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September 29, 2025

A big thanks to Huron County for hosting last week's CCAO/CEAO Northeast Region meeting at Summit Motorsports Park! Attendees had the opportunity to discuss priority issues in their counties and opportunities for collaboration.

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CCAO adopts position to limit inside millage revenue growth

At its September meeting, the CCAO Board of Directors adopted a position to recommend the General Assembly limit revenue growth attributable to inside millage to 3% annually. The recommendation also requests the provision include an emergency clause, allowing it to take effect immediately upon signature.

Inside millage is not subject to tax reduction factors, meaning revenue from the millage grows with valuation changes. These automatic increases have often been referred to as "unvoted increases" because they occur without a separate vote of a subdivision's electorate. The other form of unvoted increase is when a school district is on the 20-mill floor.

Inside millage is limited to 10 mills per taxing district and is shared between the county, township, municipality, and school district located in the taxing district. There are some special districts that receive inside millage but these are rare.

Counties typically account for a third of inside millage, although it varies from county to county. Inside millage rates to the county government range from 0.20 mills (Columbiana County) to 4.90 mills (Pike County).

According to CCAO simulation data, if a 3% annual revenue growth limit had been enacted in 2012, counties would have received $275.9 million less from inside millage than actual figures over the period from TY 2012 to TY 2024. That amounts to a reduction of about 3.46%.

The number of counties that would experience the cap and the magnitude of capped revenue would have increased in the past five years as property valuations have grown at a greater than normal rate. The effect of the cap in TY 2023 alone would have been $86.0 million (or 31.12% of the total effect over the period).

A note on the CCAO simulation: Data limitations required the simulation to use aggregated figures. An actual cap would be applied at the tax bill level, so the magnitude of effect will vary from the estimates above.

The CCAO position in support of capping inside millage revenue at 3% annually is a sound fiscal policy that provides needed tax relief to Ohio residents. A cap maintains fiscal predictability for counties while protecting taxpayers from spikes on their tax bills.

CCAO supports including an emergency clause in whatever legislative vehicle the proposal is a part of to ensure the cap is applied to tax bills payable in 2026.

If you have questions concerning CCAO's position on limiting revenue growth from inside millage, please contact CCAO Research Analyst Nick Ciolli at nciolli@ccao.org.

Long time fair board president named new Huron County Commissioner

Last week, the Huron County Republican Central Committee selected Bob Morgan to serve the unexpired Huron County Commissioner term after former Commissioner Brad Mesenburg resigned.

Commissioner Morgan has served for 39 years on the Huron County Fair Board, including as the president since 1992. His past public service includes 32 years as a transportation manager with the Ohio Department of Transportation, 12 years on the South Central Local School District board of education, and service on the board of the North Point Educational Service Center.

He will serve the remainder of the unexpired term, which ends on December 31, 2026.

Welcome to CCAO, Commissioner Morgan!

CCAO publishes County Advisory Bulletins on state operating budget and county official compensation

This week, CCAO published two County Advisory Bulletins (CABs), both pertaining to the state operating budget.

First, CAB 2025-12, State Operating Budget provides an analysis of county-related provisions in House Bill 96, the state operating budget for SFY 2026 and SFY 2027. Due to the size of the CAB, provisions are categorized by CCAO Standing Committee.

If you have questions about a budget provision, please contact the Policy Team at policy@ccao.org.

Second, CAB 2025-14, County Official Pay Tables provides updated pay tables for county officials (elected row officers, judges, and boards of elections members) after the annual 5% compensation increase included in HB 96.

Full details are available in the CAB, but key points to know are that the 5% annual raise will only be available to elected row officers when their next elected term begins. Judges and boards of elections members will receive the pay raise when the raises become effective on January 1, 2026. Officials who cannot receive the compensation increase until their next term begins will continue to receive the prior 1.75% annual increase established in the prior pay bill.

If you have questions about the county official compensation changes, please contact CCAO Research Analyst Nick Ciolli at nciolli@ccao.org.

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.

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

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STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Department of Children and Youth releases Child Wellness Campus request for proposals

Last week, the Department of Children and Youth released its Child Wellness Campuses Request for Proposals (RFP). The RFP can be found here on OhioBuys.*

**Please note that if you are prompted for a code, you must click on the "proceed" button after inputting the security code in order to view the procurement opportunity.*

DCY will provide one-time funding to entities that establish CWCs across the state to serve children and youth identified by a public children services agency as being at risk of entering agency custody. These children are not placed in licensed residential settings and are instead spending one or more nights in unlicensed settings. Entities must be licensed as a CWC or be actively working with DCY to obtain such a license. Additionally, entities must hold a license, with DCY, as a Children's Residential Center or Group Home.

The RFP includes more information about the target population, a map of the regions, and additional qualifying information. The RFP will remain open until November 6, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

Any questions regarding the RFP should be submitted through OhioBuys.

Department of Children and Youth launches Child Care Cred Program

Governor DeWine and Ohio Department of Children and Youth (DCY) Director Kara Wente announced the launch of the Child Care Cred Program, a $10 million program making child care more affordable for working families while helping Ohio businesses strengthen their workforce.

The program was created through Ohio's SFY26–SFY27 biennial budget and is designed to tackle one of the state's biggest workforce challenges: access to affordable child care.

Families must live in Ohio and employers must be Ohio-based to qualify for the program. Employers and employees must work together to submit an application through DCY. Once approved, families may enroll their child in a licensed program or remain with their current provider and receive assistance with costs.
Applications are due by May 1, 2026, with funding available through June 30, 2026.

For more information on how to participate and to learn about other business partnership opportunities, visit: childrenandyouth.ohio.gov/for-partners/partner-resources/public-private-partnership

Attorney General issues opinions pertaining to county government

Last week, Attorney General Dave Yost issued two Attorney General Opinions of note to counties.

The first, OAG 2025-020, concerns the proper legal counsel to either a joint county board for the purpose of constructing and maintaining a multicounty facility for the training and treatment of juveniles or the governing board of juvenile judges for a multicounty community corrections facility.

Attorney General Yost found that no county prosecutor of any of the involved counties has a duty to serve as legal counsel to a joint county board, and the county prosecutor from a single county has no duty to provide legal counsel to the governing board of juvenile judges. Similarly, the county prosecutor of an individual county does not have a duty to represent the juvenile judge from their county when the judge is acting as a member of such a governing board.

The second, OAG 2025-021, concerns the applicability of Open Meetings Law to county contracting authorities and their designated selection committees.

Attorney General Yost found that these entities are subject to the Open Meeting Law when evaluating, ranking, discussing, and negotiating proposals submitted under a competitive bidding process in accordance with R.C. 307.862. However, Attorney General Yost clarifies that these elements, including award decisions, can lawfully be conducted in an executive session.

He further added that documents and information generated regarding these elements, even if conducted in an executive session, are public records, as is the contract award. However, they are not subject to public inspection and copying until after the contract has been awarded.

CCAO encourages counties to familiarize themselves with these Attorney General Opinions.

Ohio one of five states selected for federal pilot to boost self-sufficiency, strengthen families

Governor DeWine announced last week that Ohio is one of five states selected by the Trump Administration for a new pilot program that will help individuals overcome barriers to employment and move from public assistance to self-sufficiency. Ohio was chosen for the pilot by the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) through its Administration for Children and Families (ACF) for the purpose of finding innovative approaches to promote work and reduce government dependency.

The pilot will be administered by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) and will focus on those receiving benefits through the department's Ohio Works First (OWF) program. Funded through the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant, OWF provides short-term assistance to low-income families, while helping recipients work toward securing a job.

Under the pilot, Ohio will have greater flexibility to provide individualized services tailored to participants' unique needs. OWF recipients often live at or below 50% of the federal poverty level and face significant barriers to employment such as lack of transportation, limited education, unstable housing, or health challenges. Caseworkers will work closely with participants to develop personalized plans that address these barriers – helping them move toward stable employment and self-sufficiency.

Historically, federal funding for OWF required states to meet certain metrics for recipients tied to employment, work search, and training. Approval of this pilot allows Ohio to develop alternative metrics that account for barriers to employment, track progress toward independence, and address basic needs along the way. For example, if a single mother lacks a high school education, reliable transportation, or stable housing, the pilot will give case workers flexibility to address those root issues as part of her plan toward long-term employment.

ODJFS will begin implementation of the pilot on October 1, 2025, which will be available to OWF participants in all 88 counties through county JFS agencies.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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CCAO and CyberOhio to hold cybersecurity program webinar on October 9

Ohio's new cybersecurity law, codified in R.C. 9.64, requires counties and other political subdivisions to adopt and maintain a formal cybersecurity program. The law also introduces new procedures for reporting cyber incidents, responding to ransomware, and clarifies public records exceptions for cybersecurity-related documents.

This webinar, hosted by CyberOhio and the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO), will walk through what political subdivisions need to know to comply with R.C. 9.64. We'll break down the legal requirements, highlight resources available to help your organization build or strengthen a cyber program, and answer common questions from local officials.

Topics will include:

- What Ohio Revised Code Section 9.64 requires of political subdivisions
- Cyber incident reporting and ransomware response obligations
- Public records exceptions for cybersecurity documents
- Practical steps to begin or enhance a compliant cyber program
- Free resources available through CyberOhio and state partners

The webinar does not require registration. The access lick (**HERE**) will be activate on Thursday, October 9 at 2:00 p.m. If you have questions about the webinar link, please contact Lexie Meade, Deputy Director, CyberOhio at Lexie.Meade@Governor.Ohio.gov.

"How to Use NIST CSF to Build a Cyber Program" webinar recording available

Last week, CyberOhio held a webinar to walk through using the NIST Cybersecurity Framework (CSF) as your roadmap to build or enhance a comprehensive cyber program. The agency has made a recording of the webinar available. This session can be especially geared toward local entities building a cyber program to come into compliance with R.C. 9.64.

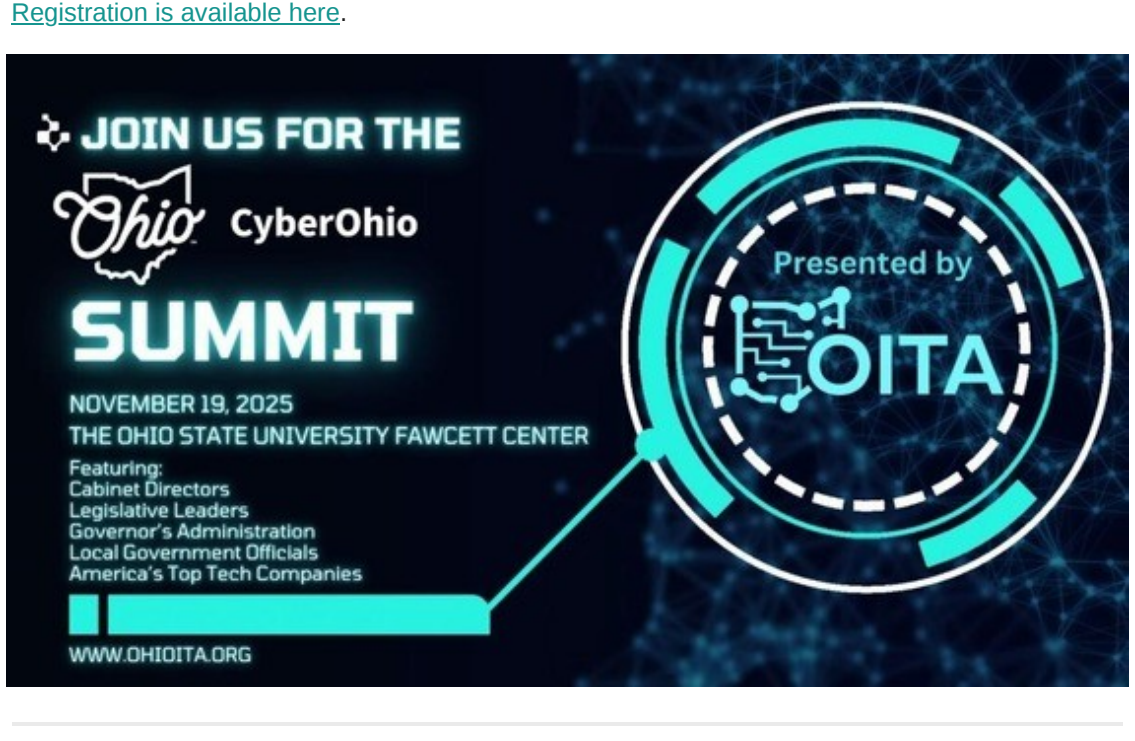
What You'll Learn:

- The core components of the NIST CSF: Govern, Identify, Protect, Detect, Respond, Recover
- How to align these components with your organization's people, processes, and technology
- Practical steps & tools to assess current posture and prioritize improvements
- Tips for communicating risk and gaining support from leadership

2025 Cyber Summit to be held November 19

Join cybersecurity leaders, government officials, education and nonprofit professionals at Ohio's premier cybersecurity gathering. Hosted by the Ohio Innovation and Technology Association in partnership with the State of Ohio, the CyberOhio Summit is your chance to dive into the state's cyber landscape — from new standards and legislative updates to best practices and collective defense. The event will take place on November 19 at the Fawcett Center in Columbus.

Registration is available here.



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

Defiance commissioners make choice on new brick for courthouse addition

Crescent News, September 25, 2025

Bricklaying for Defiance County's courthouse addition project likely will be resuming soon.

That's because county commissioners selected a new color of brick during their study session Wednesday morning — an attempt to correct a concern that surfaced earlier this month. The addition on the courthouse's east side will house an elevator that will replace a sometimes-unreliable one in the building's middle.

"We're satisfied with this," said Commissioner Mick Pocratsky of the brick chosen Wednesday. "It is a lot closer to the brick on the courthouse. Hopefully, they can get started and getting it to look just like the courthouse."

Approximately two weeks ago commissioners paused the bricklaying because the new exterior brick color didn't appear to match the original material — placed in the 1870s when the courthouse in downtown Defiance was built — to a satisfying degree.

Some bricks had been laid before commissioners voiced their concern with the contractor and things paused. Those bricks will be removed before the new ones begin going up.

Northeast District

Medina County commissioners look closer at property tax relief mechanisms

Medina Gazette, September 24, 2025

The Medina County commissioners are taking a closer look at the new property tax relief mechanisms that will soon be available to Ohio's counties, as they consider their implementation for county taxpayers.

On Tuesday, the Medina County commissioners talked with several department officials during the board's weekly meeting to discuss options for providing relief to county taxpayers.

The conversation follows several discussions at past commissioners' meetings about increased property taxes, as well as the distribution of reappraisal notices to Medina County residents.

Medina County Administrator Matt Springer said county staff have spent a couple of months looking at some changes at the state level, specifically related to House Bill 96 and property tax reform.

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio's County Advisory Bulletin states that counties could roll back a portion or all of their inside millage.

House Bill 96 also granted two new property tax relief mechanisms: the creation of a local permissive homestead exemption or a local owner occupancy credit. House Bill 96 will become effective Sept. 30.

Springer said Medina County is projected to receive an additional $3.5 million in inside millage.

Central District

Workforce programs thrive through collaboration of multiple agencies

Richland Source, September 25, 2025

A nurse walked into director of Success Unlimited Dan Dickman's hospital room last year and stunned him with a memory, he said.

More than 25 years earlier, she had been a single parent who dropped out of high school when she came to his Success Unlimited program. With the program's support, she earned her GED, completed an STNA certification and eventually fulfilled her dream of becoming a nurse.

Today, she has a BSN, serves as a floor supervisor and has watched her daughter graduate from college. Dickman said this story always knocks his socks off when he thinks about it.

That kind of impact took center stage Wednesday when Catalyst Life Services, in partnership with Richland County Job and Family Services and Success Unlimited Programs, hosted an appreciation luncheon.

The event, at 1285 Winery at The Blueberry Patch, honored the employers, agencies and community partners who help prepare Richland County youth and young adults for the workforce.

"Today we set this luncheon as a small token of our appreciation," said Mitch Jacobsen, director of vocational services. "Thank you for being more than partners. Thank you for being champions, mentors and role models."

These partnerships connect participants with work experience, job readiness training and life skills. Employers provide jobs, mentorship and guidance. Community partners step in with referrals so participants can access resources like transportation or child care.

"Our individuals do sometimes face challenges and we want to help them meet their dreams of the work experience they would like to go into," said Heather Mosley, supervisor at Richland County Job and Family Services.

Dickman said the program always starts with people where they are. They help remove barriers, whether it's transportation, child care or family needs, so participants can move forward and enter the skilled workforce.

Southwest District

Miami County leaders hope comprehensive plan will help guide county decisions

Dayton Daily News, September 22, 2025

It's never easy for community leaders to balance differing desires particularly when it comes to use of land.

Locally, officials hope the recently adopted Miami County Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan will help guide decisions on issues such as annexation, a topic which was sparked controversy in the county, particularly Bethel Twp.

The county commissioners recently adopted the plan. The previous plan was done in 1998 and updated in 2006.

"The key now, as a commission, is we need to make sure that our department of development follows through with the plan," said Commission President Ted Mercer. "I told Dan (Suerdieck, manager of county planning and zoning) that we need to implement some things, particularly the annexation (section)."

The plan lists annexation as among threats in the community, stating, "potential annexations by neighboring cities pose challenges for maintaining control over development. Many township leaders and residents are concerned about losing land to annexation or uncoordinated growth."

He was particularly pleased by the citizen input that included citizen surveys, stakeholder interviews, stakeholder meetings and other activities, Mercer said.

Southeast District

Carroll County commissioners address sinkhole repair, promote dog warden

Your Ohio News, September 22, 2025

Carroll County commissioners met for a brief meeting Sept. 15.

Commissioner Donald E. Leggett II said they will fix the side parking lot sinkhole Sept. 16 at 3 p.m. He said the problem was a drain on the lower side pulling water and dirt out from under the parking lot. They plan to rebar and reinforce the area, then fill the hole.

In an unrelated matter, following an executive session at the Sept. 11 meeting, commissioners made and approved a motion to promote interim dog warden Merle Long to dog warden, effective immediately at a rate of $19 per hour with a six-month probationary period and an increase of $1 per hour, contingent on his employee review.

Commissioner Chris Modranski said interviews with other candidates will be held Wednesday, Sept. 17, to fill the open assistant dog warden role.

In other business, at the Sept. 11 meeting, following a recess, commissioners received an email from cartoonist and screenwriter Duane Abel, who is preparing to do a second film he wrote and co-produced. It will be filmed in January with locations in Carroll County. He wants permission to film on the exterior steps of the courthouse. The film, titled "A Christmas Drawn Together," is a family romantic comedy.

Commissioners approved this on the condition that Abel has insurance in place and provides a copy to commissioners.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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OCTOBER 3
Post Budget Briefing - Delaware County

OCTOBER 6
Post Budget Briefing - Jackson County

OCTOBER 10
Central District Meeting - Licking County

OCTOBER 13
Columbus Day - Legal holiday

OCTOBER 22
Northwest District Meeting - Mercer County

OCTOBER 31
CEBCO Board of Directors Meeting

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