June 3, 2024

Last week, Wayne County Commissioner Sue Smail celebrated her retirement with fellow commissioners Jon Hofstetter and Ron Amstutz, CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler, CCAO Assistant Director John Leutz, and Wayne County Administrator Patrick Herron.

Thank you for your service to Wayne County, Sue!

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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DeWine-Husted Administration awards $75 million in jail grants

Last week, Governor Mike DeWine and Director of the Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Annette Chambers-Smith announced the awarding of the $75 million in funding for county jail projects that was authorized in the state budget.

The funds will go to five projects across the state, with some serving multiple counties. The projects that received funding are, ordered by the size of the award:

- Jackson County: $32,189,178 to support a new multi-county jail that will serve Jackson, Lawrence, and Pike counties.
- Adams County: $21,611,312 to support a new jail that will increase the number of beds and provide additional beds for detainees with special needs.
- Wyandot County: $19,475,000 to support a new jail that will increase the number of beds and provide additional beds for detainees with special needs.
- Morrow County: $4,318,182 for renovation and security projects at the existing jail.
- Meigs County: $144,886 to conduct a feasibility study for a new jail that could serve Meigs County and other neighboring counties.

Congratulations to the receiving counties! They join 31 other counties across the state that have received a combined $178 million for jail construction and renovation projects during the DeWine-Husted Administration.

With these awards, it's important to remember that the General Assembly is continuing to work on the capital budget, where CCAO is advocating for additional funding for similarly vital jail projects. The House's version of the capital budget includes $200 million for jail projects, split between $100 million for large counties and $100 million for small and medium counties.

Now is a vital time to contact your Senate delegation and stress the importance of the partnership between the state and counties on funding for jails. CCAO's policy brief on jail issues is a good tool to use in your conversations with legislators and executive branch officials.

If you have any questions concerning jail funding in the prospective capital budget, please reach out to the Policy Team at policy@ccao.org.

County entities receive housing, water project grant funding

Last week, the DeWine-Husted Administration announced grant awards under two programs.

Welcome Home Ohio

The first, Welcome Home Ohio, is a program to invest a total of $100 million to help landbanks purchase and rehabilitate or build residential properties, with an additional $50 million available in tax credits. Last week, the administration awarded $29.5 million of the total $150 million available. The full list of projects that received funding, including details on what the funding is for, can be found here.

The following county landbanks (some of which have the technical name of "land reutilization corporation") received funds:

- Ashtabula County: $990,000
- Athens County: $1,390,000
- Gallia County: $360,000
- Hamilton County: $2,720,000
- Jackson County: $60,000
- Knox County: $2,460,000
- Lucas County: $1,340,000
- Mahoning County: $2,400,000
- Marion County: $30,000
- Montgomery County: $6,920,000
- Morgan County: $650,000
- Stark County: $2,000,000
- Trumbull County: $700,000
- Wayne County: $2,100,000

The program is accepting applications on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted. You can learn more about how to apply here.

Water and Wastewater Program

The second program that awarded grants last week was the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Program, which reduce or eliminate the fiscal burdens faced in addressing critical water infrastructure, such as water distribution systems, pipes, and water mains for drinking water and sanitary sewer systems and extended sewer lines for sanitation.

Counties and county entities that received funding under the awards are as follows:

Drinking Water

- Ashtabula County: $576,640 to replace and extend a water line.
- Greene County: $2.5 million to complete a previously funded project to develop a 57-acre property.
- Noble County Water Authority: $2.0 million to complete the fourth phase of a waterline extension project.

Wastewater

- Adams County: $3.0 million for sanitary sewer improvements in an area deemed a public health nuisance by the Ohio EPA.
- Clermont County: $3.5 million to complete improvements on a wastewater treatment plant.
- Defiance County: $2.7 million to complete improvements on a wastewater treatment plant.
- Harrison County: $2.4 million to construct a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system in the village of Freeport.
- Hocking County: $1.1 million to rehabilitate a current wastewater treatment system from inflow and infiltration issues
- Muskingum County: $2.0 million to replace a sewer main which has repeatedly failed recently.
- Putnam County: $33,000 to complete improvements on a previously-funded stormwater collection system.
- Scioto County: $2.6 million to install multiple sewer mains and pumping stations to improve replace failing sewage treatment systems.
- Tuscarawas County: $533,500 to return certain areas of the county to an acceptable level of sanitary sewer service.
- Williams County: $2.3 million to construct a sewage system in an unincorporated village currently relying on septic systems and private wells.

A full list of funded projects can be found here.

CCAO Summer Symposium: Registration Open!

CCAO SUMMER SYMPOSIUM 2024
TEAMWORK FOR A BETTER TOMORROW
AUGUST 21-23, 2024
Hocking Hills Lodge & Conference Center | Logan, Ohio

Join us for the CCAO Summer Symposium 2024, set amidst the serene beauty of Hocking Hills. This year's event promises to deliver relevant and timely sessions, foster valuable relationships across the state, and align with our 2024 President's vision: "Teamwork for a Better Tomorrow, Stronger Counties, Stronger Ohio."

Stay tuned for the Symposium Schedule which will be released in the coming days!

Register

If you haven't attended a CCAO Summer Symposium since its inception in 2022, we invite you to register at a discounted rate. Contact Tim Hoverman at thoverman@ccao.org to see if you qualify and learn how you can save 25% off the registration fee.

Early Bird Registration: $249 (until July 19)

Standard Registration: $295 (after July 19)

Reserve Your Room:

To book your room, call 1-800-282-7275 and mention the CCAO Summer Symposium block or use Block Code #1017E3. A deposit for the first night's room, taxes, and fees is required at the time of reservation. This deposit is fully refundable up to 72 hours prior to arrival. Cancellations made within 72 hours of arrival will incur a no-show fee.

Room Rate: $107 + tax and fees (available until July 19, 2024)

Note: Rooms are limited, so reserve yours today.

We look forward to seeing you in the picturesque "Hills" of Hocking County!

Hocking Hills Lodge and Conference Center

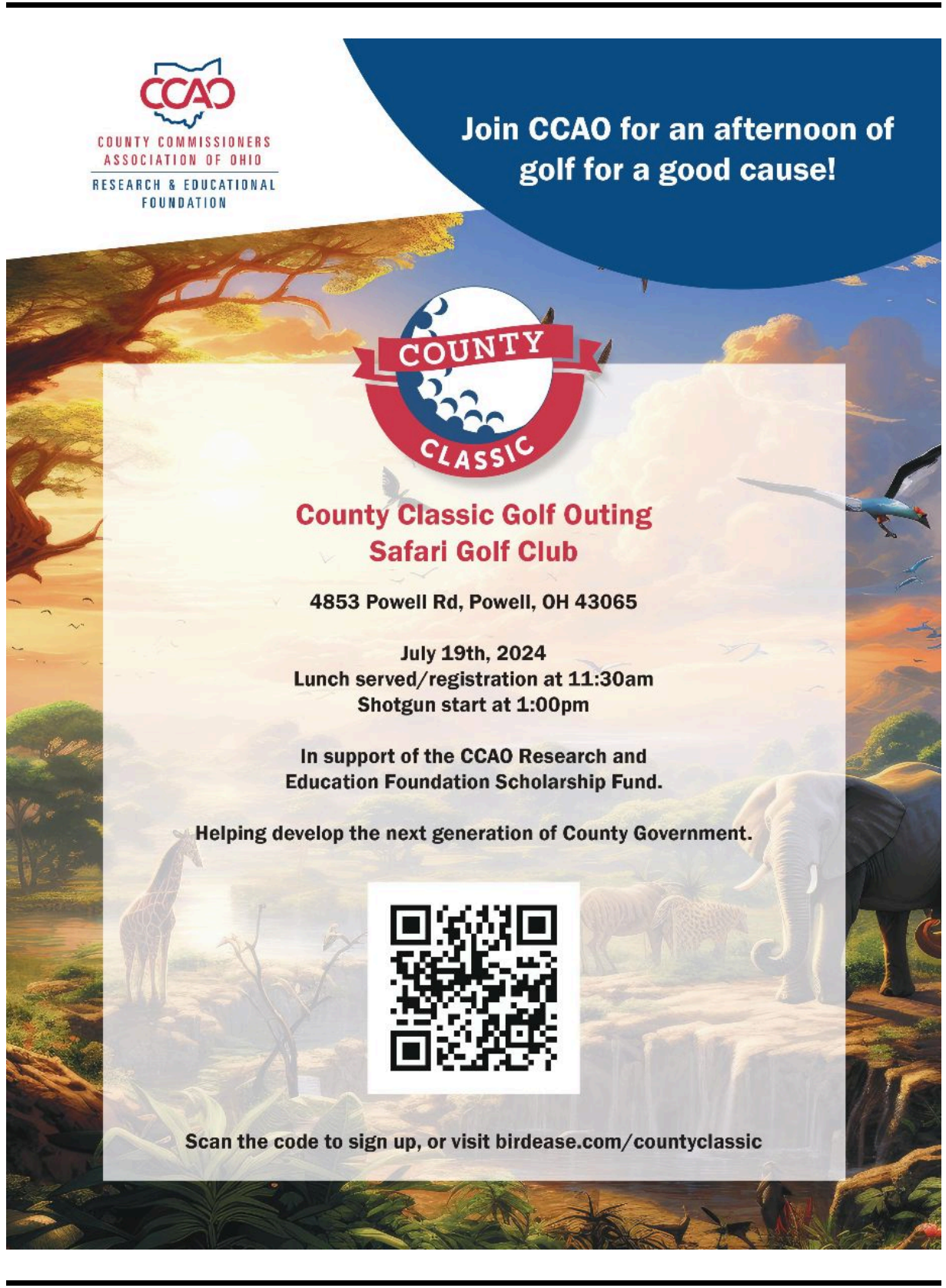
20020 OH-664

Logan, OH 43138

Gannett media group publishes series on county jails

This past weekend a series of news articles was published about Ohio's jails, particularly focused on individuals dying while in custody and why these deaths are occurring. Reporters with the Cincinnati Enquirer, Columbus Dispatch and USA Today Network Ohio spent more than a year investigating. Here are links to their articles:

- Dying Behind Bars: At least 220 people died in Ohio jails over 4 years
- Ohio's jails have long been de facto mental health hospitals. Now they look like them
- Surveillance video shows how an autistic teen died after 10 terrifying hours in Ohio jail
- Who is dying behind bars in Ohio jails?
- 2 people were sent to Ohio jails just miles apart. One received treatment. The other died
- Ohio jails house about 300,000 people a year. How does the system work?
- How we investigated deaths in Ohio's local jails


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

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STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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DeWine-Husted Administration announces dates of Expanded Sales Tax Holiday

On Friday, Governor Mike DeWine announced that the Expanded Sales Tax Holiday, authorized in the state operating budget, will take place from 12:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 30, through 11:59 p.m. on Thursday, August 8.

The 10-day holiday allows tax-free purchases made both in-person and online on eligible items up to $500. Excluded items include alcohol, motor vehicles, watercraft, tobacco, vapor products, and cannabis products.

An important part of the statutory language creating the Expanded Holiday is that the state must reimburse the revenue losses to counties and transit authorities that levy permissive sales taxes and the Local Government Fund and Public Library Fund, which both receive 1.70% of state general revenue fund tax revenue.

However, the language only requires the state to reimburse counties, transit authorities, the LGF, and the PLF for foregone revenue in August. Since the holiday includes two days in July, as it stands these entities will not receive reimbursement for foregone revenue that occurs during those days.

The Governor's Office and the Department of Taxation have spoken with CCAO and intend to work with the Association and the legislature to maintain the spirit of the original language and ensure that counties and other affected entities will receive reimbursement for those two days as well.

BroadbandOhio BEAD Challenge Process ongoing

The Challenge Phase of the BroadbandOhio BEAD process is ongoing, and will last until Monday, June 17.

If you are a member of local government, a service provider, or represent a community anchor institution, you are eligible to participate in the BEAD Challenge Process. To prepare for launch, we recommend that you complete the following steps, if you have not already done so:

- If you are an eligible challenger who wishes to participate, register for access to Ohio's Challenge Portal at this link.
- If you are concerned about internet speed in certain areas, encourage residents of those areas to take speed tests at this link on our website. We've attached a flyer that provides instructions on how to do so, which we invite you to share.

For additional information on eligibility, how to register for participation in Ohio's BEAD Challenge Process, and how to access and use Ohio's Challenge Portal, please visit the BroadbandOhio Challenge Process Fact Sheet, FAQs, and Guidebook at this link.

For questions, please reach out to bbohchallenge@development.ohio.gov

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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.

State grant round-up

CCAO posts grant opportunities on its Grants and Funding Opportunities page. Below a few current state grant opportunities are highlighted.

Wetland Grant Program

- **Eligibility**: Local Governments in NW Ohio
- **Purpose**: To provide reimbursement for natural-infrastructure projects focused on nutrient reduction and water quality improvement.
- **Funding Available**: $10 million available; Minimum award $50,000
- **Deadline**: June 7

Benefits Bridge Employer Pilot Program

- **Eligibility**: Employers ***(NON-COUNTY)***
- **Purpose**: To provide funding to employers to offer training programs to participating employees who are recipients of public assistance programs to encourage the employees to take advantage of training programs.
- **Funding Available**: Up to $5,000 per enrolled employee, no more than $100,000 per employers
- **Deadline**: June 30

COUNTY NEWS

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Each week Counties Current highlights the happenings in our counties in the words of their local media. One story from each of the CCAO's five districts is highlighted, and on occasion other stories may be highlighted as well.

Northwest District

Putnam County conducting fair housing access survey

The Lima News, May 21, 2024

The Putnam County Board of Commissioners is partnering with the Great Lakes Community Action Partnership to assess access to fair housing in the county, and that assessment is coming in the form of a public survey open to all county residents.

According to Ashley Siefker, the county's grants and wages coordinator, this Fair Housing Analysis of Impediments is necessary in order to keep the county eligible to apply for related grant funds.

"An analysis of impediments is a document that we have to update every few years," she said. "It's kind of like a critical thinking document asking what we can do to help improve these issues. So the best way to know what's out there is to try to get public input and get these surveys done."

An impediment to fair housing takes place when an individual or family is denied access to housing due to race, color, nation of origin, religion, sex, familial status or disability, housing that they are otherwise able to afford.

"For example, if an apartment complex has a three-bedroom apartment available, and a family of five wants to rent that apartment but they get told no because they have kids, that's a no-go," Siefker said. "Or, 'We don't have any units that are available for someone who's disabled, and we don't have the means to make those accommodations.'"

Northeast District

Lake County commissioners, JFS recognize 'National Foster Parent Appreciation Month'

News Herald, May 27, 2024

For over 30 years, the U.S. government has issued an annual proclamation in recognition of National Foster Care Month, celebrated in May, to show appreciation and gratitude to foster parents for stepping forward to provide safe havens for children.

In honoring the tradition, the Lake County commissioners have again adopted a special resolution recognizing May as "Foster Parent Recognition Month in Lake County."

The measure, unanimously passed, in part, states "….every child has the inherent right to grow up in a safe, permanent, loving family" which "lays the foundation for a happy and productive adulthood…."

The Lake County Department of Job and Family Services reported there are 44 licensed foster families currently caring for children of all ages in Lake County.

The department also works with relatives and kin who have opened their homes to children in need of care, officials noted.

"We are extremely grateful to our foster parents who provide the children in our custody with consistent, nurturing, and safe environments to grow and thrive," said JFS Director Suzanne Casar. "Foster parents are often faced with extremely challenging situations, and we appreciate the significant role they play in the lives of the children we work with every day."

Central District

Residents push back on 840-acre Knox County solar project

NBC4, May 21, 2024

A proposed solar project in Knox County has brought the area a lot of controversy as many have come out against it.

More than 3,000 public comments have been filed and on Wednesday, a third public hearing wrapped up.

It's all about a project that would install solar panels on a maximum of 840 acres with enough energy to power about 14,000 homes. It would be a 40-year project and at the end of it the land would be returned back to farm land.

This has some people doubtful.

Many of the people speaking out aren't saying no to solar power; they shared that it's just a no to solar on Knox County farmland. Throughout three public hearings, more people laid out how this would impact them and why they are on the side they are on.

Two main groups have come out against the Open Road Renewables Fraiser Solar Project: Knox Smart Development and Preserve Knox County Ohio.

"There's a lot of unknowns and a lot of promises that we've been asked to just kind of take on faith that they will come about, as the developer has promised," Preserve Knox County Ohio member Ben Dean said.

Southwest District

Montgomery County Job and Family Services opens mobile unit to bring services directly to residents

WYSO, May 30, 2024

Montgomery County Job and Family Services has a new "On the Move Mobile Unit" to bring services directly to people in the community.

The 38-foot vehicle offers mobile access to county resources and public assistance services. The van will also be used for recruitment of foster parents and JFS employees.

The vehicle will serve as a link between neighborhoods and key locations in the county that need assistance, Montgomery County Commissioner Judy Dodge said.

"Our residents and community members will be able to access employment support, public assistance programs, child support, child and adult protective services, and so many, many other essential resources," she said.

The JFS On the Move Mobile Unit is equipped with eight workstations, a private conference room, high speed WIFI and printing services.

The Board of County Commissioners used $422,000 from federal COVID relief to build the unit.

Montgomery County Commissioner Carolyn Rice said the mobile unit was designed to meet residents where they are.

Southeast District

Meigs County Public Transportation expands service with new hub

WOUB Public Media, May 20, 2024

After two years of service, Meigs County Public Transportation is getting a new $4 million building to expand its operations.

Director of MCPT Theresa Lavender said the program started in 2022 with two drivers and one dispatcher, but it has outgrown the office space it uses now.

The new transportation hub will have two buildings, Lavender said. One will be for offices and the other will have garages for vehicles.

"Lack of transportation in Meigs County has offered many challenges for residents in the past, (like) access to employment, healthcare, community resources, education and recreational activities," Lavender said in her groundbreaking ceremony speech Thursday. "We can now confidently say that this obstacle has been overcome."

Meigs County has over 20,000 residents, and MCPT currently serves 600 riders.

The service now has 10 drivers and 15 wheelchair accessible vehicles, including cars and shuttles.

MCPT offers free, on-demand transportation that picks residents up from their homes. This is possible through a state grant.

"Ohio Department of Transportation with their contributions for this really, really, really takes a lot of financial burdens away," Meigs County Commissioner Shannon Miller said.

Miller said he saw an MCPT vehicle taking passengers to a dialysis treatment facility in Athens, and noted how important the service is.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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JUNE 14
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

JUNE 20
CCAO General Government Committee Meeting

JUNE 26
Northwest District Meeting (Hancock County)

JUNE 28
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

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