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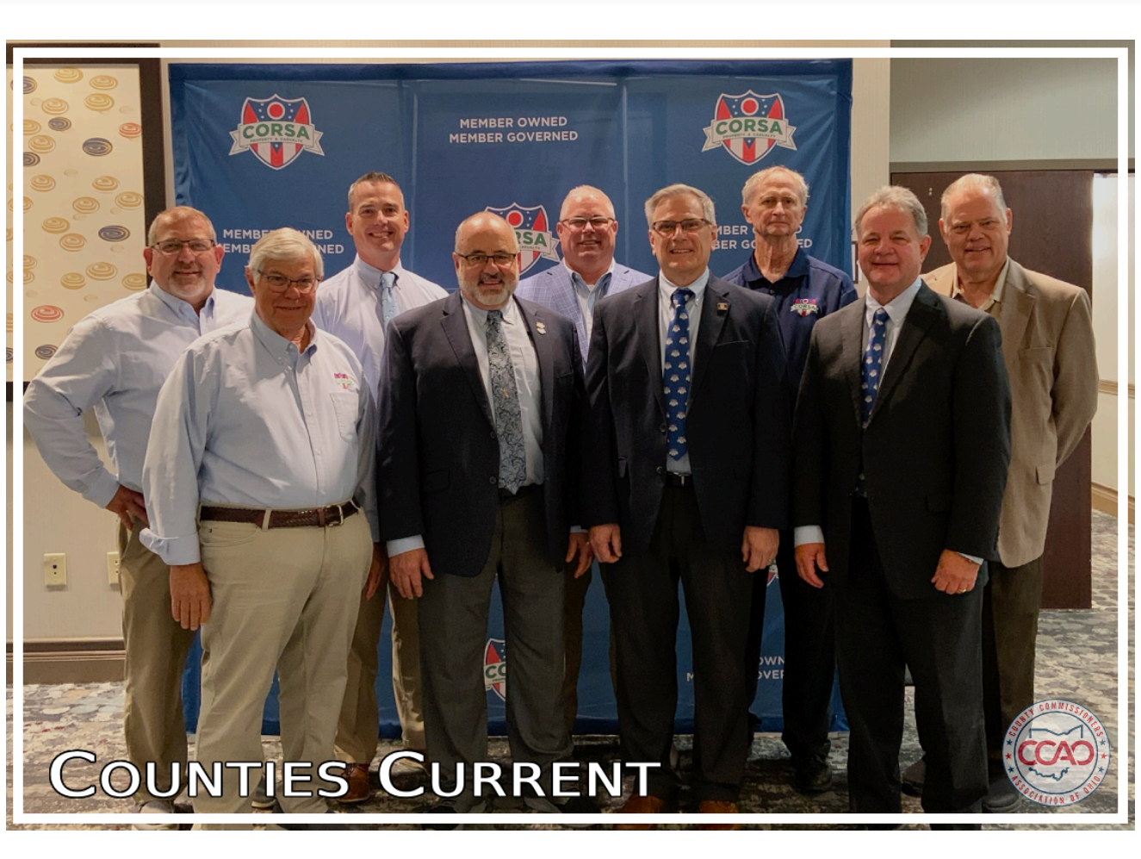

September 15, 2025

Last week, CORSA held its 2025 Annual Meeting. During the meeting, board members Commissioner Cory Noonan (Allen County), Commissioner Jim Justice (Ashland County), and Commissioner Gary Scherer (Pickaway County) were each re-elected to continue to serve on the board.

Congratulations, commissioners!

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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OCCO endorses Stark County Commissioner Alan Harold for OPERS Board

The Ohio Council of County Officials (OCCO) unanimously endorsed Stark County Commissioner Alan Harold for the County Employees seat on the Ohio Public Employee Retirement System (OPERS) Board of Directors. OCCO is an organization representing the collective interests of county elected official row officer associations.

You can read the endorsement letter here.

Ballots have been sent to county employees and retirees in the system and must be submitted by October 3.

Microsoft to cease support for Windows 10 in mid October

Microsoft has announced that Windows 10 will reach end of life on October 14, 2025, meaning the operating system will no longer receive security patches, updates, or technical support. For counties, this creates a significant cybersecurity risk, as unsupported systems become prime targets for ransomware and other attacks. To protect critical services and taxpayer money, counties must act now to prepare for the transition.

Key Steps Counties Must Take for Windows 10 End of Life

1. **Inventory & Assess Systems** – Identify all county devices still running Windows 10 and determine which are compatible with Windows 11. Eligible devices can upgrade at no additional cost.
2. **Strengthen Interim Security** – Until the deadline, keep Windows 10 fully patched, enforce encryption, and limit network access for legacy systems.
3. **Review Policies & Train Staff** – Update IT and cybersecurity policies to reflect the deadline, and train employees on the risks of operating unsupported systems.

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STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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OneOhio Recovery Foundation announces second regional grant cycle timeline

Last week, the OneOhio Recovery Foundation announced the process and timeline for the Foundation's second regional grant cycle. Information about the grant cycle can be found on the Foundation's website. At a previous board meeting, the Foundation announced $40 million would be available in funding for this cycle.

To begin preparing for the cycle, OneOhio regions will soon begin setting region funding priorities. The Foundation has two resources to aid regions in this process. The Regional Planning Guide provides step-by-step instructions, data resources, and guiding questions to help regions organize their work, engage partners, and set funding priorities. The OneOhio Abatement Strategy Regional Priorities Tool is a customizable Excel spreadsheet designed to support the grant review process by helping regions incorporate local data and information to guide funding priorities and recommendations.

Regions will establish funding priorities by the end of November. These priorities will inform the request for proposal (RFP) that the Foundation will release.

Based on feedback from the first grant cycle, the grant review process will change for the upcoming cycle. Applicants will submit funding inquiries to the regions. The regions and expert panel will review the funding inquiries. From those inquiries, the regions will choose which applicants to invite to submit full applications. The Foundation's Grant Oversight Committee will review the full applications, with full approval coming from the Foundation Board.

The timeline for the cycle is as follows:

- December: RFP release.
- January: Funding inquiry opens.
- February: Funding inquiry review begins.

Additional deadlines will be announced. Approval of grants will be rolling by region.

Directive on November e-pollbook usage issued

Last week, the Secretary of State released Directive 2025-51, concerning use of electronic pollbooks for the November 4, 2025 election. The directive follows an earlier directive that required counties to pause the use of electronic pollbooks for the May election after security issues were found in a pollbook device.

Directive 2025-51 requires boards of elections to remediate any issues determined by the Secretary of State's office and comply with audit requirements. The directive also provides a reminder of how boards are required to report suspected security events.

Applicants sought for Federal Healthcare Advisory Committee

Last month, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the creation of a new Healthcare Advisory Committee, aimed at providing expert guidance on pressing healthcare challenges. This new committee represents an important opportunity for counties to have a voice in shaping federal healthcare policy.

Counties are on the front lines of public health and chronic disease prevention. As the owners and administrators of core safety-net programs — including local health departments, hospitals, health centers, long-term care and behavioral health facilities — counties bring a unique, day-to-day perspective on how these systems function. This responsibility makes county voices essential in shaping national policy that supports healthier communities and ensures federal reforms are practical, effective and responsive to residents' needs.

HHS is currently seeking self-nominations and third-party nominations to serve on the Healthcare Advisory Committee. The deadline for applications is September 22, 2025. Information on the nomination process and application components can be found here.

NACo encourages county officials and staff with relevant expertise to consider applying.

If you are planning to apply, reach out to NACo Legislative Director for Health, Blaire Bryant (bbryant@naco.org), to discuss your interest and how NACo may be able to support you in the application process.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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Application window for drug task force grants open through October 9

RecoveryOhio and the Office of Criminal Justice Services have opened the RecoveryOhio Law Enforcement Fund grant application window. Applications must be sent by October 9 to be considered.

Grants are open to local (county, municipal, township, and village law enforcement) law enforcement agencies, provided the agency is a part of a drug task force. The drug task force must meet four criteria:

- It participates in the Ohio Incident-Based Reporting System or the Uniform Crime Reporting program.
- It must ensure deconflictization through Ohio High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area.
- It reports drug activity to Drug Incident Summary Collection Overview system on a monthly basis, collaborates with the Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center, and adheres to Ohio Task Force Commanders Association (OTFCA) Best Practices.
- It attends OTFCA meetings.

Funds from the grant program are intended to enable drug task forces to build new or strengthen existing partnerships and enhance treatment and education resources. Funds may also be used to defray expenses incurred in performing enforcement of Ohio's drug laws.

More information about the program, including how to apply, can be found here.

Grant writing workshop to be held in Toledo in early October

Grant Writing USA is hosting a two-day grant writing workshop in Toledo on October 7 and 8. The class will provide tips on how to write grant proposals and identify available grant opportunities.

Registration costs $495 and includes lifetime access to Grant Writing USA's Alumni Resource Center. Registrants can use the discount code "Special100" for a $100 discount.

Government agencies can pay for registration within 30 days after the event.

If you have questions about the event, please contact Tammy Pitts at tammy@grantwritingusa.com.

Heritage Ohio hosting annual conference in Stark County in October

From October 14 to October 16 (Tuesday to Thursday), Heritage Ohio will be hosting its annual conference in Canton. The conference will focus on how communities can revitalize un- or underused historic properties.

Sessions at the conference include, among others, the following:

- Examples of how Opportunity Zones, tax increment financing (TIFs), and other incentive programs have helped transform downtowns;
- A guide to applying for federal historic preservation tax credits;
- Case studies on the cities of Canton, Huron, and Troy; and
- How Ohio's building code regulations applies to historic properties.

Registration is open now and costs $350 for Heritage Ohio members and $400 for non-members. Registration can also be made for individual days.

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

Legal battle over ICE detainees intensifies, Sheriff says contract is valid

Review Times, September 12, 2025

A legal and political dispute over immigration detention in Seneca County is intensifying following a recent opinion from Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost and a letter from the ACLU Ohio demanding the release of detainees held under sheriff-executed contracts with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

The ACLU argues that county sheriffs lack the legal authority to enter immigration detention agreements and that individuals held under such contracts may be unlawfully detained. In a letter sent to multiple counties, including Seneca, Geauga, Butler, Lake and Portage, the organization demanded the immediate release of detainees and a halt to local enforcement actions tied to ICE.

"To the extent that any individual was arrested, is currently being held, or was at one time held without lawful authority, they may have grounds to bring a lawsuit," the ACLU said in a statement to The Advertiser-Tribune. The organization also criticized the lack of transparency, noting that several sheriff's offices have refused to release ICE contracts, prompting lawsuits in the Ohio Supreme Court.

The legal debate was sparked by Yost's formal opinion issued Aug. 26, which concluded that only county commissioners, not sheriffs, have the authority to contract with ICE for detention services. The opinion was requested by Butler County Prosecutor Michael Gmoser after a sheriff there signed a new ICE agreement earlier this year.

Seneca County Sheriff Fred Stevens responded by stating that the county's ICE contract was originally signed by the Board of Commissioners in 1996 and amended in 2003 to remain in effect indefinitely. Stevens said the jail currently houses 60 ICE detainees and emphasized that the contract is valid under Ohio law.

"We are in full compliance with the Attorney General's opinion," Stevens said. "Under no circumstance would any detainees be released into our county. ICE would come and pick them up if we ever ended the contract or if they did."

Northeast District

Lorain County addresses concerns over unlit communication towers

Cleveland.com, September 8, 2025

A resident's concerns about unlit communication towers prompted Lorain County officials to clarify that the structures meet federal safety rules and that permanent lighting will be installed before the towers go into full operation.

Brian Baker, who lives near the Brownhelm Township tower, told commissioners at their Aug. 15 meeting that the lack of red or white safety beacons on the structure created risks for crop dusters and helicopters in the area. He said the difference was clear compared to towers visible near the Baumhart Road exit of the turnpike.

"There's approximately 16 towers out there. Every one of them has a beacon on it," Baker said, later adding, "I just say it's a safety issue if we don't get that done."

At the Aug. 26 commissioners' meeting, Lorain County Administrator Jeff Armbruster explained that multiple towers within the county – including the tower in Brownhelm Township – are currently covered under federal "Notice to Airmen" (NOTAM) postings. These temporary alerts warn pilots of potential obstacles, such as unlit towers, until lighting systems are installed.

"If there's a flight going out, they should be looking at this, they should know where these towers are," Armbruster said. "Sometimes towers are put up … and there's no power, so they post this for anybody flying visually out there."

Central District

Ohio EPA has questions for the municipal utility coalition seeking to provide water and sewer service in parts of western Licking County

The Reporting Project, September 11, 2025

The utility coalition of Alexandria, Granville and Johnstown that is seeking the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's permission to provide water and sewer service in parts of western Licking County has been told it has more work to do.

In a letter to the engineering firm working with the coalition, Ashley Ward, acting chief of the EPA's Surface Water Division, said the proposal by the Municipal Utility Coalition of Licking County conflicts with current service-area boundaries set by the state.

The letter also said the coalition's proposal, submitted in May, lacks specific information on several other points. It also admonishes the coalition and other service providers to talk with each other.

"Ohio EPA continues to encourage collaboration between the coalition members and the existing wastewater management agencies, Licking County Commissioners and Licking Regional Water District (LRWD), to reach a compromise on future sewer services in western Licking County," Ward wrote.

Ward wrote that the plan "lacks significant water quality-related reasons to replace the existing management agencies and their ongoing wastewater plans with the coalition members and plan."

She wrote further that the coalition plan "lacks the necessary agreements among affected communities and management agencies currently responsible for wastewater planning" in that part of the county.

And Ward noted that the current state-designated service area plan "is a water-quality planning document, and attainment of applicable water-quality standards is the primary criteria the agency uses when evaluating sewer and wastewater plans."

The Licking Regional Water District, which is currently the designated provider of water and sewer service for much of the same territory the coalition seeks to serve, sent a letter to the EPA in February asking that the EPA affirm that position and reject the coalition's attempt to be named the official provider for Monroe and St. Albans townships, and the part of Jersey Township that is within the Johnstown-Monroe School District.

Southwest District

MC Commissioners certify unpaid sewer rates

Miami Valley Today, September 9, 2025

The Miami County Commissioners certified unpaid sewer rates and charges and penalties to the Miami County Auditor and also certified unpaid water rates and/or charges and penalties to the Miami County Auditor, with those charges being placed on the Property Tax List during their meeting on Thursday, Sept. 4.

The commissioners certified unpaid sewer rates and/or charges, including penalties, to the Miami County Auditor to be placed on the Property Tax List and Duplicate of Miami County for collection in the same manner as taxes at the request of the Sanitary Engineering Department. The certification is in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code (O.R.C.) Section 6117.02.

Josh Lococo, assistant sanitary engineer, told the commissioners that the collection amount is slightly over $57,000, a little higher than last year. He added that nearly 100 % of the amount has been collected.

The commissioners certified unpaid water rates and/or charges and penalties to the Miami County Auditor for placement on the Property Tax List and Duplicate of Miami County, with the collection in the same manner as taxes at the request of the Sanitary Engineering Department. The collections are in accordance with O.R.C. 6103.02(G). Lococo told the commissioners there are three properties with unpaid water in an amount close to $500.

Southeast District

Zoning commission floats five draft land use ordinances for county

Logan Daily, September 9, 2025

With the help of a hired consultant, the Hocking County Zoning Commission has drafted, not a county-wide zoning code, but a number of non-zoning land use ordinances for the county commissioners to consider adopting.

The five proposed ordinances, which at this point are still very much a work in progress, deal respectively with short-term rentals; excessive noise; permits for special events; commercial and industrial site standards; and impact fees for new development projects.

On Friday Hocking County Assistant Regional Planner Scott Schrader told The Logan Daily News that the commission had issued the draft ordinances a few days earlier, and will be seeking more feedback on them from stakeholders and the public. This is a continuation of a process that has been going on for over a year, in an attempt to give the county more control over the impacts of development.

"We're taking any suggestions or ideas on how to tweak them a little, and then we will have a second draft probably by the middle of September," Schrader said. He urged people to keep in mind that "this is obviously just a first draft," and there will be opportunities for more public input.

Initially the idea was for the zoning commission to come up with a county-wide zoning code. However, after garnering extensive public input through meetings and surveys, the commission began to tack toward the alternative approach of land use ordinances targeting specific issues. At a commission meeting in February David Baird, a senior project manager with the consulting firm American Structurepoint, advised that "there are less intrusive ways (than zoning) to get what the county needs," and argued that that the kind of traditional zoning imposed by the city of Logan "definitely does not make sense" for the county as a whole.

One significant difference between a zoning code and individual land use ordinances is that the first would need to be approved by county voters, while the second could be enacted by the county commissioners.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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SEPTEMBER 19
CCAO Board of Directors Meeting

SEPTEMBER 22
CCAO Post Budget Briefing - Portage County

SEPTEMBER 26
Northeast District Meeting - Huron County

SEPTEMBER 29
CCAO Post Budget Briefing - Greene County

OCTOBER 3
CCAO Post Budget Briefing - Delaware County

OCTOBER 6
CCAO Post Budget Briefing - Jackson County

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