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CEBCO
Health & Wellness

**January 5, 2026**

**CCAO, CEBCO, CORSA, and the CCAO Service Corporation are looking forward to a successful 2026!**

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Association and Member News | State and Federal News |
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Job Postings

Statehouse Report and Counties Current Archive | Dates to Remember

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## CCAO Board of Directors President

The 2026 CCAO Board of Directors President is Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus!

According to CCAO research, Commissioner Driehaus is the third Hamilton County Commissioner to serve as CCAO President. She is preceded by Commissioner Fred Moor (1949) and W.H. Hill, who was the very first CCAO President and served three terms, from 1882 to 1884.

Commissioner Driehaus' presidency brings Hamilton County into an 10-way tie for the 4th most commissioners produced by a county. The county joins Ashtabula, Belmont, Clermont, Cuyahoga, Licking, Logan, Richland, Ross, and Trumbull in having three commissioners serve as CCAO President.

These counties still trail Allen, Butler, Lake, Mahoning, Miami, Summit, and Tuscarawas counties (each have produced four CCAO Presidents), Franklin County (has produced five presidents), and Montgomery County (has produced seven presidents).

When accounting for presidents who have served multiple terms, Hamilton County joins Butler, Franklin, and Mahoning counties in serving as president for five years. These counties trail Lake County (seven years) and Montgomery County (11 years).

A full list of Past Presidents can be found on the CCAO Website. CCAO research has not been able to identify the presidents for 1886, 1888, 1893, and 1894.

A portrait of W.H. Hill from *History of Hamilton County Ohio, with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches*, published in 1881.

Commissioner Hill served as the first CCAO President and served three consecutive terms, from 1882 to 1884.

A photo of Fred Moor at a groundbreaking, featured in the July 31, 1957 edition of *The Cincinnati Post*.

Commissioner Moor served as the CCAO President in 1949.

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## ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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### Governor signs property tax reform bills, others

*CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler attended the bill signing event in December for House Bills 124, 129, 186, 309, and 335.*

*CCAO was invited to the event due to the Association's leadership on House Bill 335's inside millage inflationary cap.*

Last month, Governor Mike DeWine signed several bills that the General Assembly passed last month. Five of these bills will reform the property tax system, and other bills will reform dangerous dog law, revise absentee ballot timelines, and require feminine hygiene products be provided to female inmates in county jails.

With the Governor's signature, the bills will take effect on March 19, 2026.

CCAO policy staff will prepare and circulate County Advisory Bulletins on notable changes made to county duties in the signed bills before their effective date.

#### Property Tax Bills

**House Bill 335, Limiting Inside Millage Increases**

This bill creates an inflationary cap on the growth of inside millage. Under current law, when a property undergoes a reappraisal or an update, the portion of their tax bill attributable to inside millage increases at the same rate as the property's value increases.

Under the bill, the tax bill increase attributable to inside millage will be limited to the percentage change in the GDP Deflator since the county last underwent a reappraisal or an update. The cap applies to all entities that receive inside millage. The Legislative Service Commission estimates that the bill would result in foregone revenue for counties of $30 million in TY 2026, $55 million in TY 2027, and $91 million in in TY 2028.

The cap will first be applied for TY 2026 (payable in 2027) for counties that undergo a reappraisal or update in TY 2026. The schedule of reappraisals and updates can be found here.

CCAO was a proponent of this concept as it would limit unvoted spikes while ensuring that counties receive ongoing operations revenue.

**House Bill 186, Limiting 20-Mill Floor Revenue and Modifications of Credits**

House Bill 186 creates a similar inflationary cap to HB 335 but applies it to the school district 20-mill floor. CCAO supported this bill because property taxpayers in districts on the 20-mill floor experience additional spikes in their tax bills, accelerating voter fatigue and potentially harming counties' ability to pass levies.

The bill also eliminates the 10% non-business credit for all property not used in agricultural activities. At the same time, the 2.5% owner occupancy credit would be increased. Both changes are phased in over four years.

The table below shows the timeline of changes.

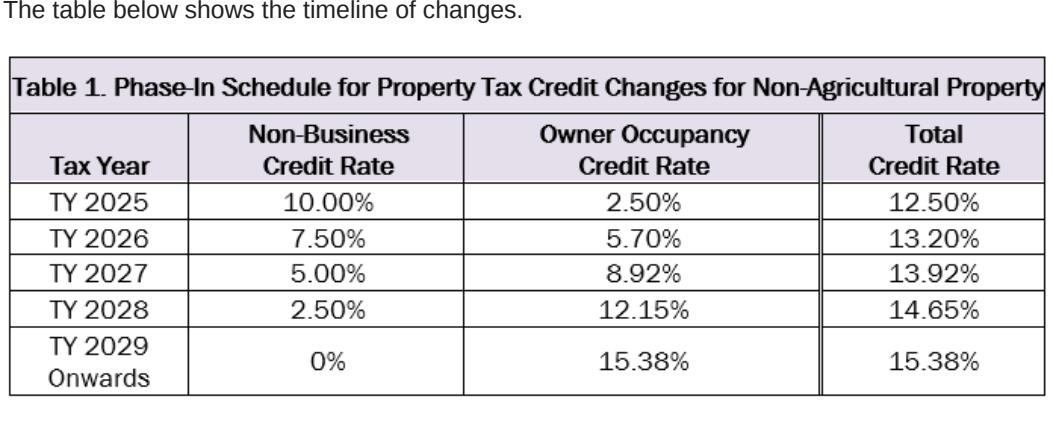

Table 1. Phase-In Schedule for Property Tax Credit Changes for Non-Agricultural Property

| Tax Year | Non-Business Credit Rate | Owner Occupancy Credit Rate | Total Credit Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| TY 2025 | 10.00% | 2.50% | 12.50% |
| TY 2026 | 7.50% | 5.70% | 13.20% |
| TY 2027 | 5.00% | 8.92% | 13.92% |
| TY 2028 | 2.50% | 12.15% | 14.65% |
| TY 2029 Onwards | 0% | 15.38% | 15.38% |

Since the increase in the owner-occupied credit rate exceeds the decrease in the non-agricultural nonbusiness credit rate, the change will provide additional tax relief to homeowners, by about 23%. This increase may vary if credit-eligible levies come off the rolls.

The increase in the state owner occupancy credit rate will not affect the credit rate of the local "piggyback" owner occupancy credit. The maximum allowable rate for the piggyback credit remains at 2.5%.

The bill does not change any provisions concerning the scope of the credits (they still apply only to pre-November 2013 levies) or their reimbursement status (the state continues to reimburse local governments fully).

**House Bill 129, Calculation of the 20-Mill Floor**

House Bill 129 will incorporate revenue from additional levy types into the calculation of the school district 20-mill floor. As mentioned in the prior bill's blurb, taxpayers in 20-mill floor school districts experience greater tax bill increases than those in non-floor districts. The combination of HB 186 and HB 129 will limit those increases and generally move districts off the floor.

CCAO supported this bill.

**House Bill 124, Flip the Valuation Script**

House Bill 124 alters the valuation process by giving county auditors, rather than the Department of Taxation, the authority to select the sales included in the sample used to calculate property value changes (the "sales ratio studies"). The Department may appeal the sample supplied by the county auditor to the Board of Tax Appeals if the Department feels the sample is unreasonable or unlawful.

CCAO supported this bill.

**House Bill 309, County Budget Commissions**

House Bill 309 makes modifications to the scope of duties of the county budget commission, including setting a one-year grace period where the budget commission cannot rollback the tax rate for voted levies. This grace period only applies to new levies, not to renewals.

CCAO did not have a position on this bill.

Descriptions of other bills that Governor DeWine signed in December can be found in the December 19 edition of *Statehouse Report*.

### CCAO hiring Accounting Manager

CCAO is hiring an Accounting Manager to lead day-to-day accounting operations for CCAO, CEBCO, CORSA, the CCAO Service Corporation, and the CCAO Research and Education Foundation.

The manager will be tasked with supervising accounting staff, developing internal controls, and assisting with financial reporting, analysis, and audit preparation.

Applicants for the position must be Certified Public Accountants and have at least five years experience in progressive accounting, including three years of supervising staff. Knowledge of health and property/casualty insurance accounting is also ideal, as is experience with government accounting.

If you are interested in this position, please submit a resume and a letter of interest to CCAO Finance & Benefits Manager Thisbe Butcher at tbutcher@ccao.org.

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*A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner*

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## STATE AND FEDERAL

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### Governor DeWine Announces Ohio's Rural Health Transformation Program Award

*The following is a press release issued by the Governor's Office on December 29, 2025.*

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine today announced that Ohio will receive more than $200 million from the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through the Rural Health Transformation Program to strengthen health care across Ohio's rural communities.

"We are so grateful to be awarded this funding so that more Ohioans can receive expanded access and enhanced quality to necessary health care," said Governor DeWine. "Thank you, Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and CMS Administrator Dr. Mehmet Oz for your support of Ohio's proposal. We are committed to working collaboratively with you and your teams to ensure these funds are fully utilized so rural Ohioans can live their healthiest lives. Thank you, Senator Husted and Senator Moreno for your continued work to invest in rural health care here in Ohio."

According to the Ohio Department of Health's (ODH) Ohio Chronic Disease Atlas 2025, Ohioans living in rural parts of the state experience higher rates of chronic disease, lower access to specialty care, and worse health outcomes. Frequently, Ohioans living in rural communities live far from care, making preventative and early intervention services difficult to access.

Ohio's Rural Health Transformation Program proposal focuses on addressing these barriers by building on existing state investments to expand access to care in rural communities, strengthen the rural health workforce, modernize rural facilities and technology, and support innovative models that bring high-quality, dependable care closer to home.

With this funding, Ohio will invest in more school-based health centers in rural communities, expand the OhioSEE child vision care program to more students in rural school districts, and build upon Ohio's success in reducing infant mortality rates by expanding evidence-based home visiting models to more rural communities across the state.

Ohio's plan also includes support for two programs to boost workforce and innovation. Ohio will build out the Rural Healthcare Workforce Pipeline by creating partnerships between healthcare providers and educational institutions to encourage Ohio providers to recruit Ohio medical and health care students to find long-term employment in Ohio's rural communities.

Additionally, Ohio will launch Rural Patient Health Innovation Hubs to provide those living in rural areas with access to the best-in-class, integrated care in their communities by partnering with hospitals, community health centers, behavioral health specialists, and others to bring high-quality health care options closer to home.

ODH is the lead agency for Ohio's program and will continue to work with federal partners as more information and guidance become available.

### Public comment period on data center wastewater discharge extended to January 16

The Ohio EPA has extended the public comment period on a draft general National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for the statewide regulation of data center wastewater discharges. The public comment period is open through January 16.

The NPDES General Permit for Discharges from Data Center Facilities (Permit No. OHD000001) is a first-time issuance and would cover data center facility operations that discharge into waters of the state. Both wastewater and stormwater from the data center facility are proposed for coverage under the permit.

Wastewater discharges include non-contact cooling waters (once through or re-circulated water that does not come into contact with the process operations of a facility and is used only to convey heat from the facility), low volume wastewaters (such as, cooling tower blowdown, boiler blowdown, and air compressor condensate yet excludes some waste streams like sanitary wastes) and stormwater associated with the industrial activities from the site.

More information about the permit proposal can be found on the Ohio EPA's website.

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## EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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### OHPELRA's Annual Training Conference to take place in February, registration open

In February, the Ohio Public Employer Labor Relations Association (OHPELRA) will hold its Annual Training Conference (ATC), *From Tightropes to Teamwork: Mastering the HR/LR High Wire*. Designed for public sector human resources and labor relations professionals, this conference is also an excellent opportunity for managers and administrators who handle personnel matters.

The conference will feature more than 20 sessions led by Ohio's top employment law attorneys, policy experts, and experienced practitioners. Attendees can tailor their experience by choosing sessions that best meet their needs. Topics will span a broad range of human resources and labor relations issues, including contract negotiations, workplace communication, employee benefits, legal updates, and more. Click here to view the conference agenda.

OHPELRA's ATC will be held 2/1/26 - 2/3/26 at the Hilton Polaris in Columbus. **Click here to register** and reserve your hotel accommodations. Please note that the hotel room block expires January 16, 2026.

The conference is open to both OHPELRA members and non-members. OHPELRA's membership includes public sector HR professionals, supervisors, managers, and other non-bargaining unit leaders involved in workforce and labor relations. As Ohio's premiere public sector HR and labor relations association, OHPELRA provides access to valuable resources, meaningful connections, and professional development opportunities to support growth and organizational success. To learn more about OHPELRA, please click here.

### *THURSDAY DEADLINE*: Law enforcement grants available through DPS

The Department of Public Safety is accepting applications for two law enforcement grant programs. The application deadline for both programs is this Thursday, January 8.

The first is the Violence Crime Reduction Grant, which offers a total of $3.4 million to local law enforcement agencies. Key priorities for the grants are addressing the needs of high-crime communities, assisting in multi-jurisdicitional efforts to reduce violence, and assisting in resolving cold case investigations.

Grant funds can be used for several purposes, including training and equipment. Funds can be used for overtime, but not to hire additional staff. There is no match requirement for these grants.

The second program is the Drug Law Enforcement Grant. Local law enforcement agencies (including drug task forces) can use these funds to gather and analyze intelligence, coordinate efforts across multiple jurisdictions, and improve community-based responses to drug addiction.

Grants under the Drug Law Enforcement program are limited to $250,000 and includes a match requirement of at least 25%.

### Residential Development Revolving Loan Program now accepting applications

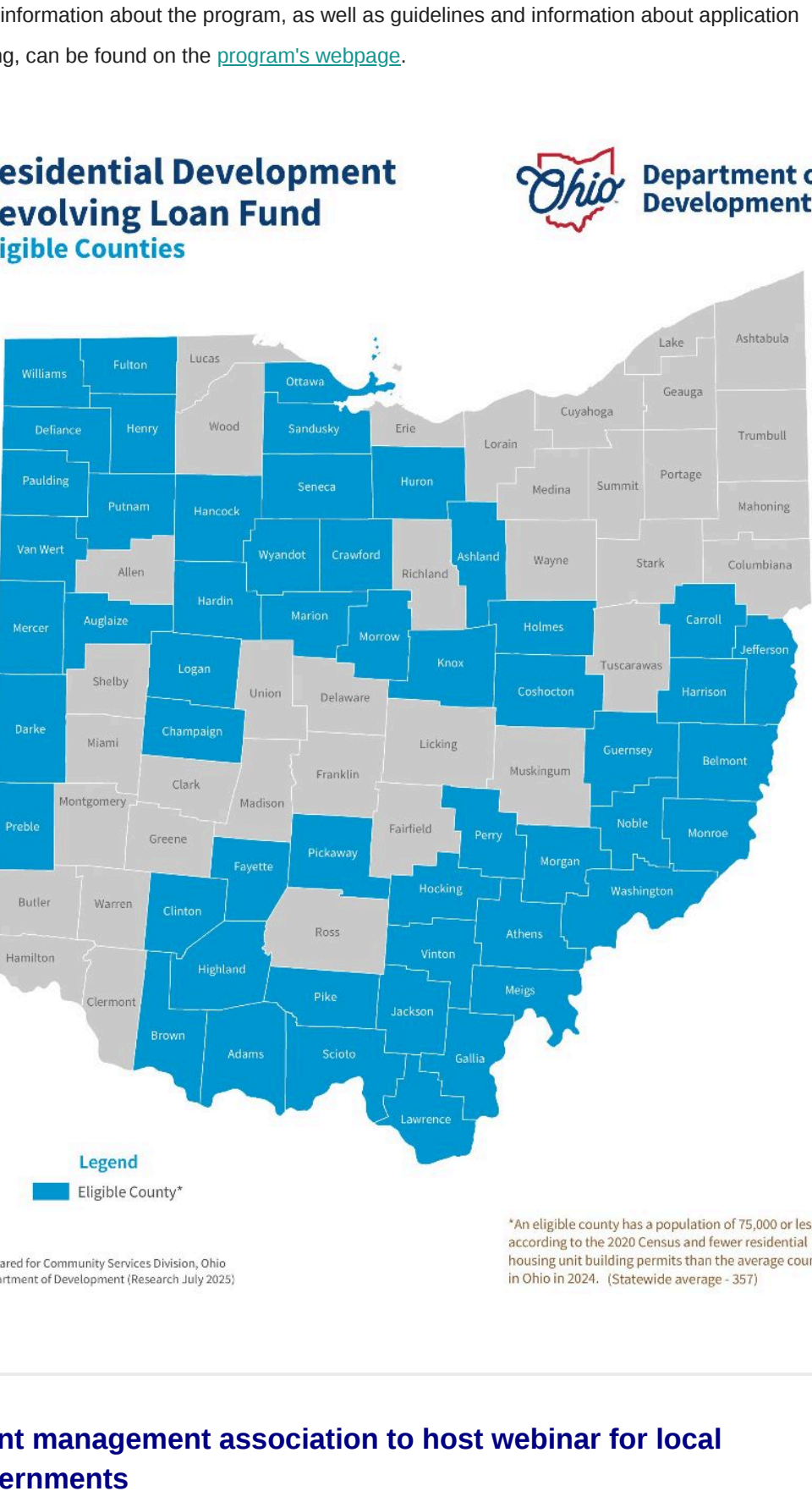
The Department of Development has begun accepting applications for the Residential Development Revolving Loan Program, which will provide loans to local governments to fund eligible infrastructure costs for the construction of new, single-family residential dwellings in rural areas of Ohio.

Approximately $100 million in funds is available for the program. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the appropriation is depleted.

Loans are available to only certain local governments. To be eligible, a government must either be the county itself or a township or municipality at least partially located in one of the highlighted counties on the map below. Eligible counties were determined by a population threshold (75,000 or less) and based on the number of housing unit permits granted last year.

Recipients must use the loans to develop infrastructure needed for the construction of a residential development project. Infrastructure for this purpose includes water, sewer, transportation, electric, or gas.

More information about the program, as well as guidelines and information about application scoring, can be found on the program's webpage.



### Grant management association to host webinar for local governments

On January 15, the National Grants Management Association will be hosting a webinar titled, "Growing with Grants: Preparing to Win and Manage Federal Awards."

The free webinar is intended for local government officials and will share important tips to grow grant management teams. Key takeaways will be:

- Developing a proposal strategy
- Understanding the grants lifecycle
- Creating a checklist for success
- Discussing the basics of compliance
- Exploring the use of internal staff versus consultants

While the webinar will focus on federal awards, the tips and strategies that will be covered could be useful to counties in winning and managing state and private grants as well.

Registration is free and can be completed here (account creation required).

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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

Commissioners approve '26 budget amidst union negotiations

**LimaOhio, December 30, 2025**

As the Allen County Board of Commissioners wrapped up its year-end business at its Tuesday morning meeting, the commissioners approved the county budget for next year, knowing that updates to the final numbers will still need to be made.

The vote to approve the budget came as negotiations for the next three-year contract with the unions associated with the Allen County Sheriff's Office are ongoing. With that in mind, the budget lines potentially impacted by the contract have the same numbers as the 2025 budget for now, according to commissioner Brian Winegardner.

"They are temporary budget numbers," he said. "We do that every year, right? We adjust throughout the year for whatever comes up — maintenance, fees or something. That number always gets adjusted throughout the year. So this is a little different, but it's still the same process."

While an agreement has already been reached with the union representing support staff for the sheriff's office, negotiations are taking place with the unions representing the deputies, dispatchers and corrections officers. Negotiations with the unions representing those in supervisory roles at the sheriff's office will begin after this round of negotiations have concluded, Winegardner said.

"Moving into 2026, we can't finalize the true numbers because we don't know what the outcome of that is going to be, whether it's a certain percentage [of the budget] or if it's higher than what we expected," he said. "So that's why we decided to move forward with the 2025 numbers going into 2026, and then we can adjust it."

Winegardner said there is no firm deadline at this point as to when the negotiations will need to be concluded, but he hopes that contracts with all the unions will be ratified by February at the latest in order to have the best grasp on how the county's expenses for the year will look.

### Northeast District

Commissioners review options on animal care

**Star Beacon, December 27, 2025**

A long-simmering disagreement between the Ashtabula County Animal Protective League and the Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners continues, with no end in sight.

A recent communication between APL leadership and the commissioners indicated the agency will not negotiate until the county dismisses an objection to the APL's revocation of two county dog wardens' ability to operate as humane agents.

The motion was filed in Ashtabula County Probate Court, and a hearing has been postponed twice due to the inability of the APL'S attorney to attend, Commissioner Casey Kozlowski said.

The commissioners said an email from the APL widened the disagreement with the county beyond placing a stay on dropping off animals when the shelter numbers are high.

"This takes on a whole new [tone]," County Administrator Janet Discher said.

"It has evolved into a back and forth," Kozlowski said.

He suggested a letter be sent to the APL indicating an interest in getting back to the bargaining table and coming up with a solution.

"We are looking into an alternative to house dogs," he said.

Commissioner Kathryn Whittington said she and Eastern County Court Executive Ryan Colby talked with representation of the Ashtabula County Humane Society, and offered to get that discussion going to see if there might be an option with them.

### Central District

Richland County commissioners recap noteworthy 2025 news

**Richland Source, December 31, 2025**

Cliff Mears said Richland County "is the place to be."

Mears, a county commissioner, took time at the end of Tuesday's meeting — the last of 2025 — to highlight some of the past year's notable happenings.

At the top of Mears' list was the $1.7 million in property tax relief commissioners approved near the end of October. The three-member board unanimously approved a motion to double the current state-funded 2.5 percent owner-occupancy credits, effective Jan. 1, 2026.

Richland County Auditor Pat Dropsey in October estimated the total property tax relief expected after commissioner's decision would be around $1.73 million.

"Property tax relief has been quite a discussion this year. The Board of Commissioners I think did a balanced amount of property tax relief," Mears said.

Next on the commissioner's list was the addition of a fourth courtroom for the Richland County Common Pleas Court. Unveiled in September, the new courtroom promises faster hearings and improved service for the public.

It is located on the second floor of the Richland County Administration Building and hosts a range of proceedings, including bench trials, jury trials, civil protection order hearings, bond hearings, visiting judges and court of appeals cases.

"I think it's state-of-the-art and something that Richland County can be very proud of," Mears said.

### Southwest District

Proposal for Miami County sales tax hike to pay for new jail topic of public hearings

**Dayton Daily News, January 2, 2026**

Miami County Commission will hold public hearings Jan. 22 and Jan. 27 on a proposed 0.5 percent sales tax for 10 years to build a new county jail.

The Jan. 22 hearing is set for 9:10 a.m. The Jan. 29 hearing is scheduled for 1:40 p.m. Hearings will be held in the county commissioners' hearing room located in the county Safety Building Troy.

Anyone interested in making written comments can do so and send the comments to Janelle Barga, clerk, Board of County Commissioners, Miami County commissioners, Troy, Ohio 45373.

The county has been discussing options for a new jail for months. The commissioners met with Sheriff Dave Duchak, Auditor Matt Gearhardt, bond lawyers county budget commission members to look at options for financing, including asking voters to support a tax issue.

"We're working closely with the auditor's office and bond agents on ballot language and funding options," Commissioner Wade Westfall said. "The funding includes a sunset clause, so it will be reviewed again in less than 10 years."

Attorneys are preparing paperwork to place the request on the ballot and set two public hearings on the requested funding, according to Westfall

In a report released earlier in 2025, consultants from Henningson, Durham and Richardson Inc., or HDR. recommended a new jail on the grounds of the current county Incarceration Facility north of Troy. The cost of a recommended 200-bed maximum security jail, including 32 new medical beds, was estimated at around $90 million.

### Southeast District

Harrison County commissioners approve contracts, note Toys for Tots totals

**YourOhioNews, December 30, 2025**

The Harrison County commissioners approved two resolutions related to IV-D contracts and the county Child Support Enforcement Agency.

The first, Resolution 45-25, addressed required contracts between the CSEA and the courts for enforcement purposes within the county.

"Whereas, the Harrison County CSEA has entered into an IV-D contract with the Harrison County Juvenile Courts for magistrate services," Commissioner Dustin Corder read.

The resolution states the commissioners accepted the IV-D contracts between the county CSEA and the Harrison County Juvenile Courts for the period from Oct. 1, 2025, through Sept. 30, 2026. In Contract 15-25, the CSEA entered into a separate IV-D contract with the Harrison County Prosecutor's Office to purchase services supporting the enforcement program.

"Unless otherwise specified, the terms of this IV-D contract apply to both governmental contractors and private contractors," the resolution states.

That IV-D contract is effective from Jan. 1, 2026, through Dec. 31, 2026. Services include legal representation through signatures, advice or presence at hearings. The unit rate is $75 per hour.

The commissioners also approved a transfer requested by the Board of Developmental Disabilities through the county auditor's office to move employees' shares of health insurance premiums from the county auditor's account into the PDA fund.

"These deduction amounts were withheld from Jan. 1, 2025, to Nov. 30, 2025. The total withheld from the employees' paychecks for that period was $20,218.58," Corder said.

Under purchase orders and vouchers, the County Home reported total expenses of $24,139.93. Line items included Otis Elevator, $1,338; Mizer Printing, $493; Kimble Refuse, $200.65; Performance Foods, $11,886.27; Sam's Club, $2,891.95; Sanders, $154.45; Staples, $312.66; and Summit Fire, $5,000.

Corder also reported on this year's Toys for Tots program, noting 179 families participated, involving 372 children. Each child received three toys, for a total of 1,116 toys distributed.

"Very proud of the community for that," Corder 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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**JANUARY 19**
**Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - Holiday**

**JANUARY 23**
**CCAO Board of Directors' Meeting**

**JANUARY 30**
**CEBCO Board of Directors' Meeting**

**FEBRUARY 13**
**CCAO Board of Directors' Meeting**

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