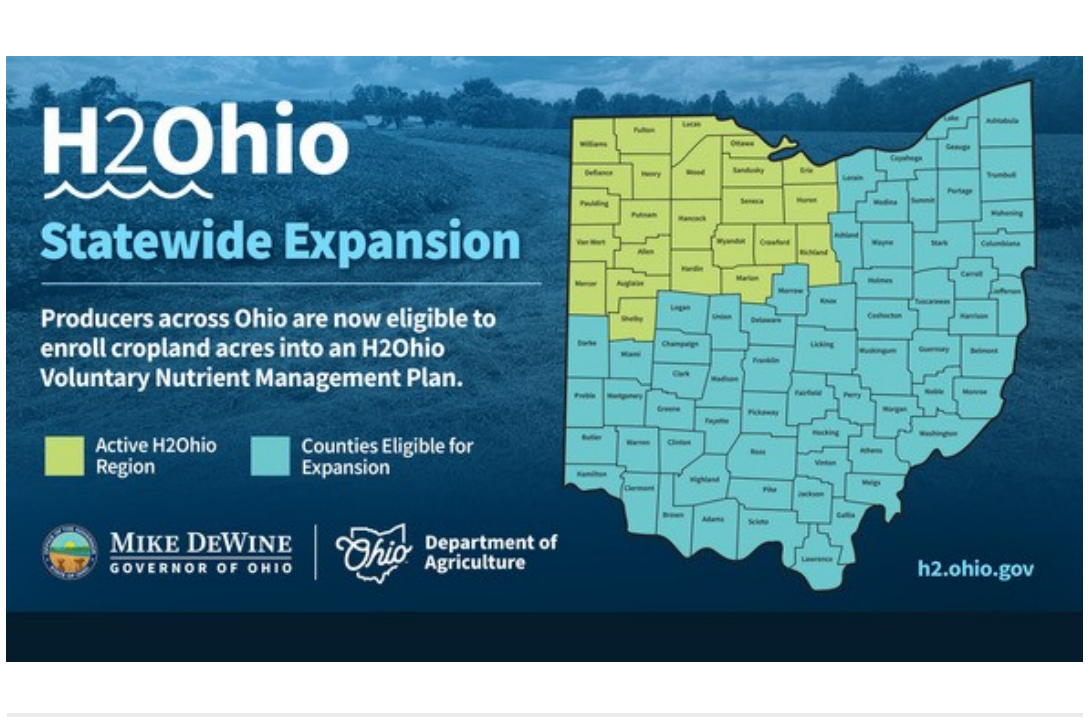
Governor DeWine and Department of Agriculture Director (ODA) Brian Baldridge recently announced that H2Ohio's agriculture incentive program is being offered to producers across the state.

H2Ohio was initially launched as a program focused solely on farms in northwestern Ohio near Lake Erie. Now, ODA will be rolling out enrollment for row-crop producers in Ohio's other 64 counties.

The application period opens today and closes on May 6, a two-week sign-up period. The Department aims to enroll 500,000 acres on a first come, first served basis.

To apply, farmers should contact their local Soil and Water Conservation District and provide up-to-date soil tests and information on planned crops and rotations, yield goals, and planned fertilizer applications. Producers who enroll will receive support to develop and implement Voluntary Nutrient Management Plans, which encourages better utilization of nutrients applied.

If you are located in one of the counties highlighted in blue in the map below, please share this opportunity with farmers in your community.


H2Ohio
Statewide Expansion
Producers across Ohio are now eligible to enroll cropland acres into an H2Ohio Voluntary Nutrient Management Plan.
🟩 Active H2Ohio Region
🟦 Counties Eligible for Expansion
MIKE DEWINE
GOVERNOR OF OHIO
Ohio Department of Agriculture
h2.ohio.gov

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.

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.

THIS WEEK: CCAO hosting webinar on broadband project funding

On April 24 (this Wednesday), CCAO will be hosting a webinar with BroadbandOhio and Ice Miller concerning broadband funding available to counties and other local entities.

Access to broadband remains a pivotal issue for many Ohio counties throughout this state. The State of Ohio has received $793 million in funding through the U.S. Department of Commerce's Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program along with additional streams of revenue. BroadbandOhio, along with the law firm Ice Miller, will discuss project plans along with other state grant programs that will be beneficial to county governments.

PRESENTERS:

- Peter Voderberg - Chief, BroadbandOhio
- Amy Elbaor - Assistant Chief, BroadbandOhio
- Chris Miller - Partner, Ice Miller, Government Affairs and Regulatory Law Group; Chair, Government Law Group
- Lauren Stenger - Associate, Ice Miller, Government Affairs and Regulatory Law Group

Register today!

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.

NACo to host webinar on modernizing county finances through digital disbursements

Next Tuesday, April 30, NACo will host a webinar in partnership with Visa and Knox County, Illinois, on modernizing county finances. The session will provide an in-depth overview of the successful pilot project by Knox County, Ill., NACo, and Visa, sharing how they delivered fast and secure payments to county election judges and jurors. During this webinar, participants will learn:

1. The importance of cross-sector partnerships for driving digital transformation;
2. The benefits of transitioning to digital payment systems;
3. The unique challenges and solutions for implementing a digital payment system involving the public sector; and
4. The role of stakeholder involvement and effective communication in successful digital payments projects.

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

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

County revises its job training provider policy

Toledo Blade, April 17, 2024

Area job training providers take notice: Lucas County has revised its policy of selecting providers eligible to receive funding through the 2014 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

Lucas County Workforce Development Board unanimously voted Wednesday to revise its 2018 policy, effective immediately. According to the board staff, that was done to bring the local policy into compliance with the state one, which was updated in December.

"The practical side of this is that we will not be losing state dollars," Lucas County Commissioner Lisa Sobecki, a board member, said after the meeting. "This [policy revision] keeps us in line with the direction that the state gives us."

While the county's old, three-paragraph policy stated that "that preference would be given" to providers located within 40 miles of the city of Toledo, the new policy mandates that they "must be" located within 40 miles of the county's OhioMeansJobs Center location at 3737 W. Sylvania Ave. in West Toledo unless the training provider solely provides virtual learning classes.

Northeast District

Commissioners warned of potential liability in efforts to save Coalburg Dam

The Vindicator, April 18, 2024

A Trumbull County attorney warned commissioners to tread lightly when making future decisions in helping community organizations in their efforts to prevent the privately-owned Coalburg Lake Dam from being removed, because if a future catastrophic event were to happen, any agency could be held partially financially responsible because of their involvement in preventing the dam from being removed.

"There has been a rosy picture of the lake dam painted," attorney Bill Danso told the commissioners during Wednesday's meeting. "There's some real risk and real liability that goes along with the dam."

Danso works with the Trumbull County prosecutor's office.

The prosecutor outlined his concerns during the public comment period of the commissioners' weekly meeting. Danso, on Tuesday, participated in a video conference sponsored by Hubbard Township Trustee Jason Tedrow; an attorney representing Coalburg Land Partners LLC, which owns the property on which the dam is located; Ohio Department of Natural Resources; the Ohio Attorney General's office; Commissioner Niki Frenchko and others.

Tedrow requested the state give those opposed to the removal of the dam up to a year to come up with strategies and the funds that will be required to save the dam.

"They (ODNR and AG's office representatives) want up to two weeks to consider my proposal," Tedrow said.

Central District

Richland County commissioners OK design contract for fourth courtroom

Richland Source, April 19, 2024

Richland County commissioners on Thursday approved a design contract that will lead to a fourth courtroom for the Common Pleas general division judges.

The move to use $45,500 in American Rescue Plan Act funds for the design comes almost three years after judges Brent Robinson and Phil Naumoff made the request for additional space through a letter in May 2021.

Design work is expected to take three to four months. But construction of the fourth courtroom is not expected to begin until the fourth quarter of 2024, delayed until the Clerk of Courts office is moved into its new spaces on "L2," likely in September.

The design work on the estimated 2,700-square foot space will be done by Brad Mauer of Mauer Architectural Design Studio and Craig Christie with Karpinski Engineering, commissioners said.

"It's a project that's been a long time coming," county administrator Andrew Keller said.

"The court has explained the need for this over a series of months and even years. This courtroom will be located in the space being evacuated by the Clerk of Courts as they move to L2.

Southwest District

Montgomery County holds 2024 State of the County

Dayton247Now, April 17, 2024

Montgomery County Commissioners held its state of the county on Wednesday.

The theme for 2024 is infrastructure modernization, healthy community, ready workforce, and how those things can be achieved.

"We believe in investing in our community and enhancing quality of life," said Commissioner Carolyn Rice. "Infrastructure is one way we do that and is something that benefits all citizens."

One of those initiatives is the Sewer Modernization and Revitalized Treatment or SMART project, which consolidates water reclamation to West Carrollton. The $65 million project will be completed this summer.

Commissioners recounted projects from last year that created more revenue and improved the quality of life.

Commissioners also addressed ongoing projects for 2024 that could address issues in behavioral health, employment, and housing. They say great work has been done over the last year, but more needs to be done.

The county administration building is also undergoing construction. The community and economic development department temporarily moved floors so their office space on the 10th floor could be modernized. The county is also updating the elevators in the facility. At Courthouse Square, a fountain that has not been functioning will receive an investment, making it one of the beautiful focal points in Downtown Dayton.

Southeast District

Ohio Department of Transportation plans to spend $15 million in Tuscarawas County in 2024

Times Recorder, March 31, 2024

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) will be spending around $15 million on various project in Tuscarawas County during the 2024 construction season.

The projects include:

- Resurfacing, storm sewer replacement and curb improvements along Trenton Avenue in Uhrichsville. The project, which will cost $630,000, will be completed by May 31. It will require a road closure.
- Replacement of a culvert under Interstate 77 just north of Newcomerstown. The project will cost $1.4 million and be completed by May 31. It will require lane restrictions and shoulder closure.
- Repair of a bridge on Ohio 800 just south of Ohio 212 in Zoarville. The project will cost $2 million and will be completed by Oct. 31. Traffic signals will be used to maintain traffic.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

Back to Top

APRIL 22-30
Passover

APRIL 24
CCAO Webinar: Broadband

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

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

MAY 15
CCAO Webinar: Summit County and UniteUS

MAY 16
CCAO General Government Committee

MAY 16
CCAO Executive Committee

MAY 17
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

DID YOU KNOW?

Back to Top

Carroll County

Carroll County was home to one of the most prolific families in American military history: The Fighting McCooks.

Daniel McCook and his brother John were originally from Pennsylvania but moved to Carrollton in the 1820s. When the Civil War broke out, the "Tribe of Dan" (Daniel McCook and his eight sons) and the "Tribe of John" (John McCook and his five sons) went to war for the Union.

Six of the McCooks would earn the rank of brigadier general and several went on to high political offices after the war.

The Daniel McCook House in Carrollton is maintained as a house museum to the family.

The fates of the Fighting McCooks were as follows:

"Tribe of Dan"

- Daniel McCook: Major, killed in action at the Battle of Buffington Island (one of the few Civil War battles to take place in Ohio).
- Latimer McCook: Major, wounded at Vicksburg and during the March to the Sea. Died of his wounds.
- George McCook: Colonel. Ohio Attorney General (pre-war), Democratic nominee for Ohio Governor (post-war). Died in 1877.
- Robert McCook: Brigadier general, killed in action in Alabama.
- Alexander McCook: Major general, died in 1903.
- Daniel McCook, Jr.: Brigadier general, killed in action at Kennesaw Mountain.
- Edwin McCook: Colonel, later Governor of the Dakota Territory. Assassinated in 1873.
- Charles McCook: Private, killed in action at the First Battle of Bull Run.
- John McCook: Captain, later chair of the Army and Navy Christian Commission during the Spanish-American War. Died in 1911.

"Tribe of John"

- John McCook: Volunteer surgeon. Died in 1865.
- Edward McCook: Brigadier general, later Governor of the Colorado Territory. Died in 1909.
- Anson McCook: Colonel, later a Congressman from New York. Died in 1917.
- Henry McCook: First lieutenant, served as a chaplain, later became an expert on the behavior of ants and spiders. Died in 1911.
- Roderick McCook: Naval commander, later a lighthouse inspector on the Ohio River. Died in 1886.
- John McCook, Jr.: Lieutenant, served as a chaplain. Later a professor of modern languages at Trinity College. Died in 1927.

"The Tribe of Dan" painting by Charles T. Webber, on display at the Daniel McCook House in Carrollton.

Copyright © 2024 CCAO, All rights reserved.

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