September 16, 2024

Last Wednesday, the Jackson County Commissioners were among attendance for a groundbreaking ceremony at the 30,000 square-foot Salt Creek Industrial Park, after officials announced $3.6 million in investments.

Photo courtesy of WCHSTV

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Job Postings

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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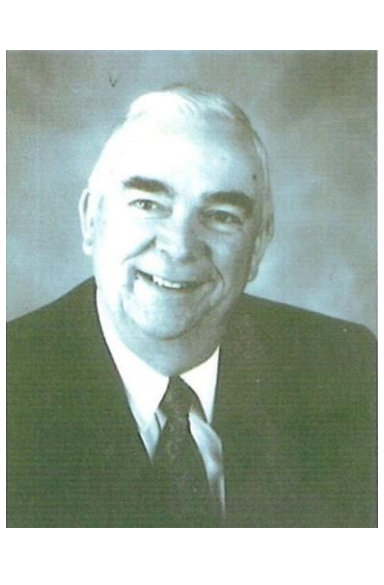
Former Noble County Commissioner Kenneth Williams passes away



On Wednesday, September 4, Kenneth Bradley Williams, a former Noble County Commissioner, passed away at the age of 88.

Kenneth was a longtime guidance counselor for Canton City Schools before retiring in 1989. He was a member of the Farm Bureau and the Ohio Education Association and taught GED and Adult Education.

You may read Kenneth's full obituary here.

OSU Extension discusses educator cost share increase with Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee

Last Friday, the CCAO Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee hosted OSU Extension Interim Director David Civittolo and his staff to provide an overview of the university's state and county funding budget.

The university proposed a $10,000 increase to the county cost share for extension educators over the next two fiscal years. Currently, counties pay $32,750 for the first OSU Educator, and $42,750 for any additional educators within the county. The proposal would have counties pay an additional $5,000 in calendar year 2025 & 2026, with the intention of having the same cost share amount for all educators.

Currently the average salary including benefits for an educator is $85,000, which means counties are paying about 44.7% of an educator's salary on average. The proposal would increase that average to 45.1% for 2026 and beyond.

Internally, OSU Extension has four pay bands for OSU Educators. Most educators fall in the first and second pay bands and have the majority of their salary paid for by the county, while most educators in the 3rd & 4th pay bands are paid primarily by OSU Extension. Extension's proposal to increase the county cost share will cause many educators in the 3rd pay band to have the majority of their salary paid for by the county. Once the proposal is in full effect by 2026, the 4th pay band will be the only pay band where OSU is picking up the majority of their salary.

You can find more information about OSU Extension education pay here.

As a reminder, on July 1, 2024, OSU Extension increased the salary for all educators by an average of $2,500, with the university covering the entirety of the raise. OSU Extension salary for educators ranks last within the region among comparable programs.

The proposal would also be considered the largest increase to the county cost share within the last five fiscal years. For additional questions or concerns please contact CCAO Policy Analyst James Kennedy at jkennedy@ccao.org.

CEBCO to expand into 49th member county with addition of Clermont County

On January 1, 2025, Clermont County will join the County Employee Benefit Consortium of Ohio (CEBCO) as its 49th member.

With the addition of Clermont County, CEBCO will provide Medical and Prescription coverage to over 16,700 employees and over 37,000 members.

CEBCO continues its mission to provide Ohio counties with stable and competitive rates, financial strength, and broad coverage that includes an array of health management, wellness, and lifestyle management services.

Congratulations CEBCO, and welcome aboard Clermont County!

County Employee Benefit
Consortium of Ohio
CEBCO
Health & Wellness

Ohio drought: Ohio Hay Directory information, webinar materials available

Much of Ohio has been suffering from a drought since mid-June. This article will first provide two items of recent news concerning the drought, then highlight resources offered to hard-hit areas, and finally provide an overview of conditions across the state.

Recent News
Ohio Hay Directory and Emergency Assistance for Livestock
As part of the department's efforts to help Ohio farmers weather the effects of the ongoing drought, the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) has created the Ohio Hay Directory to help facilitate communication between hay providers and farmers who need help acquiring hay to feed their livestock.

Please note that the listed firms and individuals provide the information in the directory. ODA does not guarantee information accuracy or endorse the business practices of any firm or individual.

An additional resource for helping farmers feed livestock is the Emergency Assistance for Livestock program operated by the US Department of Agriculture. Under the program, eligible producers may receive reimbursement for feeding livestock during disasters.

County Declarations
Multiple counties have formally declared a drought emergency within their jurisdictions. Emergency declarations allow certain portions of the Revised Code to be effective and may be helpful for other counties. For those interested in potentially adopting a drought emergency declaration, samples from other counties are below.

- Athens County
- Meigs County
- Muskingum County
- Washington County

CCAO Webinar
Last Thursday, CCAO hosted a webinar with ODA, featuring Director Brian Baldridge and Assistant Chief of the Division of Soil and Water Conservation Robert Hamilton, to brief counties on the ongoing drought conditions and to make themselves available as a resource to help counties navigate the natural disaster.

You can find the recording of the webinar and a copy of the presentation on CCAO's website.

Drought Overview
Current Conditions
Ohio's drought began in mid-June. On June 11, 100% of Ohio's land area was in the "None" category. By the following Tuesday, 55% was in the D0 category. Conditions across the state have deteriorated since. As of September 10, only 4.6% of the state is in the "None" category. While this figure is unchanged from the prior week, conditions in drought-affected areas worsened. Currently, 8.4% of Ohio is in a D4 drought, the most severe category; in the prior week, that figure was 7.4%.

The USDM estimates that about 10.3 million Ohioans, or 89.1% of the state's population, live in a drought-affected area.

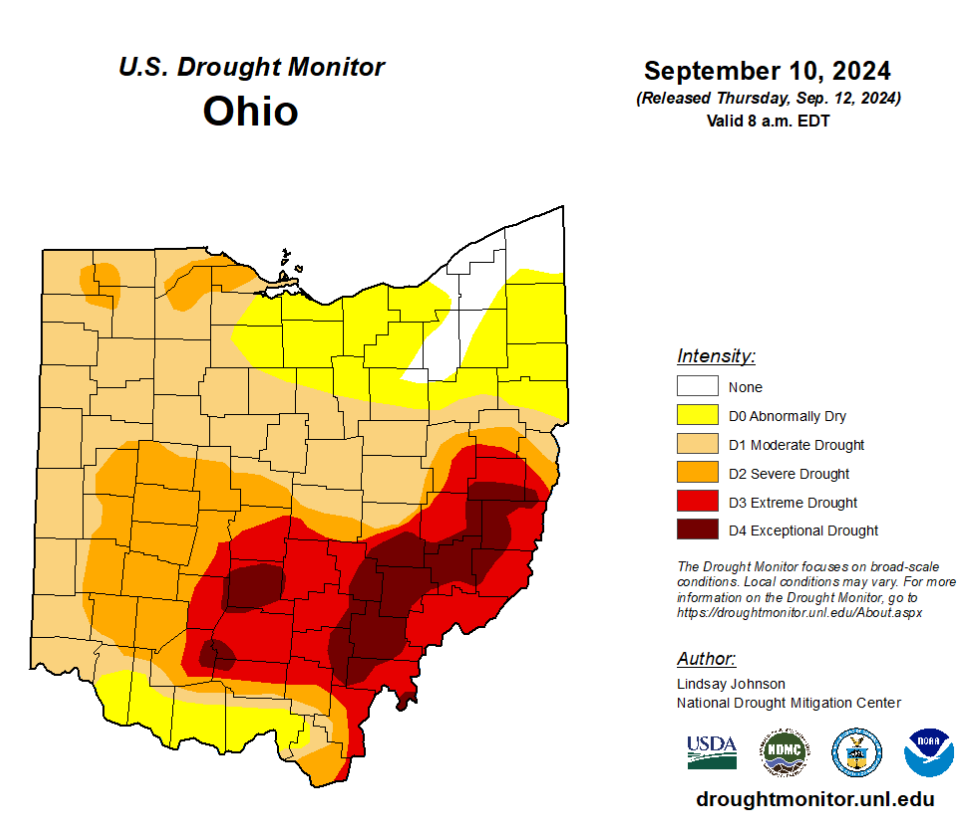
Notes on Classification
In the United States, droughts are defined as periods when several factors, including but not limited to precipitation, are significantly below the expected value. Since there are multiple factors at play and droughts have a cumulative effect, isolated occurrences of rainfall do not necessarily mitigate the drought's effects.

USDA determines droughts using the US Drought Monitor (USDM), a joint project between USDA, the University of Nebraska, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The USDM classifies areas by intensity according to the following scale:

- None - Areas with normal or wet conditions
- D0 - Abnormally Dry
- D1 - Moderate Drought
- D2 - Severe Drought
- D3 - Extreme Drought
- D4 - Exceptional Drought

The USDM updates its data every Tuesday and releases updated maps every Thursday.


U.S. Drought Monitor
Ohio
September 10, 2024
(Released Thursday, Sep. 12, 2024)
Valid 8 a.m. EDT
Intensity:
None
D0 Abnormally Dry
D1 Moderate Drought
D2 Severe Drought
D3 Extreme Drought
D4 Exceptional Drought
The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx
Author:
Lindsay Johnson
National Drought Mitigation Center
USDA
droughtmonitor.unl.edu

Current drought conditions in Ohio, overlaid by county.

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.

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

Aflac

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Supreme Court of Ohio Task Force on Reentry issues final report

Last week, the Supreme Court of Ohio's Task Force on Reentry issued its final report and recommendations on how the state can address the challenges that individuals face after reentering society after a jail sentence or jail release.

The task force had 39 members, including Henry County Commissioner and former CCAO President Glenn Miller. The Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association, the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, and the Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities also had representatives on the task force.

The report makes 16 recommendations, split between recommendations to Ohio's Judicial Branch (six recommendations), the Executive Branch (eight recommendations), and the Legislative Branch (two recommendations). Some of these recommendations are summarized below.

- **Remove Housing Barries (Judicial)**: Encourage reforms to broaden the ability for individuals on prohibition or parole and for recently-released individuals to qualify for housing under public housing authority admission policies, and explore the creation of funding and grants to incentive landlords rent to formerly incarcerated individuals.
- **Strengthen Family and Community Supports (Judicial)**: Promote programs that assist families with incarcerated family members and create education and support resources for students with incarcerated or justice-involved family members.
- **Form Additional Reentry Coalitions (Executive)**: Expand reentry coalitions to the 25 counties that do not currently have one and expand their capabilities in the counties where they do exist.
- **Expand Peer Support (Executive)**: Educate reentry agencies and local jails on the role of peer support specialists and train specialists in navigating vital systems that returning citizens may need, such as bus routes and how to apply for benefits.
- **Enact Clean Slate Legislation (Legislative)**: Create an automatic record clearance program for eligible individuals.

The full report can be found here. If you have questions about the report, please contact the CCAO Policy Team at policy@ccao.org.

PCSAO debuts new podcast series to highlight child welfare staff

Recently, the Public Children Services Association of Ohio announced that it is launching a podcast series to spread uplifting stories from the child welfare system.

The series, titled 3,000 Good Things, has aired two episodes to date. The first episode, Porch Time with Susan, spotlights the relationship between an overwhelmed mother and a new caseworker, while the second, Lamar's Book Club Invites Vulnerability, features Lamar King, a former foster care system child, discussing the book club he launched to create safe spaces for sharing vulnerability.

You can follow the series on Spotify.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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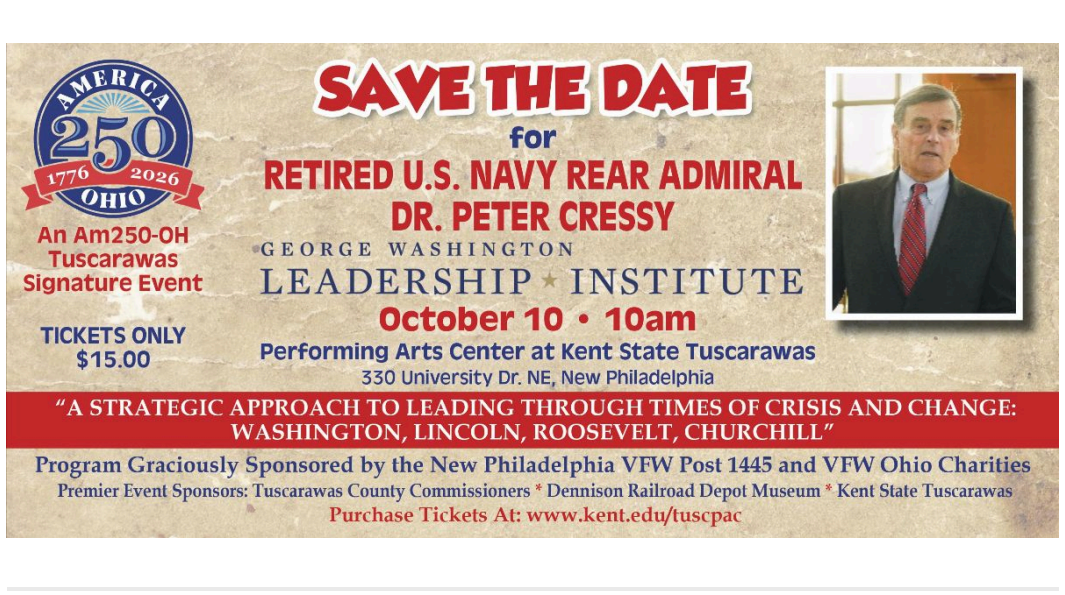
Visit the Grants and Funding Opportunities page on the CCAO website for a detailed listing of open grant programs.

Tuscarawas County to host event with Rear Admiral Peter Cressy as part of America 250-Ohio celebration

On October 10, Tuscarawas County, in partnership with the Dennison Railroad Depot Museum and Kent State University Tuscarawas, will be hosting an America 250 event featuring retired US Navy Rear Admiral Dr. Peter Cressy of the George Washington Leadership Institute.

Dr. Cressy spoke at the 2023 CCAO / CEAO Winter Conference and received rave reviews from attendees. The Tuscarawas County event is an opportunity to hear him speak again, this time to a more general audience.

The event will take place at the Performing Arts Center at Kent State Tuscarawas at 10:00 a.m. on October 10. Tickets cost $15 and can be purchased here.



AMERICA 250 1776 2026 OHIO
An Am250-OH Tuscarawas Signature Event
TICKETS ONLY $15.00

SAVE THE DATE
for
RETIRED U.S. NAVY REAR ADMIRAL
DR. PETER CRESSY
GEORGE WASHINGTON
LEADERSHIP ★ INSTITUTE
October 10 • 10am
Performing Arts Center at Kent State Tuscarawas
330 University Dr. NE, New Philadelphia
"A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO LEADING THROUGH TIMES OF CRISIS AND CHANGE: WASHINGTON, LINCOLN, ROOSEVELT, CHURCHILL"
Program Graciously Sponsored by the New Philadelphia VFW Post 1445 and VFW Ohio Charities
Premier Event Sponsors: Tuscarawas County Commissioners * Dennison Railroad Depot Museum * Kent State Tuscarawas
Purchase Tickets At: www.kent.edu/tuscpac

Low-interest loan programs available to drought-affected areas

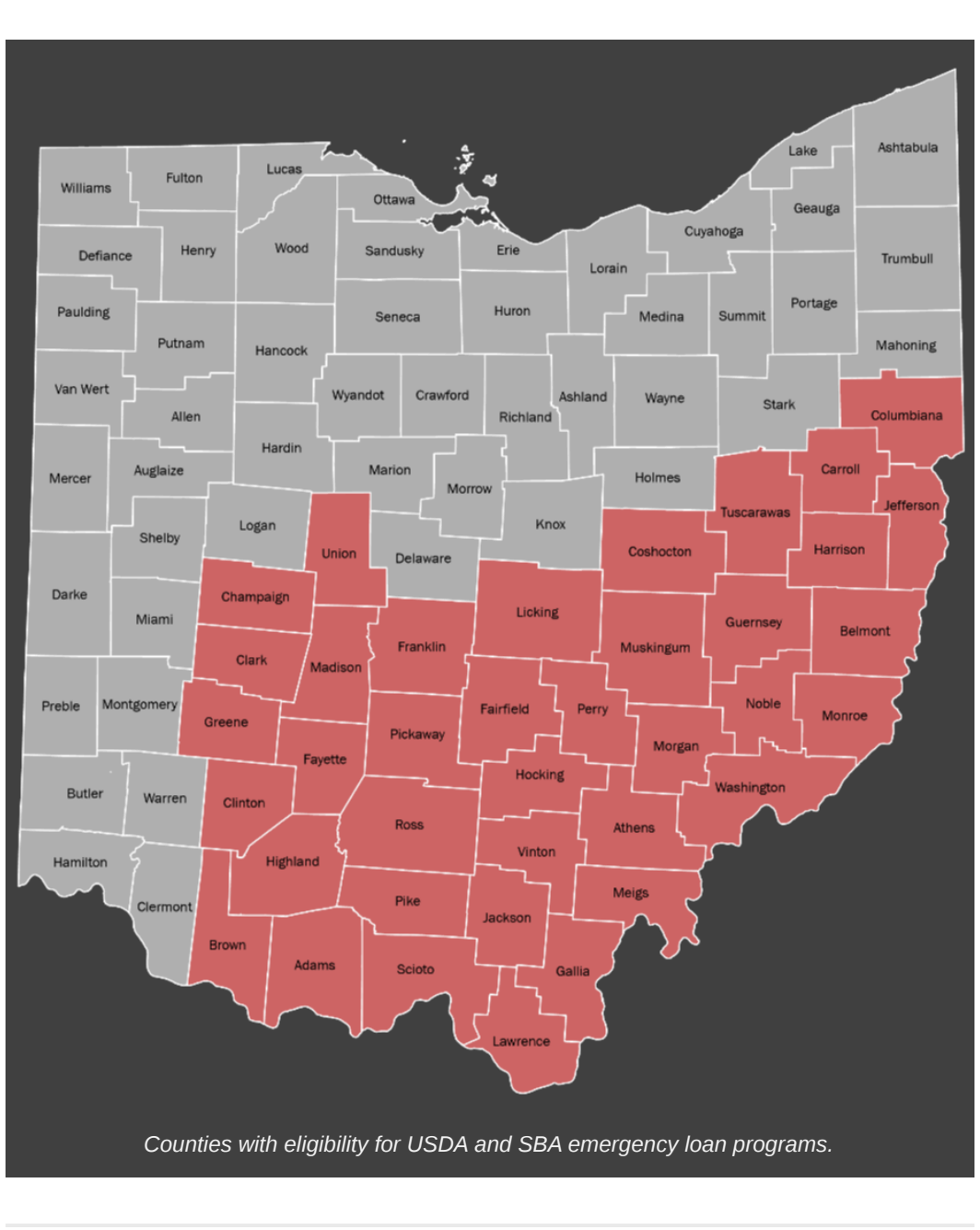
On September 4, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Small Business Administration (SBA) announced that emergency assistance programs are open to Ohio counties.

Under the USDA Emergency Farm Loan Program, producers who have suffered farm-related losses directly caused by a declared disaster or designated disaster area may qualify for emergency loans. To qualify, applicants must be established family farm operators and have suffered at least a 30% loss in crop production or physical loss to livestock or associated property. Applicants can receive the lesser of the actual production or physical losses or $500,000.

Under the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program, eligible farm-related and nonfarm-related entities suffering financial losses can apply for up to a $2 million loan. Interest rates are 4% for businesses and 3.25% for private nonprofit organizations, and terms are up to 30 years. These loans ***are not available*** to agricultural producers, farmers, or ranchers.

CCAO encourages affected counties to share information about these programs with farmers and small businesses in their communities to help them weather the effects of the ongoing drought.

The programs are open to 22 primary counties and their neighbors. The map below shows the eligible counties (Ohio River counties in West Virginia are also eligible but not mapped below).



Counties with eligibility for USDA and SBA emergency loan programs.

Two 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.

Save the dates! Housing forums to be held in October, November

After the successful housing forum held earlier this month in Allen County, CCAO has worked with BrickerGraydon and OhioRealtors to schedule additional events around the state.

Details are still being finalized, but the dates are listed below. While the events are targeted at regional audiences, attendees from any area of the state are welcome.

- October 18 - Fairfield County (Central Ohio audience)
- November 1 - Portage County (Northeast Ohio audience)
- November 13 - Ross County (Southern Ohio audience)

As times and venues are cemented, CCAO will circulate registration information through e-blasts and Counties Current.

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 County Commissioners meet with Microsoft representatives about proposed data center
Hometown Stations, September 12, 2024
Allen County Commissioners are learning more about a proposed data center in Perry Township.

Representatives from Microsoft are in town for a community meeting Thursday afternoon, but took time this morning to sit down with commissioners to share more about what a data center is and that Allen County is still in the running for one of their centers. They are looking at land east of State Route 65 between Breese and Hume Roads in Perry Township for a multi-building campus to increase their data center footprint.

Commissioners are encouraged by the interest in Microsoft to become a member of the community.

"I think it was exciting to learn today that they have three projects in the works in the Columbus area. I sat there and thought well, Lima to be their fourth project potentially is pretty exciting," said Beth Seibert, Allen County Commissioner.

Northeast District
Local families recognized for caring for displaced children
Morning Journal, September 13, 2024
Local families that take in children who can't live with their parents were recognized Sept. 13 at the Lorain County Commission meeting.

The commissioners presented two families with a proclamation following a presentation by Kristen Fox Berki, director of Lorain County Children Services.

"We're here today to say thank you to these two families, but also the hundreds of other families who are willing and lovingly open their homes to children in need," Fox Berki said.

Often, staff at Children's Services have a difficult time locating family members of the children, and the parents aren't always forthcoming about their kin, she said.

"When a child can't stay with their parent, our staff starts looking really hard for relatives," Fox Berki said. "And sometimes, the families we're working with, they're not always willing to give the names of kin, and so we have to do our own research."

The first family introduced was tracked down by the staff through an obituary, she said.

The video player is currently playing an ad. You can skip the ad in 5 sec with a mouse or keyboard

The family wasn't aware that their great niece was living in foster care, Fox Berki said.

When the family found out, they were eager to step up and bring the infant into their home, she said.

Central District
Richland County preparing for impact of Intel's Ohio facility
Ideastream Public Media, September 11, 2024
Richland County is preparing for potential employment and housing impacts from Intel's $20 billion manufacturing facility in Licking County.

The facility will produce semiconductors, with construction projected to continue through 2027, five years after the project's groundbreaking. Intel has received $600 million in onshoring grants from the state and is under contract to deliver on job creation and investment commitments by 2028.

The company has also received federal funding through the CHIPS and Science Act. The project is expected to be the single largest private sector investment in state history, creating 3,000 long term positions. Despite a recent announcement that Intel will cut 15% of its workforce in a global restructuring, the company has said it will move forward with expansion plans.

Richland County's Regional Planning Commission is analyzing results from a recent community survey and asking local leaders what projects need funding, including potential infrastructure to support Intel, Transportation Technical Director Pong Wu said.

"By projections and also some employments chains up to our region, there's a kind of increase in employment," he said.

Southwest District
Hamilton Co. to buy former Mercy Health building, will sell some county offices
WCPO, September 10, 2024
The Hamilton County Board of Commissioners agreed Tuesday to buy the former Mercy Health building in Bond Hill.

With this purchase, the county will begin transitioning thousands of employees to the new office space in the coming months.

The sale cost $95 million, and Mercy Health will pay $30 million of that price tag. The rest is expected to come from the sale of county buildings that currently house a variety of offices, which will be consolidated into the new building.

Offices that will be consolidated include Job and Family Services, Developmental Disabilities Services, Hamilton County Public Health and the Veteran Service Commission.

The Alms and Doepke building, which houses JFS, will be one of the buildings going up for sale.

"We have been getting calls for years about the Alms and Doepke building," said Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus. "Developers approach every now and again and say 'hey is that building for sale?,' the answer in the past has been no."

With the board's approval Tuesday, Driehaus expects that building will be redeveloped.

"I expect we'll get a lot of interest in it, and convert it into residential," Driehaus said.

Southeast District
Officials want reassurance ballots will be delivered on time
WJER, September 10, 2024
Tuscarawas County Board of Elections officials are getting ready for the fall election. They want reassurance that the United States Post Office is ready, too.

Tuscarawas County Board of Elections Director Gail Garbrandt says there have been issues with absentee ballots getting delivered on time. She says several ballots took four weeks to get from Dover to the Board of Elections office in New Philadelphia during recent elections. She says with a large turnout expected, officials want to make sure that doesn't happen this time.

The Board had hoped to meet with a Post Office liaison Monday, but that didn't take place. Garbrandt says the liaison mistakenly deleted the meeting from her schedule. It's now scheduled for Sept. 23.

Garbrandt says otherwise, things are moving smoothly toward early voting that starts Oct. 8 and Election Day on Nov. 5. Ballots for military families and overseas voters go out Sept. 20.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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SEPTEMBER 27
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

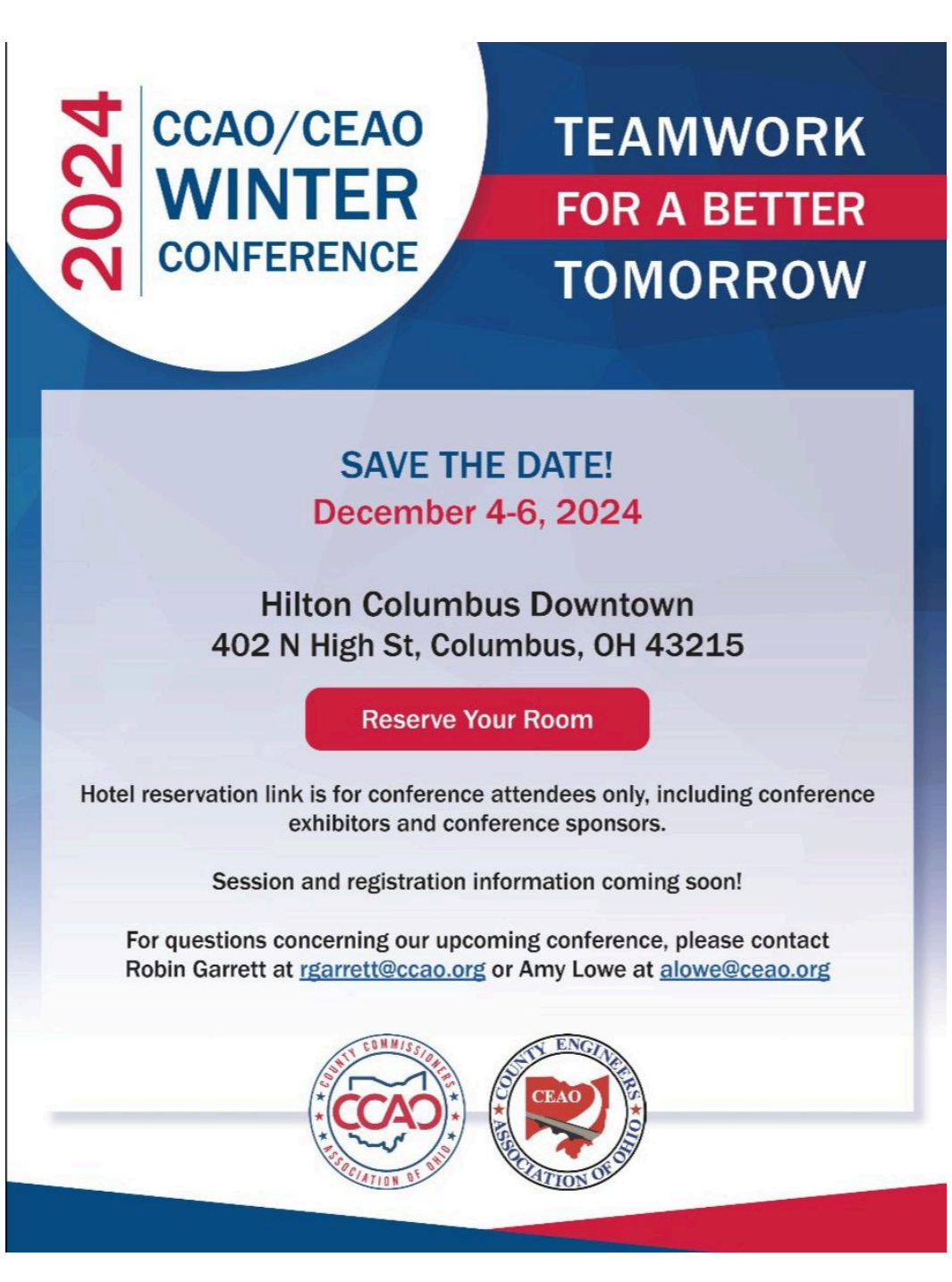
BY SEPTEMBER 28
County elected officials and employees must take Fraud Reporting training

OCTOBER 4
Central District Meeting - Champaign County

OCTOBER 14
Columbus Day - Legal Holiday

NOVEMBER 12
OCCO Legislative Reception

DECEMBER 4 - 6
CCAO / CEAO Winter Conference



2024 CCAO/CEAO WINTER CONFERENCE
TEAMWORK FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

SAVE THE DATE!
December 4-6, 2024

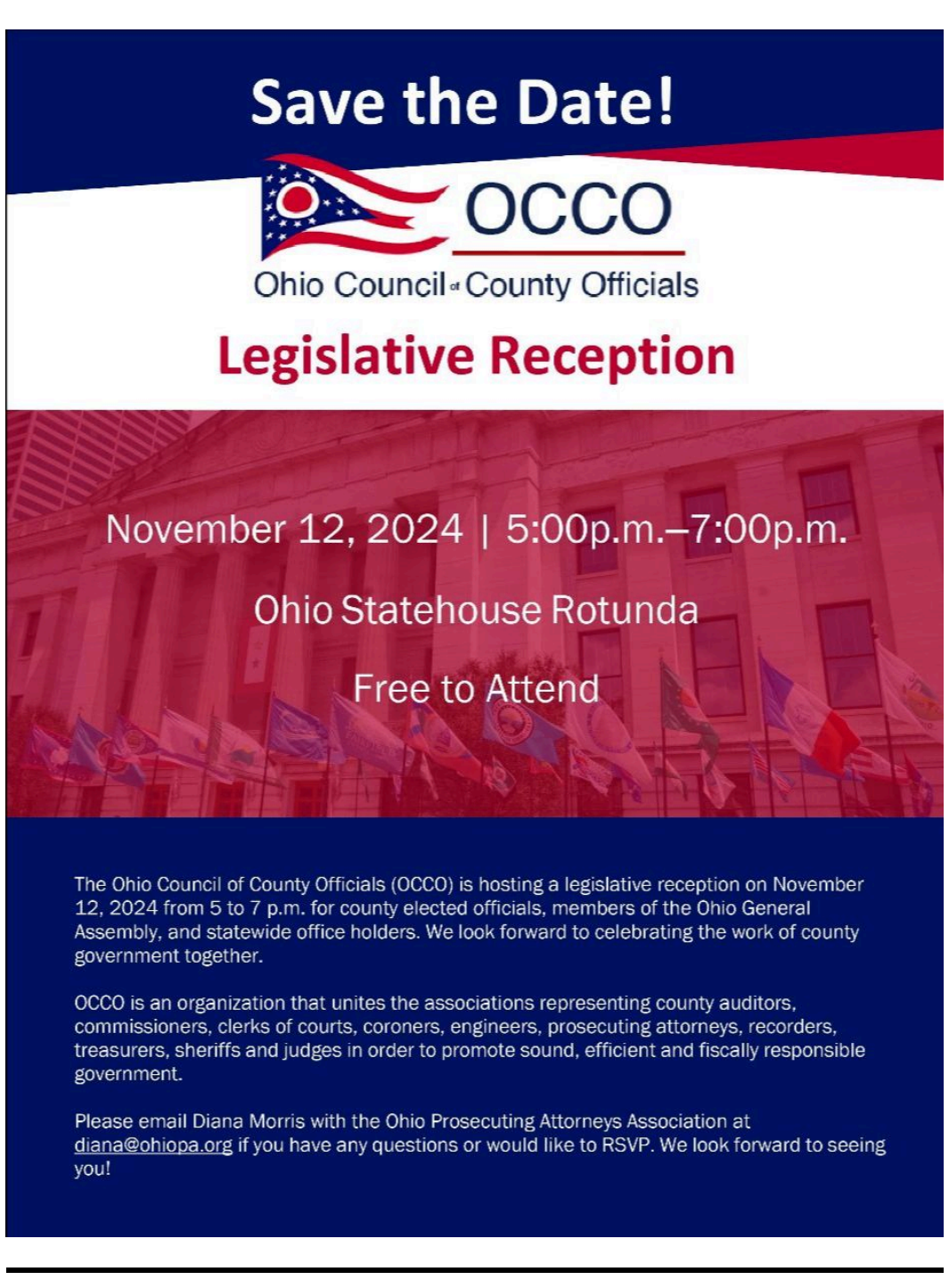
Hilton Columbus Downtown
402 N High St, Columbus, OH 43215

Reserve Your Room

Hotel reservation link is for conference attendees only, including conference exhibitors and conference sponsors.

Session and registration information coming soon!

For questions concerning our upcoming conference, please contact Robin Garrett at rgarrett@ccao.org or Amy Lowe at alowe@ceao.org



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!

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