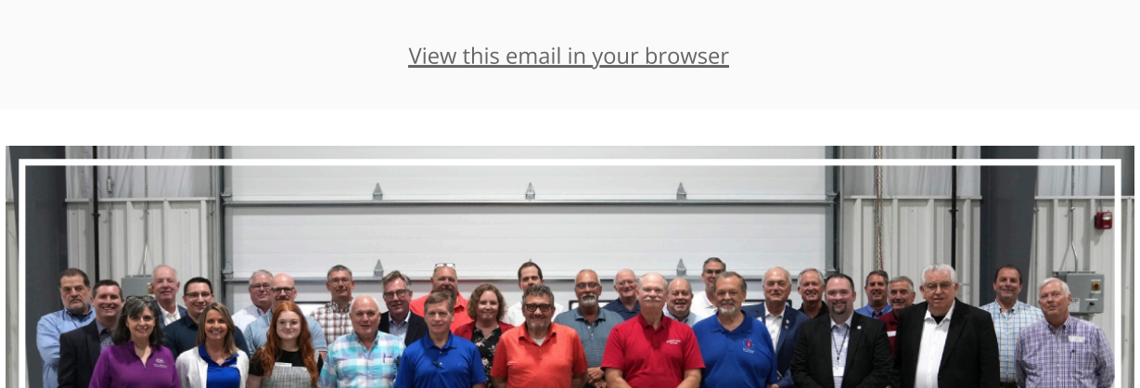

June 16, 2025

Earlier this month, leaders from the CCAO/CEAO Central Region gathered in Morrow County for a regional meeting hosted by Commissioners Tim Abraham, Jon Mason, and Tim Siegfried, along with County Engineer Bart Dennison.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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CORSA: FBI issues critical cyberattack alert

The Federal Bureau of Investigation has issued the attached joint cybersecurity advisory in conjunction with the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, as the number of confirmed observed victims of Play ransomware attacks skyrocketed in May.

Thought to be linked to a North Korean state-sponsored attack group, one that is known to be part of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's "Reconnaissance General Bureau," known as Andariel, Play ransomware is thought to be distributed by threat groups, including Balloonfly. Researchers have expressed the opinion that Play forms an "integral part" of the Andariel cyberattack arsenal.

Using a malware backdoor to infect Windows systems, Balloonfly has been linked to multiple incidents involving the deployment of Play ransomware, according to Symantec Threat Hunter researchers, mostly against businesses across the U.S. and Europe. An overview of the threat can be found in this article by Forbes.

As always, CORSA members are encouraged to take advantage of our cybersecurity risk mitigation offerings, which include: Cyber Grant Reimbursement, CTAP testing as part of the 2025 Loss Control Incentive Bonus, training and template policies, as well as online training through CORSA U, located at www.corsa.org.

Agriculture Director Brian Baldridge presents to CCAO Agricultural and Rural Affairs Committee

Last week, Ohio Department of Agriculture Director Brian Baldridge and members of his staff gave an overview of the Farmland Preservation programs the Department offers. The presentation may be viewed here. A brief overview of the three preservation programs is below.

Agriculture Security Area (ASA)

The ASA program began in 2005 and has served over 40,000 acres through 47 ASAs. Currently, there are 15 ASAs, totaling 16,125 acres of farmland. An ASA may be requested from a landowner/farmer in the unincorporated area of the county and must have at least 500 acres of contiguous land that receive Current Agricultural Use Valuation (CAUV) from the Department of Taxation.

Any land in an ASA requires the commitment from the landowner, township, and county not to initiate, approve, or finance new non-agriculture development for 10 years. If non-agriculture development occurs, a fine of $500 is levied on the land owner. CCAO's Legislative Platform calls for this fine to be increased to better protect the preservation of farmland.

After the landowner submits an application for an ASA, the county and township must approve a resolution authorizing it before it can take effect. If the ASA would span multiple townships or multiple counties, the governing board of all entities must be issued before the ASA can begin.

What makes this program different as opposed to the agricultural easement programs is that an ASA is temporary and can only be requested for up to 10 years and can be granted for a shorter term, as determined by the county and township. The landowner also can apply up to a 75% tax exemption and can be a smaller percentage as determined by the County and Township.

CCAO's Legislative Platform calls the ASA program allow for a public-private partnership so county owned farmland could enter the program.

Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP)

The LAEPP has existed since 1999 and provides funding to farmland owners for placing an agricultural easement on their property. Unlike a the time-limited ASA, an agricultural easement is permanent. The acreage threshold for a LAEPP is also lower than an ASA, at 40 acres (in some circumstances down to 25 acres). The farmland must be enrolled in the CAUV program.

In a LAEPP, the state issues payments for up to 75% of the appraised value of a farm's development rights. A payment cap has been set at $2,000 per acre, with a maximum of $500,000 per farm. All easement transactions are recorded on the property deed and transferred with the land to successive owners.

The landowner/farmer to find a local sponsor which is either a local government or the local soil and water conservation district to submit the application to the Department. A local sponsor may solicit the landowner if the local sponsor would like that land part of an agricultural easement. To date, 49 farms have been entered into an agricultural easement totaling 6,000 acres.

Agricultural Easement Donation Program (AEDP)

The AEDP, similar to the LAEPP, is part of the state's agricultural easement programs to protect farmland. The two programs have the same requirements and application process. The key difference is that the AEDP provides landowners the opportunity to donate the easement rights on viable farmland to the Department. The Department assures the land remains in agricultural use permanently.

The standard cost for services needed to secure the easement (i.e., title examination, title policy, escrow, closing, and recordation) are covered by the Department. They are recorded on the property deed and will transfer with the land to successive owners. This process requires the landowner to forfeit their easements rights; however, they may be eligible for an income tax deduction through the federal government.

If you have questions regarding these programs, please reach out to CCAO Policy Analyst James Kennedy at jkennedy@ccao.org.

Registration open for 2025's Summer Symposium!

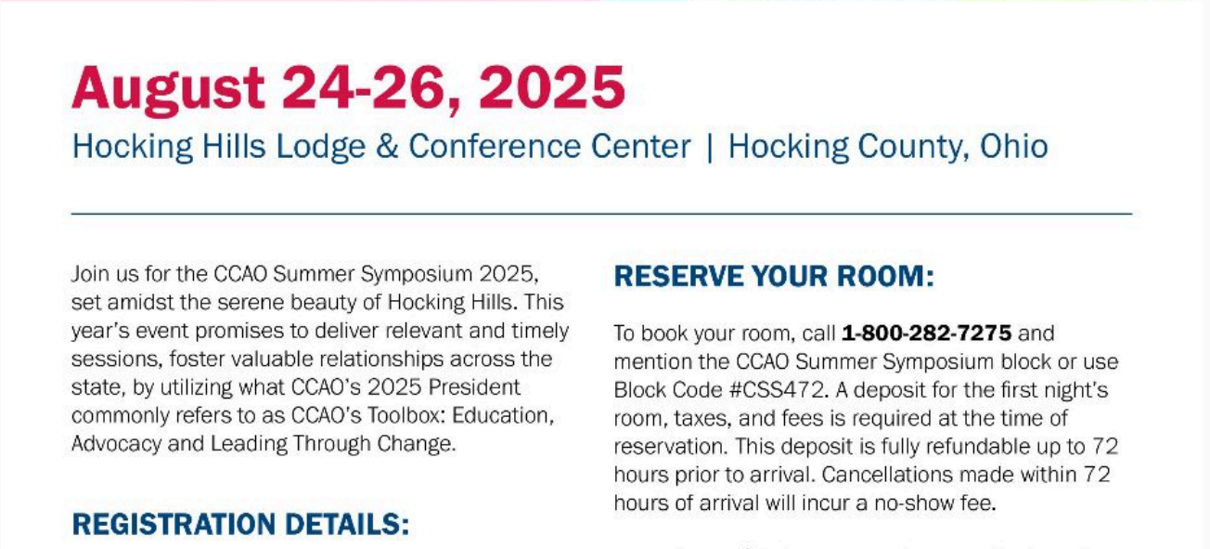
CCAO Summer Symposium 2025 Registration and Reservations are now open! Click on the announcement below or here to get started on your registration today!

The Hocking County Commissioners will be offering a tour of downtown Logan for those arriving on Sunday. The tour includes transportation to and from the lodge to downtown Logan, where attendees will visit their famous pencil sharpener museum, walk past the Hocking County Courthouse to their newly renovated theater then to 58 West for refreshments and food.

There will be plenty of time during the tour to visit other local establishments along the way. Please be sure to check the box when registering for the optional tour if you would like to join the tour Sunday evening!

We look forward to gathering together at Hocking Hills Lodge and Conference Center this summer to reconnect and discuss important topics. The official agenda is still under construction but will be released soon.

Please visit our Events page on our website for future updates!


SUMMER SYMPOSIUM 2025
CCAO Toolbox: Education, Advocacy and Leading Through Change
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO
CCAO

August 24-26, 2025

Hocking Hills Lodge & Conference Center | Hocking County, Ohio

Join us for the CCAO Summer Symposium 2025, set amidst the serene beauty of Hocking Hills. This year's event promises to deliver relevant and timely sessions, foster valuable relationships across the state, by utilizing what CCAO's 2025 President commonly refers to as CCAO's Toolbox: Education, Advocacy and Leading Through Change.

REGISTRATION DETAILS:

Early Bird Registration: $275 (until July 14)

Standard Registration: $320 (after July 14)

To register for the symposium, click here.

RESERVE YOUR ROOM:

To book your room, call **1-800-282-7275** and mention the CCAO Summer Symposium block or use Block Code #CSS472. A deposit for the first night's room, taxes, and fees is required at the time of reservation. This deposit is fully refundable up to 72 hours prior to arrival. Cancellations made within 72 hours of arrival will incur a no-show fee.

Room Rate: $110 + tax and fees (available until July 14, 2025) **Note:** Rooms are limited, so reserve yours today.

We look forward to seeing you in the picturesque "Hills" of Hocking County!

Hocking Hills Lodge and Conference Center
20020 OH-664
Hocking County, Ohio 43138

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STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Ohio's May financial report continues to show state revenue exceed estimates

The Office of Budget and Management recently released its May Financial Report. The state's revenue continues to perform well compared to projections.

The state's two largest revenue sources are the Personal Income Tax (PIT) and the Sales Tax. PIT revenue was 30.3% above estimates ($817.5 million), putting it at 5.7% above expectations for the fiscal year (July to June).

More significantly for counties is the Sales Tax revenue figures, since counties can levy a piggyback sales tax up to 1.5%. In May, sales tax revenue was 5.2% better than expected ($62.3 million), with a significant over-performance for auto sales (15.3%/$25.5 million above estimates). Year-to-Date, sales tax revenue is 5.8% above estimates, when factoring out payments to the Expanded Sales Tax Holiday Fund.

The full state General Revenue Fund outperformed May estimates by 19.6% and is 3.4% above estimates for the full fiscal year.

Federal Advocacy: SNAP Changes in Reconciliation Package

Earlier this year, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 1, the federal reconciliation budget package, by a vote of 215-214. The package includes several policy changes, which are summarized here. The U.S. Senate is now considering the bill and likely make several changes.

NACo recently put out several documents related to the SNAP changes:

- An overview of the SNAP changes
- A sample letter for counties to send to their Senators
- A memo regarding the potential impact of the SNAP changes

CCAO and the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors Association (OJFSDA) have partnered to advocate regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provisions of the bill. If passed in its current form, the legislation would:

- Reduce the federal match for SNAP administration from 50% to 25%, resulting in a statewide increase of $65 million, up to $40 million of which could fall to the responsibility of the county JFS agencies without an additional revenue source.
- Require the state to contribute to the cost of SNAP benefits on a sliding scale, based on the statewide SNAP error rate. In Ohio, this could be up to $800 million in each fiscal year.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the National Association of County Human Services Administrators (NACHSA) sent letters to House leadership prior to the vote expressing concerns over the changes. CCAO also shared information with Ohio's congressional delegation regarding the proposal's specific impact on Ohio budgets.

Our advocacy now turns toward the U.S. Senate. CCAO sent a letter to Senator Jon Husted and Senator Bernie Moreno to share our concerns about the impact of the SNAP provisions on county administration and budgets. We urge our members to share information about the local impact your county will feel if these changes become law. Below are some statewide talking points that might be useful in your conversations:

SNAP federal match reduction

- H.R. 1 would reduce the federal match for SNAP administration from 50% to 25%.
- If no other administrative factors changed, Ohio's portion of the costs would increase by $65 million per fiscal year.
- In Ohio, the state and counties share the cost of administration. This shift could increase administrative costs by up to $40 million per fiscal year for counties.
- County budgets are already tight, and this would put a strain on an already underfunded system.

SNAP state benefit cost share

- H.R. 1 would require states to contribute to the cost of SNAP benefits beginning in Federal Fiscal Year 2028, which is State Fiscal Year 2028. The required state share increases if a state has a higher error rate.
- **Ohio would likely need to contribute at least $640 million per state fiscal year, but depending on Ohio's error rate, this amount could rise to $800 million per state fiscal year**.
- H.R. 1 also reduces the tolerance level for SNAP errors from $37 in 2014 dollars ($57 in 2024) to $0, meaning all states' error rates would likely increase. If Ohio's error rate increases, the state would pay a higher cost-share percentage.

If you have questions about the SNAP provisions, please contact Rachel Reedy at rreedy@ccao.org. If you have questions about other provisions of H.R. 1, please contact policy@ccao.org.

Ohio receives $911,000 in lead abatement in schools federal grant

Last week, the US EPA announced the awarding of $26 million for states to address lead in drinking water at schools and child care facilities.

Ohio is set to receive $911,000 under last week's awards. This is the 8th largest award to a state. States generally have discretion in how they utilize the funds as they follow certain guidance from the US EPA and use no more than 4% of the award for administrative purposes.

You can learn more about the program 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.

Three State Plan on Aging Community Listening Sessions remain

Throughout June 2025, the Ohio Department of Aging will be hosting community listening sessions to learn from the experiences of older adults and caregivers across Ohio. The remaining sessions will be facilitated by the Health Policy Institute of Ohio and will be hosted in four Ohio communities:

- Euclid (Cuyahoga County) — *June 23*
- Marietta (Washington County) — *June 25*
- Maumee (Lucas County) — *June 26*

Please see the attached recruitment flyers for the SPOA community listening sessions and share with your networks. Registration is limited at each event to create an environment conducive to conversation. Lunch or refreshments, as well as gift cards, will be provided to participants.

They are hoping to hear diverse perspectives from older Ohioans and their caregivers!

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

Ohio Supreme Court rejects Williams County commissioners' effort to have AquaBounty case heard

Toledo Blade, June 10, 2025

The Ohio Supreme Court is refusing to hear the case brought by Williams County commissioners over the controversial right-of-way permits for the mothballed or delayed AquaBounty project.

The decision was signed by Chief Justice Sharon L. Kennedy. It gave no reason other than a one-sentence statement in which it said the court had considered "the jurisdictional memoranda" that commissioners had their attorney file, and that it declines "to accept jurisdiction of the appeal."

The Pioneer site where AquaBounty had planned to build is on the village's east side. The address is listed as 7 Kexson Dr., Pioneer.

Williams County commissioners agreed by a 2-1 vote in late March to seek a ruling from the Ohio Supreme Court over whether the village and the company are still entitled to a right-of-way permit to lay two mile-long pipelines.

One would bring groundwater from a Madison Township field to the AquaBounty site. The other would send wastewater to the St. Joseph River, a Maumee River tributary.

In February, a three-judge panel from Ohio's Sixth District Court of Appeals upheld a decision rendered by a trial judge 13 months earlier that would have let AquaBounty Technologies and the village of Pioneer build a water transmission pipeline and wastewater transmission pipeline.

Northeast District

Lorain County Sheriff trades SUV for hovercraft

Chronicle Telegram, June 12, 2025

The Lorain County Sheriff's Office will send a 2021 Ford Explorer police SUV to the Morgan County Sheriff's Office in southeast Ohio to replace a broken-down cruiser. In return, the Lorain County Sheriff's Office will get a 2012 hovercraft.

Yes, a hovercraft: A vehicle that can travel on difficult terrain including water or ice, on an inflated cushion of air.

It will be used for water and ice rescues on Lake Erie or to search for missing persons, Sheriff Jack Hall told the commissioners last week, and comes with a trailer to tow it on.

Hall said the hovercraft became available to Lorain County when he and other sheriffs in the state were approached by Morgan County Sheriff James Fisher to replace a 2011 Dodge Charger police cruiser with 210,000 miles.

The Charger had become too expensive to fix for the small county sheriff's office. Fisher leads a sheriff's office of eight full-time including himself, that patrols more than 420 square miles of Morgan County and 900-plus miles of roads, according to its website.

Morgan County has no jail of its own, but uses a regional jail, and has a pickup truck and three hand-me-down cruisers in its fleet, Hall said. Most of the time Morgan County gets those cruisers from other police departments or sheriff's offices after they become "too dangerous to drive," he said.

Two Morgan County sheriff's vehicles broke down in the last two weeks, so Fisher was looking for an already-equipped cruiser, Hall said.

Central District

Developers express interest in newly formed Richland County Port Authority

Richland Source, June 10, 2025

Celebratory sparkling water was in order for local leaders Tuesday morning.

Ellen Heinz, president and CEO of the Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development, proudly passed out bottles of S. Pellegrino — a sparkling natural mineral water — following county commissioners' approval of the Richland County Port Authority.

Heinz thanked the three-member board for its financial support and efforts to provide a resource which will help catalyze regional development.

Several members of Heinz' team joined her Tuesday, including Jessica Gribben, economic and community development director, and Donnie Clark, economic development project manager.

Kristine Lindeman, board chair for the Richland Area Chamber, and Jake Penwell, chair of the Richland County Development Group, were also in attendance.

"There's been an overwhelming support (to create a port authority)," Heinz said. "In fact, we have a number of projects that have reached out to us already asking to get involved to see if there is some way that their project might be a good fit for the port authority."

Commissioners also approved the individuals who will serve on the port authority's board.

Commissioner Tony Vero said the selection process prioritized seeking individuals with business and economic development experience, as well as in finance.

Southwest District

MC Commissioners discuss public housing privatization

Miami Valley Today, June 11, 2025

The Miami County Commissioners heard from the Miami County Metropolitan Housing Authority (MCMHA)/Miami County Community Action Commission (CAC) regarding the possibility of privatizing MCMHA. They also appointed new interim Miami County Department of Development (DOD) co-directors while the search for a new director is ongoing, at their meeting on Tuesday, June 9.

Andria Beach, MCMHA/CAC executive director, addressed the commissioners at the meeting to have them authorize and sign an environmental review for the activity/project for the MCMHA Rental Assistance Demonstration Conversion Family Sites Project, during which she discussed the potential of privatizing public housing in the county.

Beach told commissioners, public housing is not at the top of the list for our current federal administration, also noting that MCMHA is looking to privatize public housing as a result.

"We will still own (public housing)," Beach said. "We will go through a process to rehab it."

Breach explained that the current public housing would then operate more like a private owner.

Miami County Commissioner Ted Mercer addressed Beach's comments, telling her he was not comfortable with the privatization of county public housing, adding that he would need more information.

Beach told the Commissioners that in 2026, MCMHA is expected to get 25 percent less funding.

Southeast District

Group talks about land use, farming

Ironton Tribune, June 14, 2025

Among the visitors to the Thursday meeting of the Lawrence County Commissioners were Jerah Pettibone and John Stock, two educators with Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA).

Pettibone explained that they were in to talks about their programming and how the group supports farmers, specifically giving them land bank properties in Lawrence County.

"We offer a lot of different educational services. We really do help farmers with whatever they may need" Pettibone said, adding they help with questions about production, certification, funding, accessing farm land or transitioning farm land. "Literally anything you can think of. There are a million questions you could have."

OEFFA has a policy team that advocates for farmers' needs at the state and federal level.

Stockton said they support farmers and they don't have to be a member of OEFFA or be a certified organic operation. "We help home gardeners, conventional farmers in the realm of sustainable agriculture. So, we help with strategies for cover cropping, weed control, soil health," he said.

Commissioner Mike Finley asked them about working with the land bank and said they were there at the right time.

"We are thinking about bundling some of this stuff up and this might be a better way to go for making some sustainable farms for small farmers," he said. "I think it would be a great attribute to a lot of people who don't have to have a big farm."

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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JUNE 19
Juneteenth - Holiday

JUNE 27
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

JULY 4
Independence Day - Holiday

JULY 25
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

AUGUST 8
2025 County Classic Golf Outing

AUGUST 24 - 26
2025 CCAO Summer Symposium

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