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COUNTIES CURRENT
CCAO
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO

April 29, 2024

Congratulations to our new CEBCO officers, elected at the CEBCO Board of Directors retreat on Friday!

(Left to Right): Scioto County Commissioner Bryan Davis, Treasurer;
Allen County Commissioner Cory Noonan, President;
Huron County Commissioner Harry Brady, Vice President;
Ashtabula County Commissioner J.P. Ducro, Secretary

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Montgomery County Commissioner Carolyn Rice receives Ohio Land Bank Association Lifetime Achievement

The following is adapted from a press release by Montgomery County.

Last Thursday, Montgomery County Commissioner Carolyn Rice was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ohio Land Bank Association. Rice is in her sixth year serving as a county commissioner. Prior to that, she served as the Montgomery County Treasurer from 2007-2018. It was while she was in that role that she began serving as Chair of the Montgomery County Land Reutilization Corporations (Land Bank) since its inception in 2011 and served as the Land Bank's Acting Executive Director from 2011-2013.

Shawn Carvin, Ohio Land Bank Association Executive Director, congratulated Rice on her award. "Your role in expanding the land bank movement and attracting millions of dollars in investments has revitalized neighborhoods and enhanced community vitality, notably in underserved areas. Furthermore, your efforts in developing the Foreclosure Mediation Program have provided essential support to families, showcasing your commitment to the well-being of Ohio's residents."

"What an honor to be recognized by the Land Bank Association and what a privilege it has been to champion efforts that rejuvenate our communities while contributing to economic development efforts," said Rice.

"Carolyn Rice is a community servant and leader," said Realtor and Community Development Specialist Sheila Crane. "She has worked tirelessly in areas of community revitalization and stabilization." Carvin agreed, saying "Your legacy of dedication and service is truly inspiring."

Retired Executive Director of the Montgomery County Land Bank, Mike Grauwelman, praised Rice, calling her the "Mother of the Land Bank." He said her nomination for the award was supported locally for an array of achievements accomplished during her tenure. "Congratulations Carolyn and thank you for paving the way for the organization to provide valuable services to the community."

Swing for Scholarships: The County Classic Golf Outing

Step onto the lush greens of Safari Golf Club in Powell, Ohio, and immerse yourself in a day of swings, putts, and camaraderie for a noble cause. The second annual County Classic Golf Outing, organized by the CCAO Research and Educational Foundation, promises a day of fun-filled competition while supporting the dreams of aspiring students across Ohio.

Date: July 19th

Location: Safari Golf Club, Powell, Ohio

Time: Lunch and Registration at 11:30 a.m. | Shotgun Start at 1:00 p.m.

As the midsummer sun bathes the fairways in golden light, golf enthusiasts and philanthropists alike gather for a day that blends sport with purpose. The scent of freshly cut grass mingles with the aroma of a delicious lunch spread, setting the stage for an unforgettable event.

A Swing for a Cause:
The heartbeat of the County Classic Golf Outing is its dedication to the CCAO Research and Educational Foundation Scholarship fund. With every swing of the club, participants directly contribute to the future of promising students throughout Ohio. The Foundation's commitment to education shines bright as it awards five deserving students with $2,000 scholarships, empowering them to pursue their academic endeavors and shape tomorrow's leaders.

Unleash Your Inner Champion:
From seasoned pros to novice players, the County Classic welcomes golfers of all skill levels to join in the action-packed day. Whether you're aiming for the elusive hole-in-one or simply enjoying the scenic course, every participant plays a vital role in making a difference in students' lives.

Bonding Through Birdies:
Beyond the thrill of competition, the County Classic fosters connections that extend far beyond the greens. Amidst friendly banter and shared victories, participants forge lasting friendships, united by their passion for golf and their commitment to education.

Join Us:
Mark your calendars and prepare to tee off for a cause that transcends the game itself. The County Classic Golf Outing invites you to be a part of something truly special—a day where your love for golf merges seamlessly with your desire to support the next generation of leaders.

Register Today:
Secure your spot in this unforgettable event by registering early. Don't miss your chance to make a difference while enjoying a day of golf, laughter, and purpose at the County Classic.

For registrations visit: https://birdease.com/countyclassic

CCAO
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO
RESEARCH & EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
Join CCAO for an afternoon of golf for a good cause!
COUNTY CLASSIC

County Classic Golf Outing
Safari Golf Club
4853 Powell Rd, Powell, OH 43065

July 19th, 2024
Lunch served/registration at 11:30am
Shotgun start at 1:00pm

In support of the CCAO Research and Education Foundation Scholarship Fund.

Helping develop the next generation of County Government.

Scan the code to sign up, or visit birdease.com/countyclassic

Fairfield County receives "Best Workplace" recognition for third consecutive year

For the third year in a row, Fairfield County was named one of the top workplaces by Columbus CEO Magazine and USA Today.

The awards are based on confidential employee surveys that measure the employee experience and factors including if the employees feel respected, supported, enabled to grow, and empowered, among others.

Fairfield County is the only local government to receive the award in 2024. The Ohio Department of Agriculture also received recognition.

Congratulations Fairfield County!

OSU Extension, CCAO conducting land use survey; 18 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.

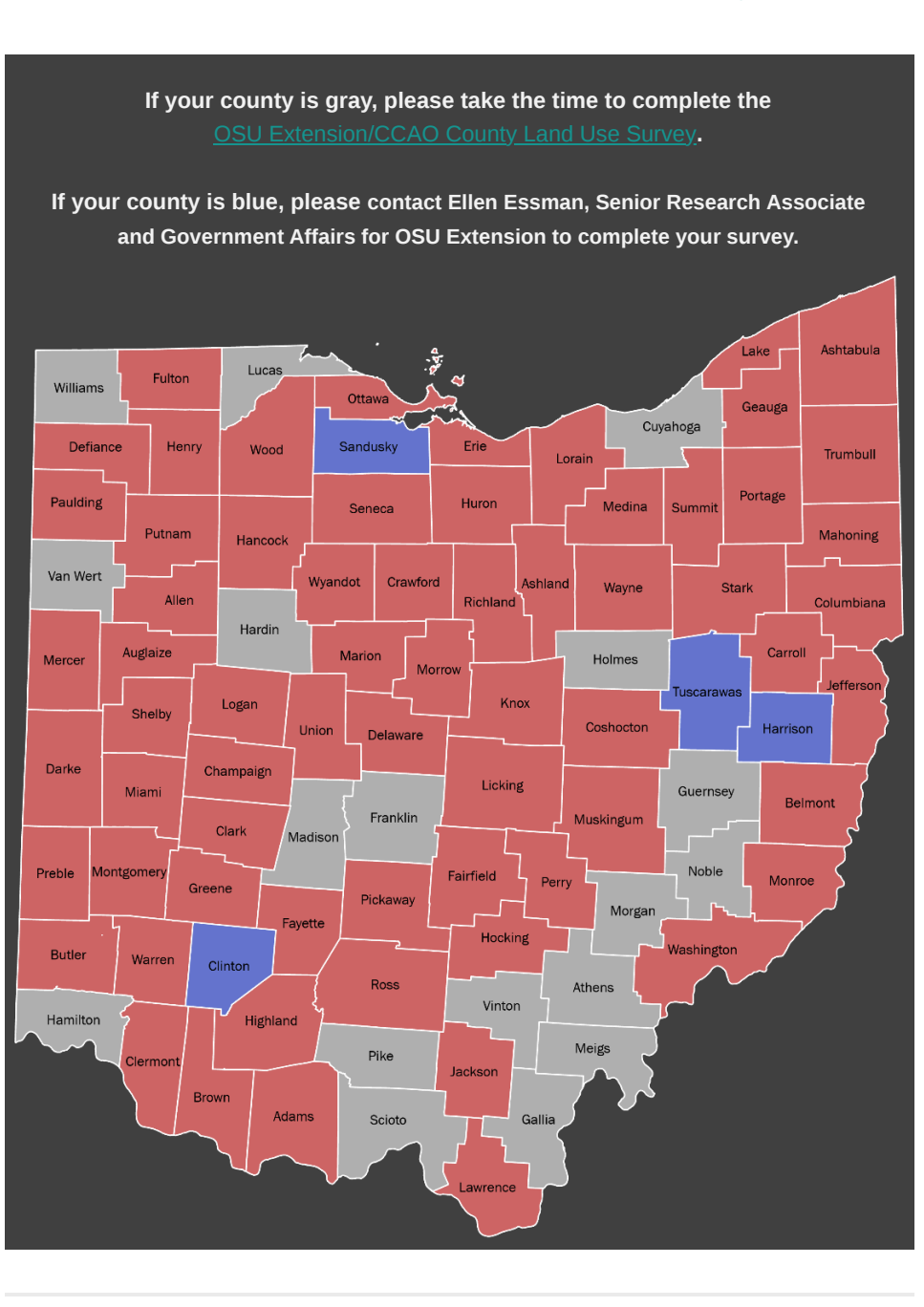
One of the end products of the survey will be a map visualizing county land use policies and other measures, such as renewable energy siting restricted areas. The map, along with a companion map that Extension is working on developing with the Ohio Township Association, will be useful to both community 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 complete survey responses from 66 counties, incomplete responses from four counties, and is awaiting responses from the remaining 18 counties. If your county is shaded in gray in the map below, you have ***NOT YET*** provided a response to the survey. If your county is shaded in blue, your survey response is ***incomplete***.

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.

If your county is blue, please contact Ellen Essman, Senior Research Associate and Government Affairs for OSU Extension to complete your survey.



SAVE THE DATE! CCAO Summer Symposium in Hocking County

On August 21-23 (Wednesday to Friday), CCAO will host its annual Summer Symposium at the Hocking Hills Lodge and Conference Center in Hocking County!

The theme of the symposium is still being finalized, as are hotel arrangements. Watch for more information in future issues of *Counties Current* and through CCAO e-bulletins!

The Wyandot County Courthouse with a National County Government Month yard sign.

NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH
APRIL
STRONGER COUNTIES. STRONGER OHIO.

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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OHFA's 2024-2025 Annual Plan open to public comments

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency has opened the public comment period on its Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Annual Plan.

The draft plan, available here, lists 11 key opportunities the agency will consider in supporting single family and multi-family housing and modifies the agency's key challenges, among other changes.

The agency will receive comments until the end of the day on May 28. If you have comments, you can email to them ohfapublichearing@ohiohome.org or mail them to:

Ohio Housing Finance Agency
Attention: Office of Research and Analytics
2600 Corporate Exchange Drive, Suite 300
Columbus, Ohio 43231

If you have questions concerning the draft plan or have difficulties submitting comments, please contact Penny Martin at pmartin@ohiohome.org.

Cuyahoga County requests Attorney General Opinion on human services levy revenue usage for capital projects

Last week, the Attorney General Opinions Section accepted a request from Cuyahoga County Prosecutor Michael O'Malley regarding how funding from the county's health and human services (HHS) levy may be used; specifically, if revenue can be used for capital expenses that are "inextricably intertwined" with providing health and human services programs.

The county's health and human services levy is comprised of two separate levies of 4.7 mills and 4.8 mills. Revenue from the levies is used to fund substance abuse treatment, the county hospital (MetroHealth), child protective services, senior services, and services to the homeless.

In his request, Prosecutor O'Malley relays that the Cuyahoga County ADAMHS Board is requesting the county use funds from the HHS levy to build and equip treatment facilities. Given the immediacy of the question, O'Malley has asked Attorney General Dave Yost whether the county may use funds derived from the HHS levy for capital expenditures that are inextricably intertwined with and made for the purpose of providing HHS services, or if the funds can only be used solely for non-capital purposes such as current operating expenses.

Since this opinion may have broad county implications, CCAO will keep membership informed of the Attorney General's Opinion when it is published.

Ohio, Intel announce H2Ohio partnership to protect Licking Watershed water quality

The following is a press release from Governor Mike DeWine.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), and Intel announced today a new H2Ohio partnership to protect and improve water quality in the Licking Watershed.

"Water means business here in Ohio, and we are excited about partnering with Intel on an H2Ohio project that aligns with a mission we are both dedicated to – protecting our water," said Governor DeWine. "I appreciate that Intel cares as much as we do about the quality of Ohio's water."

"One of the reasons that Intel chose Ohio was because we are a water-rich state due to our abundant water resources, including rivers, lakes, reservoirs and groundwater," said Lt. Governor Jon Husted. "It's important that we protect these resources, and today's announcement will further that mission thanks to our partnership with Intel."

H2Ohio is Governor DeWine's statewide water quality initiative that is improving Ohio's many waterways. Intel's mission to invest in local watersheds in which they operate aligns with the H2Ohio initiative, which sparked this partnership.

"As we continue building a bright future in the Silicon Heartland, Intel is committed to upholding the highest sustainability standards in Ohio with its investments and innovations," Intel Chief Global Operations Officer Keyvan Esfarjani said. "This historic water restoration project will support the local watershed, and when combined with Intel's investment in onsite water treatment, conservation and reuse efforts, will further strengthen Ohio's watersheds."

ODNR's portion of H2Ohio focuses on restoring and creating wetlands to filter nutrients from the landscape that cause water quality issues, such as algal blooms.

The Licking River floodplain project will restore 90 acres of retired farmland along the Licking River. Once restored, the floodplain wetland will capture phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment in flood waters and prevent them from contaminating the Licking River, which flows into the Dillon Lake Reservoir, and eventually into the Ohio River.

Since 2019, ODNR has overseen 170 H2Ohio wetland projects that are either completed or in the works. These projects have led to 15,000 acres of habitat restoration.

"We are thrilled to join forces with Intel as we continue to carry out our mission to improve water quality around Ohio," ODNR Director Mary Mertz said. "By protecting our vital water supply, these wetlands embody the kind of conservation work ODNR has been doing for 75 years."

H2Ohio is Governor DeWine's statewide water quality initiative designed to address complex issues impacting Ohio's waters. Launched in 2019, H2Ohio uses a comprehensive approach guided by science and data to reduce algal blooms, stop pollution, and improve access to clean drinking water by supporting best farming practices, road salt runoff reduction, litter cleanup, dam removal, land conservation, and water infrastructure revitalization. For more information visit h2.ohio.gov.

Ohio Turnpike launches new toll collection system

The Ohio Turnpike and Infrastructure Commission's new toll collection system, which started as a vision and a study in 2016, went live on April 10.

"The modernization of the toll collection system has been a long, challenging, and complex project. But the moment we have anticipated – following meticulous testing of the electronic tolling system over the past several months – has arrived," said Ferzan Ahmed, P.E., executive director of the turnpike commission. "The Ohio Turnpike's new toll collection system was five years in the making. The commission approved the first contract in 2019."

To accommodate all travelers on the 241-mile Ohio Turnpike – designated as Interstate 80, I-90, and I-76 – the new toll collection system will feature a combination of open road tolling lanes for *E-ZPass* customers and a gated exit system for non-*E-ZPass* customers who prefer to pay by cash or credit card.

Visit www.ohioturnpike.org/openroadtolling2024 for more details.

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 Healthy Homes Network's annual conference to spotlight lead poisoning prevention

On May 10, the Ohio Healthy Homes Network will hold its 2024 Annual Conference at the Fawcett Center at Ohio State University's Columbus campus.

The event, registration for which is $85 for non-OHHN members and $65 for OHHN members, will have an emphasis on lead poisoning prevention and will also feature discussions on whole-house health, mold, and legal aid. Lead abatement funding is a plank in CCAO's Metropolitan and Regional Affairs legislative platform section, so attending the conference is an opportunity to learn more about current state efforts to advance this important public health policy.

A full schedule for the event and a link to register can be found here.

2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Featuring Keynote Speakers

Mary DiOrio, MD, MPH
Medical Director of the Ohio Department of Health

Matthew Ammon, Director of HUD's Office of Lead Hazard Control & Healthy Homes

Armond Magnelli
President of Livable Housing, Inc.

May 10, 2024, 8:30am-4:30pm
The Fawcett Center at Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
Register online today!

Licensed attendees may qualify for up to 6.5 hours of continuing education from the Ohio Board of Nursing, the Counselor and Social Work Board of Ohio and the Ohio Department of Health Environmental Health Specialist Program. *

TUESDAY: NACo to host webinar on modernizing county finances through digital disbursements

This 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

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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 commissioners to launch benefits program

Toledo Blade, April 23, 2024

The Board of Lucas County Commissioners is establishing a pilot benefits bridge program that will help families and businesses reach economic success.

Public benefits, such as child care, health coverage, housing vouchers, and food assistance, help thousands of working families make ends meet and assist low-income people to participate in the work force.

Those who are working and receive these benefits often have to choose whether to accept an increase in pay and lose those benefits, or not accept the pay raise and keep the benefits. This is called the "benefits cliff" — when an individual or family experiences a decrease in public assistance benefits because of an increase in earnings, yet the additional salary is not enough to cover the loss of benefits.

When families lose public benefits because of increased wages, the benefits cliff creates hardships, not only for affected families, but for employers as well. Individuals often forgo an increase in work hours and promotional opportunities to avoid the net loss to the family that would result, reducing their long-term chance of self-sufficiency while employers experience difficulty filling positions critical to the successful operation of their businesses.

Northeast District

'Unsung heroes' celebrated during National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week

News Herald, April 25, 2024

You don't know their names, but you've might have heard their voices.

You don't recognize all of what they do, but you've likely have benefitted from their talent.

In some instances, they may have been responsible for saving the life of someone you know — or your own.

As many area police and fire officials stress, dispatchers and call center workers are the true first responders and the unsung heroes of the departments.

These behind-the-scenes workers were recently recognized during National Public Safety Telecommunications Week from April 14 through April 20.

Geauga County Sheriff Scott Hildenbrand does not underestimate the essential importance the dispatchers at the department are for the entire county. One example of their efforts took place in the fall of 2022, when Dispatcher Christina Lamtman helped save the life of a woman suffering a serious asthma attack.

Central District

Boyce: Franklin County's growth problems can be addressed

Columbus Dispatch, April 24, 2024

Franklin County's strong population and economic growth have made it the largest county in Ohio, with an estimated 1.33 million residents.

While that growth has brought problems — housing shortages, traffic and infrastructure needs among them — they are problems that most other counties in Ohio that are losing population would love to have, said Kevin Boyce, president of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners.

On Wednesday, Boyce used the annual State of the County luncheon to highlight to the public what Franklin County government and its approximately 6,500 employees do everyday to help meet the needs of county residents. As an illustration of the size of the county's operation, Boyce noted that employees use more than 500 county vehicles to drive about 5 million miles a year on average.

"What that means to me is that we're not just sitting in some building on 373 S. High St.," Boyce said of how the county spends its $2.18-billion budget, including about $660 million in its general fund funded mostly from sales tax receipts. "That we're deploying human resources throughout the county, but also trying our best to cover the challenges and some of the growth opportunities that exist in Franklin County. We're trying to get ahead of that."

Southwest District

Butler County auditor's property search back online after unusual activity

Journal News, April 17, 2024

Part of the Butler County Auditor's Office website came back online Tuesday after the site had been offline for the last week.

The auditor's heavily used "Real Estate Search" is serving as the office's online homepage until a new website is ready to go live by the end of May. The other features, however, won't be available online until the new site is ready.

Returning the county website online took longer than anticipated, as Auditor Nancy Nix had told the Journal-News she hoped it would be back online Wednesday of last week.

Shortly after taking office last year, Nix said a new website provider was an area of need. The county's preferred provider, Revize, was contracted months ago to construct a new site. Nix said the site has been down since April 14 after her office was notified by Tyler Technologies, the company that hosts the site, after "unusual activity" was detected.

The site was taken offline by the provider as a security precaution until an update could be performed.

Now, there is an incompatibility issue with the update, and it is doubtful the issues with the old website could be remedied before the new website was ready. Though the old site will not be brought back online, the "Real Estate Search" feature is the most used, so the auditor's office has set that as the homepage at ButlerCountyAuditor.org.

Southeast District

Melway Paving awarded 2.5M Holmes County paving project

Daily Record, April 24, 2024

The Holmes County commissioners on Monday approved the recommendation of County Engineer Chris Young to award the $2.5 million bid for the 0.25 % sales tax road paving project to Melway Paving.

The county received two bids for the project to pave stretches of eight Holmes County roads, including County Roads 1, 19, 23 (from the Ashland County line to the covered bridge), 35, 61, 192, 400 and 558.

The base bid is for about $2.5 million.

Three alternates roads, which will be done if funding allows, are County Road 201 from state Route 241 to the Wayne County line, $500,000; County Road 373, $257,000; and County Road 672, $91,000.

Karvo Companies out of Stow submitted the other bid for $3.125 million.

"The bid from a Holmes County company was substantially lower, and we like that," said Commissioner Joe Miller. "Hopefully the money will stay here."

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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APRIL 22-30
Passover

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?

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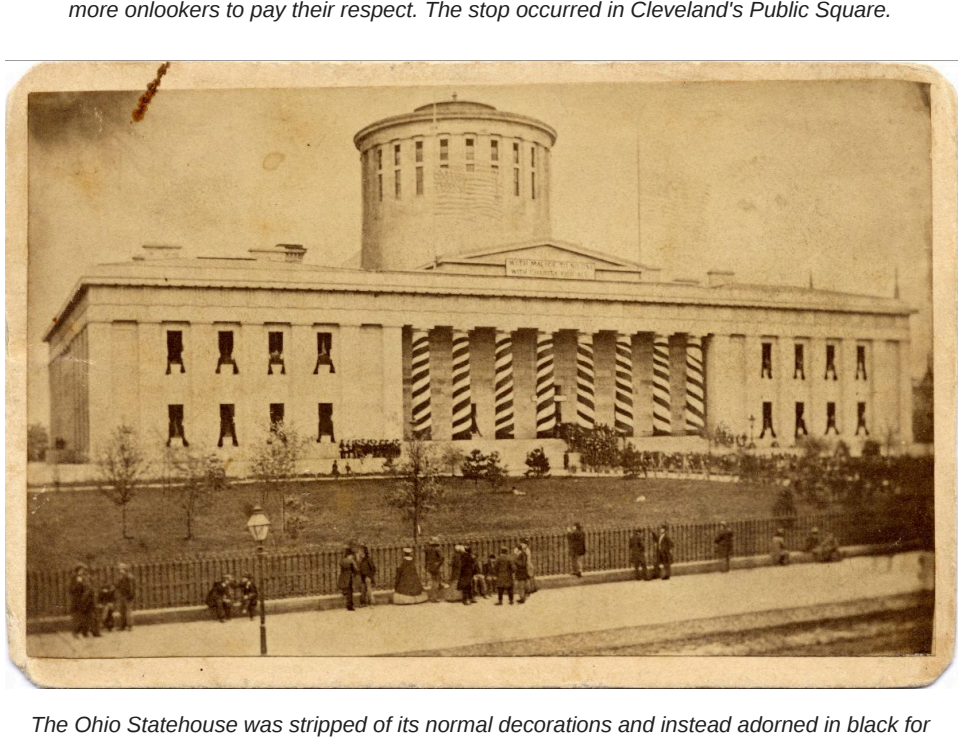
Lincoln Funeral Train

Today is the 159th anniversary of President Abraham Lincoln laying in state in the Statehouse Rotunda after his assassination.

The Lincoln Funeral Train traveled from Washington, D.C., to Springfield, Illinois, and included many stops to allow mourning Americans to pay last respects. The train arrived in Cleveland for a public viewing at Public Square on April 28 and passed through the Darke County village of Gettysburg in the early hours of April 30, before passing into Indiana.

The Cleveland photo below is courtesy of the Huntington Library; the three Columbus photos below are courtesy of the Ohio Historical Connection.

President Lincoln's funeral stop in Cleveland featured his casket in an open-air gazebo to allow more onlookers to pay their respect. The stop occurred in Cleveland's Public Square.



The Ohio Statehouse was stripped of its normal decorations and instead adorned in black for President Lincoln's final visit to Columbus.

President Lincoln's casket was escorted from the train station to the Statehouse as thousands looked on.

President Lincoln's casket in the Statehouse Rotunda.

The President's funeral train would make a number of brief stops through the day at other locations in Ohio before eventually reaching his Springfield, Illinois, home for his burial.

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