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COUNTIES CURRENT
CCAO
COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO

October 14, 2025

Thank you to Licking County for hosting last week's Central District Meeting! Attendees had the opportunity to view the recent renovations to the Licking County Courthouse and to tour the Historic Newark Arcade.

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Job Postings

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Hocking County Commissioner D'Onofrio named to working group on state park safety

Last week, Governor Mike DeWine announced the members of his Public Safety in Ohio State Parks Working Group. Created after the governor vetoed an operating budget provision, the work group is tasked with examining how the state and local governments can best provide emergency services in Ohio's state parks.

Hocking County Commissioner Jason D'Onofrio is one of the sixteen members of the work group.

The other members of the work group, which will be chaired by Ohio Department of Public Safety Director Andy Wilson and Ohio Department of Natural Resources Director Mary Mertz, include:

- Lt. Colonel Pat Brown, Office of Law Enforcement, ODNR
- Eric Burns, Chief of EMS, Tri-Village Rescue Service
- Chief Robert Butler, Independence Police Department
- Heidi Fought, Executive Director, Ohio Township Association
- Sen. Theresa Gavarone, District 2
- Josh Gardner, District Manager, ODNR
- Bill Houk, Program Coordinator, Ohio Fire Chiefs' Association
- Melinda Huntley, Executive Director, Ohio Travel Association
- Sheriff Stephen Levorchick, Ottawa County Sheriff's Office
- Lt. Colonel Josh Swindell, Ohio State Highway Patrol
- Dan Swords, Deputy Director, Division of EMS, Ohio Department of Public Safety
- Steven White, Chief Warrant Officer, U.S. Coast Guard.
- Woody Woodward, Executive Director, Ohio Parks and Recreation Association

The work group will hold its first public meeting on November 18.

CCAO Policy Team concludes post-budget briefings

Last week, the CCAO Policy Team held its final post-budget briefing in Jackson County. Every two years, the Association holds meetings in each of the CCAO/CEAO districts to provide information on provisions of the state operating budget pertinent to counties and information about other pressing issues.

During the briefings, the Policy Team shared with attendees several documents that provide additional information about budget provisions. These include:

- County Advisory Bulletin (CAB) 2025-12, State Operating Budget Overview
- CAB 2025-10, Property Tax Relief Options
- CAB 2025-13, Cybersecurity Programs
- CAB 2025-14, County Official Pay Tables
- Auditor of State Bulletin 2025-007, Cybersecurity Programs

While there were fairly minor changes to the SNAP program in the operating budget, the briefings shared information about the federal SNAP changes that will begin taking effect in the next few years. Detailed information about these changes are available through a CCAO Webinar.

If you have any questions concerning the state operating budget, please contact policy@ccao.org.

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.

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 candidate questionnaire above 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.

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

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

JobsOhio®
Ohio's Economic Development Corporation

STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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OBM releases September state fiscal report

On Friday, the Office of Budget and Management released the state financial report for September.

State General Revenue Fund (GRF) tax revenue came in 12.0% above estimates, with the state's largest tax scoures, the sales tax and income tax, generating 9.7% and 11.4%, respectively, more revenue than originally estimated. For the month, all source revenue to the General Revenue Fund was 3.7% above estimate.

GRF expenditures were 5.5% above estimates, driven largely but greater than expected expenditures from the three largest disbursement categories: primary and secondary education, Medicaid, and property tax reimbursements.

Overall, in September, the GRF received $3.3 billion and spent $4.4 billion. OBM estimates that the GRF will finish SFY 2026 (July 1, 2025 to June 30, 2026) with a positive balance of $850.4 million.

You can read the full report here.

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.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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CCAO and CyberOhio cybersecurity program webinar postponed

Due to technical issues, the webinar with CCAO and CyberOhio regarding the new cybersecurity program requirements has been postponed. CCAO will send new webinar info out when it is available.

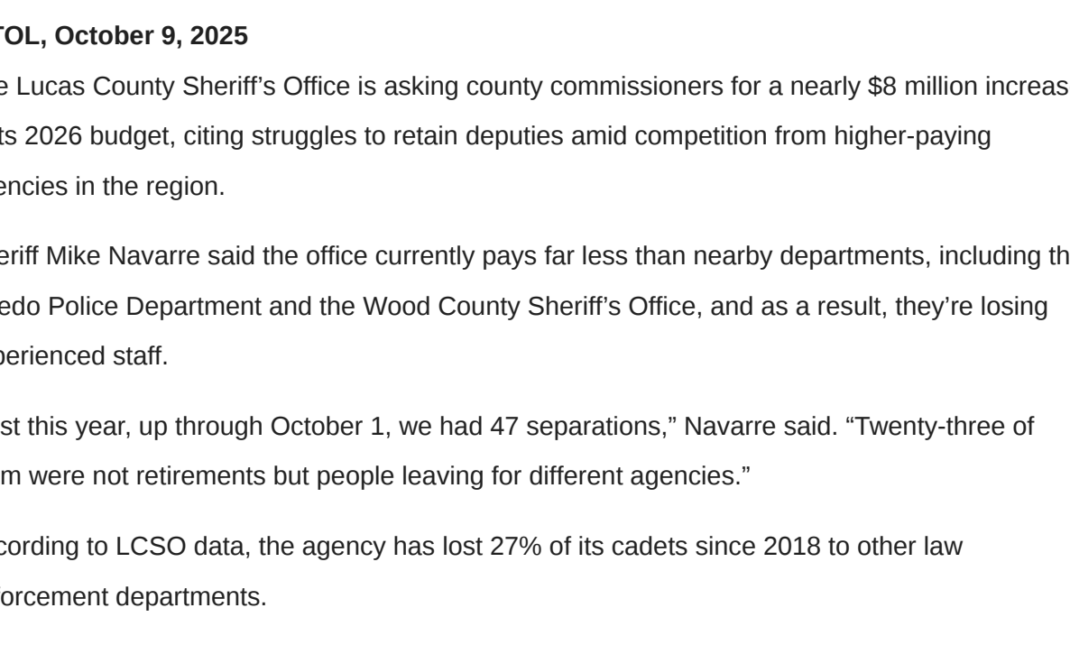
Ohio's new cybersecurity law, codified in R.C. 9.64, requires counties and other political subdivisions to adopt and maintain a formal cybersecurity program. The law also introduces new procedures for reporting cyber incidents, responding to ransomware, and clarifies public records exceptions for cybersecurity-related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

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.



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

Lucas County Sheriff's Office seeks boost to combat low wages, staffing losses

WTOL, October 9, 2025

The Lucas County Sheriff's Office is asking county commissioners for a nearly $8 million increase in its 2026 budget, citing struggles to retain deputies amid competition from higher-paying agencies in the region.

Sheriff Mike Navarre said the office currently pays far less than nearby departments, including the Toledo Police Department and the Wood County Sheriff's Office, and as a result, they're losing experienced staff.

"Just this year, up through October 1, we had 47 separations," Navarre said. "Twenty-three of them were not retirements but people leaving for different agencies."

According to LCSO data, the agency has lost 27% of its cadets since 2018 to other law enforcement departments.

The sheriff's office has already cut 15 full-time positions and is seeking an additional $7.9 million in funding to raise wages and remain competitive. But Navarre said pay isn't the only problem.

"It's not just wages," Navarre said. "There are not enough young people out there looking for employment in criminal justice."

Lucas County Commissioner Pete Gerken said the budget hearings are just the beginning of the process.

"You don't always finish where you start, but I think this is a great start to a finished product," Gerken said.

Northeast District

Geauga County courthouse design error could cost $32K

Cleveland.com, October 8, 2025

The Geauga County courthouse expansion is facing an additional cost of $32,000 to add swinging doors for magistrate benches — a cost commissioners say stems from a design error that should have been caught earlier.

The change order from Infinity Construction Company involves installing the doors and removing portions of the already-built benches.

A representative from TDA Architects and Judge Carolyn Paschke told commissioners during a meeting Tuesday that the doors are needed to give magistrates two secure ways to enter and exit the bench, which is standard for security and logistical reasons.

Paschke said the issue was discovered during an August walkthrough. Without the change, magistrates would have to exit through administrative offices to reach chambers, rather than using a direct swinging door.

Commissioner Carolyn Brakey said she supports adding the doors but took issue with the change order's expectation that taxpayers fund the fix.

"Frankly I think this is a design omission," Brakey said. "... This is like building a bathroom and not putting a sink in."

She said the $34,000 cost is mostly driven by ripping out and modifying the benches after the fact.

Brakey suggested holding off on any decisions for a week, allowing the project team to "make it right" by creating a proposal to share responsibility for the cost.

Central District

Fairfield County commissioner wins mobility leadership award

Lancaster Eagle Gazette, October 9, 2025

Fairfield County Commissioner Steve Davis was honored with the Leadership in Mobility Award at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's Annual Summit on Sustainability.

The event, held Sept. 30 at the Hilton Columbus Downtown, recognized individuals and organizations committed to sustainability and planning across the region, according to a community announcement.

Davis was recognized for his efforts in advancing transportation solutions in Fairfield County. His journey began when he decided to drive for a ride-share company using his electric vehicle to understand the economics and connect with the community. Through this experience, he discovered the significant transportation barriers faced by residents.

What started as an experiment led Davis to work to transition the local transit service to The LINK, Fairfield County Transit, to address these challenges.

"I'm honored and humbled to receive this recognition," Davis said in the announcement. "I found more than I was looking for when I started driving for a ride-share app. I'm grateful for the moments I had talking to real residents, hearing their stories, and finding solutions that make Fairfield County a place to work, live and succeed."

Southwest District

Water project, tax concerns, building needs top commissioners' agenda

Record Herald, October 6, 2025

The Fayette County Commissioners met Monday to address the needs of the Fayette County Building Department and to open a bid for an underwater intake rehabilitation project.

Improvements are needed for the existing intake and pump station at Caesar Creek Reservoir, including the installation of four additional pumps for water lines from Caesar Creek to the Honda facility in Jeffersonville.

Allied Technical Services of Cincinnati submitted the only bid. Fayette County Engineer Jason Little said it was a specialized project that not many contractors can accomplish. Allied bid $1,622,904 for the project. The engineer's estimate was $1,500,000.

Little said the bid would most likely be accepted pending a review of the paperwork, as it falls within the 20 percent contingency overage allowance.

Fayette County Building Inspector Craig Breedlove told the commissioners about his excessive workload and the number of inspections he is required to accomplish. He requested that the county hire an assistant to review plans and help with records.

He said the Honda facility and the new hospital construction were especially time-consuming and that he works weekends to keep up with the work. The commissioners gave him permission to seek a qualified individual and write a job description for the advertisement.

Breedlove said Honda is nearing substantial completion of its production goal for the end of October. After inspections, he can issue a partial occupancy permit for production. The water treatment area needed to correct a few issues, Breedlove said, and he wants to evaluate the hazardous materials storage. A fire suppression system also needs to be in place.

Southeast District

Carroll County commissioners review updates on dog pound, Golden Age Retreat and transit services

YourOhioNews, October 9, 2025

Carroll County commissioners met with department heads and received reports at the Oct. 2 meeting.

Dog Warden Merle Long reported that in September the county dog pound took in 19 dogs, adopted out seven to new families and reunited seven with their owners. One dog was euthanized due to organ failure at the Carrollton Animal Hospital, but none were put down for aggression. The pound issued one citation for failure to license a dog and two citations for dogs running at large.

Long highlighted a major cost-saving measure: The facility had been using Home Again microchips, which increased dramatically in price from about $284 to nearly $672 for a box of 25, raising the per-chip cost from $11.99 to $27. After researching alternatives and contacting suppliers, Long switched to Buddy Complete microchips, which cost $130 for a box of 25 — about $5.20 per chip — with no ongoing subscription fees. These chips also measure internal temperature and allow quick owner identification.

Superintendent Dawn Faulk updated the board on operations at the Carroll Golden Age Retreat.

The advisory meeting originally scheduled for Oct. 2 was moved to Tuesday, Oct. 14, at 4 p.m., and will invite public input on services and home improvements.

Upgrades to the facility's Wi-Fi and phone systems are underway, with plans to install more user-friendly phones featuring large, easy-to-read numbers for residents. Delivery delays have pushed installation to around Oct. 8-10, depending on the phones' arrival. Brief Wi-Fi and phone service outages lasting 30 to 60 minutes may occur during the transition.

The home ended September with 34 residents — 12 men and 22 women — and accepted four new admissions. Respite stays remain available, and both male and female beds are open.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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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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