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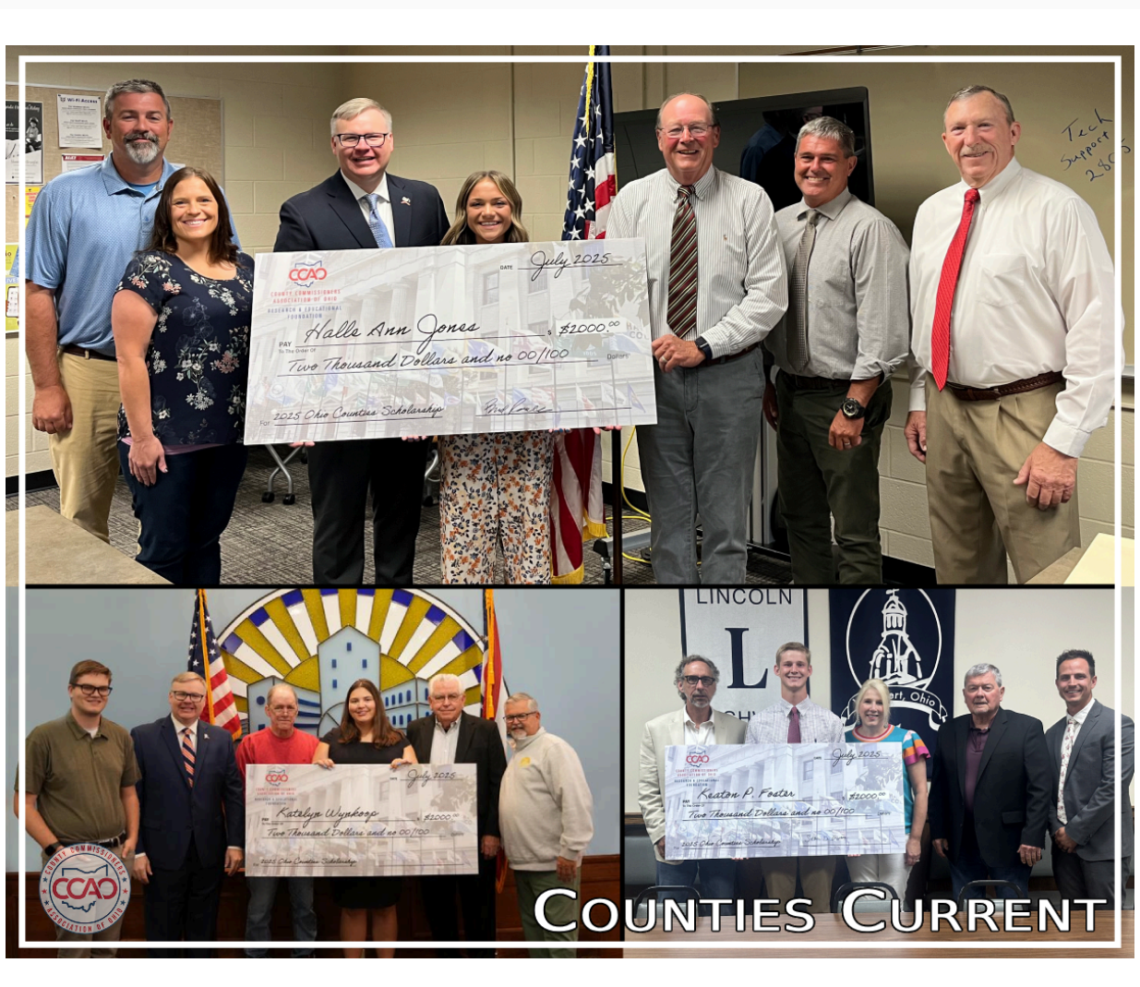
Halle Ann Jones
$2000.00
Two Thousand Dollars and no 00/100
2025 Ohio Counties Scholarship
LINCOLN
CCAO
COUNTIES CURRENT

July 28, 2025

The CCAO Research and Education Foundation has presented the awards to three of the five scholarship program recipients!

Congratulations to Halle Ann Jones of Highland County (top), Katelyn Wynkoop of Fairfield County (left), and Keaton Foster of Van Wert County (right)!

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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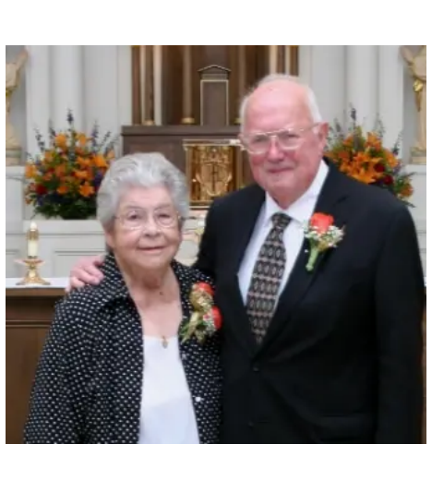
Former CCAO President, Licking County Commissioner Don Hill and former Medina County Commissioner Sara Pavlovicz pass away



Last week, former Licking County Commissioner Don Hill passed away at the age of 91.

Don's career in public service began with his election as Newark's City Treasurer in 1962 and in 1968, he was elected to serve as a Licking County Commissioner, a position he held for seven consecutive terms. Don was especially proud of his role in establishing the Licking County Port Authority and believed in promoting public-private partnerships to promote economic development.

Over the course of his long career Don undertook numerous leadership roles at the local and state level. He was a past president and member of CCAO and served on the Governor's Jail Advisory Council. A consistent advocate for workforce development, Don helped to initiate the CORC Job Training Program, which provided employment opportunities for over 70,000 high school dropouts.

You can view Don's full obituary here.

Earlier this month, former Medina County Commissioner Sara Pavlovicz passed away at the age 76.

Sara was a stay-at-home mother raising her four children, after which she served as a Montville Township Trustee and later as a Medina County Commissioner from 1995-1998.

Sara had an eye for all things that glitter and wore her sparkly clothing and accessories with unmatched style, but even they couldn't outshine her magnetic personality.

You can view Sara's full obituary here.

OCERP welcomes Baldridge as Membership Services Coordinator

OCERP is excited to announce that Lori Baldridge recently joined the team as Membership Services Coordinator. In her role, Lori will serve as a key liaison for county officials and staff, increase engagement, and work directly with county human resource offices to educate on important features of the plan.

Lori brings a wealth of experience in public service and deep knowledge of Ohio's counties to her new role. Most recently, she served as Deputy Elections Director for the Ohio Secretary of State and as a support and compliance administrator with the Ohio Department of Administrative Services/Ohio 9-1-1 program office, where she supported county and local government operations across the state. Prior to her state service, Lori dedicated nearly three decades as an educator in Southern Ohio.

For more information about OCERP, visit OCERP457.com.

Welcome, Lori!

Expanded sales tax holiday slated for August 1 - 14

The Ohio will offer its second expanded sales tax holiday from August 1 – August 14, 2025. While Ohio has long had a sales tax holiday in August focused around clothing and school items, House Bill 33, the prior state operating budget, created an expanded version that exempts most products under $500 and lasts at least three days.

In 2023, HB 33 created a new fund, the Expanded Sales Tax Holiday Fund, by depositing $750 million into the fund with the purpose of greatly increasing the scope of the traditional sales tax holiday. HB 33 also intended to replace income tax reductions with a sales tax holiday as the way to spend budget surpluses. The first expanded holiday would take place in 2024.

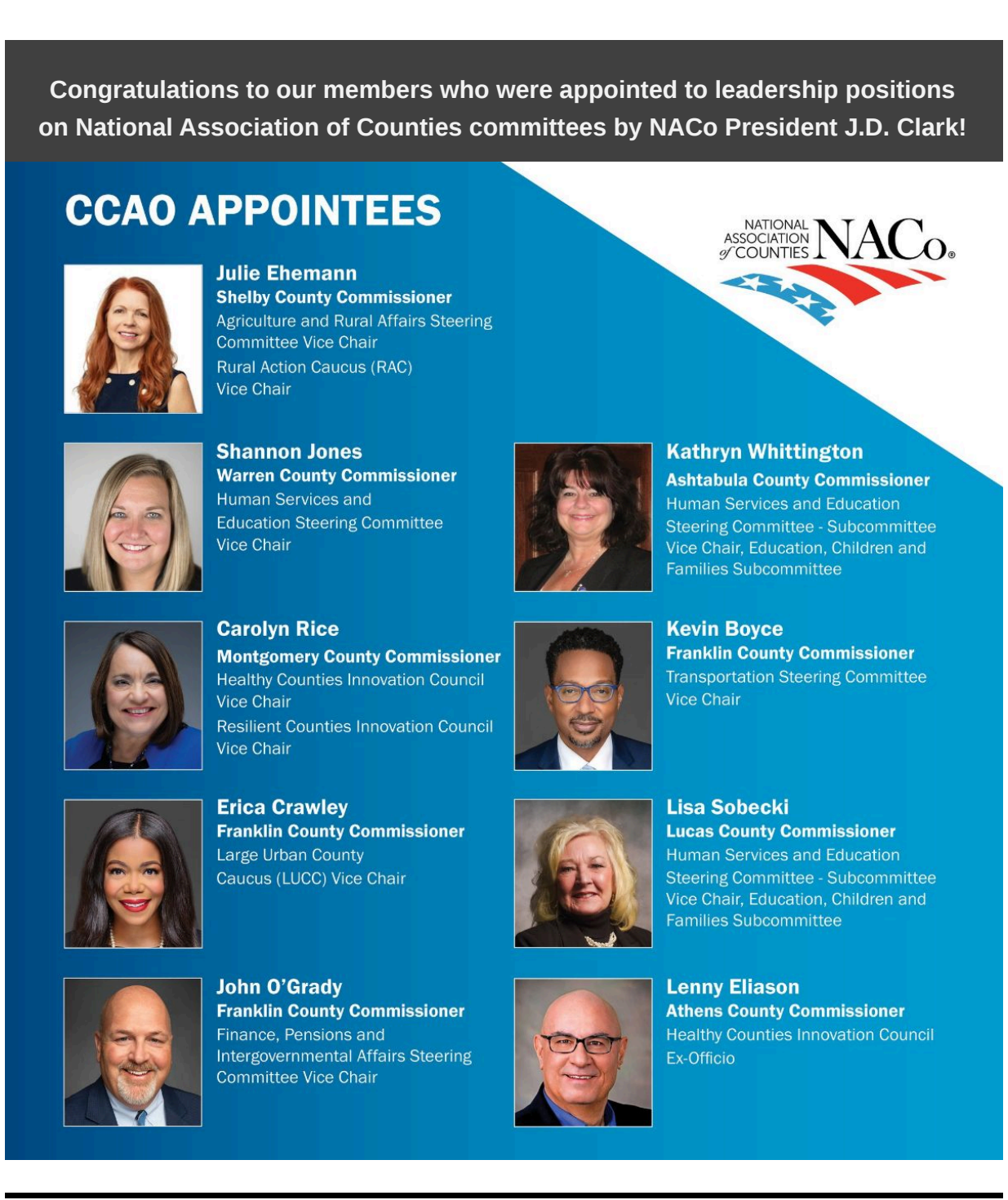
In 2024, the expanded holiday lasted nine days and was not as utilized as expected. The Department of Taxation estimated that the nine-day holiday would use most of the $750 million, but only about $125 million roughly was needed to cover the foregone revenue. The remaining $625 million balance in the fund enabled the Department to schedule the 2025 holiday over a longer period that includes two weekends.

Generally, products that cost below $500, including clothing, electronics, furniture, sporting goods, and dine-in food are exempt during the holiday.

Sales tax will still be charged on certain items, including motor vehicles, watercraft, alcohol, tobacco and vaping products and marijuana products.

Unlike the traditional "back to school" sales tax holiday, counties and transit authorities are reimbursed for lost sales tax revenue during this period. Similar to the process for last year, in September the state will receive sales tax revenue from August, then in November it will make payments to counties and transit authorities based on the foregone revenue. As long as the Expanded Sales Tax Holiday Fund contains at least $60 million, the state is required to hold an expanded holiday for that year. Once the fund drops below $60 million, the sales tax holiday will revert to the traditional school-only holiday weekend.

Members with questions should contact CCAO Policy Team Member Dan Baker at dbaker@ccao.org with any questions related to the upcoming sales tax holiday.



Congratulations to our members who were appointed to leadership positions on National Association of Counties committees by NACo President J.D. Clark!

CCAO APPOINTEES

Julie Ehemann
Shelby County Commissioner
Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee Vice Chair
Rural Action Caucus (RAC) Vice Chair

Shannon Jones
Warren County Commissioner
Human Services and Education Steering Committee Vice Chair

Kathryn Whittington
Ashtabula County Commissioner
Human Services and Education Steering Committee - Subcommittee Vice Chair, Education, Children and Families Subcommittee

Carolyn Rice
Montgomery County Commissioner
Healthy Counties Innovation Council Vice Chair
Resilient Counties Innovation Council Vice Chair

Kevin Boyce
Franklin County Commissioner
Transportation Steering Committee Vice Chair

Erica Crawley
Franklin County Commissioner
Large Urban County Caucus (LUCC) Vice Chair

Lisa Sobecki
Lucas County Commissioner
Human Services and Education Steering Committee - Subcommittee Vice Chair, Education, Children and Families Subcommittee

John O'Grady
Franklin County Commissioner
Finance, Pensions and Intergovernmental Affairs Steering Committee Vice Chair

Lenny Eliason
Athens County Commissioner
Healthy Counties Innovation Council Ex-Officio

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

Anthem

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Additional All Ohio Future Fund sites announced

On July 21, Governor DeWine and Lt. Governor Tressel announced four new All Ohio Future Fund sites to attract future economic development. More than $255 million in funding will be used to improve infrastructure at the four sites located in Coshocton, Lorain, Montgomery and Muskingum counties. The four projects are:

Dayton International Airport – The airport will receive $78,750,000 for construction of a new apron and rehabilitation of the existing one to expand the capacity for hangars.

Lorain County Commissioners – The commissioners will receive $67,412,580 for improvements to the Lorain Mega Site, including expanded water capacity, improved wastewater service and engineering and support for a new wastewater treatment plant.

Coshocton County Port Authority – The port authority will receive $58,752,504 for improvements to the Conesville Industrial Park project including for roadwork, and utility, water and wastewater upgrades.

Zanesville-Muskingum Port Authority – The port authority will receive $20,701,384 to provide water and sanitary access to 600 acres, including new water treatment and wastewater treatment plants.

The All Ohio Future Fund was created in House Bill 33, the prior biennial operating budget, to prepare sites for economic development, attract new businesses or workforce to Ohio, or expand business, workforce and communities across Ohio.

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.

History Fund grant program open for applications through September 9

The Ohio History Connection History Fund is a competitive matching grant program dedicated to supporting history projects across Ohio. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations and public entities such as counties, libraries, and educational institutions.

Grants fall in one of three categories:

Brick and Mortar

- Includes rehabilitation, restoration, protection, or acquisition of historical and archaeological sites.
- Grants range from $2,000 to $20,000 and require a 60/40 match (the receiving entity must provide at least 40% of the total project cost).

Organization Development

- Includes building capacity to help historical societies and similar organizations help themselves through activities such as improving governance structures, volunteer development, and strategic plans, among others.
- Grants range from $1,000 to $4,000 with an 80/20 match (the receiving entity must provide at least 20% of the total project cost).

Programs & Collections

- Includes projects that further the study of historical collections and archives through activities such as digitization, funding field work, and putting on public programs, among others.
- Grants range from $2,000 to $20,000 and require a 60/40 match (the receiving entity must provide at least 40% of the total project cost).

Applications for 2025 are due by September 9.

The Ohio History Connection's website offers numerous resources to assist in crafting applications, including checklists, guidelines, and webinars.

Lake Erie Commission Ohio Domestic Action Plan Webinar and Report

Earlier this week, the Lake Erie Commission released a webinar outlining the Ohio Domestic Action Plan. The webinar along with the slide decks are available here. Also published earlier this week was the subwatershed monitoring data for Ohio, including the stations reported on the Water Monitoring Summary and other stations where data have been collected in the state in support of nutrient reduction actions through the Ohio DAP process. This report can be viewed here.

The Ohio Domestic Action Plan will focus on the following:

- Establishing science-based priorities for agricultural best management practices and state programs to support H2Ohio efforts to encourage farmers to implement them;
- Calling out the importance of wetland restoration and outlining ODNR's efforts to restore and enhance wetlands for nutrient reduction as part of H2Ohio;
- Updated actions for communities including H2Ohio support for home sewage treatment system remediation;
- Integrating the role of watershed planning at the local level for siting projects to reduce nutrients efficiently, including a distribution of the load reduction throughout the Maumee River watershed based on the Maumee Watershed Nutrient TMDL.

If you have any questions, please contact CCAO Policy Analyst James Kennedy at jkennedy@ccao.org.

Ohio Energy Conference to be held October 20 and 21

On October 20 and 21, the Energy Coalition of Ohio will host the 2025 Ohio Energy Conference in Columbus. The conference gathers energy providers, technology innovators, and consumers looking to connect, collaborate, and stay ahead of the curve.

The registration link, conference agenda, and information about hotel accommodations can be found here. To receive a discounted rate, use code COLLABORATE2025OEC.

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

Williams commissioners discuss Kunkle post office with Husted rep

Crescent News, July 23, 2025

Williams County commissioners discussed a U.S. Post Office issue in Kunkle with a representative of Ohio Sen. Jon Husted's office during a recent meeting.

Ashley Aston, working from an office in Toledo, introduced herself as Husted's northwest Ohio regional representative. She and District Director Lori Brody are responsible for 24 counties, according to Aston.

In that capacity, Aston fielded a question from Commissioner Bart Westfall about the closure of the U.S. Post Office in Kunkle, located in Madison Township in northeast Williams County. Residents have to go to Pioneer to pick up mail.

Westfall suggested a location in Kunkle so "if nothing else, we get the Postal Service to drop a cluster, cluster box" so residents can "at least go to the corner and get their mail rather than drive to Pioneer," commissioners' meeting minutes noted.

Acton promised to connect commissioners with a staff member in Washington, D.C.

Commissioners also discussed the possibility of federal grant money for the county airport. The county would like grant funds to help replace the airport's fuel system.

Northeast District

Northeast Ohio's largest 'mega site' poised to attract new industry

News 5, July 22, 2025

A rural area of central Lorain County is bracing for what some leaders have called "generational change." A state grant will help prime Northeast Ohio's largest mega site for development.

Frank Poore remembers when farmland sprawled across the area now home to the Lorain County Airport and residential properties.

"It's changed a lot over the years," said Poore, 83.

With the transformation of other nearby communities, he told News 5 he wasn't surprised to hear of more changes near his New Russia Township home.

"Look at the cities like Avon and North Ridgeville, how they've grown. They can only move this way," he said.

More than 1,000 acres north and west of the airport are poised for new infrastructure to support potential industry and housing. The shovel-ready tract of land is known as a mega site.

"Not only is it going to alleviate the housing pressures that we receive, but the employment boom is going to be immense," said Lorain County Commissioner Dave Moore.

This week, the state announced it was awarding the Board of Commissioners $67.4 million from the All Ohio Future Fund (AOFF). Governor Mike DeWine created the All Ohio Future Fund to help attract future economic development projects by preparing large sites with necessary infrastructure.

The funding, along with a local and private investment, will expand water capacity, improve wastewater service and fund a new wastewater treatment plant.

"You can have a lot of farmland and it's really good hunting land. But unless you can flush a toilet, it's really just hunting land," Moore said.

Central District

Federal budget cuts hit Knox County's workforce program

Knox Pages, July 20, 2025

Changes are coming to Knox County's workforce as a result of federal budget cuts and a Trump administration Executive Order.

"The public workforce system is about to change, and it's about to change radically. We don't know what that's going to look like," Brandy Booth, workforce administrator at OhioMeansJobs Knox County, told the commissioners on Thursday.

The executive order President Donald Trump issued on April 23 requires the Secretary of Commerce, Secretary of Education, and Secretary of Labor to review all federal workforce development programs.

They must submit a report within 90 days detailing strategies to help the American worker.

"Next week they have to give their recommendations to President Trump on what they think needs to happen with the public workforce system, so we're just waiting to see what's going to happen," Booth said.

However, the executive order is not what caused Booth to panic.

"We are facing some significant funding cuts for this next program year," she said. "It has nothing to do with that executive order. It has nothing to do with any cuts that DOGE [Department of Government Efficiency] made."

The federal government seriously reduced the department's budget:

- 69% cut in adult funding
- 13% cut in dislocated worker funding
- 52% cut in youth funding

"To put that in perspective, we were expecting $100,000 in adult funding, and we're getting $34,000. We were expecting $160,000 in youth funding, and we're getting $77,000," Booth said.

Southwest District

Commissioners, CCAO present scholarship to HHS graduate Halle Jones

The Highland County Press, July 20, 2025

Highland County commissioners Brad Roades, Terry Britton and David Daniels honored the County Commissioners Association of Ohio's Southwest District recipient of the 2025 Ohio Counties Scholarship during their Wednesday, July 16 meeting.

Along with county commissioners, CCAO Managing Director of Enterprise and Retirement Services Steve Caraway presented the check to Halle Jones, a 2025 Hillsboro High School graduate. Jones, who will be attending Wilmington College starting this fall, has been employed by the county for over a year in the records department. Her supervisor, records manager Julie Wallingford, also attended the presentation.

"It is a scholarship that is heavily based upon the essay, community service and what they desire to do after college or technical school or vocational school or training," Caraway told commissioners. "We're very pleased to say that Miss Jones, whom you know very, very well, is the recipient of this district's 2025 Ohio Counties Scholarship, and her application, of course, was phenomenal."

According to Caraway, the CCAO "received over 125 applications from every corner of Ohio," which were reviewed by commissioners who volunteer to serve on panels. Although he said it was "rare" for commissioners to reach consensus easily, they did in Jones' case.

"We're very, very proud of you," Caraway told Jones. "The panel was extremely impressed by your application, and I will tell you that all three review the applications independently, and then we have a virtual meeting to go over those top three. It just so happens that you were the top one on all three commissioners."

The $2,000 scholarship is for students who "plan on a career in public service in Ohio," the CCAO website says. Caraway read an excerpt from Jones' essay, which said: "Our local and state governments are committed to maintaining integrity and supporting economic development and community initiatives. They serve as the backbone of public administration, offering programs and infrastructure that directly impact the citizens' wellbeing.

"I am proud to have grown up in a county that feels like family, and as a community, we support each other. I'm thankful for all of our public service employees, and I hope to make my community a better place and to one day lead improving the lives of my fellow citizens and the surrounding community."

Commissioners congratulated Jones, who said she was headed back to work after the presentation at SSCC.

Southeast District

Harrison County anticipates budget relief despite initial costs of new jail operations

WTOV, July 23, 2025

Despite a ribbon-cutting ceremony in June, the new Harrison County Jail has yet to house any inmates.

The facility, unveiled earlier this year to a large crowd including Governor Mike DeWine, is still in the process of hiring and training staff with the necessary technology before it becomes fully operational later this year.

"We had a ribbon cutting back on June third," said Harrison County Commissioner Dustin Corder. "We knew we weren't quite ready yet to start bringing in prisoners. A lot of stuff that we have to figure out—the meal plans, who is going to be the provider for the meal plans, the health for the prisoners—that's important too. So we had to figure that out, get those contracts in place, and that takes time. We have to bid that stuff out."

The transition to a larger, more expensive facility is a significant adjustment for the county government.

"Budget, that's something that has hit us pretty hard and going to hit us pretty hard once the jail opens. The additional staff the jail this size requires quite a few more corrections officers than what we've had in the past," Corder said.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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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

SEPTEMBER 1
Labor Day - Legal Holiday

SEPTEMBER 12
CORSA Annual Meeting

SEPTEMBER 19
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

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