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October 20, 2025

Last week, Miami County dedicated the new America 250-Ohio sidewalk mural and kicked off its America 250-Ohio celebrations!

Photo courtesy of America 250-Ohio

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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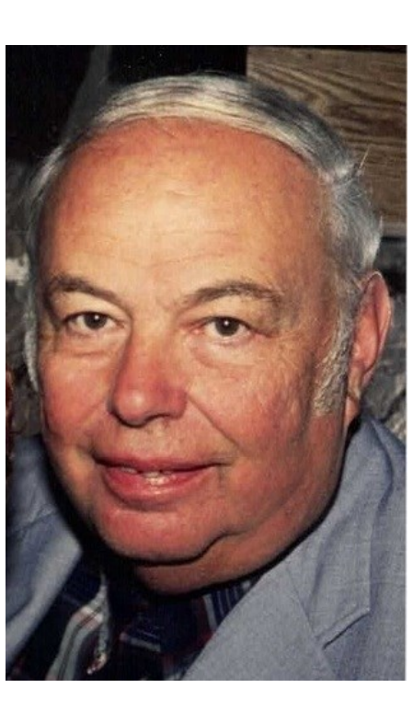
Former Huron County Commissioner Westerhold passes away



On October 11, former Huron County Commissioner James Westerhold passed away at the age of 93.

James served as Huron County Commissioner from 1983 to 1990. In addition to his time as Huron County Commissioner, he also served his community through roles on the county Mental Health Board, the local Red Cross, Salvation Army, and Humane Society.

James was also President and General Manager of Firelands Broadcasting, where he covered the Cleveland Indians (now the Guardians) for 35 years.

You can view James' full obituary here.

Tentative agenda released for 2025 CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference

CCAO has released a tentative agenda for the upcoming 145th Annual CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference. CCAO sessions will include best practices for energy and economic development, information on data centers, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and changes to the children services landscape.

There will also be five sessions focusing on different aspects of property taxation and the potential ramifications of if property taxation is eliminated.

The full tentative agenda can be viewed here.

Early Bird Registration Fee Ends November 7, 2025!

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

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

Call for Letters of Interest for NACo Board of Directors Representative Position

As part of the upcoming CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference, CCAO will be electing two members to the National Association of Counties (NACo) board of directors, per NACo bylaws, during the CCAO Annual Business meeting.

We ask that individuals interested in running for these two positions submit a 1-2-page letter of interest to Robin Garrett at rgarrett@ccao.org by Noon, Monday, November 17. CCAO will distribute these letters to Ohio NACo members on Thursday, November 20.

On Thursday, Dec. 4 during the annual meeting, CCAO will conduct an election for these two positions. This vote will be by paper ballot. Each NACo county will receive two votes, and the top two vote-getters will be the new representatives to the NACo board of directors. The elected board members would begin their terms in July 2026. This election will not impact any other NACo board positions Ohio members may hold, such as those receiving board appointments from the NACo president or due to previous service as NACo president.

Commissioners Shannon Jones (Warren) and Lisa Sobecki (Lucas) are currently representing Ohio during the term of 2025-2026 on the NACo Board of Directors.

Should there be a two-way tie for first place, both individuals will receive board seats. If there is a three-way tie for first place, there will be a runoff election. If there is a tie for second place, there will be a runoff election. If a tie remains after two elections, a coin toss will be conducted to determine the winner.

If you have any questions about the election process, please contact Cheryl Subler or Robin Garrett.

Federal government shutdown update

Since October 1, the federal government has been in a partial government shutdown due to the inability of Congress to pass an appropriations bill. It is unclear how long the shutdown will continue. Currently the longest federal government shutdown lasted 35 days (December 21, 2018, to January 25, 2019).

The ongoing shutdown raises questions about the continuity of certain federal programs. On a program level, Medicaid and block grant programs like Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF), child care and the social services block grant will continue for now as business as usual. The biggest question regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, which does not have funding for November.

At this point, counties have not received SNAP guidance past October. CCAO remains in close contact with the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) as well as the Ohio Job and Family Service Directors Association (OJFSDA) for the latest updates from the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.

We will share any further information we receive from ODJFS or OJFSDA with members to ensure as much preparation time as possible.

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.

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STATE AND FEDERAL NEWS

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Auditor of State releases two advisory bulletins

Last week, Auditor of State Keith Faber released two bulletins of note for counties.

Bulletin 2025-012 concerns an Ohio Ethics Commission (OEC) opinion regarding rewards (such as frequent flyer miles, points programs, etc.) earned during official business by public officials and employees.

Provided that the points are earned in the same manner as a private individual and they do not impose additional costs to the public agency, use of rewards is not considered additional compensation and is permitted.

Public officials, however, are prohibited from selecting vendors or services solely to earn points for personal use.

The Auditor of State recommends that public offices adopt a policy for personal use of reward points accrued during public business.

The second bulletin, Bulletin 2025-013, provides guidance on how public offices can reimburse officials or employees who have made lawful expenditures on behalf of the office using a personal credit card or checking account, particularly if the public office is tax-exempt.

The bulletin recommends that public offices adopt a written policy on the use of an entity's tax-exempt certificate and the use of personal credit cards and checking accounts for public purposes.

CCAO encourages county staff review the bulletins.

Secretary of State releases advisory on changes in state operating budget

Earlier this month, the Secretary of State's office sent Advisory 2025-05 to county boards of elections The advisory provides an overview of changes made in the state operating budget that are pertinent to boards of elections. These include pay raises for boards of elections members, changes in the funding mechanism for elections, and the elimination of the Ohio Elections Commission, among other changes.

CCAO encourages members familiarize themselves with the advisory. More information about elections-related changes in the budget can be found in the General Government section of CCAO's County Advisory Bulletin on the operating budget.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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THURSDAY: CCAO and CyberOhio cybersecurity program webinar

On Thursday, at 2:00 p.m., CCAO and CyberOhio will be holding a webinar on the new cybersecurity program requirements that were created as part of the state operating budget. Registration can be completed here.

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.

WEDNESDAY: Informational webinar on Demolition and Site Revitalization Program

On Wednesday at 10:00 a.m., the Department of Development will host a webinar about the Demolition and Site Revitalization grant program. The program guidelines were recently released and are available here.

The webinar will cover changes to the program made since prior cycles, eligibility requirements, how to apply, and a question-and-answer segment with program staff.

You can register for the webinar 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.

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

Henry commissioners updated on landfill, including new glass option

Crescent News, October 15, 2025

Henry County commissioners received a request to purchase a large amount of county-owned farmland during their Tuesday meeting.

A local farmer, Mike Beck, who has leased 145 acres near roads 15 and S (north of Napoleon) from commissioners since 1979, said he would like to purchase that ground, once the location for the long-closed county home. But he also proposed buying nearby land where the OSU Extension Office is contemplating a research pond to study farmland irrigation.

Beck said the properties total 220 acres. The farmed portion is leased out every four years for crop production.

"... you put a price on it and I'll take it," said Beck. "... If you want to get out of the land business, I'm ready to get into the land business."

Commissioners made no decision on the request while Commissioner Glenn Miller told Beck only that "you gave us something to think about."

After the meeting with Beck, commissioners briefly discussed the OSU Extension Office's plans to use only a small portion of the land for the pond.

In another matter Tuesday, commissioners met with Environmental Facilities Manager Tracy McDaniels for an update on landfill matters.

She reported that the landfill — which serves only as a waste transfer station — took in 112.98 tons of waste in September, compared to 104 tons in September 2024.

Northeast District

Mahoning commissioners support preserving Poland Library

Mahoning Matters, October 15, 2025

The Village of Poland, Poland Township Trustees and the Mahoning County Commissioners all passed resolutions supporting keeping the Poland Library in its current location.

Local residents and members of the Save Your Library Citizens Group recently urged county commissioners to preserve the Poland Public Library, according to Citizen Portal.

The Save Your Library Citizens Group also presented a petition with more than 2,000 signatures asking the board of the Public Library of Youngstown and Mahoning County to keep the branch in Poland.

Back in May, the PLYMC board voted to explore relocation of the Poland Library, built in 2001.

The decision came after library leaders brought in several architects and engineers to examine the structural integrity of the building, according to Aimee Fifarek, director and CEO of PLYMC.

"We have been assured by the experts that this building is safe for use. However, the problems facing this building date back to the original design and construction and they are not going away," Fifarek said.

Dave Smith is a trustee of the Poland Historical Society and a member of the Save Your Library Citizens Group who spoke during the public-comment portion of the commissioner's meeting.

"Our one and only goal is to keep the Poland library at its present location," Smith said.

Tom Frost is a trustee who represents the PLYMC. Frost said the library board has voted only to explore options and that "there has been no decision to vacate."

The first option PLYMC has looked into to address the facility challenges of the Poland Branch includes maintaining the existing building which will cost around $8 million.

For maintenance, the library will need essential repairs and system replacements, including specific sections of siding showing deterioration that will be removed and replaced, but the entire building will not be resided.

Central District

Refugees, immigrants in Ohio to lose SNAP benefits under Trump's bill

Columbus Dispatch, October 16, 2025

More than 4,000 Franklin County residents, most of whom are refugees, will soon be without food assistance as Ohio complies with federal changes brought about by President Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, is facing major changes as part of the president's megabill — namely limiting eligibility to U.S. citizens and green card holders who have completed a five-year waiting period, plus some Haitian and Cuban nationals with special status. That means that many Franklin County residents with documented immigration status but without citizenship will be without SNAP assistance come November.

At an Oct. 16 press conference, county leaders announced that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services will be automatically ending SNAP coverage for those left out of the new eligibility criteria effective Nov. 1, the deadline to comply with this provision of the bill, formally known as H.R. 1. These changes exclude refugees, asylees, victims of trafficking and other documented noncitizens that were previously exempt from the program's five-year residency requirement from receiving benefits.

There's still some confusion surrounding whether these groups can regain eligibility if they apply after living in the United States for five years, said Karen Mozenter, CEO of Jewish Family Services, a local nonprofit that serves Columbus' immigrants and refugees.

"When you have a green card and are a lawful permanent resident, you should have all the rights and opportunities and access to all the programs that others have," Mozenter told The Dispatch. "But right now, there is so much uncertainty about whether that will remain the case."

Southwest District

Commissioners debut new meeting room; hear updates on OneOhio, HCSO project

Highland County Press, October 18, 2025

After six months' worth of meetings at Southern State Community College, Highland County commissioners Brad Roades, Terry Britton and David Daniels debuted their new meeting room at the Highland County Administration Building Wednesday, Oct. 15.

With the renovations to the top floor of the administration building, the commissioners' former combined lobby, workspace and meeting area have been converted to a large conference room, while their offices moved across the hall. Work is currently underway on the first floor of the building.

Britton thanked Southern State Community College President Dr. Nicole Roades for the college's hospitality over the past six months, as commissioners have held both their regular Wednesday morning meetings as well as special meetings, discussions with department heads and land bank board meetings at the college since April.

"We just wanted to thank her and her staff and everybody that was involved to take care of us," Britton said. "Anything that we wanted, she took care of, so we just want to say thank you."

Dr. Roades, who was present for Wednesday's meeting, said she would pass along the gratitude to SSCC staff, as she congratulated commissioners on their return to the administration building.

Southeast District

Belmont County commissioners address property tax concerns amid levy discussions

WTOV9, October 15, 2025

Belmont County commissioners addressed rising concerns over property taxes and the implications for the upcoming election season on Wednesday.

Although property taxes in the county are lower than the Ohio state median, they remain 0.2% higher than the national median. To alleviate this burden, commissioners are working to eliminate unnecessary levies.

"We do understand that people are paying a lot in property taxes and more in recent years. It's been in the news quite a bit. So anytime we can eliminate a levy, it will ease the burden, somewhat. You know, not a huge amount, but it helps," Commissioner Jerry Echemann said.

Echemann says there's a fine line between having too few and too many levies and that voters should do their research.

"A lot of them are renewals which means same thing. I'm not really sure how we could function without levys on the ballot. We don't want too many of them, and I think the public understands that," he said.

Meanwhile, Ohio lawmakers are considering the potential abolishment of property taxes statewide, a decision that could have significant consequences.

"I think the public by and large understands that we need levys. So I don't know how long that will continue with what's going on in legislature in Columbus. It's difficult to say," Echemann said.

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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 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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