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June 23, 2025

Last week Noble County Commissioner Ty Moore was selected to fill the vacant House of Representatives 95th District seat. The seat became vacant when former Representative Don Jones resigned to take a position in the federal Department of Agriculture.

Congratulations Representative Moore!

Photo courtesy of the Ohio House of Representatives

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Former Noble County Commissioner Ty Moore appointed to House of Representatives seat

Representative Moore was sworn in on Wednesday and will represent Harrison County, Morgan County, and Noble County, as well as portions of Athens, Belmont, and Guernsey counties. He will serve on the following House committees: Agriculture, Local Government, Natural Resources, and Veterans & Military Development.

Before his appointment to the House, Representative Moore served nine years as a Noble County Commissioner. He is also the a co-owner and vice president of R.C. Moore Lumber Company.

Representative Moore is the 12th CCAO former in the House of Representatives, joining the following:

- Rodney Creech
- Marilyn John
- Roy Klopfenstein
- Bob Peterson
- Sharon Ray
- Kevin Ritter
- Bill Roemer
- Veronica Sims
- Jason Stephens
- Brian Stewart
- Daniel Troy

Senators Jerry Cirino, Al Landis, and Shane Wilkin are the three CCAO formers who serve in the Senate.

CCAO, CAAO provide joint testimony against inside millage elimination bill; next steps

Last Wednesday, House Bill 335 (Representative David Thomas) received its first formal hearing in House Ways and Means, featuring invited testimony from proponents, opponents, and interested parties. CCAO and the County Auditors Association of Ohio (CAAO) provided joint opposition testimony.

The two associations were represented by Pickaway County Commissioner and CCAO Tax and Finance Committee Chair Gary Scherer and Warren County Auditor and CAAO President Matt Nolan. The joint testimony expressed concerns about the impact the $850 million revenue loss would have on the ability of counties to provide critical public safety services. In response to a question about cuts that counties would need to make, Commissioner Scherer answered that Pickaway County would have to make cuts across the board in all departments, including in the county sheriff's office.

The two associations also highlighted concerns around the debt and credit impact of eliminating inside millage (perfectly summarized in a memo from debt counsel law firms and discussed in a recent *Statehouse Report*) and the effect on economic tools such as Tax Increment Financing (TIFs). TIFs often receive reduced rates due to the security of inside mill revenue. The loss of this revenue would likely require public contracts be voided and could hamper valuable development projects across the state.

The testimony concluded with property tax reforms that the associations propose instead of eliminating inside millage:

- Reforming the calculation of and limiting the growth of the school district 20-mill floor.
- Expanding the homestead exemption program at the state level to provide uniformity and leverage greater resources.
- Eliminate the 10% nonbusiness tax credit and increasing the owner occupancy tax credit by a corresponding amount, to limit the ability of for-profit owners to exploit loopholes in the existing program.
- Create targeted property tax assistance programs, such as deferral programs, circuit breaker tax credits, and other endeavors.

Some members of the committee questioned the assertion that the loss of inside millage would result in cuts to law enforcement. A letter sent to the Ways and Means Committee by the Buckeye State Sheriffs' Association, the Ohio Association of Chiefs of Police, the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association, the Fraternal Order of Police, and the Ohio Patrolmen's Benevolent Association explained that law enforcement agencies are already facing recruitment and retention issues and have been for years. The cuts that would accompany inside millage elimination would exacerbate these issues.

Other witnesses explained to the committee that, since public safety is often the largest expenditure category in a local government's budget, when cuts need to be made, public safety is often among them. It is not a scare tactic to say that counties would need to layoff sheriff's deputies if this funding was lost; it is a budgetary reality.

Inside millage for the median county represents about 25% of its general fund budget. As an analogy, if the state government lost the same share of its revenue, it would be a loss of $11.0 billion in SFY 2026. The state's largest expenditure categories are Medicaid and Education (combining the Department of Education and Workforce and the Department of Higher Education). If the state had to make cuts but didn't want to touch its largest expenditure categories, it would need to eliminate every other department, agency, and program and it would still come up short (the sum of General Revenue Fund appropriations to all departments and agencies other then the three listed above is $10.3 billion, or about $700 million short of the hypothetical cut).

As testimony attested, and as the analogy shows, when there is a sudden loss of a significant portion of a government's revenue, it is not feasible to exempt any part of its functions from cuts.

While CCAO and CAAO were the only county entities to be invited to give in-person testimony, counties made their voice heard through submitted testimony. The Association of County Veterans Service Officers testified on the negative impact inside millage elimination would have on veterans services.

The counties that sent in testimony were:

- Carroll County (and Auditor)
- Coshocton County
- Franklin County
- Hamilton County
- Hardin County
- Medina County
- Mercer County
- Lucas County
- Summit County (Executive, Council, and VSC)
- Wayne County

Outside of testifying at the committee on Wednesday, CCAO has been active in leveraging our connections with other county and local government groups to get the message out about the harmful effects HB 335 would have. CCAO helped draft and signed on to letters to state leadership from a compact of local government groups and from the Ohio Coalition of County Officials.

While House Bill 335 is the current home of the inside millage elimination, its ultimate fate (in the immediate future, at least) will be determined by the House Bill 96 Conference Committee, expected to conclude on Tuesday or Wednesday (see subsequent article for more information about the conference committee).

The next property taxation front that counties must address is the ongoing constitutional amendment campaign to make property taxes unconstitutional. The effort is in the signature gathering phase and is believed to be working towards a May 2026 ballot vote. As a citizen referendum, this ballot measure can only be defeated at the ballot box.

Ballot measures are beaten by public awareness and information. As with the June inside millage debate, it is important that counties continue sharing with your communities the importance that property taxation has for the services that you provide. When sharing your story at commissioner meetings, county fairs, or local events, it is best to focus on services impact rather than the fiscal impact. Telling voters that your county would lose $25 million from your all funds budget will not have anywhere near the impact of telling your voters that 9-1-1 response times will increase, services for the developmentally disabled will be scaled back or be eliminated, or that senior services will be reduced or eliminated.

After the budget is completed and post-budget informational materials are published by the Association, staff will begin to compile information to help counties share these messages with their residents.

Registration open for 2025's Summer Symposium!

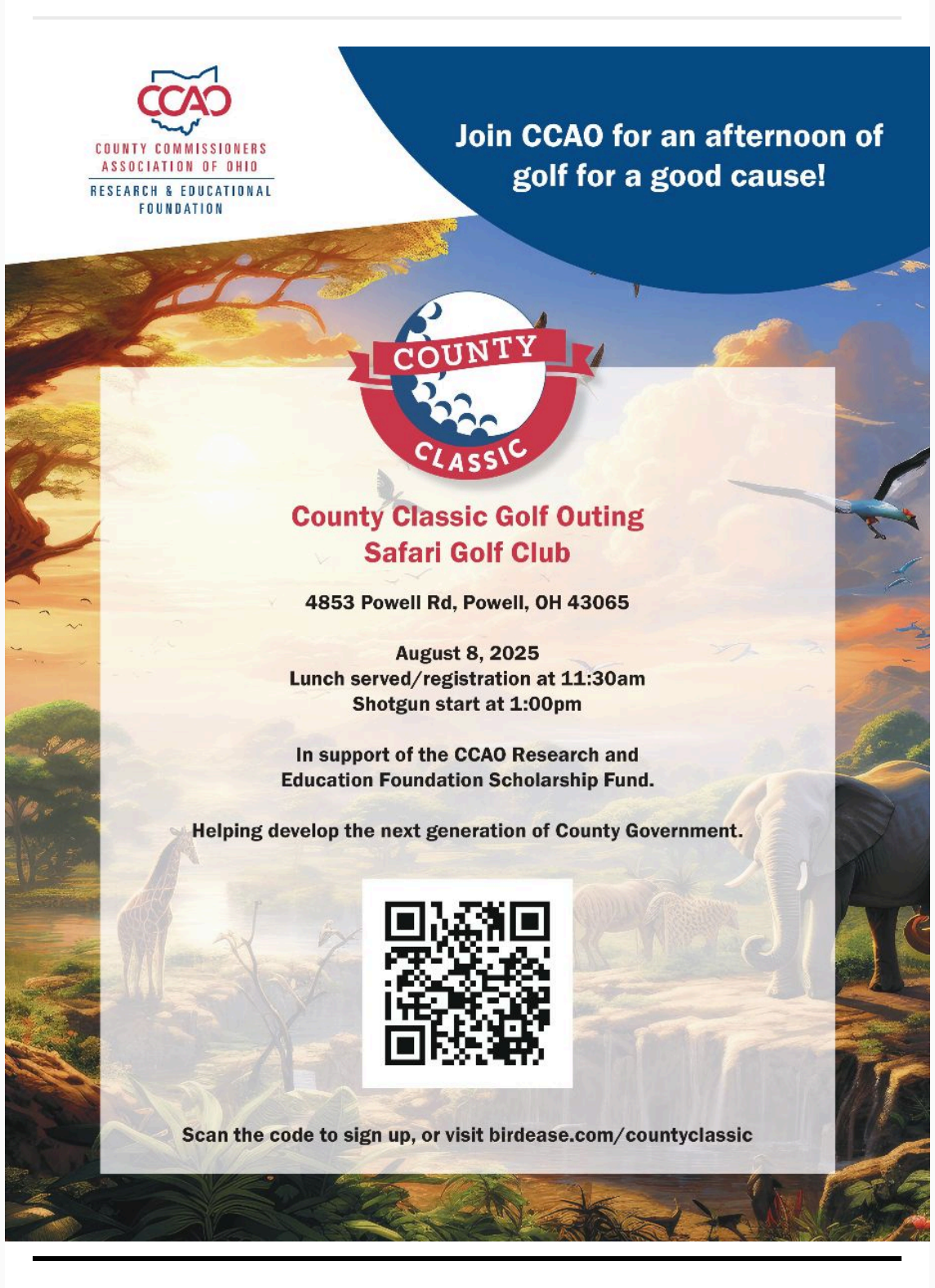
CCAO Summer Symposium 2025 Registration and Reservations are now open! Click here to get started on your registration today!

Tentative Agenda Timeline:

1. Sunday Afternoon - Registration will open at 1:00 p.m. in the lobby at Hocking Hills Lodge and Conference Center. There will be at least one session that will start at approximately 3:00 p.m. (tentative time)
2. Sunday Evening - Bus will leave the lodge at 5:00 p.m. for downtown Logan tour and food. Bus will return to lodge at 8:00 p.m.
3. Monday – Join us for a full day of CCAO education and thought-provoking discussions, all complemented by our signature hospitality – including breakfast, lunch, and weather permitting, dinner on the patio. Entertainment and networking to follow.
4. Tuesday – Start the day with a hot breakfast, followed by the final symposium session(s), CCAO Board of Directors Meeting (all CCAO members are welcome to attend) and lunch will be provided either to go or to eat onsite.

Final Agenda coming soon!

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


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

4853 Powell Rd, Powell, OH 43065

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

In support of the CCAO Research and Education Foundation Scholarship Fund.

Helping develop the next generation of County Government.

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STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Opinion sought from Attorney General on county agricultural society status

The Champaign County Prosecutor recently requested an opinion from Attorney General Dave Yost on behalf of the Champaign County Sheriff to seek clarity on whether a county agricultural society is considered a political subdivision for R.C. 9.68.

This section generally provides the statutory mechanism for what are traditionally called Second Amendment rights, i.e., the right to keep and bear arms. R.C. 9.68(B) allows a person adversely affected by any manner of resolution enacted or enforced by a political subdivision that conflicts with the section to bring a civil action against the political subdivision.

The request explains that the Champaign County Agricultural Society solely owns the county fairgrounds and the Champaign County Board of Commissioners has never owned it. The opinion request cites various sections of the Revised Code and different judicial decisions that classify county agricultural societies as private entities, as well as others that classify them as political subdivisions.

Since political subdivisions and private entities have different civil liabilities when restricting firearm possession, the prosecutor and sheriff are seeking clarity on what the sheriff's office's duties are when providing security at the county fair.

CCAO will include information in a future *Counties Current* issue when an opinion is issued.

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.

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.

Federal Rural Development Office offering grants

US Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development has released a list of available funding opportunities to enhance life in rural America. While not every opportunity below is available to counties, they all may be useful to your communities.

Funding Opportunities for Infrastructure

Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development provides funding to develop or improve essential public services and facilities in rural areas. Projects include fire and rescue stations, town halls, health care clinics, hospitals, childcare centers, assisted living facilities, rehabilitation centers, public buildings, schools, libraries, and many other community-based initiatives. **Application deadline: Open**

Rural Housing Site Loans
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development offers specific loans to eligible entities to purchase and develop housing sites for low- and moderate-income income families. **Application Deadline: Open**

Single Family Housing Repair Loans & Grants
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to very-low-income homeowners to repair, improve, or remove health and safety hazards to their homes. **Application deadline: Open**

Telecommunications Infrastructure Loans & Loan Guarantees
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development provides financing to eligible service providers that will construct, improve, or expand telecommunication and broadband networks in rural areas. **Application deadline: Open**

Water & Waste Disposal Loan Guarantees
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development helps private lenders provide affordable financing to qualified borrowers to improve access to clean, reliable water and waste disposal systems in rural areas. **Application Deadline: Open**

Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program
U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
U.S. DOT Federal Transit Administration makes federal resources available to recipients to replace, rehabilitate and purchase buses and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities, including technological changes or innovations to modify low or no emission vehicles or facilities. Except for projects proposed by Indian tribes, all projects in rural areas must be submitted by a State. **Application deadline: 7/14/2025**

Funding Opportunities Supporting Community and Economic Development

Business and Industry Loan Guarantees (B&I)
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development offers loan guarantees to lenders to provide loans to rural businesses. Qualified lenders may be located anywhere. **Application deadline: Open**

Mutual Self-Help Housing Technical Assistance Grants
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development provides grants to organizations to help them carry out local self-help housing construction projects. Recipients supervise groups of very-low- and low-income individuals and families as they construct their own homes in rural areas. **Application deadline: Open**

Timber Production Expansion Guaranteed Loan Program (TPEP)
U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDA Rural Development assists qualified lenders in providing loan guarantees to eligible applicants who want to establish, reopen, expand, or improve a sawmill or other wood processing facility. **Application deadline: Open until funds are depleted**

Coastal Program
U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)
The U.S. DOI Fish and Wildlife Service offers this community-based program which provides technical and financial support to address conservation challenges of priority coastal ecosystems through cooperative agreements. The goal is to restore and protect fish and wildlife habitats on both public and private lands. **Application deadline: 9/30/2025**

Targeted Technical Assistance for Rural Hospitals Program
A federally funded initiative that offers comprehensive technical assistance to rural hospitals to address financial and operational challenges and maintain essential health services for their communities. **Application Deadline: 9/30/2025**

Final week of State Plan on Aging Community Listening Session

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:

- 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

Fair board decides against helicopter rides
Sidney Daily News, June 19, 2025
The Shelby County Fair Board discussed grant monies, helicopter rides and adding an AED unit to the Clopay Building among other topics at a meeting Wednesday.

The board discussed whether to have the helicopter rides return to the fair this year. Last year, the fair board earned $325 from the helicopter ride company. The board decided not to include the helicopter rides at the 2025 fair.

The board had a state grant for $156,000 that they used for the waterline project. Now that the waterline project is complete, there is approximately $37,000 left in the grant. A motion passed to use the remaining funds for projects such as the Clopay Building doors, the garage door for the kitchen in the Clopay Building, the electrical for the infield poles and the Emerson gate, as well as other projects that come up between now and the fair.

Shelby County Maintenance Supervisor Chris Roediger said they ran into a problem while cutting the larger door size for the Clopay Building kitchen door. There was an unexpected concrete threshold, and the additional cost to cut it was not included in the quote.

Motions also passed to add barriers to the midway to prevent vehicular traffic from driving into the midway and adding keycode locks to the scale building and the hog barn to facilitate easier access. Currently, when someone needs access to these buildings, they have to ask Roediger. The same is true for the secretary's office, but it was decided not to add a keycode lock to that building.

Northeast District

Commissioners hold hearing on future site of a consolidated county court
Star Beacon, June 18, 2025
A variety of interested parties had their chance to present their thoughts on the location of a consolidated court during a public hearing on Tuesday.

The bringing together of Eastern and Western County courts will officially occur Jan. 1, 2031, but the Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners hopes to bring the two courts into the same facility before the merger date.

The state legislature approved the consolidation last year, but county commissioners held the hearing to review possible places to house the court.

Presently Eastern County Court is housed in Jefferson in the county courthouse and Western County Court is in Geneva. The city of Geneva has a lease with the county until fall of 2026.

Ashtabula County Commissioner Casey Kozlowski started the hearing with a history of the court consolidation and the next steps int he process.

"We are soliciting comments until June 23," he said. "We will render a decision on June 24."

A variety of ideas were discussed at the hearing, including the moving of the Ashtabula County Law Library, which is already underway, and thoughts on a full-time county probate judge.

William Bobulsky, an attorney in Ashtabula County for the last 50 years, urged the commissioners to reconsider the move of the library because it is essential for it to be in the courthouse not down the street.

He described the law library, located across from Eastern County Court, as a staging area for a lot of legal action with lawyers meeting with their clients in the building and able to access important legal updates on site.

Central District

New grant program targets Knox County families & children affected by opioids
Knox Pages, June 18, 2025
Three years after receiving the first distribution from the OneOhio opioid settlement, Knox County is ready to disburse the money into the community.

The current balance in the county OneOhio fund is $361,677.

On Tuesday, Kay Spergel, executive director of the Mental Health & Recovery Board for Licking and Knox Counties, outlined a mini-grant program to support local projects that aid those affected by the opioid crisis.

Spergel serves on the OneOhio county committee and the OneOhio Region 18 board.

"Keeping within what the spirit of Ohio dollars are, they are not intended to offset the cost of an organization's operational costs or to pay for their administrative overhead," Spergel said.

"They are intended to develop direct services and supports for those individuals that are the most deeply impacted by the opioid crisis.

"And certainly with children and families, there has been a tremendous impact."

Round 1 funding focuses on programs that support children and families. Future rounds might focus on public safety and first responders, the criminal legal system, prevention, or recovery.

Private agencies designated as 501(c)(3), public charities as defined by the Internal Revenue Service, and government agencies can apply for grants up to $25,000.

The commissioners did not cap the amount distributed in Round 1. Instead, they will evaluate the number and types of applications and programs submitted.

Southwest District

Commissioners review bids for new jail body scanner
Record Harold, June 17, 2025
The Fayette County Commissioners met Monday morning to open bids for a new body scanner for the Fayette County Jail.

Fayette County Sheriff's Office Capt. Ryan A. McFarland opened the three bids received at the commissioners' office: INEV Systems bid $186,878.16; Secure Technology Value Solutions bid $125,000; and TEK84-Wayne Horvath bid $142,900.

McFarland said he would review the bid packets in detail. "I am familiar with two of these scanner units, and they will not fit in the small space we have available," he said. He added that the specifications would be thoroughly reviewed and a decision made about a possible alternate location for a new scanner.

McFarland stated that an alternate space is available, but building modifications would be needed to house a new unit.

The new body scanner is being financed with jail commissary funds, but any building modifications would require funding from the commissioners. Commissioner Tony Anderson agreed with this assessment and asked McFarland to take his time, review the bids, take measurements of both the current and potential alternate spaces, and determine what plans would be necessary to acquire a new body scanner for the jail.

McFarland previously stated that his research into new body scanners indicated a current unit cost between $150,000 and $200,000. The jail's current unit is at least eight years old, he said, and runs on a generator that is no longer manufactured, with parts no longer available. He anticipates reporting back to the commissioners in about a week for final approval.

Southeast District

Belmont County discusses flood prevention
Times Leader, June 18, 2025
Pultney Township Trustee Frank Shaffer told the Belmont County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday that he believes the county dodged a bullet when it comes to the recent flash flooding disaster in Wheeling.

"We've dodged another bullet here, and with that being said, this has been an ongoing topic for many, many years and, in my opinion, we need to start looking now at some preventive measures with these creeks," Shaffer said. "I think we've got the means to do it. We at least need to come to a point where we need to enforce some type of laws to be able to clean up and keep debris out of the floodplains. With what I've seen, and I'm not bashing any previous people or any administration, but the state funding is tough to get after the fact and the federal funding is getting extremely harder, because I went through that in 2018 and 2019. It's getting harder and harder to get that funding after the fact, and then when I've seen some major devastation, we end up having to go through FEMA."

He restated that he isn't trying to be critical of the commissioners, but he believes something needs to be done before it is too late.

"It's been an ongoing issue, and it's a tough thing to do because we've had state reps out here and have talked to our senators about this. But we have to do something, guys, and I'm willing to put forth some effort," Shaffer said. "I don't have a lot of time, but I'd be willing to speak. I'm not the best speaker in the world, and I get that, but I'm willing to do whatever to help. But I think it's time to really start thinking about it, because it's not going to be if we get another storm. It's when we're going to get another one. It's coming."

Commissioner J.P. Dutton replied that he agrees with Shaffer.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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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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