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**October 6, 2025**

**CCAO was honored to receive the Public Children Services Association of Ohio's 2025 Partner of the Year Award. PCSAO gave CCAO the distinction due to the partnership between the two organizations during the state operating budget process in ensuring that children services received the prioritization it deserves.**

**PCSAO Executive Director Angela Sausser gave the award to Ross County Commissioner Jack Everson, CCAO Outreach & Member Engagement Manager Rachel Reedy, and CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler.**

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## ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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### Notice from Glenn Miller, Henry County Commissioner & CCAO Nominating Committee Chair

*2025 Nominating Packet And Form*

CCAO President David Painter has appointed me to serve as chair of the CCAO Nominating Committee for 2025. Other members of the Committee include Commissioners Pete Gerken (Lucas), Mike Halleck (Columbiana), Steven Hess (Champaign), and Amy Norris (Harrison).

The CCAO Code of Regulations entrusts us with the responsibility of nominating candidates for the offices of president, first vice president, second vice president, secretary, treasurer, and eight members of the Board of Directors for a two-year term of office.

In addition, the Committee will fill any vacancies in the event that members previously elected to serve in 2025 will not be returning to office or where a member forfeits office for non-attendance. The CCAO Code of Regulations provides that the Board of Directors is composed of up to 35 members: 5 officers, 15 elected board members, 9 members appointed by the president, and the 6 most recent past presidents who still hold the office of county commissioner, county executive, or county council.

The Code of Regulations specifies that in order to be eligible to be nominated as an officer, an individual must be from a member county and have served a term of at least one year on the CCAO Board of Directors. In addition, the Code of Regulations limits the number of consecutive years a person can serve as either Treasurer (not more than three consecutive years) or Secretary (not more than one consecutive year). Also, persons serving in the offices of Treasurer and Secretary must be of different political parties.

Under the Code of Regulations, it is assumed that the Nominating Committee will nominate the then-sitting Second Vice President for the office of First Vice President, and the then-sitting First Vice President for the office of President. Additional nominations will be accepted from the floor for these two positions. The CCAO President may serve more than one year as long as the years are not consecutive.

Nominations other than the Nominating Committee's for the offices of Secretary, Treasurer, First Vice President and President, will be accepted from the floor at the election.

In addition, the Nominating Committee should place on the ballot the names of all eligible candidates who have requested to be nominated to the office of Second Vice President. The person receiving the highest number of votes at the election conducted during the annual business meeting would be elected to the office of Second Vice President.

The eight members whose terms to the Board expire this year include: Commissioners Tony Anderson (Fayette), Jeff Fix (Fairfield), Stephen Hambley (Medina), Shannon Jones (Warren), Gary Merrell (Delaware), Scott Miller (Sandusky), Donnie Willis (Jackson) and County Executive Chris Ronayne (Cuyahoga).

The CCAO Code of Regulations provides the six most recent past presidents who still hold the office of county commissioner, executive, or county council and who elect to serve as a member on the Board of Directors, may have a seat on the Board. In 2026 those individuals will include: David Painter (Clermont), Glenn Miller (Henry), Tim Bubb (Licking), Julie Ehemann (Shelby), Mike Halleck (Columbiana) and Lenny Eliason (Athens).

The CCAO Board of Directors typically meets nine times a year, and attendance and participation are vital. While there are circumstances where an individual cannot attend a meeting, this should not be the norm. I must stress the fact that we need people who are committed to attending and engaging in a majority of the meetings.

The Nominating Committee Report will be published on the web at www.ccao.org on November 20. The Business Meeting for election of officers and board members is scheduled for Thursday**,** December 4, 2025. Nominations will be accepted from the floor as described above.

If you are interested in serving on the Board for a two-year term or as an officer, please complete the attached Nominating Committee Request Form found in the link above. You can request consideration for more than one office. Also note that if you request consideration to serve on the Board for a two-year term and/or as an officer and are not nominated, your name will automatically be submitted for a Presidential Appointment to the Board of Directors. ***Please fill out and return the attached candidate questionnaire with your CCAO Nominating Committee Form.***

Finally, both forms must be returned no later than **November 1, 2025**, to the committee chair: **Glenn Miller, 1853 Oakwood Ave., Napoleon, OH 43545-4016, or by email at glenn.miller@henrycountyohio.gov.**

***In addition*****,** mail copies to **CCAO, 209 E. State Street, Columbus, OH 43215-4309, in an envelope marked: NOMINATING COMMITTEE – ATTENTION: Robin Garrett, or you may email your forms to rgarrett@ccao.org.**

If you have any questions, feel free to contact Chair Glenn Miller at (419) 779-0020, or call CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler at (614) 746-8507.

### Reminder regarding Official Representative and Alternative for annual meeting

Please remember the Code of Regulations requires each member county to designate an Official Representative and Alternate to cast the county's vote at the Annual Meeting or any special meetings of the Association.

The designation of the Official Representative and Alternate for a county organized under the statutory form of county government is by resolution of the board of county commissioners. In the case of a county organized as a charter county, the elected executive designates, by a letter signed by the executive, the Official Representative and an Alternate.

***Please note in designating the Official Representative and Alternate, a member county may name only a county commissioner, executive or council member.***

For your convenience the original request for the Official Representative and Alternate form can be found here.

A memo explaining the process along with a sample *Designation of Official Representative and Alternate Resolution* and a sample letter for County Executives can be found on the CCAO Website at www.ccao.org.

***If you have not already done so, please send a copy of your resolution or letter designating your Official Representative and Alternate to Robin Garrett, CCAO, 209 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215-4309 or at rgarrett@ccao.org so that we may maintain a record of the names in our files for voting purposes.***

Should you have any questions or to confirm that we have received a copy of your resolution or letter, please contact Robin Garrett at 1-614-307-6399 or at rgarrett@ccao.org.

### Registration for 2025 CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference is now open!

**December 3 - December 5**

**The 145th Annual CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference**

**Hilton Columbus Downtown ♥ 402 N. High Street ♥ Columbus, OH 43215**

Click Here to Register!

**Early Bird Registration Fees:**

Full Conference $525

One Day Only $380

Spouse or Guest Flat Fee for Full Conference or One Day Only $200

Affiliate Groups Have Option to Choose Meetings Only + Coffee Breaks $125

***Early Bird Registration Fee Ends November 7, 2025!***

**Rates after November 7, 2025**

Full Conference $625

One Day Only $480

Spouse or Guest Flat Fee for Full Conference or One Day Only $300

Affiliate Groups Have Option to Choose Meetings Only + Coffee Breaks $175

**Session topics will be released soon!**

*Full Conference and Wednesday-only registrants may choose to join a Working Lunch with a Lawmaker Panel on Wednesday, December 3rd, at 11:30 a.m.*

**Once you are registered you will be directed to link to reserve your room!**

*Hotel reservation link is for registered conference attendees only, including conference exhibitors and conference sponsors. Room rates are $201 before tax.*

*Be sure to book your room before November 3rd to secure this discounted rate!*

**For questions concerning our upcoming conference**

Please contact Robin Garrett at rgarrett@ccao.org

**For questions regarding our Tradeshow**

Please contact Amy Lowe at alowe@ceao.org

**We Look Forward to Seeing You at the 145th Annual CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference!**
***Counties at the Heart of America's 250th***

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*A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner*

Anthem

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## STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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### Office of the Public Defender issues memo on appointed counsel billing

Earlier this month, the Ohio Public Defender (OPD) announced that the Court Appointed Counsel Billing System (CABS) has been rolled out to 82 courts across the state and that, starting March 1, 2026, all appointed counsel bills will be required to be submitted through CABS.

The memo containing the announcement can be read here.

CABS is a free, cloud-based program that allows appointed counsel to electronically enter and generate bills for court submission. Once an attorney has entered their billable time for a case, the bill can either be submitted electronically to a court (where the court and auditor have been onboarded to CABS) or printed in a portable document format (PDF) and submitted to the court in paper form (where the court and auditor have not yet been onboarded to CABS).

OPD has a webpage dedicated to CABS, including information that is specific for each user type – attorneys, judges, and auditors.

### Governor's Work Group on Property Tax Reform issues report with 20 recommendations

Last week, the Governor's Work Group on Property Taxation issues its final report, making 20 recommendations on reforms to the states property tax system and the creation of new programs to provide tax relief. The full report is accessible here.

CCAO has preexisting positions on some of the recommendations in the report and the Association's Taxation and Finance Committee is reviewing the other recommendations.

The table below shows the recommendations for which the Association does and does not have existing positions.

| Governor's Work Group on Property Taxation Recommendations and CCAO Positions | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Recommendations with CCAO Positions** | | **Recommendations without CCAO Positions** |
| **Recommendation** | **Position** | |
| Eliminate certain school levy types and include additional levies in the 20-mill floor calculation. | CCAO supports including more elements in the 20-mill floor calculation. CCAO has no position regarding what levy types should be available to schools. | Refine the county budget commission process. |
| Allow county commissioners to review and reject/approve proposed levies by county-wide, non-elected entities. | CCAO supports providing this oversight authority to county commissioners. | Generally, limit carryover balances to 100% of the prior year's expenditures. |
| Close the LLC transfer loophole. | CCAO supports closing this loophole. | Increase transparency and clarify the impact on tax liabilities in ballot language. |
| Support a cap on 20-mill floor growth and apply a cap to inside millage growth as well. | CCAO supports both of these provisions, ideally at the rate of inflation. | Restrict usage of certain school district levy types. |
| Support a tax credit that provides a property tax freeze for certain homeowners. | CCAO is generally supportive of this concept. | Reform the penalty and interest process on delinquent property taxes. |
| Authorize levy boards to retain interest on levies and grant county commissioners ability to recover indirect costs. | CCAO supports increased ability for commissioners to recovery indirect costs. CCAO does not have a position on where interest on levies is retained. | Regularly review and evaluate property tax exemptions. |
| Implement a tax deferral program for certain homeowners. | CCAO supports the creation of deferral programs. | Rebalance reappraisal cycles. |
| Require school districts to have the ability to disapprove a residential Community Reinvestment Area. | CCAO opposes granting school districts veto authority over CRAs. | Encourage the Governor create a working group to analyze potential efficiencies at various government levels. |
| Support creation of Residential Stability Zones that would allow counties to provide property tax relief and give school districts veto authority over the creation of these zones. | CCAO supports the creation of RSZs but opposes giving school districts veto authority over RSZs. | Increase oversight to ensure proper granting of existing property tax credits. |
| Support a variety of measures to increase housing supply across the state. | CCAO supports taking broad consideration of housing supply policies. | |
| Consider expansion of the homestead exemption and/or the creation of a circuit breaker program. | CCAO supports both proposals. | |

CCAO would like to thank the Work Group for its work on these issues. Particular thanks to Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus, Pickaway County Commissioner Gary Scherer, and Pike County Commissioner Jeff Chattin for serving on the group and representing the county perspective.

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## EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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### ***THIS WEEK***: 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 link (**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.

### ***FINAL WEEK***: 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 (Thursday) 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.

### 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.

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## 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

Economic stakeholders consider five-county development strategy

**LimaOhio.com, September 29, 2025**

Economic development is a highly competitive field as different communities and regions jockey for new businesses and industries as well as public funding to help promote economic growth.

With that in mind, Allen, Hancock, Hardin, Putnam and Van Wert counties have been working to create a regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy to serve as a common roadmap to help put the area in the best position to gain a competitive edge.

As part of this process, more than a dozen economic and civic leaders in Allen County gathered Monday afternoon at the Cambridge Building in Lima to offer feedback on the language of this strategy, covering areas such as business climate and innovation, land use, redevelopment, collaboration, infrastructure and transportation, amenities, services, housing, workforce and financial resource availability. The workshop was conducted by Kleinfelder, a Perrysburg-based consulting group that has been putting the strategy document together.

"The Economic Development Administration gives out funding, so the feds give money to communities, mostly counties, that are trying to plan for the future of economic development," Kleinfelder Planning Department Manager Lauren Falcone said. "In this case, we're looking at a multi-county area."

These five counties were not included in any other group or block working toward the same goal, so it made sense for them to come together to make a broader, more compelling case to both the federal government and to any potential economic investors down the road.

### Northeast District

Lorain County sewer project costs rise more than $600,000 after FirstEnergy reverses sewer line OK

**Cleveland.com, September 30, 2025**

Lorain County Commissioners have authorized an additional $643,000 for the State Route 82 sewer expansion project in Columbia Township following a mid-construction decision reversal by FirstEnergy that officials say significantly altered the project's scope.

The vote, which took place during last Tuesday's commissioners' meeting, increases the total project budget to just over $2.8 million.

According to Assistant County Engineer Robert Klaiber, the sewer infrastructure was originally designed to run alongside the roadway within the right-of-way outside the pavement. This positioned the sewer three to four feet from existing electric poles—a design reviewed and approved by FirstEnergy.

However, once work began, the utility company reversed its decision, claiming construction was taking place too close to overhead electrical lines. Klaiber told commissioners that the county was told it was no longer allowed to place the sewer next to the utility poles, forcing crews to relocate the sewer line beneath the roadway pavement.

"We thought we were proactive. We met with them. We showed them what we were going to do. There was an agreement," Klaiber said. "We actually even paid them up front to hold the poles, but then once construction started, they changed their mind."

Commissioners David Moore and Marty Gallagher voiced their frustration with FirstEnergy's decision and the resulting financial strain and logistical challenges it created for project construction.

### Central District

The Perry County Courthouse opens after years of planning, saving, and renovating

**WHIZ, October 3, 2025**

Over a decade of saving money, planning and renovation work have culminated in a ribbon cutting ceremony in Perry County on Friday.

County commissioners, judges, Ohio State House representatives and local area residents came to the open house and ribbon cutting for the newly renovated Perry County Courthouse in New Lexington. The renovations included a new roof using locally made Ludowici Clay Roof Tile, restoring the historic cast iron staircase, and made other significant repairs.

"After two and a half years of having the courthouse closed, eight years of planning and 8 years of saving money for this project, it's great to finally have this back open," said Perry County Commissioner Ben Carpenter. "One thing we're especially proud of, the other county commissioners Scott Owen and Chase Bennett and myself, is that we've been able to do this project completely without borrowing any money. So when we open the doors Monday, we'll be debt free and open for business. "

The community members attended the ceremony and toured the courthouse during a day accompanied by live music, refreshments and snacks. Some of the people moving into their new workspace were excited at the prospect of seeing people in the courthouse.

"I know that sounds kind of funny but when we were across the street over there, we were the only office department in that part of the building. So I did not see the other judges very often. I did not see a lot of attorneys, prosecutors, people just maybe in the courthouse for whatever reason to be," said Drew Cannon, the Perry County Municipal Court Judge. "I didn't get to see those people anymore and so it'll be nice to get back to see people. We were kind of out in a bubble over there we didn't get a lot of interaction so it's just going to be nice to maybe get a little more human interaction instead of being in our own little space over there."

### Southwest District

Ross County Commissioners Announce Property Tax Relief for 2026

**Scioto Post, September 29, 2025**

In response to rapidly rising property valuations and growing tax burdens, the Ross County Board of Commissioners has voted to significantly reduce the county's portion of property taxes for 2026.

Over the past three years, Ohio has seen unprecedented increases in residential and commercial property values. Factors such as low housing inventory, bidding wars, and record inflation have contributed to sharp rises in property tax payments, placing Ohio eighth in the nation for property tax burden.

"Annual property tax increases of 20% to 30% or more are unfair to Ross County homeowners," said the Board of Commissioners. "Many residents face the risk of being forced out of their homes because they cannot afford rising taxes. We believe enough is enough."

For the 2025 tax year, the Ross County Tax Commission, which includes Auditor Jeff Lehner, Treasurer David Jeffers, and Prosecutor Jeff Marks, had already reduced the inside millage rate of the county government's portion of property tax from 3.1% to 2.4%. Under Ohio law, the Tax Commission cannot reduce the rate further. However, the Board of Commissioners has now approved an additional reduction of 30%, lowering the inside millage to 1.68% for 2026.

"This action will offset the scheduled 30% tax increase for the county government portion of property taxes," the Commissioners said. "We will continue providing necessary services through responsible budgeting, cost cutting, and reducing carryover funds."

### Southeast District

Athens County Commission: Commissioners discuss federal grants, property tax reform

**Athens Messenger, September 29, 2025**

The Athens County Board of Commissioners discussed a variety of issues ranging from technology upgrades to property tax reform on Tuesday.

Much of the technology used by the Athens County Treasurer's Office is severely outdated, Taylor Sappington, the Athens County treasurer, explained. Not only does this hamper efficiency, but it also places crucial data at risk, he said.

"We have some severely old technology up there, including Microsoft equipment that is no longer supported, which is pretty dangerous for the payment data we have and land bank information we have on there," Sappington explained.

The treasurer's office has already received a quote for a new cashiering system and is currently awaiting a tech upgrade quote. The treasurer's office will present the commissioners with their findings at a future meeting, Sappington said.

In other news, around 500 children signed up for Winterfest on Oct. 11, Jean Demosky, executive director of the Athens County Department of Job and Family Services (DJFS), said. Eligible children K-12 will receive free winter coats, gloves and hats.

The event will take place from 10 a.m-2 p.m. at the Athens County Community Cares Resource Center in Nelsonville at 10 W. Washington St.

Athens County DJFS is also working on putting together a resource guide for its clients, Demosky said. This guide will include information about where to get help for paying utility bills, housing assistance, free transportation, free meals and food pantries, she explained.

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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**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**

**NOVEMBER 4**
**General Election**

**NOVEMBER 7**
**CORSA Board of Directors Meeting**

**NOVEMBER 14**
**CCAO Board of Directors Meeting**

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