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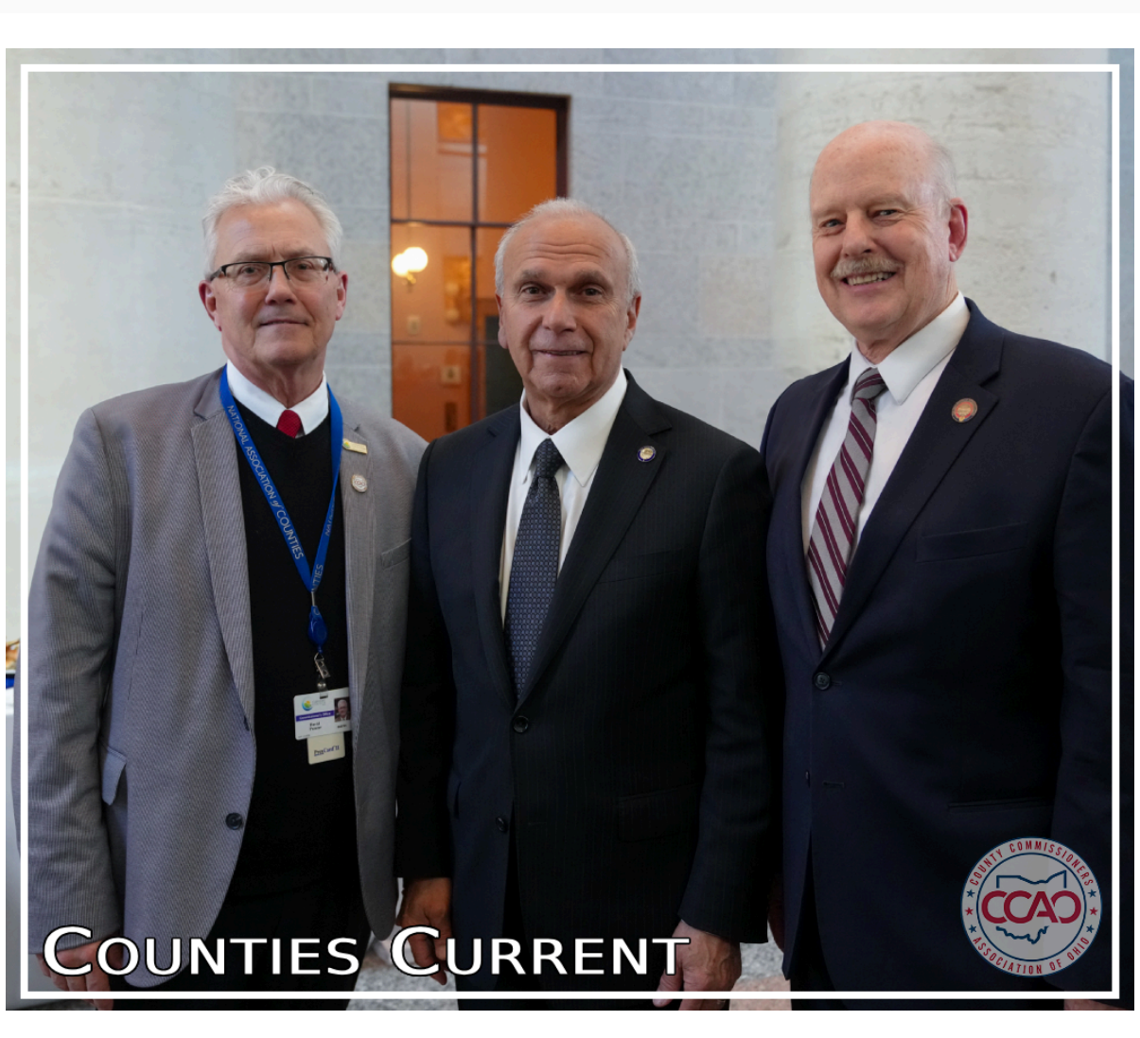

April 14, 2025

CCAO President and Clermont County Commissioner David Painter, Senator Jerry Cirino (a former Lake County Commissioner), and Representative Bill Roemer (a former Summit County Council Member) at the April 8 OCCO Legislative Reception.

CCAO thanks Representative Roemer and the rest of the House of Representatives for his work on HB 96, the State Operating Budget, and looks forward to working with Senator Cirino and the rest of the Senate on the budget in the coming weeks.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Buckeye State Sheriffs Association and CORSA deliver regional leadership training to counties

(The following is aggregated from PeakofOhio.com)

The Logan County Sheriff's Office held a special leadership training event on Thursday, bringing together nearly 50 law enforcement officers from seven different agencies across Ohio.

The event was co-hosted by the County Risk Sharing Authority (CORSA).

Chad Dennis from the Licking County Sheriff's Office led the training, sharing ideas on how to be a stronger leader in law enforcement.

Fifteen deputies and corrections officers from Logan County took part in the event. Sheriff Randy Dodds said he believes leadership is one of the most important areas to focus on in law enforcement.

> "The single best way to impact an organization is to focus on leadership development," Sheriff Dodds said. "I sent my supervisory staff and myself, who are leaders, to this training to give us new ideas and ways to improve our leadership skills. The staff we supervise today could be the leaders of the sheriff's office tomorrow."

The training gave officers a chance to learn, share experiences, and bring back valuable tools to help lead their teams more effectively.

CORSA staffers Larry Sims (left) and Steve Flory (right) with Logan County Sheriff Randy Dodds at the leadership training event in Logan County last week.

House passes Operating Budget with county government changes

Last Wednesday, the Ohio House of Representatives passed House Bill 96, the State Operating Budget, by a vote of 60-39. The passage sends the bill to the Senate, which has already begun hearing budget testimony from statewide officeholders and departments. The budget must be signed by Governor DeWine by 11:59 p.m. on June 30.

The budget, as passed by the House, includes a few county government changes that are discussed below. A full account of county-related provisions can be found on our Bill Tracker.

County Coroner Recodification as Appointed Officials
The bill recodifies the county coroner as a position appointed by the board of county commissioners instead of a position elected by voters. Current officeholders can complete their terms (coroners were elected in November, so their terms will end on January 7, 2029). Should a vacancy occur after the bill's effective date, however, the vacant office will be filled by the county commissioners, not the county's central committee of the political party the coroner belonged to.

Aside from the shift to appointed status, the bill does not make many changes to county coroner law. The appointments will last for the same duration as elected terms (four years, beginning on the first Monday of January) and there is no change to the coroner compensation schedule (they are included in another provision, discussed below, providing county elected officials, and others, a pay raise).

One change that was made concerns who becomes an acting county commissioner when two commissioners are absent due to sickness or injury. Under current law, the county coroner becomes an acting commissioner (while retaining their duties as coroner) in such a situation. The bill replaces the coroner with the county auditor for this purpose.

Elected Official Compensation
The bill includes a raise for members of the judiciary, county elected officials (including the coroner, who would shift to appointed status as discussed above), township elected officials, and members of county boards of elections of 5% per year through 2029 and, each year afterwards, a raise equal to the lesser of 3% or the rate of inflation as defined by the consumer price index.

Due to the constitutional prohibition on in-term compensation increases, county elected officials will not be able to receive the increased salary until their next term begins (for auditors and the January 1 seat on the board of county commissioners, that will be in 2027, and for the other row officers it will be in 2029). Judges are allowed to accept raises mid-term and board of elections members are not elected so both can receive the increased compensation upon the budget's effective date.

If a vacancy occurs in a row office position and it is filled after the budget's effective date, that individual can receive the adjusted salary.

CCAO will make simulated pay tables to illustrate the effect of these provisions available in the near future.

County Engineer Contracting Compensation
The bill changes the compensation that a county engineer can receive for contracting to provide services for county with a vacant engineer from 100% of the compensation that the elected engineer in that county would receive to between 80% and 100% of that compensation as determined by the Board of County Commissioners.

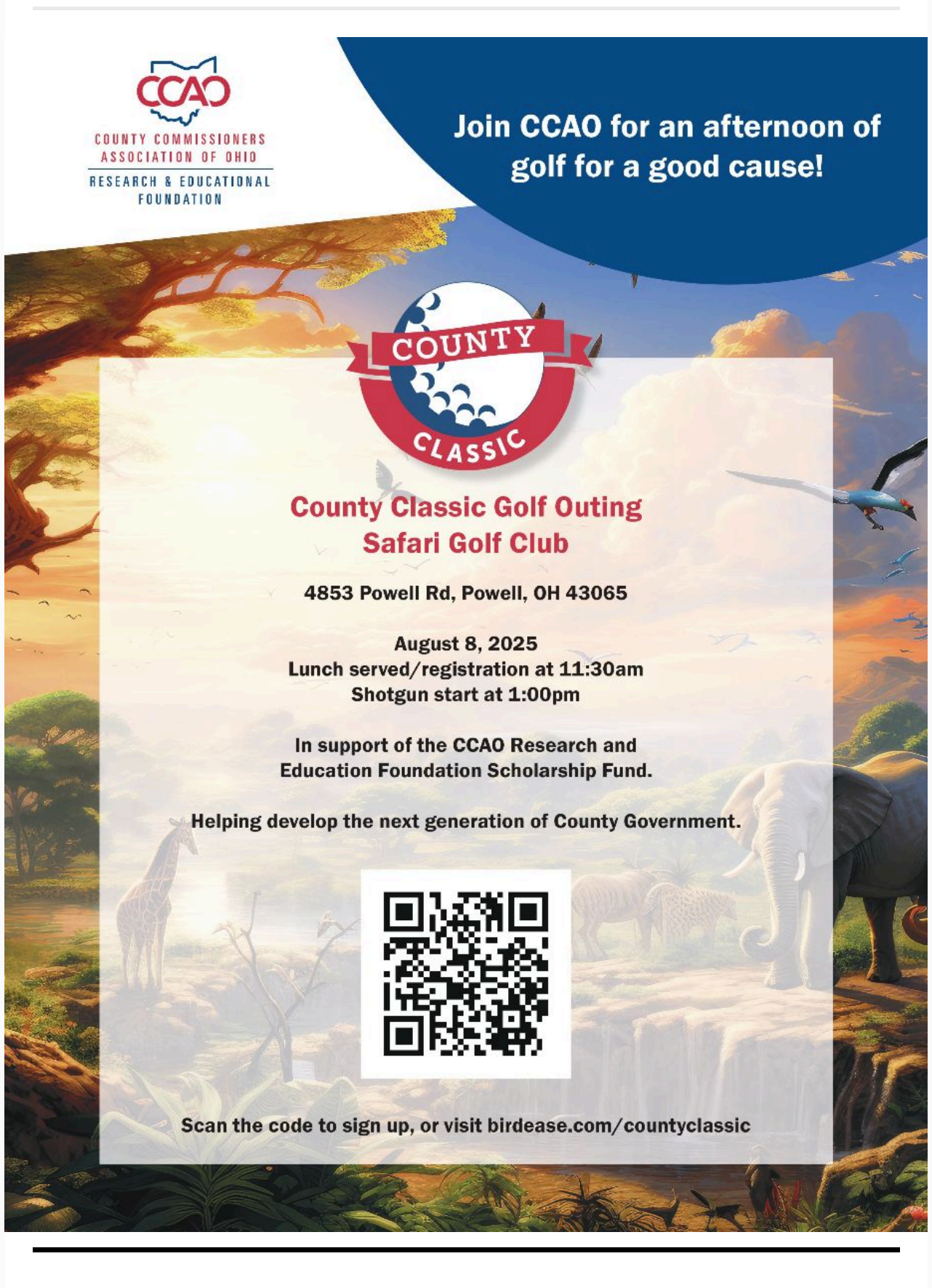
This is a CCAO-supported change that was intended to be included in the county engineer contracting language in House Bill 315 at the end of the 135th General Assembly but was accidentally omitted.

County Budget Commission Composition
The bill replaces the county prosecutor with the president of the board of the county commissioners on the county budget commission. The county auditor and county treasurer remain on the commission.

County sheriffs, drug task forces receive state funding

Last week, Governor DeWine announced the awarding of $3 million for law enforcement agencies and drug task forces to combat illegal drug activity, including helping overdose victims and their families through education, support, and treatment options.

Thirty-two of the 38 awards went to primarily county agencies, totaling $2.4 million of the $3 million awarded.



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

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August 8, 2025
Lunch served/registration at 11:30am
Shotgun start at 1:00pm

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A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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TUESDAY: US Treasury to hold second webinar on reporting, next reports due end of the month

To support counties in preparing their 2025 Annual or Q1 Project and Expenditure (P&E) Reports – due **April 30, 2025** – the U.S. Department of the Treasury is offering a workshop for all ARPA recipients tomorrow, April 15, at 2:00 p.m.

The webinar will equip county staff with tools, updates and guidance to successfully complete upcoming reporting requirements. Topics will include P&E report content, common reporting errors, noncompliance Issues, and debt management.

State financial reports show continued tax revenue over performance

Last week, the Office of Budget and Management (OBM) and the Legislative Budget Office (LBO) each released their March financial reports.

Tax revenue and all state GRF revenue showed positive variances, over performing expectations by $98.1 million and $70.1 million, respectively. A decrease in expected federal grant revenue accounts for the majority of the difference between the two figures. State fiscal year year-to-date, tax revenue is up $990.1 million (including transfers to the Expanded Sales Tax Holiday Fund), 5.0% better than estimated.

You can view the OBM Monthly Financial Report and the LBO Budget Footnotes for more information.

Pending Attorney General opinions could impact counties

There two new pending Attorney General Opinion requests that could have an impact on counties.

First, the Delaware County Prosecutor asked Attorney General Dave Yost if the county prosecutor's office falls in the definition of "law enforcement agency" for the purposes of charging a public records requester the actual cost of preparing a video record. This is a new authority added in the Lame Duck session of the 135th General Assembly, allowing law enforcement agencies to charge up to $75 per hour of requested footage, capped at $750 total, for the preparation of a video public record.

As a note, there is a provision in the Operating Budget that explicitly adds county prosecutors to the definition of law enforcement agencies for this purpose.

Second, the Highland County Prosecutor requested an opinion on if a dentist is qualified to serve as an "investigator" under the deputy county coroner law.

As a note, this would not be effected by the provisions in the Operating Budget recodifing the county coroner as an appointed official because the code sections governing deputy coroners, coroner investigators, or the required qualifications of these positions are not amended in the bill.

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.

Greater Ohio Policy Center hosting Brownfields Conference on May 8

The Greater Ohio Policy Center (GOPC), in partnership with the Ohio EPA, is hosting the 2025 Ohio Brownfields Conference, to be held on May 8 in Westerville. The conference will provide attendees with panel sessions to learn about the latest in brownfield remediation and redevelopment, connect with environmental professionals, and network with peers from across the state.

Registration can be completed here and costs $185 per attendee.

Attendees can attend sessions about the following subjects:

- Brownfields Funding & Financing
- Remediation and Redevelopment Case Studies
- Public-Private Partnerships in Brownfields Remediation
- Community Planning to Redevelop Brownfields
- Brownfields into Residential Housing
- Brownfields and Land Banks
- Ohio EPA Voluntary Action Program (VAP)

A full schedule, with details about each session, can be found on the event's website.

As with past conferences, GOPC is seeking continuing learning education credits, including AICP credits through APA Ohio, CLE credits through the Ohio Supreme Court, and CP credits through Ohio EPA.

Montrose Group to host 4th Annual Economic Development & Policy Forum on May 23

On May 23, the Montrose Group will host its 4th Annual Montrose Group Economic Development & Policy Forum at the Hilton Easton in Columbus, Ohio. The event will be preceded by an opening reception on Thursday, May 22 from 5-7 p.m. at Fado Irish Pub & Restaurant.

The forum is free to participants and registration can be completed on the event's page. Rooms can also be reserved through a link on the events page, at a special conference rate the Montrose Group has secured at the Hilton Easton.

The focus of the forum will be on Preparing to Win!! for communities and companies. The event will include a deep agenda with national thought leaders on:

- Regional markets in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky and how communities can implement strategies to land billion-dollar economic development projects;
- What the future of industrial development is in the middle of a trade war;
- How housing policies impact economic success;
- How energy can spur economic investment but also be a powerful industry to recruit to communities; and
- A discussion on entrepreneurship.

With the unique role Ohio's county leaders play in the state's economic development and public policy development, this free opportunity could be a useful event for county government leaders to participate in.

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 share support for state Issue 2
Sidney Daily News, April 5, 2025
The Shelby County Board of Commissioners has officially voted to support state Issue 2, which will appear on the May 6 ballot, urging residents to vote in favor of renewing the State Capital Improvement Program, which provides critical funding for local infrastructure projects.

According to a news release from the Shelby County Commissioners Office, since its creation in 1987, SCIP has provided over $7 billion in grants and low-interest loans to local governments in all 88 Ohio counties. These funds help ensure that communities can maintain safe roadways, upgrade aging infrastructure and support economic development without relying solely on local tax dollars.

"The State Capital Improvement Program is a lifeline for Ohio's counties, including Shelby County," Commissioner Julie Ehemann said. "Renewing this program means continuing to invest in the roads, bridges, and water systems that our residents rely on every day. This funding has helped improve safety, attract business and protect public health without raising taxes."

The current SCIP authorization is set to expire July 1, 2025. A yes vote on Issue 2 would renew the program, preventing a funding gap that could delay crucial infrastructure projects across Ohio. The release said voters have overwhelmingly renewed this program three times in the past.

In Shelby County, SCIP has funded projects such as the city of Sidney's downtown storm and sewer improvements, the Jefferson Street bridge replacement, the Eilerman Road sanitary pump station repair and the 2018 sewer pump station and force main replacement.

Northeast District

FOP president urges support of county sales tax renewal
Morning Journal, April 11, 2025
In a press release issued Thursday, Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio President Jay McDonald urged support for Columbiana County's 1% sales tax renewal on the May 6 ballot.

"This is not a new or additional tax," he wrote. "It simply extends the current tax and provides vital funding for public safety."

McDonald referred to the confusion that resulted the last time from the wording on the ballot, when voters downed the tax issue in the fall because they thought it was a new tax.

According to the press release, McDonald said in a letter to county commissioners that he appreciated their effort to correct confusion, but that more outreach is necessary.

"This is important because of the impact of the tax renewal, which provides a significant piece of the county's operating budget. A second tax vote failure would result in devastating consequences — not only for the sheriff's department, but for public safety throughout the county," the press release said.

"Make no mistake, passage of the sales tax renewal is the difference between quality law enforcement and dangerous streets." McDonald said, adding that they "need everyone from the county commissioners to residents reiterating the important fact that this renewal tax is not a new or additional tax."

Central District

Richland County deputy apiarist appointed by commissioners
Richland Source, April 10, 2025
No bees were present at the Richland County Board of Commissioners meeting Thursday morning.

But three members of the bee community were in attendance to advocate for appointing a county deputy apiarist.

David Duncan, Aaron Billheimer and Hager Hicks joined commissioners to discuss the importance of the position.

Duncan spoke on behalf of the Richland Area Beekeepers Association, which meets monthly at the Richland County Longview Center, 1495 W. Longview Ave. in Mansfield.

The three were seeking an allocation from commissioners to fund a county deputy apiarist.

According to the Ohio Department of Agriculture, the position is "appointed and paid by a county," but submits its inspection reports to the state agriculture department.

"County-appointed inspectors are a crucial component of the current program by providing hands-on interaction with beekeepers through the inspection process," the department website says. "County apiary inspectors increase the likelihood that the bees required for pollination are disease and pest free."

Southwest District

Brown County Health Department recognized for success in mobile unit initiative
Brown County Press, March 26, 2025
The Brown County Health Department's work is being featured as a success story of the HEALing Communities Study in Ohio. The health department purchased a mobile medical unit with technical assistance and funding from the HCS.

With the mobile medical unit, health department personnel provide overdose prevention education and naloxone distribution. The unit includes triage space, an exam room, and storage for medical supplies. Additionally, individuals can receive substance use assessments, telehealth appointments, and assistance accessing treatment providers. The department has targeted remote and underserved areas throughout the county and distributed 1,343 naloxone kits to mobile unit visitors from March to December 2023.

The Brown County Health Department receives its naloxone supply from the Project DAWN program, along with funding from state agencies and the local mental health and addiction services board to support continuation of the mobile medical unit.

From June 2022 through December 2023, Brown County took part in the HCS intervention as one of 19 participating counties in Ohio. The study allocated funding for county coalitions to lead a community engaged, data-driven process to select and implement evidence-based practices to reduce overdose deaths. A health communications campaign was also implemented in each county to reduce stigma and increase demand for those evidence-based practices. The study was supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Helping to End Addiction Long-term® Initiative.

Southeast District

911 center updates: County officials talk funding under combined 911 program
Marietta Times, April 11, 2025
Washington County commissioners brought 911 dispatch funding back to the table for discussion at Thursday's meeting.

The Washington County Sheriff's Office and Marietta and Belpre Police departments all have their own dispatchers. But with next-generation 911 technology being implemented, a consolidated dispatch location is being planned.

Commissioner Eddie Place said he met with Marietta Mayor Josh Schlicher, Belpre Mayor Susan Abdella, Belpre Police Chief Mike Stump, Marietta Police Chief Katherine Warden and county Sheriff Mark Warden to discuss a business plan for a centralized 911 center.

"We came to the conclusion that we don't have the funding for that," Place said. "However, we're working towards it, and we all agree that it's the best thing to have for our county."

Officials discussed how funding for the police departments would be distributed under the new arrangement. It was proposed that a combined $190,000 would be given to the departments in Marietta and Belpre, based on call volume, with any equipment purchases authorized by 911 Director Douglas Moore.

Place suggested having the 911 director distribute the money as needed.

"I don't know that I agree with that because you're putting money under the 911 director who doesn't have the authority to appropriate it," said Booth. "We appropriate some of those funds, and let them (Marietta and Belpre) figure out how they can use it."

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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APRIL 14
Southeast District Meeting

APRIL 21
Licking County Regional Legislative Briefing

APRIL 24 - 25
CEBCO Board Retreat

APRIL 25
Columbiana County Regional Legislative Briefing

APRIL 28
Ross County Regional Legislative Briefing
Seneca County Regional Legislative Briefing

MAY 9
Northeast District Meeting

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