September 3, 2024

The Wayne County Commissioners, the Mayor of Wooster, and CCAO Policy Analyst James Kennedy recently toured the Ohio State University's College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences campus in Wooster.

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CCAO Research and Education Foundation awards 2nd annual Ohio Counties Scholarships

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio Research and Educational Foundation is proud to announce the 2024 Ohio Counties Scholarship recipients. Established in 1991, the foundation operates as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing our members and the people of Ohio with high-quality information, tools, and education. The scholarships, funded through private donations and events like the County Classic, support outstanding students pursuing higher education.

One student from each CCAO region received a scholarship. Congratulations to this year's recipients!

- Northeast: Nicholas McClure, Ashtabula County
- Northwest: Riley Barhorst, Shelby County
- Central: Alexis Cupp, Pickaway County
- Southwest: Sophia Shenk, Montgomery County
- Southeast: Ava Fierbaugh, Harrison County

These scholarships reflect the foundation's commitment to investing in future leaders who will contribute to the continued growth and development of Ohio's counties.

Grants awarded for reducing opiate impact and bosting awareness, prevention, and recovery

Last week, the Office of Criminal Justice Services (OCJS), a division of the Department of Public Safety, awarded $5.5 million in grants to support efforts to reduce the impact of opioids and other drugs on communities and to promote substance abuse awareness, prevention, and recovery.

OCJS awarded 14 grants, the majority of which went to county entities. A list of these awards is below.

- Defiance County Sheriff: $117,821
- Franklin County Office of Justice Policy & Programs: $838,866
- Lawrence County Prosecutor: $418,317
- Lorain County Sheriff: $449,615
- Medina County Drug Task Force: $241,976
- Muskingum County Prosecutor: $205,062
- Portage County Sheriff: $369,609
- Ross County Sheriff: $128,072

You can view more details here.

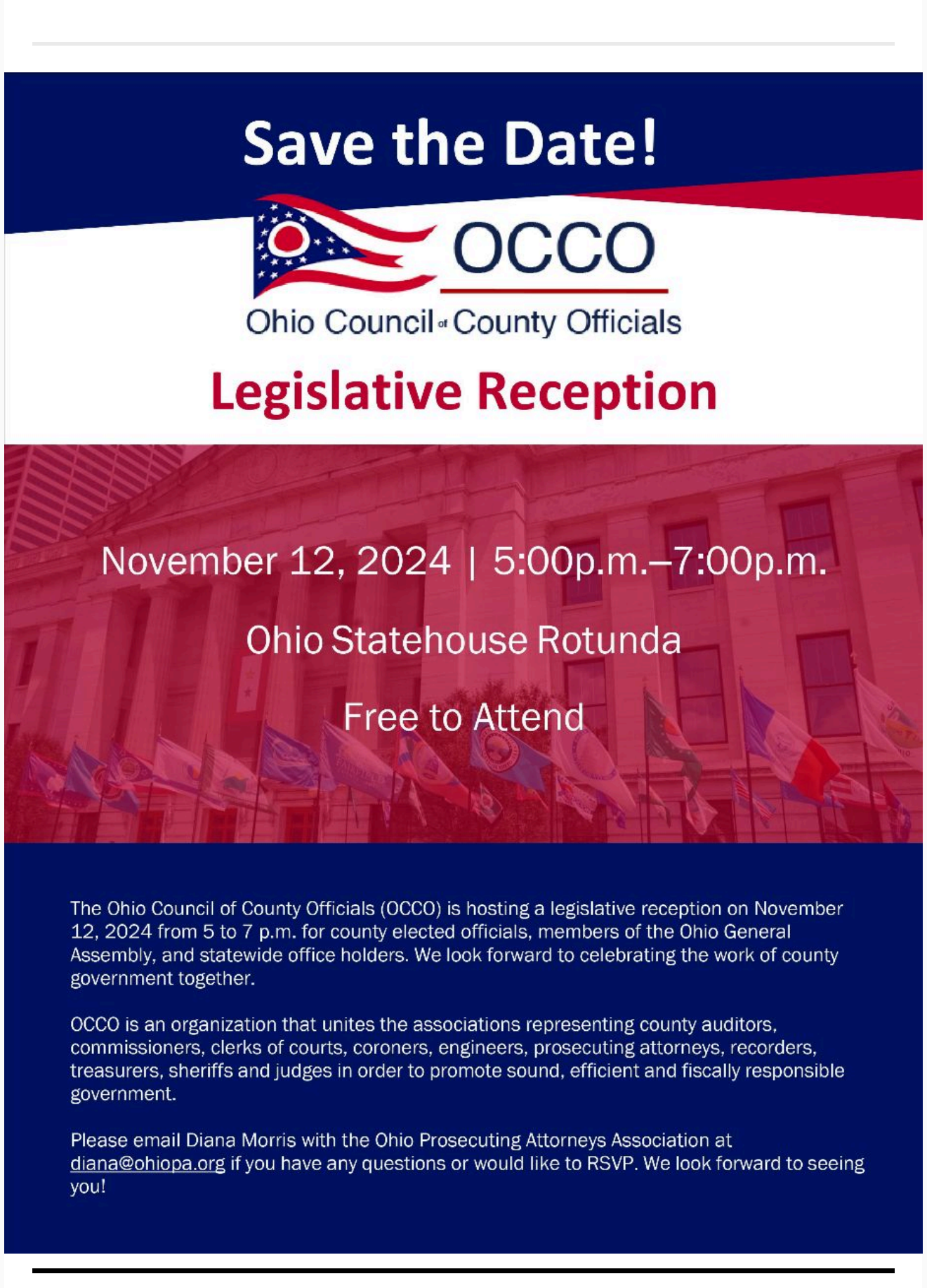
Central District Meeting to be held in Champaign County on October 4

On October 4, the CCAO-CEAO Central District will host a meeting in Champaign County.

The meeting will include a tour of the Sutphen Corporation, a company that manufactures and services fire trucks and other fire suppression supplies. **Please note that close-toed shoes must be worn for this tour.**

After the Sutphen tour, the event will conclude with a tour of the Champaign Aviation Museum. The museum is known for its ongoing project of restoring a B-17 Flying Fortress, the primary Allied high-altitude bomber during World War II.

If you are interested in registering for the event, please contact Champaign County Clerk Natalie Ransdell at nransdell@co.champaign.oh.us or 937-484-1611. Please register by September 18.



Save the Date!

OCCO
Ohio Council of County Officials

Legislative Reception

November 12, 2024 | 5:00p.m.–7:00p.m.

Ohio Statehouse Rotunda

Free to Attend

The Ohio Council of County Officials (OCCO) is hosting a legislative reception on November 12, 2024 from 5 to 7 p.m. for county elected officials, members of the Ohio General Assembly, and statewide office holders. We look forward to celebrating the work of county government together.

OCCO is an organization that unites the associations representing county auditors, commissioners, clerks of courts, coroners, engineers, prosecuting attorneys, recorders, treasurers, sheriffs and judges in order to promote sound, efficient and fiscally responsible government.

Please email Diana Morris with the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association at diana@ohiopa.org if you have any questions or would like to RSVP. We look forward to seeing you!

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

RUMPKE

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Make sure to join the America 250-OH program today!

The Ohio Commission for the U.S. Semiquincentennial (also referred to as America 250-Ohio) was announced on March 1, 2022, on Ohio's Statehood Day by Governor Mike DeWine. The commission is preparing the state to participate in the United States of America's 250th anniversary, culminating on July 4, 2026. During this multi-year commemoration, Ohioans from our local communities in all 88 counties will spotlight the impact that has/is/will be made on our nation's story. From the many "Firsts" that came from Ohio to the stories of our residents and the unique areas of the state that continue to evolve, the rich content of our state will be an opportunity for all people to connect and see themselves in Ohio's story, as well as the story of our nation.

Join the AM 250-OH Communities program!
The AM 250-OH Communities program invites counties, cities, villages, townships, and neighbors from across the state to apply to have this special designation from the AM 250-OH Commission. This unique opportunity allows local leaders to connect, collaborate, and share insights with their fellow leaders from around the state and the AM 250-OH Commission team. The goal of the program is to encourage leaders in all 88 counties to plan and implement signature events, projects, and programs affiliated with this momentous occasion and produce experiences that show the world how we celebrate "Ohio-style." Becoming an AM 250-OH Community is a straightforward process and only takes a few minutes to register.

Benefits of Becoming an AM 250-OH Community:

- Access to "turn-key" resources, including toolkits and an online community platform.
- Regular check-ins with other AM 250-OH Communities for knowledge exchange.
- Recognition of your active participation in AM 250-OH celebrations and commemorations.
- Opportunities for professional and personal development.

For more information, please contact CCAO's Steve Caraway at scaraway@ccao.org or 614-220-7998.

One Department of Aging Assisted Living Feedback forum remains

On Thursday, the Department of Aging will host the final of eight Assisted Living Feedback Forums to foster communication between local leaders and community members regarding assisted living. The forum is structured in a similar way as the Nursing Home Quality and Accountability Task Force's listening sessions were, held last year. The forum will focus on another option for long-term care.

You can register for the event through this link.

Cleveland
Thursday, Sept. 5, 2024
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.
The Conference Center at Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging
11890 Fairhill Road, Cleveland, Ohio 44120

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.

Three weeks remain for all county staff to fraud reporting training

All county commissioners, executives, council members, other county elected officials and all current county staff are required to complete a new, mandatory fraud reporting training through the Auditor of State's office by **September 28, 2024**. All public employees and elected officials are required to take the training once every 4 years.

Elected officials are unable to delegate this training to another employee and must complete the training themselves.

Any new county employees hired after September 28, 2024, must take the training within 30 days of the first day of employment and all elected officials must take the training within 30 days after taking office. The requirement is ongoing and training must be completed once every four years.

The training is a free, 8-minute video that is available on demand on the Auditor of State's website. Each elected official and county employee will register, watch the video, and then receive a certificate of completion. All certificates should be collected from employees and retained for audit.

The Auditor of State website includes FAQs and sample tools for tracking employee participation.

If you have questions regarding the training, you can contact the Auditor of State's office here.

NACo launches course to develop artificial intelligence knowledge among county leaders

The NACo AI Leadership Academy is an innovative, completely online 6-week program created to equip frontline county government leaders with the knowledge and tools they need to understand and utilize AI to create higher levels of operational efficiency, organizational effectiveness and value for those they serve.

This robust curriculum, developed by the Professional Development Academy in partnership with NACo, provides lessons and insights from highly effective government leaders, proven industry executives, researchers and professors from top universities and subject matter experts. These professionals, along with an online Leadership Coach, address pressing issues facing county leaders today: understanding the power of AI, mitigating the risk of AI and navigating the complexity of cascading change occurring because of AI.

The leadership coaches facilitating this program will demystify AI with practical, relevant and immediately actionable cases, frameworks and tools for existing and emerging leaders in government. The work of government leaders has never been more challenging. This program addresses the challenge head-on and provides participants with engaging content that will increase confidence to lead with AI for good governance.

The course costs $595 for member counties, but discounts and scholarships may be available. The course will run from November 4 to December 20.

If you are interested in signing up yourself or staff members, you can do so by requesting more information here.

Local government cybersecurity grants available

CyberOhio, an initiative by the state to bolster cybersecurity in Ohio, has two grant opportunities for local governments open.

First, the Cybersecurity Software and Services Grant is intended to assist local governments in acquiring security software and services. Examples include implementing multi-factor authentication, server protection programs, and more. Grants can be up to $20,000.

The second program is the .gov Migration Grant. This grant program is intended to assist local governments transition their websites and emails to the ".gov" type. This domain type is only available to U.S.-based government entities, allowing users to have more confidence that they are receiving genuine information and that the emails they may receive from government entities are legitimate. Grants under this program may be up to $9,500.

Applications for both programs are open until September 16. CCAO encourages counties to consider applying for these funds as the threat of cyber attacks will only increase going forward.

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

Allen commissioners check out collapsing water wall in Delphos

LimaOhio.com, August 28, 2024

Shay Buettner said she is just happy someone is going to fix the water wall that is deteriorating alongside her Delphos home.

Allen County Commissioner Cory Noonan said the county is responsible for the petition ditch program, and that required them to respond to a petition from Buettner to maintain the flow of water that goes between the Delphos homes.

"When there's any type of obstructions, the county engineers drainage department will come out and remedy that and take care of it," he said. "We have a situation here where a wall looks like it's going to fall in some time. Once it falls, we will be responsible for cleaning it, and we have been discussing whether to wait for it to fall and be a safety hazard or to be proactive."

Buettner said she was going to resort to asking for help from the neighborhood if the area, which has produced holes, divots and a dangerous fence situation, remained the same.

"I have a 95-pound dog that I tie up out back, and he needs space so hopefully we can at least salvage my fence," she said. "I just don't want anyone to fall into the creek. I'm just glad it's going to get fixed, and we can be done with everything."

Noonan said the commissioner's office was able to get a quote and came out to the site to discuss the matter with Buettner.

Northeast District

Lake County commissioners authorize $4.9 million in ARPA funds for Bacon Road Water facility

News-Herald, August 23, 2024

The Lake County commissioners recently adopted a resolution authorizing $4,950,000 in American Rescue Plan Act funding for a revetment project at the Bacon Road Water Treatment Facility in Painesville Township.

According to officials, the work covered by the grant will include the installation of 900 linear feet of new armor stone revetment at a slope along the existing bluff east of McKinley Creek, with grading to provide a more stable angle.

Two bid project alternates would extend the construction of the revetment approximately 300 feet of armor stone further to the west of the McKinley pump station, in addition to western segment grading at the site.

Lake County Sanitary Engineer Randy Rothlisberger noted that the project is "very important" and is an unexpected expense.

"About 10 years ago, we finished the revetment in front of our Bacon Road pump station….the raw water pump station," he said. "Since that time, the shoreline to the west has started to erode and is compromising the pipe that runs from the station to the water plant."

Rothlisberger added that the Lake County Department of Utilities worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to construct an armor stone revetment along approximately 643 linear feet of shore at the eastern end of the Bacon Road Water Treatment Facility in 2019, noting roughly 1,200 linear feet of shore at the west end of the facility remains unprotected from lake-based erosion.

Central District

Richland County buys 2 parcels needed for $4.2 million wastewater improvement

Richland Source, August 21, 2024

It cost more than twice as much as Richland County offered. But two land parcels have been acquired needed for a wastewater improvement plan near the I-71/Ohio 97 interchange.

The Board of Commissioners on Thursday approved spending $9,226 for two parcels near the existing lift station near the intersection of Ohio 97 and Bellville-Johnsville Road, an acquisition needed for a $4.2 million project aimed at spurring economic growth along the corridor.

Commissioners on Aug. 22 had offered $1,500 for a 1.235-acre parcel and $2,300 for a 0.557-acre parcel. Both parcels are in a floodplain and are not developable, according to county administrator Andrew Keller.

Those offers represented "fair market value" based upon appraisals on the land done by Belcastro Valuation Services, LLC, based in Westerville.

On Thursday, at Keller's recommendation, commissioners accepted counteroffers from the two property owners.

Commissioners agree to pay $4,770 for the 1.2-acre parcel owned by the South Side Development Company and $4,456 for the 0.557-acre parcel owned by David Reznik.

The wastewater improvement project will be paid for using American Rescue Plan Act funds. That means federal guidelines had to be followed in the land acquisition process, Keller said.

Southwest District

County commission to review polling place relocation

Butler Eagle, August 28, 2024

Butler County Commissioners will vote to approve a temporary move of a voting precinct in Concord Township, because of a structural issue at the township's only polling place.

Chantell McCurdy, director of the Butler County Elections Bureau, said at the commissioners' meeting Wednesday, Aug. 28, that the Concord Presbyterian Church has some structural damage that might not be repaired by the Nov. 5 General Election. She asked the commissioners to consider moving the polling place to the North Washington Volunteer Fire Department, which is a polling place for Washington Township.

McCurdy emphasized that the move would be temporary, and the bureau of elections would have enough time to mail letters to all voters in Concord Township to notify them of the location change, so long as the commissioners vote at their next public meeting.

Southeast District

Jefferson County commissioners discuss slip repair

Herald Star, August 23, 2024

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Management is seeking landowner permission to gather information for an emergency hillside stabilization project that is aimed at preventing another landslide in the St. Charles Drive area of Steubenville.

During Thursday's meeting of the Jefferson County commissioners, ODNR Environmental Specialist Alicia Davis said they "need permission from you guys and the neighbors as well" to explore the affected area "because we may need access afrom John Scott Highway and across property owned by the county."

A family was forced to move out of their home after an April 2 landslide damaged their backyard and concrete patio "and caused their deck to collapse and fall away from the house and down the slope," ODNR said. Mine spoil found next to that property appears to be from "unregulated surface mining" years ago and said there "appears to be the potential for continued movement of this material that could affect neighboring properties," officials said.

"We come in and help stabilize land," Davis said.

In a letter to commissioners, ODNR said the proposed project area is "a steep hillside in a residential setting immediately behind and to the west" of the St. Charles Drive property.

As many as six or seven property owners, including the commissioners, will be asked for permission to "explore their properties and collect data." Core drilling will be done to determine subsurface material and "properly identify the scope and extent of the unstable mine spoil," which will help ODNR determine what they'll need to do to repair and stabilize the slope.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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SEPTEMBER 13
CORSA Annual Meeting

BY SEPTEMBER 28
County elected officials and employees must take Fraud Reporting training

OCTOBER 4
Central District Meeting - Champaign County

NOVEMBER 12
OCCO Legislative Reception

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