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January 26, 2026

Noble County Commissioners Brian Carter, Allen Fraley, and Gary Saling provided CCAO Executive Cheryl Subler and CCAO Staffer John Leutz an in-depth overview of EMS and fire operations in their rural county where 100% of fire response remains volunteer based.

Photo courtesy of David Evans

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ASSOCIATION AND MEMBER NEWS

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Final call for CCAO standing committee membership requests

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.

A Special Thanks to our Pinnacle Partner

JobsOhio
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Development Corporation

STATE AND FEDERAL

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Coalition of national local government groups sends SNAP letter

Earlier this month, a coalition of organizations that represent local governments sent a letter to Congressional leadership requesting a delay of the SNAP benefit cost share and administrative cost share until FFY 2030 and to exclude data from October and November 2025 from federal quality control samples due to the federal government shutdown that was occurring during those months.

The full letter, available here, contains more details on these recommendations.

The letter was signed by NACo, the National Governors Association, the American Public Human Services Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Association of County Human Services Administrators, the National League of Cities, the Council of State Governments, the US Conference of Mayors, and the International County/City Management Association.

Ohio Housing Finance Agency updating Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program

The Ohio Housing Finance Agency (OHFA) serves as the allocating entity for the Ohio's Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (OLIHTC), and may reserve OLIHTC from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2027. The intent of the program is to create additional rental housing that would not have otherwise been created using federal, state, or private financing.

OHFA has made the SFY 2027 OLIHTC draft guidelines available for public comment through February 17, with comments to be sent to StateTaxCredits@ohiohome.org. The draft changes and an interactive map of program boundaries is available on the program's webpage.

OHFA is also hosting a webinar to review the proposed changes today at 11:00 a.m. You can attend by following this link.

Modeled after the federal program of the same name, OLIHTC allows owners of qualifying affordable rental projects to claim tax credits against state taxable liabilities over a 10-year Credit Period. These credits are then exchanged by investors and syndicators for equity to help construct or preserve affordable rental housing throughout the state.

OLIHTCs are limited by a state statutory credit ceiling of $100 million per state fiscal year. The $100 million annual credit cap is the full 10-year credit period amount. It also must be paired with affordable rental housing proposals that have secured a reservation of federal LIHTCs pursuant to the applicable Qualified Allocation Plan (QAP).

OEPA seeking input regarding State Solid Waste Management Plan

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA)'s Division of Materials and Waste Management is requesting input on the State Solid Waste Management Plan.

R.C. 3734.50 requires OEPA, with the advice of the Materials Management Advisory Council, to review the progress Ohio has made toward achieving the objectives in the State Plan every three years. Based upon the findings of the review, Ohio EPA may prepare and adopt a revised State Plan. Following the most recent three-year review of the current State Plan, OEPA, with the advice of the Materials Management Advisory Council, recommends revisions to the State Plan.

The following questions may help guide you as you develop your comments.

- What specific objectives will further reduce reliance on the use of landfills for management of solid waste?
- What changes to the objectives in the current State Plan would overcome the challenges associated with achieving those objectives?
- What new objectives should OEPA consider?
- Should the State Plan set different objectives for urban, suburban, and rural areas? For example, R.C. 3734.50 requires the agency to take into consideration the feasibility of waste reduction, recycling, reuse, and minimization measures and landfilling restrictions in urban, suburban, and rural areas.
- What strategies can OEPA pursue, and what resources can Ohio EPA make available to assist with achieving the objectives in the State Plan?
- Is there any information or data OEPA should be aware of as the agency evaluates the objectives in the State Plan?

This request for stakeholder input is only for the State Plan and does not seek comments for statutory amendments or rulemaking. Upon adoption of the revised State Plan, OEPA will amend Ohio Administrative Code Rule 3745-27-90. OEPA will conduct early stakeholder outreach at the beginning of that rule update process.

OEPA will accept written comments through the close of business on February 28, 2026. Please submit input to SWMDPlanners@epa.ohio.gov.

Auditor of State's CPI Bulletin issued for GAAP capital asset calculations

The Auditor of State has released Bulletin 2026-001, the office's annual Consumer Price Index bulletin.

Political subdivisions reporting in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles may have to calculate the historical cost of a capital asset. Listed below is the consumer price index (CPI) for years ranging from 1935 to 2025 that may be used for such calculations.

Please note that the base year of the index is "1967" (at 100.0).

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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Invasive species mitigation grants available through Friday

The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) is making grants of up to $15,000 available to organizations that are working to control the invasive spotted lanternfly (SLF). The SLF poses a threat to a number of crops, including grapes, hops, stone fruits, and others.

SLF is particularly drawn to the tree of heaven, itself an invasive species. Removal of the tree is the best strategy for reducing both its own invasiveness and that of the SLF.

The grants available through ODA can be used for tree of heaven removal, application of herbicides to kill the trees, application of insecticides to kill SLF, and other purposes.

The grants are available to local government agencies among other eligible applicants.

The deadline to apply is this Friday, January 20. More information on the program and the application itself is accessible here.

Chamber of Commerce to host Housing Summit in February

The Ohio Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a Housing Summit on February 26, which will convene housing experts, business leaders, policymakers, and community partners for in-depth conversations on the opportunities and challenges shaping Ohio's housing landscape. Participants will explore the factors affecting housing supply, accessibility, and affordability—and how these issues directly influence Ohio's ability to attract and retain a growing workforce.

Through collaborative discussions, case studies, and forward-looking insights, the series will highlight innovative approaches, policy considerations, and community-driven strategies aimed at strengthening Ohio's housing market. Attendees will gain a clearer understanding of the interconnected needs of employers, workers, and local communities as Ohio continues to grow and compete for talent.

The full agenda can be found here.

Registration costs $99 for Chamber of Commerce members and $149 for non-members.

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 Micrograants

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.

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

Construction of new Allen County Administration Building moves toward fall completion

Hometown Stations, January 15, 2026

Construction of the new Allen County Administration Building is in full swing, with a completion date expected this fall.

County officials say the exterior of the building is nearly finished, while work on the interior continues to take shape. Once complete, the facility will house many of the non-judicial administrative county offices under one roof.

The new administration building marks the first step in a broader series of projects aimed at making county government more accessible and consumer-friendly for residents.

Allen County Commissioner Cory Noonan said seeing the project come together has been exciting after months of planning.

"We've been looking at prints and going over the prints, you know, for many, many months. So to see it now, to see the walls, the studs going up, and actually see the offices and how they're going to be and the windows and counters for the public, it is exciting because, again, it is a structure that's going to be way more conducive for our county elected officials and the residents of Allen County coming in here."

The administration building is a $17 million project that county leaders say was financed without taking on debt. Officials say the next major capital improvement will be the renovation of the Allen County Courthouse, a project that will bring county courts under one roof.

Northeast District

Commissioners, auditor discuss potential effects of property-tax elimination

Gazette News, January 23, 2026

The Ashtabula County commissioners offered their thoughts on the push by some to eliminate property taxes in the State of Ohio during their talk at the Business Compass event hosted by the Rock Creek Area Chamber of Commerce on Friday, Jan. 16, at Paradise Bay in Roaming Shores.

Commissioners Casey Kozlowski, Kathryn Whittington and J.P. Ducro IV fielded questions from the audience on the matter.

With county Auditor Scott Yamamoto also in attendance, he also was invited to share his perspective.

The questions related to an initiative led by the Committee to Abolish Ohio Property Taxes seeking a statewide vote this November to eliminate property taxes statewide through a proposed Constitutional amendment. Organizers have until early July to gather roughly 418,000 certified signatures from registered voters in at least half of Ohio's 88 counties to reach the November ballot.

Rock Creek Area Chamber of Commerce President Bob Schultz asked the commissioners what impact the elimination of property taxes could have.

"The impact would be monumental," Kozlowski said.

Property taxes fund a number of services in the County, he said.

"As it relates to County government, the impact would be, of course, the county commissioners' General Fund. We receive property-tax revenue to support county government operations, though it's a much smaller percentage compared to sales tax. Sales tax is our largest source of revenue for our county government services," Kozlowski said.

Central District

Commissioners 'very pleased' with effort by Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development

Richland Source, January 20, 2026

Ellen Heinz promised Richland County commissioners "enhanced local economic development" efforts in 2025 when asking for additional funding.

All three commissioners endorsed those efforts during a meeting Tuesday with Heinz and other leaders of Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development.

"We're very pleased with the taxpayer investment," Commissioner Tony Vero said. "It's a pragmatic approach to economic development.

"When the community made a decision to combine (the Richland Community Development Group) and the chamber, it made sense that the economic development function of the county be organized under the chamber," Vero said.

Commissioners voted in 2021 to pay the chamber $100,000 annually for its work around the county, an amount that increased by $15,000 last year. It came after a request by Heinz, the chamber's president and CEO.

She said the chamber planned to expand its economic development efforts. But these opportunities require additional funding, she said. Heinz and other chamber officials meet with commissioners twice yearly to go over development efforts.

Southwest District

Voters could decide on an increased children's services levy

Cincinnati Enquirer, January 20, 2026

Hamilton County residents may vote on a potential increase to the children's services levy this year.

Hamilton County Administrator Jeff Aluotto called the levy "the frontline defense" for children at risk of abuse and neglect. It funds the abuse and neglect hotline, foster care, family preservation and reunification and independent living, among other services.

Voters last approved the levy in 2021 at a rate of 4.51 mills and it currently costs taxpayers $81.15 per $100,000 home, Webb said. It was last increased in 2018.

Those taxes generate about $81 million per year – not nearly enough anymore to care for the children in the county's care, county officials said.

Assistant County Administrator Lisa Webb presented to the commissioners at their Jan. 20 meeting and said Jobs and Family Services is trying to balance the needs of the community with the burden on taxpayers.

Webb said to maintain the levy's current services, it would need to generate about $123 million more per year, but staff felt that would be too onerous a burden for taxpayers.

If the county decided the levy needed to generate $65 million more, which was the minimum staff suggested, it would be a roughly 80% increase in the money the levy generates.

Southeast District

Community, commission continue discussion on Meigs County jail

Daily Post Athenian, January 23, 2026

Discussions continued on the status of the Meigs County jail between commissioners and citizens recently.

The Meigs County Board of Commissioners provided some small updates concerning the jail during the citizen comments period of both their regular workshop and monthly meeting for the month of January.

Beginning with the workshop that took place on Jan. 8, a citizen of the county asked the commission if the county was currently paid up with the architect firm that was leading the jail project.

"As far as paid up, yes," said Meigs County Mayor Eddie Jewell. "Everything has been submitted."

Jewell stated that he had Meigs County Attorney Sheridan Randolph research the contracts to see if the county would be able to terminate the contract they have with the firm.

Randolph confirmed that the county had the ability to terminate the contract with Spirit Architect so long as they were all paid up.

Additionally, the citizen provided information to the commission that he and a few others had toured the jail and witnessed a lot of the issues they were experiencing there, including a very slick floor, lock issues and more.

Following the citizen comment portion of the workshop, Commissioner Ralph Minnis asked when they were going to start cleaning out the old health department portion of the jail in order to remodel it for jail use.

"They are going to have to get on it," Minnis expressed. "We need to get our certification back."

The question was sparked due to a conversation the commission had during a meeting in December where former Meigs County Sheriff Walter Hickman informed the county commission that his team had already prepared for future expansion during his tenure as sheriff. Additionally, he noted that they could renovate the old health department with the intention of housing more inmates.

DATES TO REMEMBER

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

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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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