July 7, 2025

Last week, Richland County leaders celebrated the funding for the Route 30 OARnet Broadband Extension project, which will provide middle-mile infrastructure along the entirety of U.S. Route 30 within Ohio. The project will support over 260 miles of fiber and to build a Point-of-Presence for the 179th Cyberspace Wing.

CCAO would like to express gratitude to State Representative Marilyn John for her work advocating for the project during the operating budget.

(L-R: Mansfield Mayor Jodie Perry, Richland County Commissioner Tony Vero, Representative Marilyn John, Richland Area Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Barrett Thomas, Commissioner Darrell Banks, and Commissioner Cliff Mears)

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Scioto County Commissioner Cathy Coleman passes away

CCAO was deeply saddened to learn that Scioto County Commissioner Cathy Coleman passed away on July 4 from complications of a traffic collision that occurred in May.

Cathy was a lifelong resident of West Portsmouth and started her career in management at Boone Coleman Construction, before she first entered public service as a two-term member of the Washington-Nile School District Board of Education.

Cathy became a Scioto County Commissioner after her husband, Commissioner Doug Coleman, passed away in 2016, and she was appointed to fill his seat. She subsequently won reelection three times. During her tenure in office, she was a strong advocate for children's services and infrastructure across the county.

Calling hours will be held from 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday at Roger W. Davis Funeral Home and from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on Friday, prior to the funeral service at Nauvoo Methodist Church.

You can read Cathy's obituary here.

Celebrate Ohio's citizen archivists by honoring the accomplishments of a volunteer in an Ohio archival institution

The Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board is accepting nominations for the Citizen Archivist Award through September 15. The award honors volunteers in Ohio's archives who work long hours answering reference requests, processing collections, and indexing historic records. This award recognizes a volunteer in an Ohio archive who best exemplifies the dedication and hard work volunteers—our citizen archivists—contribute to Ohio's archives each day.

All Ohio institutions responsible for archival records that provide free public access to at least a portion of their collections are eligible. Preference will be given to volunteers whose work increases access to archival collections in Ohio. OHRAB will accept nominations from Ohio archival institutions as well as the general public.

Departments employing members of OHRAB are not eligible, but other departments in their institutions are eligible.

Nominating letters should be no longer than two pages, 12-pt, single spaced, describing the accomplishments and dedication of the volunteer. Include the nominee's name along with a contact person's name, mailing and email addresses, and phone number. If the nominee's contributions include online collections, please include a link to the website.

Nominations can be sent by email to Tina Ratcliff, the County Records & Information Manager for Montgomery County, at ratclifft@mcohio.org or by post to:

Tina Ratcliff
County Records & Information Manager
Montgomery County Records Center & Archives
117 South Main Street, 6th Floor
Dayton, OH 45422

CCAO endorses Stark County Commissioner Harold for OPERS Board of Trustees

In October, members of the Ohio Public Employee Retirement System (OPERS) Board of Trustees will be hosting an election for three seats:

- County Employees - Those working at a county job.
- Miscellaneous Employees - Those working at jobs for other governmental groups, such as townships, public libraries, health districts, and conservancy districts.
- Retirees - Those who have retired, including re-employed retirees.

At CCAO's May Board of Directors meeting, **the board formally endorsed Stark County Commissioner Alan Harold for the County Employee seat**.

For a member seeking an employee seat to be on the ballot, they must obtain 500 signatures from active members of their employee group, with at least 20 signatures from 10 counties.

Completed petitions with signatures must be submitted by August 4. Voting information will be sent to qualified voters on August 26, and votes must be cast by midnight of October 3.

If you have questions concerning the OPERS Board of Trustees election, you can contact OPERS outreach staff at either 888-400-0965 or employeroutreach@opers.org.

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.
Scan the code to sign up, or visit birdease.com/countyclassic

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STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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SNAP Changes in One Big Beautiful Bill; NACo Webinar

Last week, Congress passed the One Big Beautiful Bill (HR 1). President Trump signed the bill on July 4.

A NACo summary of changes affecting counties is available here. NACo is hosting a webinar this afternoon, July 7, at 3:00 p.m. to provide an overview of the bill. Registration is available here.

The final bill includes several provisions affecting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which counties administer through local JFS agencies.

SNAP federal match reduction

- Reduces the federal match for SNAP administration from 50% to 25%.
- If no other administrative factors change, Ohio's portion of the costs will increase by $65 million per fiscal year, beginning October 1, 2026.
- 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, beginning October 1, 2026.

SNAP state benefit cost share

- For the first time in the history of the program, states will be required to contribute to the cost of SNAP benefits beginning on October 1, 2027 (Federal Fiscal Year 2028). This change occurs in the next state budget biennium.
- The required state share increases if a state has a higher error rate (see table below). The error rate is a measure of administrative error and includes both underpayments and overpayments.
- In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2028, Ohio can use either its FFY 2025 or FFY 2026 error rate to determine the payment amount. In FFY 2029 and subsequent years, Ohio will be required to use the error rate from three fiscal years prior.
- Ohio's most recent error rate was 9.01%. Under this legislation, Ohio would need to contribute $320 million per state fiscal year if the error rate does not decrease below 8%.

State SNAP Benefit Cost Share under HR 1

State Payment Error Rate	SNAP Benefit Cost Share	Estimated Ohio Cost Per FFY
Under 6%	0%	$0
6.00% to 7.99%	5%	$160 million
8.00% to 9.99%	10%	$320 million
10% or greater	15%	$480 million

CCAO continues to have discussions with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services about the implementation of the above SNAP provisions. We will provide updates to CCAO members as additional information becomes available.

If you have questions about the SNAP provisions, please contact Rachel Reedy at rreedy@ccao.org. If you have questions about other provisions of the One Big Beautiful Bill, please contact policy@ccao.org.

Audit of State issues audit, LGS cost bulletin

The Auditor of State recently issued Bulletin 2025-006, "State Fiscal Year 2026 Hourly Billing Rates and Allocation of Audit Costs." As the name suggests, the bulletin is intended to provide local governments information regarding audit costs for SFY 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026).

The bulletin begins with a note that it may need to be revised based on the final appropriation levels provided to the Auditor of State in the biennial budget. CCAO will provide members information about any revisions that may be issued.

The Auditor will bill local governments $42/hour for services from the Audit Division.

In addition to the audit costs, the Auditor of State offers other financial reporting complication, consulting, and advisory services to local governments through the department's Local Government Services (LGS) division. The costs for these services is based on a tiered rate based on the government's total combined revenues.

For counties, the LGS tiered rates are as follows:

- Tier I, Combined Revenue of more than $132 million: $90/hour
- Tier II, Combine Revenue of between $60 million and $132 million: $80/hour
- Tier III, Combine Revenue of less than $66 million: $64/hour

The bulletin also provides guidance on how local governments can allocate costs of audits and LGS options.

Coalition releases behavioral health workforce toolkits

Through a grant from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, the Mental Health & Addiction Advocacy Coalition (MHAC) is launching two resources intended to bolster the state's behavioral health workforce.

The first is BHEACON, an interactive career pathways tool that will serve as a centralized resource for individuals interested in behavioral health careers. It will include details about educational/licensing requirements.

The second is the Regional Behavioral Health Workforce Coalition toolkit (RBHWC). The toolkit is intended to help regions across the state create and maintain workforce coalitions and to provide best practices and resources for cross-sector partnerships to address local workforce shortages in the behavioral health field.

You can learn more about these initiatives and access them at MHAC's website.

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.

ODOT offering virtual course on enhancing pedestrian, cycling infrastructure in communities

The Ohio Department of Transportation's Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) is hosting a four-part virtual course on walk-ability and bike-ability in communities.

The course will provide information on how to design, operate, and maintain successful pedestrian and bicycle facilities to encourage accessibility and innovation.

The course is taught by Professor Ronald Eck of West Virginia University. Eck is the director of West Virginia's LTAP program and has more than 40 years of traffic engineering experience.

There is no fee for the course, but each 90 minute session must be registered for individually

- Part 1 of 4: July 15th – 10:00am to 11:30am ET
  - Registration
- Part 2 of 4: July 17th – 10:00am to 11:30am ET
  - Registration
- Part 3 of 4: July 22nd – 10:00am to 11:30am ET
  - Registration
- Part 4 of 4: July 24th – 10:00am to 11:30am ET
  - Registration

Continuing professional development credits are available through the course.

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**

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**

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

Wood Haven staff, residents, families ask county commissioners to not close or sell nursing home
BG Independent News, July 1, 2025
The Wood County Commissioners were asked Tuesday to keep a 50-year-old promise to provide a safe place for the county's elders who don't have trust funds or big bank accounts.

After hearing in April that the commissioners were looking at the options of closing or selling off Wood Haven Health Care, the commissioners' hearing room on Tuesday was filled with the nursing home supporters.

Surrounded by more than 30 staff, residents and their families, Wood Haven Administrator Jeff Orlowski laid it out for the county commissioners.

Wood Haven does not turn away seniors on Medicaid. While three other facilities in the county accept Medicaid patients, some have a low cap to limit the number of residents who aren't self pay. And some facilities ask self-paying residents to leave once their funds are gone.

"We are a county-owned, community-based safety net. A public commitment. A promise. And unlike for-profit facilities, we don't turn residents away, or force them out when they can no longer afford to pay privately and must rely on Medicaid," Orlowski said.

While there are other options for senior living in the county, they are profit-based.

"Wood Haven is different. We are locally owned. We are nonprofit and community-based. We exist to serve people," he said.

But the fluctuating census at Wood Haven has been a point of contention, with the facility not always meeting the goal of being self-sufficient.

Currently, with a healthy 77% census of its certified 93 beds, and a lower turnover rate for the 131 employees, Wood Haven is doing the best it can with its outdated facility at the corner of Dunbridge and East Gypsy Lane roads, Orlowski said to the commissioners.

Northeast District

New 30-year lease approved between Medina County commissioners, Medina County Career Center
Medina Gazette, July 3, 2025
With the approval of a new lease agreement on Tuesday, Medina County is one step closer to transforming the former University of Akron's Medina County University Center into additional space for the Medina County Career Center.

The Medina County commissioners approved a new 30-year lease agreement for the 6300 Technology Lane property with the Medina County Career Center, superseding the previously approved sublease.

In early April, the Medina County commissioners approved a sublease agreement with the career center for the Medina County University Center.

The career center paid $100,000 as part of the one-year sublease agreement. According to the passed resolution, the sublease would automatically terminate upon the transfer of the title from the University of Akron to the Medina County commissioners.

Tuesday's passed resolution stated that the new lease agreement includes the payment of $2,550,000 from the Career Center to the Medina County commissioners, which will facilitate the county's purchase of the property.

The new lease agreement will now replace the sublease agreement, the resolution stated.

The career center is responsible for paying for electricity, water, gas, telephone and all other utility services used on the property, according to the agreement.

The career center is authorized to construct improvements or repairs valued at up to $100,000. For any construction, improvements or repairs that cost more than $100,000, they must receive written approval of the Medina County commissioners.

Following the Medina County commissioners' unanimous approval, Medina County Commissioner Colleen Swedyk thanked Career Center Superintendent Steve Chrisman for his leadership on the project.

Central District

Commissioners celebrate $20 million broadband project coming to US 30
Mansfield News Journal, July 1, 2025
Dorey Diab compares an internet connection to basic utilities like electricity.

"We cannot live without it," he said Tuesday at a meeting of the Richland County Commissioners.

Diab, president and CEO of North Central Technical College, and Ohio state Rep. Marilyn John (R-Shelby) were on hand for a press conference announcing funding for an open access "middle mile" broadband internet network running from Lima to Canton along U.S. 30.

As part of the recently passed state budget, the funding will be divided into two parts. A total of $20 million will be allocated the next two years.

"It's not very often that we get $20 million coming into the community to enhance economic development," Diab said.

John added, "You brought a really great project that I was able to work on, and my job was just to make connections."

She said she and local officials talked to House Speaker Matt Huffman when he was president of the Senate.

The need for the project was evident.

"Everybody was so surprised when we showed them the map of broadband and how empty North Central Ohio was of broadband connections," John said. "We talked about how this could be a model of how to expand broadband around the state of Ohio.

Southwest District

MC Commissioners sign security grant agreement
Miami Valley Today, June 23, 2025
The Miami County Commissioners learned during their Tuesday, June 17 meeting that Miami County is one of only three counties in Ohio chosen for the Security Directive Ohio Pilot Program through the Ohio Secretary of State's (SOS) office.

At the meeting, Miami County Board of Elections Director Laura Bruns informed the commissioners that the county will be awarded a $10,000 grant as part of the program, which she said will be used to bolster security. She added that she believes Miami County was chosen because of the county's very good information technology (IT) department.

The commissioners authorized and signed the Elections Security Grant Agreement under the direction of the SOS as requested by the Miami County Board of Elections. The SOS previously issued directives 2024-10; 2023-16; 2022-12 and 2019-08 to bolster the security and infrastructure of all county boards of elections. Directive 2025-29 will build on that foundation and maintain the requirements in past security directives. The $10,000 grant is to be used solely for the purposes in Directive 2025-29 and the Technical Document supplied to the commissioners.

All Ohio BOEs must comply with the new Security Directive 2025-29 and the Directive 2025-29 Technical Document by Aug 29, 2025.

The commissioners authorized the following resolutions:

• A submission of the FY 2025 Cyber Security Grant at the request of the Miami County Auditor and IT Department. The grant is administered through the County Risk Sharing Authority (CORSA) in Columbus and will be used for reimbursement of funds to implement a multi-factor/2-factor authentication process. CORSA is offering the grant to provide up to $5,500 for a project, program or acquisition designed to mitigate or eliminate cyber/computer property/casualty risk including but not limited to firewall upgrade, dual factor authentication, hardware upgrade, email upgrade, GPS vehicle monitoring, positive pay and/or select IT certifications for in-house IT personnel.

Southeast District

Crime drop impacts Southeastern Ohio Regional Jail counties
WOUB Public Media, July 1, 2025
Just over a year ago, the Southeastern Ohio Regional Jail was so full that people arrested by police were literally turned away at the door due to lack of bed space.
Today, that couldn't be more different.

SEORJ takes in inmates from Athens, Hocking, Perry, Morgan and Vinton Counties and has over 240 beds available to house them. But according to Athens County Sheriff Rodney Smith, there aren't nearly that many inmates anymore.

"Five years ago, we would literally have to call in to make sure there was jail space," said Smith. "Now that's not the case. There's plenty of room at the regional jail."

The key reason for these empty jail cells? Much lower crime rates.

According to data from the FBI, there were 1,623 crimes committed in 2015 among the five counties – the highest since the FBI began tracking this data in 1986.

As of 2023, that number is down to 863, a drop of 46.8%.

"I came into office in 2014, and we immediately hit the ground running, really trying to focus on crimes and drugs and the effects they have in the communities," said Smith. "For the last 10 years, it's worked, and it's reduced the amount of crimes and taken a burden off the jail space."

But over in Vinton County, Sheriff Ryan Cain says that there are fewer inmates is because of a statewide effort to relieve overcrowded prisons.

"The legal system has adapted to having five years of a full jail and being told you can't lock people up," said Cain. "The state of Ohio does not want to build another prison because they're full."

Ohio created diversion programs like the Targeted Community Alternatives to Prison, or T-CAP, program to keep non-violent offenders out of state prisons to focus on their rehabilitation in order to reduce prison population while also saving local governments money.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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JULY 25
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

AUGUST 8
2025 County Classic Golf Outing

AUGUST 15
CORSA Board of Directors Meeting

AUGUST 24 - 26
2025 CCAO Summer Symposium
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting (August 26)

AUGUST 29
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

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