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October 21, 2024

“Aurora Borealis” by Scott Dommin, the 1st Place Winner and Judge's Favorite of the 2024 Life on Lake Erie Traveling Photo Contest.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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In Loving Memory of Josh Hahn

The CCAO family is deeply saddened to learn of the passing of our former colleague Josh Hahn. Josh was a valued and treasured member of our policy staff and loved by all. He worked for CCAO from 2007 through 2013; he managed the agriculture, rural affairs, and election administration portfolios.

Josh came to CCAO from US Senator Mike DeWine’s office and returned to work for DeWine when he was Ohio Attorney General. Josh has been Assistant Director of the Department of Commerce during Governor DeWine’s Administration. A native of Champaign County, he claimed that the Champaign County Fair was largest and best Junior Fair for 4H and FFA-Youth in the state.

Josh had a rare disease of the lungs, had undergone a double lung transplant about a decade ago, and bravely fought a long hard battle against his condition.

Our hearts go out to his family. Please keep his Mom Anne and Dad John along with brothers Joel and Jeremy in your thoughts and prayers.

Viewing hours will be Monday, October 21st 2-4 and 6-8 P.M. at Vernon Funeral Home in Urbana, Ohio, and a funeral mass will be at St Mary’s Catholic Church in Urbana at 10:00 A.M. Tuesday, October 22nd.

If you would like to send the Hahn family a note/card, their address is 939 Old Farm Road, Urbana, OH 43078.

Josh's obituary can be found here.

Finally, we thought you might enjoy seeing a few pictures of Josh during his tenure with CCAO. You can access a slideshow of these pictures here, and remember how special he was and appreciate the short time we shared with him.

- Cheryl Subler and John Leutz

Winter Conference is less than two months away!

The 2024 CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference is approaching! Join us at the Hilton Columbus Downtown on December 4 through 6 for the 144th annual Winter Conference.

You can register for the event here and book a hotel room here. Regarding hotel bookings, the federal prevailing per diem rate was recently increased to $131, so the rate for the Hilton is now $151 per night before tax.

CCAO will host sessions discussing child care capacity building, reducing the mobility gap, increasing successful reentry, potential strategies to mitigate rural EMS and fire shortages, and more. CEAO will host sessions concerning ethics, petition ditch law, and surveying. A joint session regarding artificial intelligence is also planned.

CCAO's website has more information about the upcoming Winter Conference, including forms to become a sponsor, registration forms for those who would prefer to mail or fax a registration, and information about becoming an exhibitor.

$53.3 million awarded to remediate brownfields and demolish buildings

Last week, the DeWine-Husted Administration announced the sixth round of funding for the Brownfield Remediation Program and the Demolition and Site Revitalization Program. The awards total $53.3 million for 328 projects across 28 counties.

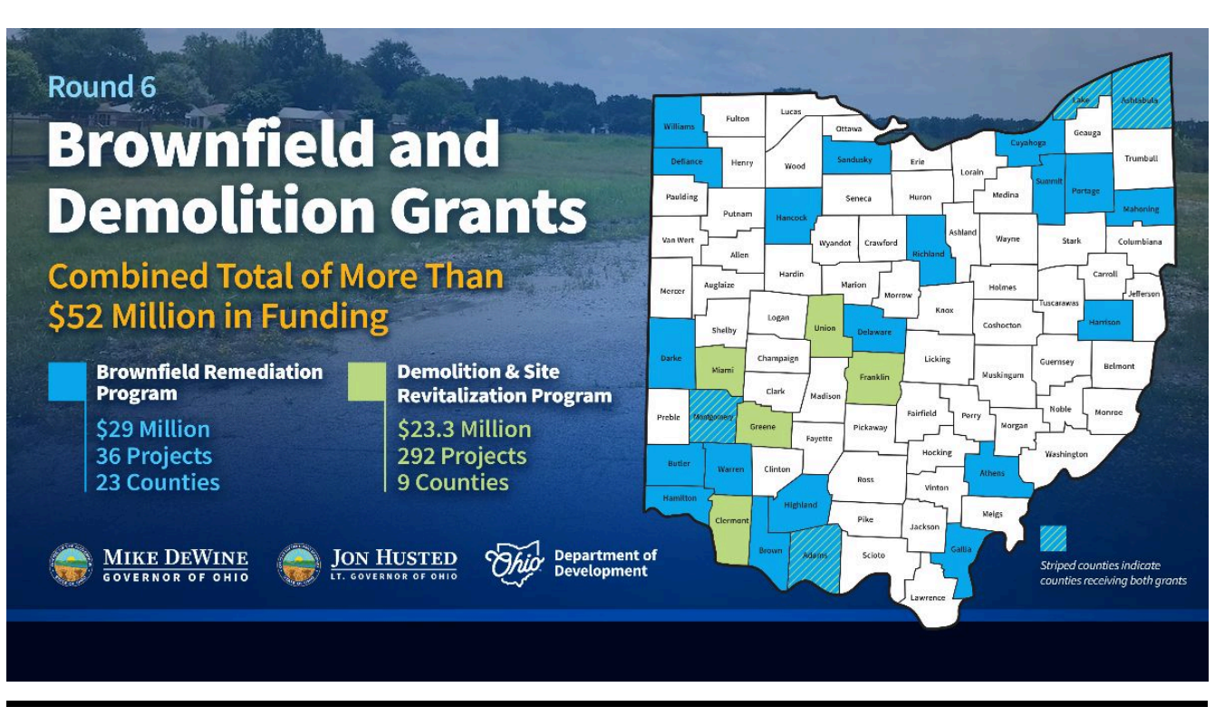
Of the total, $29 million goes to 36 projects across 23 counties for brownfield remediation projects. The largest grant was awarded to the Hamilton County land bank. The $9.9 million grant will remediate hazardous waste at the former Terrace Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati to prepare the site for redevelopment into residential apartments, retail space, and restaurants.

A full list of brownfield remediation awards can be found here.

The remaining $23.3 million was awarded for demolition grants across nine counties. The funds will demolish 292 buildings.

A complete list of demolition sites can be found here.

Since both programs were created, more than $490 million has been awarded to support 462 brownfield remediation projects and more than $270 million has been awarded to support the demolition of more than 5,000 vacant, dilapidated buildings.


Round 6
Brownfield and Demolition Grants
Combined Total of More Than $52 Million in Funding
Brownfield Remediation Program
$29 Million
36 Projects
23 Counties
Demolition & Site Revitalization Program
$23.3 Million
292 Projects
9 Counties
Mike DeWine Governor of Ohio
Jon Husted Lt. Governor of Ohio
Ohio Department of Development
Striped counties indicate counties receiving both grants

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

Aflac

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Supreme Court: Sheriffs must produce records created by private jail operators

Last week, the Ohio Supreme Court issued its decision in 2023-1218. *State ex rel. Brown v. Columbiana Cty. Jail*, Slip Opinion No. 2024-Ohio-4969. The Court found that the sheriff’s office could not redirect requests for jail records to private operators, but it has a legal duty to obtain and fulfill public records requests.

The Columbiana County Jail is operated by a private company, which is allowable under R.C. 9.06. The plaintiff in the case sent the sheriff’s office two public records requests related to jail operations. He asked for ten items pertaining to the names and positions of employees working at the jail from January 2017 through July 2018. In a second request, he sought 15 items regarding the current policies on inmate intake and booking and the retention of records. The request included procedures for “booking of inmates showing signs of intoxication, impairment, injury, or psychological problems.”

The sheriff’s office provided two records and stated that they had no other records responsive to the request and that Correctional Solutions Group created, kept, and maintained the additional records.

The Court cited the “quasi agency” test from its decision in *State ex rel Mazzaro v. Ferguson* from 1990. The test states that when a public office contracts with a private entity, the records held by the private entity are public records if the records are prepared to “carry out a public office’s responsibilities.” The Court found that the contracts with private companies created a quasi-agency relationship with the sheriff’s office. To the extent the records Brown requested exist, the private operators would have created those records as they carried out the delegated public responsibilities of the sheriff’s office, the Court explained. The quasi-agency relationship requires the public office to obtain and disclose public records to record requesters.

More information about the case is available on the Supreme Court's news website, and the full opinion is accessible here.

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.

Round-up of available grants

Below are summaries of available grants that counties may apply for. Please visit our Grants and Funding Opportunities page for more information about these and other grants.

Continuum of Care Builds **(Federal)**

- Eligibility: Local governments
- Purpose: To reduce homelessness by adding units of permanent supportive housing through construction, acquisition, or rehabilitation.
- Application Deadline: November 21

Body-Worn Camera Grants **(State)**

- Eligibility: Local law enforcement agencies
- Purpose: To outfit law enforcement officers with body cameras.
  - **NOTE**: Cannot be used for corrections officers.
- Application Deadline: November 24

Water & Waste Disposal Loan & Grant Program **(Federal)**

- Eligibility: Local governments serving rural areas with a population of less than 10,000
- Purpose: To fund projects supplying rural areas with reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, and stormwater drainage.
- Application Deadline: Rolling

Grade Crossing Elimination Program **(State)**

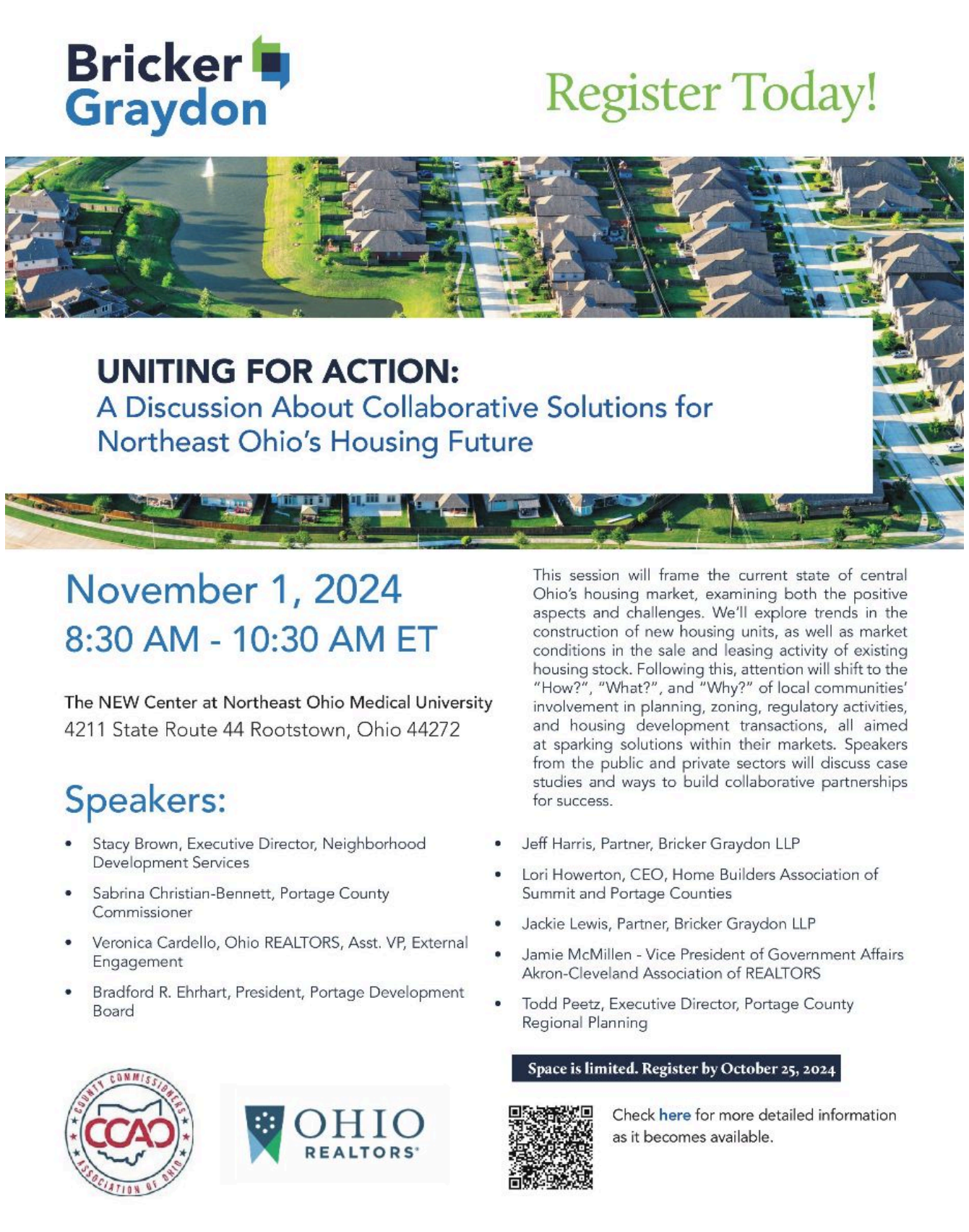
- Eligibility: Local governments that own roads.
  - **NOTE**: The county engineer must be the applicant for county applications.
- Purpose: To fund projects that eliminate existing at-grade railroad crossings.
- Application Deadline: Rolling

Registration for Portage County Housing Forum closes Friday, event to be held November 1

On November 1, BrickerGraydon, Ohio REALTORS, and CCAO will host a collaborative discussion on the future of housing in Ohio in Portage County, the third in a series of events held across the state.

The session will frame the current state of Ohio’s housing market, examining both the positive aspects and challenges. Attendees will explore trends in the construction of new housing units, as well as market conditions in the sale and leasing activity of existing housing stock. Following this, attention will shift to the “How?”, “What?”, and “Why?” of local communities’ involvement in planning, zoning, regulatory activities, and housing development transactions, all aimed at sparking solutions within their markets.

The event will be held at the NEW Center at Northeast Ohio Medical University and is free, but space is limited. ***Registration will close on Friday, October 25***. Registration for the event can be completed here.


Bricker Graydon
Register Today!
OHIO REALTORS

UNITING FOR ACTION:
A Discussion About Collaborative Solutions for Northeast Ohio’s Housing Future

November 1, 2024
8:30 AM - 10:30 AM ET

The NEW Center at Northeast Ohio Medical University
4211 State Route 44 Rootstown, Ohio 44272

This session will frame the current state of central Ohio’s housing market, examining both the positive aspects and challenges. We’ll explore trends in the construction of new housing units, as well as market conditions in the sale and leasing activity of existing housing stock. Following this, attention will shift to the “How?”, “What?”, and “Why?” of local communities’ involvement in planning, zoning, regulatory activities, and housing development transactions, all aimed at sparking solutions within their markets. Speakers from the public and private sectors will discuss case studies and ways to build collaborative partnerships for success.

Speakers:

- Stacy Brown, Executive Director, Neighborhood Development Services
- Sabrina Christian-Bennett, Portage County Commissioner
- Veronica Cardello, Ohio REALTORS, Asst. VP, External Engagement
- Bradford R. Ehrhart, President, Portage Development Board
- Jeff Harris, Partner, Bricker Graydon LLP
- Lori Howerton, CEO, Home Builders Association of Summit and Portage Counties
- Jackie Lewis, Partner, Bricker Graydon LLP
- Jamie McMillen - Vice President of Government Affairs Akron-Cleveland Association of REALTORS
- Todd Peetz, Executive Director, Portage County Regional Planning

Space is limited. Register by October 25, 2024

Check here for more detailed information as it becomes available.

Ohio Grants Summit to hold 2024 event in late November, registration now open

On November 19 and 20 (Tuesday and Wednesday), the Office of Budget and Management will host the 2024 Ohio Grants Summit, the latest iteration in the annual event that works to connect local governments with the partners and expertise needed to successfully compete for grants at both the state and federal level.

Registration for the event is free and must be completed separately for Day One and Day Two. The event is virtual and will be streamed on The Ohio Channel. Registration is not required to watch the stream, but those registered will have the opportunity to ask questions of speakers.

Each day runs from 9:00 a.m. to noon. The agenda for each day is below:

Day One:

- Grant Writing 101: Tips for a Successful Grant Application
- Ohio's Unified Approach to Federal Funding
- People, Policies, and Systems: The Foundation for Establishing Sustainable Grants Capacity

Day Two:

- Obligating and Closing Out ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds
- Uniform Guidance Update
- Water/Wastewater Roundtable

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

Commissioners award contracts for construction of new Allen County administration building

Hometown Stations, October 18, 2024

Another step forward for the construction of the new Allen County administration building. Allen County Commissioners awarded five contracts for the construction of the facility.

Bids were opened last week, and their design firm, WDC, reviewed the bids and made their recommendation. Separate contracts for different sections of the project were done to keep costs at or below the projected budget of around 12 million dollars. It will take about two weeks to get the contracts signed with construction to soon follow if the weather holds out. Commissioners are happy that local contractors came in with the best bids.

"We are so thrilled because we couldn't control that. We have to look at qualifying the best and lowest bids. And so we are just thrilled to death that 91% of the dollars that we are going to spend and that totals 12 million dollars. That money is going to stay with local firms, and we're thrilled to keep that money in our local economy," explained Beth Seibert, Allen County Commissioner.

Northeast District

Commissioners authorize engineer to apply for OPWC funds for storm sewer work

Star Beacon, October 18, 2024

The Ashtabula County Commissioners authorized the Ashtabula County Engineer’s Office to apply for an Ohio Public Works Commission grant/loan through the state capital improvements program at a Thursday meeting.

The authorization allows the office to apply for $350,000 in grants, and a $150,000 loan, towards the $1 million project, with the rest coming from motor vehicle gas tax funds. The project involves the installation of a 12-inch storm sewer for drainage improvement on Jobey Trail and Lafever Road, and resurfacing of Clay Street and Brown Road.

The commissioners also approved detailed construction plans for the Palmer Avenue tank rehabilitation project in Ashtabula Township.

A snow plowing/snow removal contract for a variety of county properties, including the courthouse complex, was approved at a rate of $11,000 to the Ashtabula County Engineer.

The commissioners approved a credit card limit upgrade from $14,000 to $20,000 because of increased travel expenses.

Central District

Commissioners, Knox County Humane Society meet to clarify animal abuse responsibilities

Knox Pages, October 18, 2024

A meeting between dog shelter and humane society representatives and the county commissioners will hopefully clarify responsibilities in animal abuse or neglect cases.

The catalyst for the meeting was an incident involving a court-ordered cat seizure that the humane society declined to take.

The Knox County Humane Society is responsible for investigating and handling animal abuse and neglect cases under Ohio Revised Code sections 1717 and 959. KCHS also appoints the county’s humane officer.

However, because the humane society does not have money to fund the humane officer or investigate and care for animal abuse or neglect cases, the dog shelter handles those obligations on its behalf.

The county and City of Mount Vernon share the cost of the humane officer’s salary. The dog shelter absorbs the cost of caring for abused or neglected dogs.

Commissioner Teresa Bemiller said this agreement has been in place for years.

“The expectation has always been that the humane society would be able to take care of the cats we come across,” she said.

The Knox County Dog Shelter is charged with caring for and adopting out strays, investigating dog complaints, and licensing dogs. ORC Section 955 details its responsibilities.

Southwest District

Montgomery County details final plans for $103M in COVID relief

WYSO, October 18, 2024

Montgomery County’s leaders have fully allocated $103.3 million in COVID-19 relief.

The county was granted the money from the American Rescue Plan Act, which distributed $65 billion across the U.S.

ARPA money was meant to supplement local funds addressing hits taken during COVID-19. A portion of the money covered extra health care costs and public employee wages. The rest could be used towards local needs.

The money covered wages and medical costs for Montgomery County employees during COVID 19. County Commissioner Debbie Lieberman said they allocated the rest to needs around the county.

“The pandemic magnified issues that we already had," Lieberman said. "We were able to invest in those areas that we thought would have the biggest return on investment."

Over 40% of it was used on infrastructure improvements.

Southeast District

Commissioners purchase property to fix bridge

Times Leader, October 17, 2024

The Belmont County Board of Commissioners purchased property Wednesday to facilitate a bridge replacement project.

Commissioners Jerry Echemann and Josh Meyer approved that and several other motions at Wednesday morning’s meeting. Commissioner J.P. Dutton was absent.

Echemann made the motion to sign a contract for right of entry with residents George C. and Nancy Balk and Robert J. Balk. This will allow county workers to perform the work necessary to construct a drive and grading for parcel 1-DW, T1, T2 in Pease Township. Echemann added that the contract was needed for the upcoming county engineer’s project on Glenn Run Road. Echemann then moved to approve and sign a contract to purchase a property without a building with the Balks in the amount of $2,500 for an 18.360-acre parcel in Pease Township. He added that the land is needed for right of way for the upcoming replacement of a bridge on Glenn Run Road.

“From time to time we have to purchase property to gain access to what we need to do,” Echemann said.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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OCTOBER 25
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

NOVEMBER 5
General Election

NOVEMBER 8
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

NOVEMBER 11
Veterans Day - Legal Holiday

NOVEMBER 12
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting
OCCO Legislative Reception

NOVEMBER 22
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

DECEMBER 4 - 6
CCAO / CEAO Winter Conference

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