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April 21, 2025

In recognition of Commissioner Lenny Eliason's steadfast dedication to public service, the Athens County Records Center building was recently dedicated in his name. Eliason has been a commissioner since 1998 and has a background in broadcasting and business.

Throughout his tenure, he has held leadership positions regionally as well as with CCAO and NACo, serving as the national association president from 2011-2012.

Congratulations Commissioner Eliason!

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Former Paulding County Commissioner passes away



Martin "Marty" Harmon, a former Paulding County Commissioner, passed away earlier this month at the age of 78.

Marty served as Paulding County Commissioner for five years, from XXXX-XXXX. He also served as a Brown Township Trustee for eight years and taught at three school districts in Defiance and Paulding counties.

In addition to his public service as a teacher and elected official, Marty was active in the Oakwood Community Development Corporation, the John Paulding Historical Society, and Gideons International.

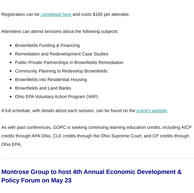
You can read Marty's full obituary here.

CCAO publishes County Advisory Bulletin on group home changes

Last week, CCAO released County Advisory Bulletin 2025-06 outlining changes to regulations of group homes for youth in foster care, also called residential facilities. The changes were initially introduced as House Bill 583 (Representatives Andrea White and Phil Plummer) during the 135th General Assembly. The provisions passed as part of House Bill 315 during the final week of legislative session.

Generally, the provisions enacted only apply to a residential facility that is operated by a public children services agency, private child placing agency, private noncustodial agency, or superintendent of a county or district children's home for the placement of foster children.

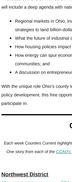
A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner



STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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BWC Administrator & CEO nominated for EPA position



Last week, Governor Mike DeWine nominated John Logue, the Administrator/CEO of the Bureau of Workers' Compensation, to serve as the director of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. The spot became vacant after former director Anne Vogel accepted a position with te US EPA as Region 5 Administrator (Region 5 covers Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota).

Logue has worked with the BWC since 2019. Before joining BWC, he spent years with Sedgwick and Nationwide.

Logue's appointment will require Senate confirmation.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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Visit the Grants and Funders 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 polices 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 an occasion other stories may be highlighted as well.

Northwest District

Allen commissioners approve CRA

LimaOhio.com, April 17, 2025

As discussion continues around the possibility of a data center coming to American Township, the Allen County Board of Commissioners approved a resolution Thursday establishing a Community Reinvestment Area in the vicinity of North Cole Street and Bluelick Road, a designation meant to help incentivize investment.

An area with a CRA designation qualifies for property tax exemptions for existing property owners to construct or renovate buildings as a means of spurring economic development. Able to last up to 15 years, the exemption could reach up to 100 percent, with any exemption over 75 percent requiring the consent of the affected public school district.

The designated area is closer to the original area proposed in early February, covering just fewer than 400 acres bordered by North Cole Street, Bluelick Road, and Irvin Road, reaching midway between Cole Street and West Street. An expanded CRA covering 887 total acres was briefly considered but later rejected.

"This is to develop an area in the township that we have been looking at for quite some time in the American Township area because of its current zoning," Allen Economic Development Group President and CEO Cynthia Lets said. "It just incentivizes development in that area."

Northeast District

Commissioners hold first of two hearings on proposed $5 vehicle registration tax

Chronicle Telegram, April 17, 2025

Few showed up Tuesday to the first of two public hearings at which the Lorain County commissioners must meet to consider adding a $5 permissive tax to county residents' vehicle registrations.

The estimated $1.4 million that will be raised annually by the tax is aimed to help the Lorain County Engineer's Office fund or match state and federal funding for future infrastructure projects.

The tax is not up for a vote on the ballot. State law allows the commissioners to impose the tax on motor vehicle registrations, including trailers, without putting it on the ballot, but two public hearings are required to be held before a decision is made.

The Engineer's Office said it is looking at a more-than $1.1 million deficit in its ability to fund repair and infrastructure projects in 2029 if no new funding source is found. By law, the revenue from the proposed permissive tax may not be used for salaries or to buy more equipment.

Most of those who attended the meeting on the fourth floor of the County Administration Building on Middle Avenue in Elyria in person were county employees.

Central District

Commissioners vote to support Issue 2

Peak of Ohio, April 19, 2025

The Logan 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 (SCIP).

This long-standing program provides critical funding for local infrastructure projects, including roads, bridges, water systems, and wastewater treatment facilities—without raising taxes.

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 Logan County," said Commissioner Michael E. Yoder. "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."

Southwest District

Commissioners honor law enforcement for efforts in 'Operation Kickstart'

Wilmington News Journal, April 14, 2025

The Clinton County Commissioners recognized the exceptional efforts of local law enforcement officers and agencies Monday morning for their work in Operation Kickstart, a large-scale drug enforcement effort that recently led to 52 indictments and 154 counts across 21 arrests in a single evening.

Commissioners presented a proclamation during their regular meeting commending law enforcement for their dedication, teamwork and commitment to safeguarding the community. The operation, which required collaboration between multiple agencies, focused on disrupting illegal drug activity and reducing crime throughout Clinton County, according to authorities.

"This operation is a testament to the vigilance, skill and collaboration of the agencies and officers involved," the proclamation stated. "These efforts help create a safer environment for our families and neighborhoods."

Commissioner Kerry Steed praised the unity and sacrifice of those who wear the badge, noting the role law enforcement plays beyond enforcement duties.

"There is a brotherhood that comes from wearing a badge or a bulletproof vest every day," Steed said. "Many people see you as cops, but we see you as the true protectors of this community. When someone is in dire need, you're ready to help — and the fundamental programs we've put in place, which you've supported and worked together on, truly create a blanket of safety that we all live under."

Southeast District

Guyan commissioners signature $150,000 to fund 911 department

WTRF, April 15, 2025

Concerns have been raised in Monroe County over budgetary issues that would require the EMS Squad Association to provide significant funds to assist the 911 department.

Last year, EMS used $150,000 of their levy funds to assist with 911 and dispatch in the county and they are asking the same this year.

However, many are worried that the county is lacking funds in other areas and want to be sure that their $150,000 would be going ONLY to the 911 department.

In a meeting tonight, the Monroe County Prosecutor and Sheriff came together to answer any questions and concerns that the squad association may have.

In the meantime, the sheriff is working to get a 2nd levy together to be on the ballot in November to generate enough funds to operate with two dispatchers under Ohio state law.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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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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