February 24, 2025

On February 13, the Mahoning County Commissioners attended the ribbon-cutting ceremony for Moab House's new facility. Moab House is a non-profit organization that provides safe and supportive spaces for young adults, particularly those who have aged out of the foster care system.

Photo Courtesy of the Mahoning County Commissioners

Association and Member News | State and Federal News | Education and Grants | County News | Job Postings

Statehouse Report and Counties Current Archive | Dates to Remember

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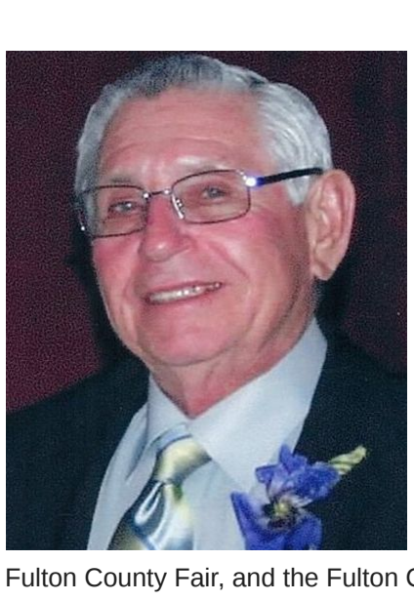
ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

Back to Top

Former Fulton County Commissioner passes away



Earlier this month, Paul Douglas Barnaby, a former Fulton County Commissioner, passed away at the age of 86.

Paul was a teacher for Fayette High School, Sylvannia Hill View Elementary, and for the Evergreen Local School District. He spent 39 years of his life teaching students.

In addition to his education career, Paul served for four terms as Fulton County Commissioner, was a volunteer firefighter, and was active with the Fulton County Historical Society, the Fulton County Fair, and the Fulton County Farm Bureau.

You can read Paul's obituary here.

Latest edition of County Leader published!

CCAO has published the Winter 2025 edition of our magazine, County Leader! Inside, you'll explore a range of stories packed with timely and valuable information for counties, including:

- Streamlining Indigent Defense Reimbursement: Introducing the Court-Appointed Billing System (CABS)
- CCAO Partners with Ohio Realtors and Bricker Graydon, LLC to Hold Forums On Housing
- Commissioner Mark Holtsberry's Mission to Preserve Paulding County's Military Past
- An Update from JobsOhio President and CEO JP Nauseef
- Honoring Resilience: The Red Tulip Project's Impact in Geauga County

Don't hesitate to contact Outreach & Member Engagement Manager Rachel Reedy at rreedy@ccao.org for feedback and ideas for future stories.

Department of Rehabilitation and Correction adds an additional submission option for county jail funding applications

The Department of Rehabilitation and Correction is adding an additional option for submitting applications for the HB 2 Jail funding. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THE DEADLINE, MARCH 3 AT 8:00 A.M., IS NOT CHANGED.**

Counties also have the **option** to use this File Drop link. This link may be useful if there are larger documents a county is attaching to its application.

Please follow the instructions below if you are using the File drop option.

1. After clicking the link, you will be brought to home/login page. Please select the blue "DROP-OFF" button.
2. The next page requires the sender to fill out their name, Organization and email address and confirm they are "not a robot."
3. Once those items are completed, click the "send confirmation" button in order to receive a confirmation email.
4. A confirmation email will be sent to you by the system. It will include a link in that email. Click the link in the confirmation email.
5. You will then see a screen asking you to "add recipients". Please add the email addresses for Christopher Galli and Chris Darlington.
6. You may then add files and a note. Please place "HB2 Jail Grant Application submission" and your county name in the NOTE section.
7. Once you have added all files and documents, select the "drop-off Files" button.
8. If the files have been successfully dropped off, you will see a time-stamped confirmation. Please print this for your records. The submission date and time must be **PRIOR to 8:00am on March 3, 2025**.
9. When ODRC "picks-up" the files, you will receive an email notification that ODRC staff have picked up the files.

Counties may submit applications by either emailing them to Christopher.Galli@drc.ohio.gov **and** Christopher.Darlington@drc.ohio.gov as directed in the application and announcement **OR by using the file drop link. Either option must be submitted prior to 8:00am on March 3, 2025.**

CCAO hiring Communications Coordinator

CCAO is seeking to fill the position of Communications Coordinator!

The position is responsible for the coordination of external and internal communication supporting the strategic direction of CCAO and its entities. The position will plan, write, design and layout communication pieces and social media; produce and edit short videos and podcasts; maintain CCAO and its entities websites; develop and implement media outreach and educational strategies; monitor media outlets for mentions of CCAO and its entities; take and edit photographs at events.

You can access the full job description here.

Please submit letter of interest, resume, references, writing samples and, if applicable, portfolio to CCAO Outreach & Member Engagement Manager Rachel Reedy at rreedy@ccao.org by close of business Wednesday, February 26, 2025.

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

RUMPKE

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

Back to Top

Attorney General releases four opinions

Attorney General Dave Yost has released four opinions this month, all bearing on county government. The opinions are summarized below, and the full text is linked. You can visit the Opinions page on the AG's website for a complete catalog of opinions dating back to 1846.

CCAO encourages counties to familiarize themselves with the full findings of these opinions.

OAG 2025-001: Land Banks as a Financial Institution
In OAG 2025-001, the Attorney General finds county land reutilization corporations (commonly called land banks) are not financial institutions for R.C. 505.86(F). That Revised Code section governs how townships can remove, repair, or secure insecure and unsafe buildings and structures. R.C. 505.86(F) authorizes townships to borrow money from a financial institution if the costs exceed $500.

The Lawrence County Prosecutor asked if a county land bank is an entity from which a township could borrow funds. The Attorney General found that the "financial institution" definition in R.C. 5725.01 does not include land reutilization corporations as defined in R.C. 1724.01.

OAG 2025-002: Drainage Maintenance Funds
In OAG 2025-002, the Attorney General considered a requestion from Fairfield County about if a county may combine multiple existing drainage maintenance districts (created under R.C. 6137.04) into a single drainage fund under R.C. 6117.02, with follow-up questions if the answer is "yes," including if the county can use assessments collected from drainage maintenance districts to offset rates for landowners.

The Attorney General finds that counties do not have the authority to convert multiple drainage maintenance districts into a single drainage fund under R.C. 6117.02 and that any money from a 6117.02 fund must be used for drainage facilities that are part of a county sewer district.

Additionally, the Attorney General states that funds collected from drainage maintenance funds (6137.04) can only be used for repair, upkeep, and permanent maintenance of drainage improvements, not for any other purpose.

OAG 2025-003: Charging Victims for Vehicle Recovery
In OAG 2025-003, the Attorney General interprets Marsy's Law (rights of crime victims) regarding property taken into custody during an investigation. The opinion focuses specifically on vehicle towing and impoundment.

The opinion finds that law enforcement agencies that directed a vehicle to be towed and stored under the control of the agency itself are prohibited from charging the victim any costs associated with the towing and storage of the vehicle and that agencies must use the constitutional and statutory definition of "victim" to make this determination.

The Attorney General does not rule on costs associated with third-party entities, finding that these are questions of fact that are determined on a case-by-case basis.

OAG 2025-004: Utiliziation of Special Levy Funds
In OAG 2025-004, the Attorney General considered a request from Cuyahoga County concerning whether a taxing entity can use funds raised by a tax levy for capital purposes that would facilitate the provision of services the levy supports. In doing so, the Attorney General reconsidered OAG 1963-154, which concerned a similar question.

The Attorney General finds that since the Revised Code explicitly authorizes taxing entities to levy taxes for capital purposes, taxing entities are prohibited from using revenue from other levies for capital purposes, even if the capital spending would support the levy's primary purpose.

Two Lights for Tomorrow: an America 250-OH event

(The following is text provided by America 250-OH about an upcoming project)

The events that sparked the War for Independence outside Boston in April of 1775 are immortalized in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's famous poem, "Paul Revere's Ride" with the famous line about "one if by land, two if by sea."

Written only 90 years after those events (before the last veteran of that conflict had passed on), his words perhaps rang true, "On the eighteenth of April in Seventy-Five: Hardly a man is now alive that remembers that famous day and year…."

The 250th anniversary of the United States is less than a year away, and the 250th anniversary of Lexington and Concord, the spark that began the Revolutionary War, is in April of this year. "Two Lights for Tomorrow" is a simple commemorative program in which Ohio counties can participate in the evening of April 18, 2025.

The famous signal from the North Church's steeple that night in 1775 – *one if by land, two if by sea* – was a signal meant to shine across the water to others on the opposite shore so that they could carry the message forward not just as a back-up for Paul Revere, but to make sure that the message got spread as far and as wide as possible.

The Revolutionary War commenced the following day – April 19, 1775 – at Lexington and Concord.

To commemorate this momentous occasion in history, the Ohio Statehouse will shine two lights to be displayed in the Statehouse cupola the evening of April 18 as a reminder that that message of light shining out in the darkness is not just something that mattered back then. It's something that matters today and for tomorrow. Most other statehouses across the country will do likewise.

But why contain "Two Lights for Tomorrow" to the Ohio Statehouse? Ohio's historic county courthouses should consider posting two lights the night of Friday, April 18, as a symbolic gesture of unity to commemorate the beginning, 250 years ago, of the American Revolutionary War. Some states will follow that up with a state-wide day of service on April 19th with projects ranging from park and cemetery clean-ups (especially with its close proximity to Earth Day) and Habitat for Humanity builds and food drives.

What began as a localized message in Boston meant to ensure that the message calling to support one another would continue on and not be dependent on just a select few sending the message forward, was a year later pledged in ink by all the fledgling states in the closing line of our Declaration that "we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor."

The America 250-Ohio Commission is working with the Ohio Statehouse to post two lanterns in the Statehouse cupola the evening of April 18, 2025. The Commission recommends that Ohio counties follow suit in ways that are meaningful for your county. The Commission does not specifically recommend what lanterns to use, lighting colors, time of illumination or service projects the following day.

TWO LIGHTS
FOR TOMORROW

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

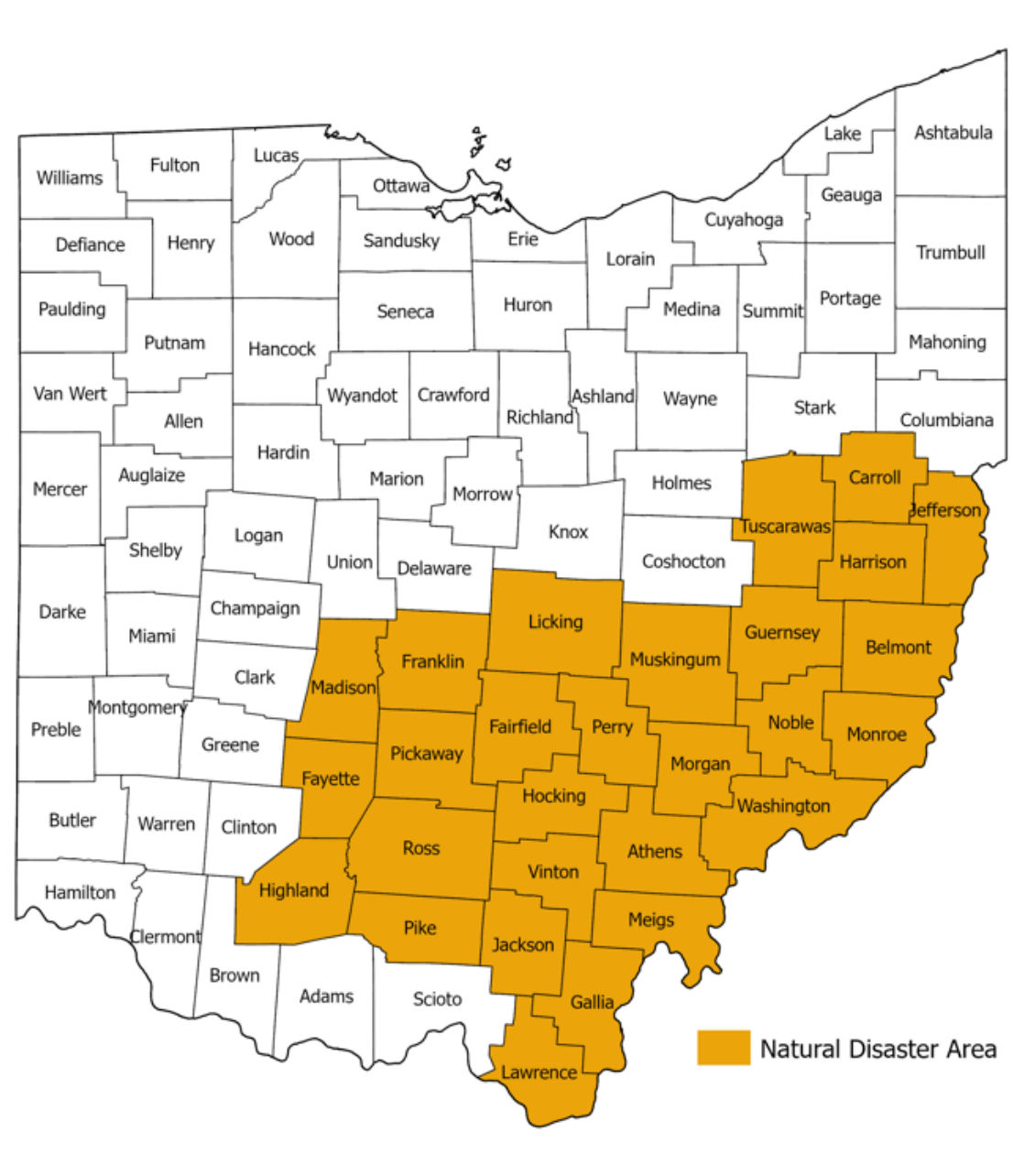
Back to Top

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

Drought assistant funding available to farmers in 28 counties

Drought assistance funds are available through the Ohio Department of Agriculture to help farmers recover from the 2024 drought. $10 million is available for farmers in 28 counties (see the map below) and is available to both crop farmers and livestock producers.

The application period closes on April 1. The program will primarily be administered through soil and water conservation districts, so the Department of Agriculture encourages farmers to reach out to their SWCD to discuss eligibility and how to apply.



CSH Ohio and OMHAS to host webinar on rental subsidy and supportive housing

The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH) Ohio and representatives from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services will host a webinar about the HUD 811 rental subsidy program and how supportive housing residents who are ready to transition can integrate this opportunity into their Moving On efforts.

The webinar will take place on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, from 10 to 11 a.m. Topics include:

- How the HUD 811 program works
- Eligibility criteria
- Becoming a HUD 811 referral agent
- Utilizing the HUD 811 program as part of your Moving On strategy
- Key components of a Moving On strategy

One of the main reasons supportive housing residents remain in supportive housing is the lack of access to affordable housing. The HUD 811 program ensures affordability for low-income residents with disabilities, aged 18-62, for qualifying properties funded with Low Income Housing Tax Credits.

Registration is free and can be completed here.

COUNTY NEWS

Back to Top

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

The Nation's Birthday Alliance: caretakers of local history prepare for America 250

Crawford County Now, February 21, 2025

Just to the left of the Great American Crossroad mural in Bucyrus' Washington Square, a small red-white-and-blue plaque can be found, commemorating the nation's upcoming semi quincentennial.

It takes a lot of work to prepare for a 250th birthday celebration, and local historical societies and museums are doing their part. The Crawford County History Alliance, formed in 2022, has expanded its purpose in the last year to help with this massive undertaking.

"America 250 is what has made the history alliance itself really take off," said Amber Wertman, Treasurer of the Galion History Center. "There is a lot of history here. We have museums, houses, and park districts. In 2023, we created a passport book. The idea was that individuals or families or groups could go around to all the sites, and if they stamped everything, they were entered to win prizes and things like that."

As the CCHA continued to meet, Wertman said, they discovered that other states were creating initiatives for America 250, "and we already had this built-in group. 'So,' we said, 'let's get on board.'"

"Late last year," Wertman continued, "our county commissioners designated the history alliance as Crawford's lead organization, which was really an honor."

"We're still focused on building the organization," Randy Fischer, Vice President of the Bucyrus Historical Society added. "We were just 16 established organizations and nothing else. We were just getting together and meeting."

Northeast District

Commissioners review options to cut budget

Morning Journal, February 12, 2025

Trumbull commissioners may have to ask county department heads to consider possible layoffs if the county cannot find ways to reduce requested budgets to fit within the $66.6 million projected 2025 budget.

Budget requests were $6,909,132.94 more than the projected budget for the year as of Thursday.

Commissioners are required to pass a balanced budget by April 1.

Various county departments outlined whether they could reduce their budgets or defended why they could not cut beyond the amount they presented in a meeting held last week.

Sam Lamancusa, Trumbull County treasurer, told the commissioners his office requested $1,258,022.32. Last week, he was urged to make cuts to about $1,200,000.

Lamancusa described being in the middle of his tax collection season. Typically, his office begins doing overtime so it can keep up with required duties.

"I have not started overtime because of budget restraints," he said. "We do two hours minimum overtime because we are so busy answering phones, taking care of taxpayers and working the windows during the day."

"The longer it takes us to close our collections, the longer it will cause us to draw out the settlements, which will cause other agencies not to receive their money," he said. "If you look at the overtime numbers that I've used over the last four years, I don't exceed $21,000 in overtime."

Central District

Fairfield County adopts AI-driven 911 technology for better emergency response

ABC6, February 12, 2025

The Fairfield County Sheriff's Office has implemented new, cutting-edge technology that allows 911 dispatchers to gain real-time visual access to emergency scenes before first responders arrive.

This advancement is made possible through an AI-driven program called Carbyne Apex. Elizabeth Maple, a communications supervisor, explained how the system works.

Callers to 911 get a link which, if clicked on, grants access to your cell phone's camera. This enables dispatchers to see the caller's exact location and live video or pictures of the emergency.

"They are able to show us video or photos of a scene, and through that, we can send that out through a program called Responder Connect. So we can go out to our responding fire departments or our law-enforcement personnel who are responding to a call," Maple said. However, she noted, "If they're not comfortable with it, they don't have to click on that link."

All of that access ends once you hang up.

Fairfield County adopts AI-driven 911 technology for better emergency response (WSYX)

The system can also be used remotely in the event of an emergency at an event or at school. It can capture all the cell phone calls to 911 in that area to help authorities come up with a plan.

Southwest District

MC Commissioners OK updated credit card policy

Miami Valley Today, February 17, 2025

The Miami County Commissioners authorized updated 2025 credit card expenditures, and a child placement contract during their meeting on Thursday, Feb. 13.

Chief Administration Officer Michael Clarey addressed the updated credit card expenditures policy according to Section 301.27 of the Ohio Revised Code (ORC), which allows county officials to use credit cards for work-related expenses and public purposes.

"In the past, allowable expenses were listed by type, whereas by the ORC now we list it by daily and per transaction limits and this doesn't change any dollar amounts," he said. "We've always done this quarterly, and this approval is not expenses themselves, but the policy, whereas now this will be a yearly resolution."

"I know that the sheriff in the past, had to use his personal credit card to buy medicine for the inmates, and then he would get reimbursed. Does this take care of that as well?" asked Commissioner Greg Simmons.

"Yes, it does," replied Clarey. "Not by a new allowable expense but for the daily and per transaction expenses."

In other business, the commissioners authorized a 2025 child placement contract with Cincinnati Children's Hospital for a cost of 250,000 to be paid from fund 150 as requested by the department of job and family services (JFS).

Jennifer Anderson, account clerk for JFS, addressed the commissioners at the meeting.

"This is a placement for a child who had custody she's just moving to a place that better meets her needs. We haven't had a contract with them and it will end at the end of this year," she said. "We are getting with OhioRISE for them to pay for 100 percent of the child's placement."

Southeast District

Jefferson County Prosecutor's Office relocation essential due to flooding concerns

WTOV9, February 20, 2025

Jefferson County commissioners are taking steps to address the persistent flooding at the prosecutor's office in the Jefferson County Justice Center.

The commissioners have agreed to seek proposals to relocate the office.

"With the long-range plan, once we get them moved out, we get in, get the right people, contractors. Let's really dig in to see if we can have a resolution to fix the issues they have, and then long-term, have that area where we could make it available to either other governmental entities or who knows," Commissioner Tony Morelli said.

Morelli emphasized that the office cannot be used in its current state due to the intermittent flooding.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

Back to Top

FEBRUARY 24 - 27
CCAO New Member Training
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting (February 25)

FEBRUARY 28
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

MARCH 1 - MARCH 4
NACo Legislative Conference (Washington D.C.)

MARCH 14
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

MARCH 21
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

April 4
CEBCO Annual Business Meeting

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