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COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO
CCAO
COUNTIES CURRENT

January 20, 2026

CCAO President and Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus and CCAO Executive Director Cheryl Subler took part in a NACo event with state association presidents and executives at Mount Vernon last week.

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Department of Taxation rebalances property value reappraisal schedule

Yesterday, the Department of Taxation announced that it was realigning the property tax reappraisal and update schedule to better balance the three rotating groups. Fifteen counties are having an upcoming reappraisal delayed by one year to reassign them to a different group, and Lucas County is having its next reappraisal moved up to 2028.

Any change to the reappraisal groups must occur at least two years before the change takes effect, so the changes are not immediate.

New Reappraisal Schedule
Only counties that are changing are listed.

2028 Reappraisal

- Lucas County

2030 Reappraisal

- Clinton
- Delaware
- Franklin
- Geauga
- Hamilton
- Jackson
- Mahoning
- Mercer
- Morrow
- Pike

2031 Reappraisal

- Crawford
- Cuyahoga
- Lake
- Muskingum
- Stark

CCAO is gathering more information about how this change will interact with the recently-enacted House Bill 335 (which caps inside millage growth upon reappraisals and updates to inflation over the prior three years) and other effects the change may have.

Realigning the reappraisal schedule to make more balanced groupings was a recommendation of the Governor's Property Tax Work Group. Since the reappraisal schedule is set administratively, it doesn't require legislative action.

CCAO standing committee membership request form is available

We would like to take this opportunity to encourage your active participation on our Standing Committees during 2026. As we continue to develop relationships with the Administration and General Assembly to advance our legislative priorities, your active participation and input are vital to the process.

Standing Committees have three primary purposes:

I. To review pending legislation and make recommendations to the Board of Directors about what CCAO's policy positions should be.

II. To serve as an information resource to members by providing a forum to discuss topical issues of importance by subject matter. Committees provide members with the opportunity to share problems and learn how other members have responded to similar problems. Standing Committees also frequently engage outside resources in their discussion of issues including affiliates, other elected officials, and state agency personnel.

III. To assist the staff on legislative issues pending in the General Assembly by providing guidance to staff, providing ideas on how to improve legislation, and by communicating with Members of the General Assembly on specific legislative proposals.

Please submit your interest using this online form by Friday, January 30.

We make every effort to accommodate your request in the order you indicate, and we generally do not appoint anyone to more than three (3) committees.

Please complete an interest form even if you currently serve on committees. Membership ***will*** automatically carry over from 2025 to 2026. If you have any questions, please contact Robin Garrett at rgarrett@ccao.org.

Please note that there will be a virtual meeting of the CCAO General Government & Operations Committee on Thursday, February 12 at 1:00 PM. Please mark this date on your calendar.

Again, we hope you will actively participate in the CCAO Standing Committees during 2026. We look forward to working with you.

Lininger promoted to CORSA Claims and Litigation Manager

Congratulations to Katie Lininger on her promotion to Claims and Litigation Manager, a role she began January 2026.

In her new role she will work with defense counsel and claims staff to protect the interests of CORSA member counties and ensure the efficient and effective management of claims. Katie has been a long-standing valuable member of the team for 20 years. She previously served as the Claims Supervisor where she excelled at overseeing the day-to-day claims activity.

Please join us in congratulating Katie on her new role!

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

Anthem

STATE AND FEDERAL

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NACo legislative conference to be held next month, webinar this week on advocacy tips

Registration is open for the NACo Annual Legislative Conference, which will be held in Washington, D.C., from February 21-24.

Registration for NACo members is $800 and $900 for non-members.

More information about how to register and the event schedule can be found on the event's webpage.

To assist county leaders in maximizing their impact at the conference, NACo is hosting a webinar this Thursday titled Advocacy 101 for Counties.

The webinar will provide a practical introduction to lobbying tailored specifically for county leaders. Attendees will learn how to prepare for Hill meetings, effectively advocate for NACo priorities, and translate county experiences into clear federal policy asks — ensuring every meeting counts while you're in town.

You can register for the webinar here.

Department of Aging conducting survey regarding senior services levies, responses sought by January 28

The Ohio Department of Aging is developing tools to enhance transparency between the state of Ohio and the public. One such tool includes a public-facing dashboard that will present key metrics related to the health and well-being of older Ohioans, with senior services levy funding being a key metric the Department is hoping to collect.

The Department has developed a survey to collect information on senior services levy funding in counties. The survey intends to gather data from the past state fiscal years (SFY 2021–2024) to gain an understanding of how much funding is available and the types of programs and services supported by these funds. This corresponds to July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2024.

Counties can access the survey here. The Department of Aging has also produced a guide to help assist those who complete the survey for their county.

The Department is asking that counties complete the survey by January 28, 2026.

EDUCATION AND GRANTS

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County land use planning grants accepting applications through February

The Department of Agriculture has made $1 million available for county governments to develop, update, or implement Land Use Plans or Farmland Preservation Plans.

As the state continues to see growth in numerous industries, food and agriculture remains Ohio's top industry – contributing $124 billion to the economy each year. This grant helps align farmland preservation with economic vitality, encourages collaboration between farmers and local governments, and supports efforts to preserve farmland.

To be eligible, county governments must demonstrate collaboration with:

- All townships, villages, and municipalities within the county that contain active farmland;
- The county Soil and Water Conservation District and/or Regional Planning Commission; and
- Optional partners such as land trusts, agricultural nonprofits, or educational institutions that provide technical assistance.

Applications and more information can be found at the program's webpage. Applications must be submitted no later than February 27, 2026.

Historical records training scholarship available

The Ohio Historical Records Advisory Board, in conjunction with the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, is pleased to offer scholarship aid to support continuing education for graduate students and individuals who care for the historic record. The Board will award two scholarships of up to $1,000 each to assist individuals in attending, either virtually or in person, a professional development opportunity of their choosing. Funding is available to support attendance at trainings, meetings, or conferences.

Applicants must be individuals who are full-time (minimum of 9 credits) graduate students currently enrolled in an Ohio institution of higher education; individuals working or volunteering in an Ohio library, archive, special collection, or government repository; individuals who serve as a state, county, municipal or township officials or their designees and whose main responsibility is to maintain public records; and those who work or volunteer in other roles caring for or providing access to records within the State of Ohio.

The application for the scholarship is available here.

To be considered, the application must be received no later than **March 1**. Applications received after this date will not be considered. Applicants will be notified by phone or email of their status respectively.

The completed application and required narrative should be sent or emailed to: Chris Shaw, Delaware County Records Center, 2079 US Rte. 23 North, PO Box 8006, Delaware, OH, 43015. Or cshaw@co.delaware.oh.us.

AARP grants available to enhance community livability for seniors

AARP invites eligible organizations to apply for the 2026 AARP Community Challenge Grant program. Now its tenth year, the AARP Community Challenge grants support tangible improvement projects that help make communities more livable for all residents – especially those age 50 and older.

Applications are being accepted through March 4, 2026 at 5 p.m. for projects that enhance:

- Public places
- Housing
- Transportation
- Digital connections
- Disaster resilience

Three funding opportunities are available:

- Flagship Grants
- Demonstration Grants
- Capacity-Building Microgrants

Ohio projects to receive funding in 2025 included walk audits to find sidewalk stretches that needed repair, safety assessments of homes for those who have had falls or were at risk of falls, and improving internet services in age-restricted housing, among others.

NACo, Professional Development Academy training options available

Two development opportunities are available to county leaders through NACo and the Professional Development Academy.

The NACo High Performance Leadership Academy is intended to help empower county leaders with practical and fundamental leadership skills that they can utilize to deliver results to the residents of their communities. The curriculum was developed in part by the late General Colin Powell and other private and public sector leaders.

Enrollment costs $1,995 (discounts may be available). The academy is delivered entirely online over ten weeks. There are three cohorts remaining, which are set to begin on April 6, July 13, and October 5. More information is available at the academy's webpage.

The Workforce Network Leadership Program is intended for county administrators and county HR professionals. The program costs $1,000 per participant and will help participants build strong mindsets in times of great change, align high-performing teams to balance competing priorities, and effectively execute strategies to deliver higher value to multiple stakeholders.

More information about the Workforce Network Leadership Program, and information on how to enroll, can be gathered by emailing the program administrator Luke Afeman.

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

Ottawa presents draft annexation agreement for sewer districts

LimaOhio, January 15, 2026

As Putnam County commissioners and the village of Ottawa continue to discuss how to resolve an issue surrounding sewer service to some residents living outside Ottawa's village limits, the plan, they said, is to eventually go to the residents themselves for input.

Ottawa Public Works Director Kyle Stechschulte met with the commissioners Thursday morning to continue a discussion begun back in December regarding sewer services for an estimated 268 customers in Sewer Districts 1 and 2 outside of Ottawa. The issue centers around an agreement in place since 1978 that places the commissioners in the position of overseeing these county-owned sewer lines despite not having an operator of record.

The discussion began about having the village's public works department take on that work, but the village stipulated that any properties it takes on should be annexed into the village. However, in December, there was uncertainty about how to move forward since the original contract could not be found.

"I found the old contract," Stechschulte said to the board during Thursday's meeting. "I think it's, like, one page."

Having that as a baseline, Stechschulte provided the board with a draft agreement for sewer operations, one addressing the need for an operator of record.

Northeast District

Ohio county board proposes using grant funding from opioid settlements to pay for sheriff's office equipment

Police1, January 14, 2026

Geauga County commissioners are preparing to open up $100,000 in opioid settlement money for local grants, with the county's Mental Health & Recovery Board hoping to use funding for an addiction recovery home and equipment for the Geauga County Sheriff's Office.

Commissioners discussed the plan during Tuesday's meeting, describing the effort as a partnership between the Board of Commissioners and the Geauga County Board of Mental Health and Recovery Services, which will issue a request for proposals by the end of January.

Under the arrangement, the mental health board will administer the application process and conduct technical evaluations, while final funding decisions will be made by the commissioners, Commissioner Carolyn Brakey said.

Brakey said the board plans to initially set aside $100,000 for grants but may adjust that amount depending on the proposals received.

Christine Lakomiak, executive director of the Geauga County Board of Mental Health and Recovery Services, said Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers previously received $300,000 in OneOhio opioid settlement funds to establish a recovery house, but spent about a year searching for a suitable property. Officials have now identified a home in Geauga County with an estimated price of $350,000, leaving a $50,000 funding gap, she said.

If the purchase is approved as part of the grant process, the home would be fully renovated and furnished and could serve about 12 people in recovery.

Lakomiak also raised a potential need at the Geauga County Sheriff's Office, where recently renovated space for partner agencies lacks basic equipment, such as tables and chairs. She suggested opioid settlement funds could be used to cover those costs rather than relying on county tax dollars.

Commissioners emphasized that all funding requests — including those from county departments — must go through the RFP process and be evaluated under the same criteria before any money is awarded.

Central District

Objections filed against Hillclimber Solar

Urbana Daily Citizen, January 17, 2026

Champaign County Prosecutor Kevin Talebi has filed objections on behalf of Champaign County and Urbana Township to the Hillclimber Solar and Storage project.

The objections were visible on the Ohio Power Siting Board's case docket on Monday, Jan. 12.

Talebi stated the county and local townships had already placed prohibitions on utility-scale wind and solar installations, as provided by state law in 2022, before Hillclimber Solar began its state siting board process.

Urbana Township is among those prohibiting such developments.

"The County Commissioners have taken action to restrict areas where wind and solar facilities can be located consistent with Senate Bill 52 (SB 52). It is our position that the solar project proposed by Hillclimber Solar is not exempt from the requirements of SB 52 and the application as submitted should be rejected by the Ohio Power Siting Board," Talebi said in a press release.

On Nov. 20, 2025, the county commissioners "passed a second resolution specifically prohibiting the construction of this particular facility that is the subject of the pre-application process," according to Talebi's filed letter of objection to the power siting board.

Talebi's letter of objection also states, "it does not appear that Hillclimber Solar, LLC has taken steps in a timely manner to exempt the subject project from the requirements of SB 52 (state law) and, as a result, Hillclimber Solar, LLC is prohibited from filing an application, and if filed, the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) cannot accept an application for certificate. Further, the staff of OPSB cannot certify that the application is complete without an explicit showing of evidence by the applicant that the project is not subject to the requirements of SB 52, now codified in the Ohio Revised Code."

Southwest District

Clark County commissioners to hold evening meeting once a month

Springfield News Sun, January 13, 2026

The Clark County commissioners are switching up one of their meeting times for this year.

Commissioners passed a resolution Jan. 7 to hold meetings at 5:30 p.m. the first Wednesday of every month, with all others to remain at 8:30 a.m. on Wednesdays as they have been, at 3130 E. Main St.freestar

"I do think it would be good for us to try and have some sort of schedule where we have some meetings in the evenings," President Sasha Rittenhouse said during the meeting. "We can kind of feel it out to see what kind of participation we get because I know a lot of times our participation in meetings depends on what's on the agenda and we cannot plan ahead for that."

Commissioner Charles Patterson said he thought this was a good idea because it's been requested from the public before.

"This would be a good way to sort of dip our toes in the water, see what our participation rates are," he said. "I like the idea of setting it (for whatever Wednesday) and be consistent so everybody knows that one would always be the meeting (at that time)."

Patterson added she felt a monthly one was more consistent than every other month.

Acting commissioner Rick Lohnes, being a former commissioner, said over the years they had tried evening meetings a couple of times, but it was tougher then because of the location and the same people that came to the morning meetings attending the night meetings.

Southeast District

Coshocton County commissioners trim 2026 spending, hope to save jobs

Coshocton Tribune, January 13, 2026

Commissioner Dane Shryock called the county's general fund budget for 2026 "a moving target" as they'll be taking finances month by month in an attempt to manage costs and avoid layoffs. As many as 17 may lose their jobs.

The county general fund budget was originally approximately $21 million for 2026 with revenue estimated at $17 million and a 2025 carryover balance of $5.1 million. Budget Director Robin Schonauer wants to shave about $1 million off this year's budget.

Leading to issues is an additional $2.1 million requested by Coshocton County Job and Family Services for foster care costs this year.

At a budget meeting Jan. 12, Commissioner Bob Bigrigg outlined a four-point plan to cut current year expenditures.

"None of us have a crystal ball underneath our desk to be able to figure this stuff out. We're trying to do the best we can do with what resources we have available to us," Bigrigg said.

All departments with budgets coming from the general fund will be cut by 4.5% from 2025. It's up to department heads to decide where to make individual cuts based on the money they'll be receiving. Shryock said there might be some slight fluctuation in that percentage if a department showed a revenue increase in 2025. Departments also can't ask for additional funding this year.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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JANUARY 23
CCAO Board of Directors' Meeting

JANUARY 30
CEBCO Board of Directors' Meeting

FEBRUARY 13
CCAO Board of Directors' Meeting

FEBRUARY 16
Presidents' Day - Holiday

FEBRUARY 20
CEBCO Board of Directors' Meeting

FEBRUARY 27
CORSA Board of Directors' Meeting

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