FALL 2026

COUNTY LEADER



FEATURING

New Approach to Indigent Defense Earns Praise

Land Banks as Partners in Housing and Economic Development

Celebrating Agriculture through Ohio's County and Independent Fairs

Supporting Agricultural Safety and Farm Stress Education









COVER: CCAO Members attend the 2026 OSU CFAES Farm Science Review. Pictured left to right: CCAO's Kenton Dresbach, CCAO Treasurer and Logan County Commissioner Joe Antram, Preble County Commissioner Rachael Vonderhaar, CCAO Board Member and Wayne County Commissioner Jon Hofstetter, CCAO Board Member and Muskingum County Commissioner Melissa Bell, State Representative Bob Peterson and State Representative Roy Klopfenstein.

ABOVE:

1: The CORSA Board of Directors hosted their annual meeting in September. Pictured left to right: Allen County Commissioner Cory Noonan, Washington County Commissioner Charlie Schilling, Ashland County Commissioner Jim Justice, Ottawa County Commissioner Mark Stahl, Wood County Commissioner Craig LaHote, Delaware County Commissioner Gary Merrell, Guernsey County Commissioner Dave Wilson, Huron County Commissioner Harry Brady, and Pickaway County Commissioner Gary Scherer.

2: Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and Cuyahoga County Executive Chris Ronayne following Executive Shapiro's State of the County address.

3: Perry County Commissioners Chase Bennett and Ben Carpenter and Judge Boyer hosted CCAO's Cheryl Subler and John Leutz for a tour of the county's recently renovated courthouse.

4: Montgomery County Commissioners Judy Dodge, Mary McDonald, and Carolyn Rice with county staff and other local leaders and partners unveiled the site of the county's future Job and Training Center. Photo courtesy of Ethan Emery, Communications Specialist, Montgomery County.

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A MESSAGE FROM 2026 CCAO PRESIDENT



Denise Driehaus

CCAO President, Hamilton County Commissioner

As I reflect on my term as CCAO President, I am reminded of the challenges we've faced this year. But even in the midst of rising costs and increasing pressure, what sticks out to me the most about this year is the importance and impact of the work that we, as county leaders, do together.

That work was in the spotlight at this year's Summer Symposium, which I was proud to host in Hamilton County. Thank you to the 170+ county commissioners, staff, and guests who joined us at the end of August for two days of learning, fellowship and collaboration.

We discussed some of the most pressing issues for Ohio counties, from emergency response and budgeting to AI and data centers. I was especially proud to see Hamilton County's own Addiction Response Coalition talk about their critical work. It was encouraging to see so many thoughtful questions being asked and similar interests being identified.

My hope is that the relationships that were formed and deepened over a pint at Rhinegeist or at the Reds game continue to foster that collaborative spirit that is so important in this work. When we put our heads together, lift up the voices of constituents across the state and advocate with a unified voice, counties in Ohio become stronger.



President Driehaus speaks to attendees at the 2026 Summer Symposium in Hamilton County.



President Driehaus with the Hamilton County ARC panelists. From left to right: Tom Synan, Chief of Police of Village of Newtown, and Co-Chair of the Interdiction Pillar; Mike Davenport, Commander, Hamilton County Heroin Coalition Task Force; Driehaus; Meagan Guthrie, Director, Hamilton County Office of Addiction Response; Sarah Coyne, Care & Training Liaison, Hamilton County Office of Addiction Response.

That is my most critical takeaway as president of this organization: We are in this work together. Whether you represent an urban, rural or suburban county (or all of these), your voice matters as we promote our priorities and work to solve difficult policy questions.

As you know, this work never stops! As we prepare to close out the year, we have another great opportunity to convene this year at the CCAO Winter Conference in Columbus from December 9-11. I hope to see you there!

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GRANGER

LETTER FROM CCAO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Thirty Years, Countless Relationships and One Great Ride



Cheryl Subler
CCAO Executive Director

On October 28, 1996, I walked through the door at the County Commissioners Association of Ohio, excited to join a team of incredibly talented people. Little did I know what a wonderful ride the next 30 years would be!

At the time, CCAO was led by Executive Director Larry Long, Assistant Director Jerry Collamore and policy expert Brad Cole. These gentlemen had an extraordinary understanding of county government, the laws governing it and the practical realities facing county officials. Their commitment went far beyond knowing the answers. They were problem-solvers.

Larry often described his role as serving as a county administrator for Ohio's 88 counties. He was also one of their greatest champions. Thirty years later, I continue to draw upon what I learned under his tutelage. In fact, I still call Larry occasionally to ask whether he's ever encountered some unusual situation I'm navigating.

While I'll never possess Larry's remarkable brainpower or talents, I hope I've carried forward his vision, dedication to public service and genuine heart for our members. And perhaps that strong work ethic I developed growing up in Darke County has helped me along the way!

Over the years, I've gained a few perspectives and lessons that continue to guide me.

First, I draw tremendous energy from people: county officials and their staffs, state elected leaders, legislative and agency professionals, and the many talented advocates around the Statehouse. I've been fortunate to develop friendships with some truly remarkable individuals. Staying curious and being genuinely sincere have always been my guiding principles. As former Wood County Commissioner Jim Carter taught me early on, there's something to learn from everyone.

Second, public service is a lot like a roller coaster. There are twists and turns, exhilarating highs, occasional stomach-dropping lows and plenty of unexpected surprises. Yet, what a fabulous ride it can be, especially when you're surrounded by good people and friends!

Third, I've collected a few favorite sayings along the way. Being right doesn't necessarily move the ball forward. Keep asking yourself whether you're staying relevant. No dinosaurs allowed! Think for yourself rather than simply repeating what others say. No robots either! Be a lifelong learner. Kindness is not weakness. And integrity matters. These reminders have served me well, especially when navigating touchy situations and tough decisions.

Fourth, I see my role as part county administrator, part advocate and sometimes part change agent. At its heart, the job is about supporting our 282 county commissioners, county executives and council members, along with the dedicated professionals who work alongside them.

That support takes many forms. CCAO's risk-sharing, benefits and purchasing programs help counties stretch limited taxpayer dollars while supporting their greatest asset, their employees. We also provide practical training, useful resources and timely information to help our members succeed. And, of course, there's advocacy! Counties serve as the state's 88 branch offices, delivering vital services under Ohio law.

Advocacy involves much more than making a case for legislation. It means helping others understand how county government works, the services counties provide and the practical consequences of policy decisions. It also requires listening, supporting others' initiatives and recognizing that progress rarely happens overnight. Often, success comes down to relationships built over many years, grounded in trust, professionalism, mutual respect and hopefully a little fun!

Change isn't always comfortable. Sometimes it's downright messy. Still, I've always believed that if we keep our shared purpose in mind, serving Ohio's residents and making our state a better place, we can work through difficult issues together.

As I reflect on this milestone, I'm especially grateful for the tremendous colleagues I've worked alongside at CCAO, CORSA, CEBCO and the Service Corporation at 209 East State Street. Their talent and dedication make every day better. I'm equally grateful for our partners at NACo, who amplify the voice of counties at the federal level and provide invaluable opportunities to exchange ideas and learn from one another.

I also want to express my appreciation to Governor Mike DeWine, First Lady Fran DeWine and their team for the strong partnership we've enjoyed over the past eight years. Regardless of whether one agrees with every decision, Governor DeWine has remained accessible, demonstrated genuine respect for county government and shown an unwavering commitment to Ohio's children and families.

Most importantly, I'm indebted to our members. They generously give of their time and talents as elected officials, then come together under the big tent of CCAO to tackle increasingly complex challenges and craft pragmatic solutions. Their dedication, collaborative spirit and determination to build a better tomorrow are what truly set them apart.

Thirty years later, I'm looking forward to a few more turns on this roller coaster! I have no doubt that 2027 will bring new challenges, exciting opportunities and perhaps a few twists unlike anything we've experienced before. I feel incredibly blessed to work for CCAO and its 282 elected officials, alongside their dedicated staffs and my fabulous colleagues at 209 East State Street.

What a ride, and what a privilege!
#StrongerCountiesStrongerOhio

POLICY UPDATE Gas Tax Suspension Protects Transportation Funding as Counties Prepare for Lame Duck



Adam Schwiebert

CCAO Managing Director of Policy

For anyone who has watched even a little television lately, it is clear that campaign season is in full swing. With the November general election approaching, candidates across Ohio are making their final pitches to voters, and commercial breaks offer few breaks from politics. But the campaign trail is not the only place seeing activity. Recent action at the Statehouse and an anticipated busy lame duck session give county officials plenty to follow in the weeks ahead.

One significant development is the enactment of House Bill 519, signed into law on October 1, which temporarily suspends nearly all of Ohio's motor fuel tax on gasoline and diesel for approximately three months. Along with providing relief at the pump, the legislation includes essential protections to preserve state and local transportation funding. Of particular importance to counties, the legislation provides replacement funding to hold local governments harmless during the temporary suspension.

To accomplish this, the legislation appropriates $725 million from the state General Revenue Fund to replace motor fuel tax revenues. These replacement dollars are to flow through the statutory motor fuel tax distribution framework. With this funding in place, there should not be transportation funding shortfalls at either the state or local level as a result of the temporary suspension.

That protection matters. Counties depend on reliable transportation revenues to maintain roads and bridges, respond to winter weather, and plan improvements that support public safety and economic activity. These responsibilities continue regardless of changes in tax collections. Providing temporary relief to motorists while maintaining those investments recognizes that Ohioans depend on both affordable transportation and a safe, reliable road network.

CCAO, working alongside our county engineer partners, will closely follow the distribution of state funding to help ensure counties continue to receive the resources needed for roads and bridges. We will keep members informed as implementation moves forward and welcome any questions or concerns that arise.

Meanwhile, the policy team looks forward to the General Assembly's return for what is expected to be a fast-paced lame duck session. The final weeks of a legislative session can bring substantial activity, with proposals advancing quickly and amendments introducing significant changes on short notice.

A wide variety of issues could be considered, including potential changes to county child protective services and legislation concerning data centers. As proposals emerge, CCAO will examine their implications for county responsibilities, funding, and local decision-making.

After the election, we encourage county officials to reach out to their lawmakers, offer congratulations, and thank those who stepped forward to serve. Campaigns can be grueling for candidates and their families, and taking a moment to acknowledge that effort matters. With attention quickly turning back to legislating, these conversations also offer an opportunity to reconnect and discuss county priorities.

The policy team will monitor developments closely and communicate with members as legislation advances. Whether the issue is transportation funding, child protection, or another county responsibility, a strong state-county partnership depends on understanding how decisions in Columbus affect the counties we serve.

FEATURE New Approach to Longstanding Challenge of Indigent Defense Earns Praise in Northwest Ohio

by Kent Cahlander, Guest Writer

If the feedback from local officials is any indication, a novel way of addressing problems related to providing constitutionally-required legal defense representation for criminal defendants unable to afford it could be a blueprint for other parts of the state.

Through the Northwest Regional Hub (NWRH) pilot included in the last biennial state budget measure, Allen, Hardin and Putnam counties agreed to partner with the Ohio Public Defender's Office (OPD) for the administration of indigent defense.

That legal coverage is a perennial challenge for counties, especially in rural parts of the state, and the obstacles to providing indigent defense have been exacerbated in recent years with a drop in the number of available attorneys.

While state funding for indigent defense has increased over the last several years – the two-year budget bill (HB 96) included $400 million to reimburse county costs in the 80% range – smaller counties continue to struggle while juggling dockets and the administration of justice.

As such, the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) partnered with OPD, the Ohio State Bar Association (OSBA), the Ohio Judicial Conference, and the Ohio Access to Justice Foundation to propose the NWRH, which based on early indications has lived up to its promise despite some early misgivings.

The Northwest Hub for indigent defense is housed in Allen County, which previously had its own public defender's office. From that base, a team of attorneys funded by OPD provide representation in neighboring Hardin and Putnam counties, who prior to the Hub relied more heavily on a court-appointed system of indigent defense that has been increasingly challenging to administer as the pool of local attorneys willing to do the work has dried up.

REGIONAL APPROACH FINDS KEY SUPPORT AT LOCAL, STATE LEVELS

Allen County Commissioner Cory Noonan, a key proponent of the Hub, said the county moved to its own public defender's office in 2020 because of the same issues that would prompt the NWRH pilot. That decision came with some additional up-front costs, he said, "but it was something that had to be done" given the lack of available defense attorneys in the region.

"What we were finding was our pool was diminishing. So those in need of the service, there was a lag" in obtaining counsel, Noonan said. "So number one, it's harming them – it's taking longer for them. Number two, if they're in the county jail, it's costing us more because we can't provide them the attorneys they need."

The commissioner said Allen County's experience prompted discussions with CCAO about a regional approach to the issue. The idea that intrigued him, he said, was: "Is there not a way we could be more efficient, both in providing the service and financially? Do we need to have these professionals in Allen County or can we have them in a region for these particular cases?"

Noonan said the idea was nothing new, pointing to the 1992 report by the Supreme Court Task Force to Study Court Costs and Indigent Defense, which found the system to be "neither efficient nor cost-effective in many areas throughout Ohio."

"State-operated regional offices would assist local public defender commissions in several areas, including investigative services, social workers, and expert witnesses," the report stated.

"This is a conversation that dates back decades," Noonan said.

Subsequent studies have backed up those findings, but the NWRH is the first attempt by the state to implement a regional system for indigent defense.

The concept picked up steam as Allen County agreed to step up and allow OPD to take over its public defender offices and serve the other two counties. Discussions between the county, state officials, CCAO, OPD, OSBA and other interested parties ensued, leading to the budget's pilot provision.

Legislative leaders bought into the pitch, which Noonan said was: "Lets show them how we can do this, how we can work together in a regional aspect."

OHIO PUBLIC DEFENDER STEPS UP

As support grew for the budget language, Ohio Public Defender Elizabeth Miller sketched out a budget of $3.35 million a year for the pilot based on staffing and other cost assumptions.

"It is a lot of work to get a hub up and running," she said. "We had to be very intentional as we created a successful model. Because if we understaffed it, it would have been a nightmare. If we overstaffed it, then we weren't spending the dollars we projected were needed."

"In general, it is a challenge in Ohio, and across the country, to attract and retain professionals to do the important work in the indigent defense field. We want people who are passionate and dedicated to do the work. At the same time, we want to meet the needs of each community we serve."

In the case of Allen County, officials didn't want to see a decrease in their existing public defender services. In the neighboring counties, the judges wanted assurances of a smooth transition from their heavy reliance on a court-appointed system of representation.

As it turned out, the funding levels have worked out as planned, and the response from local officials, including some who were apprehensive at first, has been overwhelmingly positive.

"The program is going really well and has been well received by local stakeholders. I am thrilled with what we are building and the initial outcomes," Miller said.

The feedback included judges who appreciated they don't have to find attorneys from other counties to staff their courtrooms. They also have noted efficiencies are being created because they have an assigned public defender to their dockets and they retain the ability to use appointed counsel.

Early data on the NWRH underscores its success, according to OPD.

Caseload Management: The NWRH has successfully opened 338 felony cases across Allen (289), Putnam (35), and Hardin (14) counties. Additionally, the Hub has handled 1,279 misdemeanor cases across Allen (1,160), Putnam (97), and Hardin (22) counties.

Reduced Incarceration & Fiscal Savings: Through effective, experienced advocacy, NWRH counsel have saved 1,493 days of jail time in felony cases. Furthermore, clients facing felony charges have seen 3,121 fewer months of incarceration compared to their exposure at the first offer. Clients with misdemeanors have seen 71,970 fewer days of incarceration than their exposure at the first offer.

"Thanks to the budget appropriations, the Hub has successfully recruited a dedicated team," Miller said.

Between October 2025 and September of 2026, the Hub hired one Managing Public Defender, two Supervising Public Defenders, seven Assistant Public Defenders, two Criminal Investigators, one Social Worker, one Program Administrator, and three Administrative Professionals. One slot remains open for an additional Assistant State Public Defender.

JUDGES WELCOME THE HELP, CITE LACK OF LOCAL ATTORNEYS

"It's been a big relief to have the public defender option available here," said Hardin County Common Pleas Court Judge Steve Christopher. "We don't have very many lawyers in our county. We have only two lawyers in our county under the age of 40 and they both work in prosecutors' offices."

"So the shortage is going to get even worse, and as a judge who handles felony cases there are certain requirements for the experience of the attorneys to take cases in my court and I don't have one single court-appointed attorney in my county," he said. "They all come from outside Hardin County, and I only have four of them to cover my entire docket."

Christopher said he appreciated that Deputy Public Defender Alex Treece was assigned to his county, having known him from his previous practice in Hancock County. "Alex is very experienced. That gave me some comfort level," he said.

"I also have the knowledge that if I get something that's complicated or high stakes that they've got the resources available that the solo practitioners who are mostly what I have for court-appointed counsel wouldn't necessarily have."

The judge said it's been an especially busy year for the county in terms of death-related felony cases. "That's pretty taxing for a solo practitioner," he said.

Putnam County Common Pleas Court Judge Keith Schierloh, who previously worked as a criminal defense attorney, said having the option of a public defender has been a boon to the administration of the court docket given conflicts and scheduling issues that often come up under a strictly court-appointed system.

"Where we might have had four different attorneys trying to work around their schedules because they're trying to do not only other counties but private work and everything else, we're dealing with one set individual who can be made available, who is here to cover this courtroom," he said. "They're made available, we can schedule appropriately, we can get people in a short amount of time."

Schierloh lauded the work of Assistant Public Defender Gabrielle Murphy, who is assigned to the county.

"She does a phenomenal job" and has become well known among jail staff because she is there at least twice a week working with indigent clients, he said. "What that does for your client, the defendant in these situations, is feel a little more comfortable because they didn't go four or five weeks and not talk to anybody, then show up at court and say, 'what's going on'?"

"I could not be any happier with an individual like her – what she's doing," the judge said, adding that other OPD attorneys are always available to fill in if needed. "I couldn't be more pleased with what they're doing and what they're providing."

PILOT HUB SEEN AS BLUEPRINT FOR OTHER RURAL AREAS

Judge Christopher said he "absolutely" sees NWRH as a model that could be used in other rural areas of the state given "the number of attorneys has dropped drastically." That makes a regional public defender approach more cost-effective than in the past when many more court-appointed lawyers were available, he said.

He cited as an example the graduating classes of Ohio Northern University Law School, where he earned his law degree along with some 200 others. "Now they're graduating less than 50 kids a year," he said.

He attributed the shortage to fewer people going into law and a reluctance to practice in rural areas, which he described as a nationwide issue.

"There's a dearth of attorneys. The court-appointed counsel can't meet the need," the judge observed. "And we're still in a situation where a small county can't really afford all the overhead by itself of having a PD's office, so this pilot program of multiple counties going together and essentially sharing that overhead is in my opinion the best possible solution."

"It's the best of both worlds. We can share the overhead and have the benefit of a public defender's office but still have our court-appointed counsel," Christopher said.

"I hope that it doesn't remain a pilot – that it becomes a permanent thing for our county because we are desperate. I think most of our rural judges would say the same thing."

Judge Schierloh agreed that the pilot hub would make sense for other areas of the state outside of the major metropolitan regions.

"In those rural areas, where we don't have the pool of attorneys, this becomes a huge opportunity for us to make sure we're getting the competent counsel, and availability of counsel on a short notice," he said. "This really aids the defendant so they can get some confident, credible representation at the very beginning."

"I think this is a great program," the judge added. "I think that they're going to find out as they go further down the road even more efficient ways to manage it. They're probably going to find more competent people that want to be a part of this."

Public Defender Miller said the success of the program has resulted in extensive interest from other counties; however, the speed and extent of any expansion remain dependent on financial and other considerations.

"I'm hoping there's support for that, and what I'd love to see is the ability to create additional regional models for counties who would like to work with the Ohio Public Defender's Office to do so," she said. "We've received so much outreach from certain counties, saying 'we want this, we want to be a part of it, we need it.'"

Miller thanked CCAO and other stakeholders for their support in getting the pilot enacted.



OPD Commission Chair Bill Creedon, State Public Defender Elizabeth Miller, and CCAO Staffer John Leutz at an October event to mark NWRH's one-year anniversary.

"I am extremely pleased and excited with how well the pilot has been going thus far. It has taken a lot of hard work and determination from the Northwest Regional Hub staff, the OPD leadership team, and local stakeholders, but it's been a worthwhile investment and one I believe will continue to pay dividends," she said.

"I appreciate the efficiencies that are being created through this model of indigent defense, as well as the quality of representation being provided. The Regional Hub model is vastly different than previous models, and because of that, I call this a huge success and a strong option for Ohio's future."

GUEST COLUMN Land Banks as Partners in Housing and Economic Development

by Shawn Carvin, Executive Director, Ohio Land Bank Association

For many, land banks became familiar through our demolition efforts, removing abandoned houses, addressing unsafe buildings, and helping neighborhoods recover from years of disinvestment. That work remains essential, but across Ohio, land banks have also become a driving force behind housing, community and economic development, preparing properties for investment and creating homeownership opportunities that otherwise would not be feasible.

County commissioners understand that community development begins with practical questions. Who owns the property? Can it be acquired? What will it take to make it usable? Whether the goal is housing, business development, or a neighborhood park, communities need access to property that is ready for its next purpose. Land banks help resolve the ownership, resources, and physical barriers that stand between a vacant property and a productive future use.



Franklin County COCIC homes under construction.

In housing, that role takes several forms. A land bank may acquire and prepare properties for a private builder, nonprofit developer, or community partner. Where development capacity is limited, it may take a more direct role, coordinating construction or rehabilitation and acting as the developer. This flexibility matters in communities where construction costs exceed what a finished home can sell for. Housing needs do not disappear simply because the numbers fail to work.

Land banks have long supported homeownership, but the General Assembly's creation of Welcome Home Ohio marked a significant expansion of that work. This historic investment in attainable, single-family homeownership gave communities a dedicated resource to purchase, rehabilitate, and construct homes. With land banks leading implementation, in its first three years, the program has supported more than 750 housing opportunities statewide.

The program's influence extends beyond the individual properties receiving funding. Welcome Home Ohio has helped more land banks build the experience, partnerships, and organizational capacity needed to undertake housing development. Increasingly, land banks are combining multiple sources of grants and financing to close development gaps while keeping homes within reach of local buyers. These funding capital stacks recognize a basic reality, that affordable homeownership frequently requires more than one program and more than one partner.

In Franklin County, COCIC, the Franklin County Land Bank, established the Central Ohio Community Land Trust to preserve affordability over time. The trust retains ownership of the land while buyers purchase their homes through a long-term ground lease. This approach helps protect the public investment and preserve affordable homeownership opportunities for future buyers as the surrounding market changes.

In Ashtabula County, the land bank is combining Welcome Home Ohio, Federal Home Loan Bank, and Residential PACE resources to support energy-efficient new homes at prices accessible to local residents. The approach considers both the purchase price and the ongoing cost of owning a home. A manageable mortgage matters, but so do utility bills and maintenance.

These examples reflect a broader strength of land banking, which is the ability to adapt to a county's needs. The same organization helping deliver housing can also acquire and hold a brownfield property while the county pursues cleanup resources, assemble parcels for economic development, or help secure land for a community park. Bringing a difficult property under public ownership can give a community the time and control needed to pursue its plans.

For commissioners, the opportunity is to involve land banks early. Include them in housing discussions, economic development planning, and conversations about properties that have resisted progress for years. Land banks bring property expertise, partnerships, and a willingness to take on projects with difficult economics. With clear county priorities and sustained collaboration, they can help turn those properties into homes, investment, and lasting public benefit.



A home in Ashtabula County before and after improvements through the land bank.

GUEST COLUMN Clark County's Next Generation 911 Now Live

by Madison Smith, Clark County Media Specialist

For decades, a call to 911 meant a voice carried over the same analog infrastructure that connected everything else on the grid. In Clark County, that era has ended as the county switched over to Next Generation 911 (NG911), a digital system built to be tougher, safer and better connected than the one it replaced.

The change opens up new ways to reach help. The Clark County NG911 deployment supports enhanced capabilities that may include: text-to-911 communications, video-enabled emergency communications, improved routing during outages or emergencies, and stronger coordination among Clark County law enforcement, fire, EMS, townships, municipalities, and neighboring partners.

Getting there took years. The county's 911 Communications Center opened in 2023 and now serves nearly every municipality in Clark County along with all 10 townships. It was built with Ohio's NG911 requirements in mind, and it modernized dispatch operations in the process.

The final stretch came in March 2026, when the Board of Clark County Commissioners approved a 36-month agreement with AT&T to finish the "last mile" connections that NG911 dispatching depends on. The not-to-exceed contract, worth just over $40,000, covers the closing network work.

"We are proud to be one of the first counties to be offering Next Generation 911," said County Commission President Sasha Rittenhouse. "Providing the most advanced technologies available for public safety is something every resident in Clark County deserves. This has been years in the making and we would like to thank everyone who played a part in getting Next Generation 911 across the finish line."

Sheriff Chris Clark described the launch as a milestone in the office's ongoing effort to provide the best 911 service possible. "This enhanced system allows us to provide more efficient systems that have multiple redundancies built in. This project was only made possible through the continued support of and partnership with the Clark County Commissioners, the County Administrator, and the hard work of the 911 center manager Alisha Lemen and Major Chad Eubanks."

For the people who rely on the system, the goal is simple: when someone calls, texts or reaches out for help, the connection holds.

Economic Development Is A Team Sport

JobsOhio is your partner in showcasing the advantages of doing business in Ohio – the heart of it all.

At JobsOhio, we're all about helping businesses and communities grow and thrive. As Ohio's private economic development partner, we help Ohio's businesses grow, and we work to bring new business investments and job opportunities to the state. We partner with local and state leaders and a network of seven regional partners who share our commitment to helping Ohio's communities succeed. Together, we provide businesses and communities of all sizes with world-class service and ensure they get the personalized support they need to stay competitive and grow.



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FEATURE Celebrating Agriculture through Ohio's County and Independent Fairs

From corn and soybeans to livestock and blue ribbons, agriculture is woven into the fabric of Ohio. County and independent fairs are where that heritage and livelihood takes center stage. Agriculture is Ohio's #1 industry, contributing more than $100 billion annually to our economy and employing one in seven Ohioans. We look back on another successful fair season across the state where counties honored and celebrated the farmers, families, and the youth who keep this tradition strong.



The Delaware County Board of Commissioners held a meeting at the Delaware County Fair in September.





Logan County Commissioner Joe Antram with the best of show produce at the Logan County Fair.



Muskingum County Commissioner Melissa Bell helps host inclusive youth livestock show with local board of developmental disabilities.



Shelby County Commissioners Julie Ehemann, Mack Knupp, and Bruce Metz volunteer at pork producers stand at 2026 Shelby County Fair.



Pickaway County Commissioners Harold Henson, Gary Scherer, and Jay Wippel open the 2026 Pickaway County Fair.



Wayne County Commissioner Dave McMillen showcasing displays at 2026 Wayne County Fair.

2026

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DECEMBER 9-11, 2026

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Registration for the 2026 CCAO/CEAO Winter Conference is open!

Register Today

Early Bird registration fees run through November 9.

Full session information will be announced closer to the event.

If you have questions about the conference, please contact CCAO Boards' Liaison and Events Manager Robin Garrett at rgarrett@ccao.org

FEATURE Prevention Pays Off: Better Health, Lower Costs for Families in Ohio

Jane Peterson, President, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield in Ohio

It's a scenario far too familiar: a routine checkup gets postponed, a screening is delayed, or a symptom is ignored. Life is busy. Appointments take time to schedule, and for many, there's a real concern about whether care will fit into this week's budget.

In the moment, delaying care can feel like the practical choice. But postponing routine screenings or appointments often leads to the opposite result – higher costs for patients, more complex treatment, and in some cases, worse long-term health outcomes.

This is why prevention matters – it's about overall health and financial well-being.

WHEN DELAYING CARE BECOMES EXPENSIVE CARE

Preventive care is designed to catch health issues early, when they are easier to manage. Research from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association shows that complex health issues like cancer, if detected through preventative screenings, are far more likely to be found at the earliest, most treatable stage, significantly reducing the cost of care such as advanced treatments for patients.

This matters at a time when the rise in healthcare costs is straining families' and employers' budgets. According to the Kaiser Family Foundation (KFF), the average annual premium for employer-sponsored family coverage now totals nearly $27,000 annually, underscoring how delayed care and rising treatment costs affect families, employers, and the healthcare system. In fact, two-thirds of Ohio adults delayed or went without healthcare due to cost in 2024, according to a Healthcare Value Hub survey.

WHY PREVENTION LOWERS THE COST OF CARE

Lowering healthcare costs doesn't start in the emergency room or at the pharmacy counter; it begins much earlier. Access to preventive services, early intervention, and follow-up support can help manage health issues before small problems become costly crises.

Addressing behavioral health needs before they escalate can also reduce emergency visits and in-patient hospital stays. Likewise, managing chronic conditions like diabetes or heart disease is a great example of how early prevention can avoid costly complications down the road.

MAKING PREVENTION EASIER, NOT HARDER

Health plans have a responsibility to remove barriers to preventive care by covering recommended screenings and wellness visits, and by helping people navigate where to go, what services they need, or how much care will cost. When people have clear guidance and support, they're more likely to act rather than delay.

We support prevention by pairing coverage with practical tools and programs, including:

- Rewarding safer care: Through our Quality-In-Sights: Hospital Incentive Program, we encourage and reward hospitals to improve patient safety and reduce preventable complications.
- Simplifying access through technology: Our Concierge Care program and digital tools connect members to 24/7 nurse support and case management, helping reduce avoidable hospital admissions and readmissions.
- Turning data into action: Data insights help identify care gaps and guide members to the right care to avoid unnecessary emergency visits and unexpected costs.
- Matching members to the right providers: Through our Sydney Health app and anthem.com, members can set search parameters to find high-quality providers to meet their needs. We also offer a sorting option called "personalized match" that connects members with providers best suited to treat them based on their medical profiles.

By encouraging earlier action, we're improving our members' experience and overall health outcomes.

INVESTING IN HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Prevention doesn't stop at the doctor's office. It extends into our communities through partnerships that help address barriers like housing, transportation, nutrition, and access to behavioral health services. Supporting people's physical, emotional, and social needs is critical to keeping our communities healthy and reducing avoidable healthcare costs. That's why we support health programs and charitable initiatives across the state that aim to improve health outcomes for all Ohioans.

A SMARTER PATH FORWARD

Preventive care leads to better health outcomes, lowers costs, and helps ensure that people get care when they need it most. Check with your doctor about preventive screenings that are right for you.

Learn more at anthem.com/healthcareinohio.

GUEST COLUMN Building Better Roads and Communities with Bioproducts

by Matt Reese, Ohio Soybean Council

In April, Jim Surber will hit 50 years of service as the Darke County Engineer, painstakingly caring for the roads local residents depend upon.

“Compared to the average Ohio county, Darke County has 60 percent more roads and bridges and 16 percent less funds to maintain them — that’s a fact. We’ve got good people and we’ve made improvements in spite of that,” Surber said. “For the last 50 years I’ve tried to pinch pennies as much as I can with the amount of work that needs to be done and the amount of available revenue. And I think now we have a very good system of roads here in Darke County.”

Surber has some other secrets to success as well.

“The state changed their asphalt. We’d lay it down and the next year it would start to crack, and the year after that it would crack worse,” he said. “We use BIORESTOR®. Untreated roads will crack within a couple years. This helps to preserve them and you’re not out there crack sealing the road all the time.”

BIORESTOR is a soybean-based bio-treatment applied to asphalt to preserve and protect it by adding natural oils back into the surface. The treatment slows the aging process and keeps the pavement flexible so it holds up longer without the loose stone of a chip seal. It is the step between doing nothing and paying for a full resurface or replacement.

“The ideal situation is to put it on soon after it’s freshly paved. We like to follow that paver within a few days,” Surber said. “It costs between $10,000 and $12,000 for a mile of road to apply to a hot mix that lasts anywhere from 10 to 15 years. BIORESTOR does a good job prolonging the life of that mix probably 3 to 4 years, so everybody can do their own math on that.”

The soy-based bioproduct is a particularly big win in Darke County.

“The biggest win here is the benefit to taxpayers, number one. Number two, it is a win for the farmers because you’re producing the soybeans here and you’re reapplying a soy-based product back in your own county,” said Darke County Commissioner Matt Aultman. “Roads are a huge cost and this adds years to service. When you’ve got $100,000 plus to re-asphalt a road or $30,000 plus to re-chip and seal a road, if you can keep water out of that surface, that’s taxpayer savings.”

Beyond cost savings, BIORESTOR supports American farmers.

“When you look at all these products, it’s a money saver and you’re building a better soybean market for local farmers,” Aultman said. “If you haven’t tried BIORESTOR as a county, just call and ask me. Economically, everybody benefits.”

Luke Meyer, general manager for Asphalt Systems Ohio, Inc. based in Sidney, said the company started in the mid-90s distributing asphalt preservation products. In 2004, Asphalt Systems Ohio developed BIORESTOR, which is now on the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s BioPreferred list.

“Historically, this has been the most successful on low volume roadways, like county roads, cracking up prematurely. That’s where a product like BIORESTOR can be applied, either early in the life cycle or a couple retreatments to help extend that and keep that payment in good condition longer, with less need for the crack fill process,” Meyer said. “In Darke County they’re very progressive and looking at what they can do to save taxpayer dollars.”

The Ohio Soybean Council – funded by soybean farmers and their checkoff – is offering a cost share program for first-time soy-based road sealant users. Counties can receive 40 percent, up to $6,000, in funding support for application. For more information and how to apply, visit biorestor-oh.com.

Looking for more opportunities to adopt soy biobased in your county? Visit soybiobased.org for more products.



GUEST COLUMN Supporting Agricultural Safety and Farm Stress Education



David Civittolo

Ohio State University Extension, Associate Dean and Director

For generations, Ohio State University Extension has helped Ohioans build safer, healthier lives through education. By way of local programs and initiatives, Extension has addressed some of agriculture's most pressing safety challenges while supporting the physical and mental well-being of Ohio farmers. From promoting the use of one of the world's most recognizable farm safety symbols to providing life-saving rescue training and mental health resources, Extension continues to play a vital role in agricultural safety and farm stress education throughout the Buckeye State.



Extension's Grain C.A.R.T. simulator travels throughout Ohio to teach agricultural producers and first responders the importance of grain bin safety and rescue techniques.

Roadway safety has been a focus of Extension's agricultural safety education efforts for decades. In the early 1960s, researchers in The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences developed the Slow Moving Vehicle (SMV) emblem, the bright orange triangle with reflective red borders that has become an internationally recognized symbol of farm safety. Extension professionals throughout the state were integral in promoting its adoption, helping improve the visibility of farm equipment traveling on public roadways and reducing risks for agricultural producers and motorists.



The Grain C.A.R.T. is a mobile teaching tool that Extension uses in communities throughout Ohio to teach grain bin safety and rescue.

More than 60 years later, Extension continues to build on this important work. Today, roadway safety education also includes outreach efforts in Ohio's Amish communities, where horse-drawn buggies and motor vehicles regularly share rural roads. Working with local residents, community leaders and other safety partners, Extension helps promote visibility, increase awareness and encourage safe road-sharing practices. These efforts help reduce risks and improve safety for everyone who travels Ohio's roadways.

Extension also contributes to farm safety through agricultural rescue and grain safety education programs that help prepare farmers and first responders for potentially life-threatening situations. Grain entrapments and other farm emergencies require specialized knowledge and equipment, and Extension's Grain C.A.R.T. (Comprehensive Agricultural Rescue Trailer) provides realistic, hands-on training opportunities throughout the state. Extension professionals frequently partner with local fire departments and emergency services to teach safe grain bin rescue techniques and emergency response procedures. These programs combine Ohio Fire Academy curriculum, professional development for first responders, and safe grain handling education for farmers and other industry professionals, helping strengthen emergency preparedness in rural communities.

Another way Extension supports the health and safety of farmers and agricultural workers in the state is through Ohio AgrAbility. This program is designed to help individuals continue farming after injury, illness or disability. Because farming is physically demanding work, unexpected health challenges can alter one's ability to perform routine work-related tasks, threatening one's livelihood and independence. AgrAbility connects farmers with education, resources, assistive technologies and individualized support that enables them to remain active in agriculture. From equipment modifications and adaptive tools to on-farm assessments and personalized recommendations, the program helps participants safely adapt to changing circumstances while continuing to do the work they value.

In recent years, Extension has expanded its efforts to address another important aspect of rural health: stress and mental well-being. Farmers and agricultural workers often face significant pressures, including unpredictable weather, fluctuating markets, rising costs, labor shortages and other factors beyond their control. These stressors can affect individual agricultural producers, their families and entire communities. Through farm stress programs, mental health awareness training and resource-sharing initiatives, Extension works to reduce the stigma around mental health and connect people with the support they need. By encouraging conversations about stress and providing practical resources, Extension helps strengthen mental-health resilience in Ohio's agricultural communities.

These efforts reflect Extension's long-standing commitment to supporting agricultural safety and rural health in the state. By helping individuals and communities adopt proven safety practices, preparing first responders for farm emergencies, supporting farmers facing physical challenges and promoting conversations about mental health, Extension addresses many of the factors that contribute to the health and well-being of rural Ohioans. Through trusted partnerships and a strong local presence in communities throughout the state, our faculty and staff continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Ohioans every day.







FEATURE Stretching Limited Budgets with Fleet Management

by Enterprise Fleet Management

Government agencies across Ohio and the nation face two constant realities: the pressure to deliver first-rate services, and the need to maximize their resources. Leaders are challenged to find creative ways to manage their budgets while delivering essential, quality services for taxpayers. One area where they can often find unrealized value is with their fleets, which is often a significant expense.

A partnership with a full-service fleet management provider can offer government agencies broad expertise in optimizing fleet investments by assessing the total cost of operating vehicles and optimizing the life cycle of vehicles. Ultimately, effective fleet management has proven to save agencies time, energy, and budget.

FLEET MANAGEMENT DRIVES VALUE

Many government entities decide to purchase vehicles and keep them in fleet for long periods of time. This approach can increase the total cost of ownership and cause the agency to lose valuable vehicle equity over time. Older vehicles often end up being more expensive due to frequent maintenance requirements, depreciation, and reduced fuel economy. Other hidden costs include administration, taxes, registration, and insurance.

With a strategic fleet management approach, leaders can maximize vehicle equity while minimizing operating costs. Through a data-driven fleet analysis, fleet management providers can help determine the best time to replace vehicles by balancing depreciation, maintenance expenses, and other factors with resale value to identify the optimal replacement time for each vehicle. The goal is replacing vehicles at the optimal point to preserve equity, reduce operating costs, and lower the total cost of ownership. By implementing optimal cycling patterns, agencies can capture valuable equity in their fleet that can be reinvested elsewhere.

USING TECHNOLOGY TO DRIVE COST SAVINGS

Industry-leading cost control and reporting capabilities can help reduce the total cost of ownership, while also improving productivity. All budgets and fleets require a different approach. It's beneficial to partner with a company that can provide a customized solution to meet desired goals. Data-driven reporting provides fleet operators with a comprehensive view of each vehicle and driver to help track and evaluate fuel management strategies, scheduled and preventive maintenance and maintenance alerts, driver performance, accident management, crash avoidance, employee productivity, and data for regulatory compliance.

A SMARTER WAY TO BUY AND SELL

When combined with real-time market data and in-depth knowledge of your unique needs and budget, a detailed financial analysis can help fleet leaders make informed financial decisions about replacing, holding, or selling vehicles. Paying attention to life-cycle management and setting thresholds that define when it's time to replace vehicles benefits both the government agency and the taxpayers. When it is time to sell, a partner with true remarketing expertise can help local governments achieve the highest possible returns, regardless of age, mileage, or condition.

A TRUE PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

At Enterprise Fleet Management, our expertise is in creating the best outcomes for our clients – whether they are government agencies, nonprofit organizations, or businesses. We understand that a vehicle fleet is a way for an organization to deliver the highest quality of service. Enterprise Fleet Management applies its expertise, technology, and industry acumen to make sure your fleet is optimized to help you cost-effectively serve constituents.

To learn more, visit efleets.com.

GUEST COLUMN Ohio County Employees Retirement Plan (OCERP) Is More Than a Retirement Plan: Introducing GreenPath Financial Wellness

by Empower

Your financial wellness journey doesn't begin—or end—with retirement.

Although saving for retirement is an important part of building a secure financial future, we also know that life can bring many financial challenges along the way. Managing credit card debt, creating a household budget, improving your credit, or simply figuring out how to make your money work harder can all have an impact on your ability to prepare for the future.

That's why OCERP is adding another valuable benefit: access to GreenPath Financial Wellness.

Through this new resource, eligible participants can receive one-on-one financial counseling, financial education and access to a debt management program designed to help participants take greater control of their overall financial well-being.

Your financial life today can directly affect your ability to save, invest and prepare for tomorrow. That is what makes this resource particularly valuable. OCERP isn't simply a vehicle for retirement savings—it is expanding the support and resources available to help employees navigate the financial challenges that can stand between where they are today and where they want to be in retirement.

GreenPath's certified Financial Wellness counselors can work with participants one-on-one to identify the underlying causes of debt and develop personalized budgeting and spending strategies that may help them reach their financial goals and build savings. Participants can also receive guidance on topics such as the home-buying process, credit scores and other financial questions, along with educational resources to help strengthen their financial knowledge.

One key feature of the GreenPath debt management program is that it can consolidate enrolled debts into a single monthly payment and establish automatic payments, potentially making debt easier to manage while helping ensure payments are made on time.

According to the information provided by GreenPath, its Debt Management Program clients, on average, see interest rates lowered to single digits and monthly payments reduced by more than $150. A monthly fee applies while enrolled in the program.

Whether you're trying to get out from under high-interest debt, establish a realistic budget, improve your financial knowledge or simply get a better understanding of your financial options, this resource gives you another place to turn.

Take the first step. GreenPath Financial Wellness services are available at no cost to you.
To learn more or speak with GreenPath, call 844-572-5918 or visit greenpath.com/partner/empower



VOICE OF COUNTY LEADER

Casey Kozlowski, CCAO 1st Vice President and Ashtabula County Commissioner

How long have you been a county commissioner?

I've been a county commissioner for just about 12 years now. I was elected in November 2014 and assumed the position in December of that same year, a little earlier than normal due to the retirement of a member of the county commission.

Can you tell us about yourself?

I've had the pleasure of serving in several other public roles prior to my time as county commissioner. I served as the state representative for the 99th District, which at the time included all of Ashtabula County and northern Trumbull County. Before that, I served as a member of the Pymatuning Valley Local School District Board of Education in Andover.

I have a Bachelor of Science in Applied Business Management from Ohio University and previously worked as a business manager for a local automotive company in Ashtabula. I have also been active in our family business, which owned a ready-mix concrete company for many years.

Why did you want to be a commissioner?

I ran for county commissioner because I felt there was a real opportunity to make a difference. I came to the commission with a unique background. I had worked in the private sector, came from a family that owned a small business and had served in leadership roles at both the local and state levels. I felt I had real experience and know-how to bring to the table.

I'm a lifelong resident of Ashtabula County, so I felt this was a perfect opportunity to make a difference and work on positive projects that would move our county forward.

I also like this level of government because I feel you can take action and move things along a little more quickly than in the legislature, where things can move very slowly. County government gets things done, and serving as a commissioner is a great opportunity to make a difference.

What are you most proud of having achieved during your time as commissioner?



Commissioner Kozlowski receives his CCAO Decades of Dedication Award from then CCAO President Glenn Miller.



I'm most proud of helping move our Public Safety Center, or jail, project forward. It's an issue I first ran on in 2014, and it has taken this long to reach the point where it is actually moving forward. We'll be breaking ground in just a few months.

It has been a lot of work. We looked for every possible grant dollar and saved capital funds so we could make a significant down payment and move the project forward at a cost that was doable for the county. I'm very excited to have played a part in making this project a reality and finally moving it ahead.

What has been the biggest challenge you've faced as a county commissioner?

The largest challenge I faced as commissioner was responding to and managing the COVID crisis. It was entirely new to me and everyone else, and there were so many aspects of it that required our involvement and attention.

Our responsibilities ranged from making sure we were taking steps to protect the public to managing staff during the pandemic and then handling the reopening. There was a lot of cooperation and collaboration during that time.

Looking back, there are certainly things that could have been handled differently. It was a challenging and trying time, but ultimately, we were able to work through it together.

What was the biggest surprise or adjustment after taking office?

The biggest surprise, or perhaps the most notable thing, is that every day is different. No two days are alike in this job.

I've learned that while there may be certain things I would rather be working on or focusing on, sometimes you have to



Commissioner Kozlowski and Ashtabula County Commissioner colleagues J.P. Ducro and Kathryn Whittington attend the White House State Leadership Conference for Ohio.

pivot and reallocate your time and resources because another issue has become much more pressing and needs to be handled. That can take time away from the things you had planned to work on, but that's just the nature of the job.

Every day brings something new, and there always seems to be a new challenge making its way to my desk.

One of the primary responsibilities of a commissioner is to develop a balanced budget and provide adequate resources to deliver county services. What has been one of the biggest challenges in that area?

One of our primary responsibilities as county commissioners is to work on the county budget and deliver a balanced one. I take that responsibility very seriously, and it's a process that spans many months for us.

One of the biggest challenges is doing what we can to meet the needs of all our departments while recognizing that we cannot always fund everything every elected official or department head would like. Commissioners are in the unique position of having to think globally across all departments and pass a budget that stays within the resources available to us.

I don't fault elected officials or department heads for making their requests and fighting for their departments, that's part of their job. However, we have to look across the entire county and make sure we are working within the confines of the resources we have. It can be challenging at times, but it's a challenge I enjoy working through.

What do you see as the most pressing opportunities and challenges facing county government today?

Some of the biggest opportunities and challenges I see ahead include figuring out how to do more with less when it comes to our finanxcial resources and adapting to changes in how people interact with county government and get their information.

We also need to adjust to changes in the workforce and what employees expect when serving in their roles. Technology is another major area of both opportunity and challenge, particularly as we look at how it can make county government more efficient and responsive to the residents we serve.

From an economic development standpoint, we also have to compete with other counties in an increasingly competitive environment. We need to make sure Ashtabula County remains a place where people and businesses want to invest, work and grow.

You previously served as a state representative. Can you talk about how that experience informs your work as a county commissioner?

My past experience as a state representative has proven to be very advantageous in this role. I recommend it to others as well, although that may be easier said than done!

That experience gave me a firm, ground-level understanding of the legislative process. Having been part of it firsthand has been extremely beneficial when working on issues that affect Ashtabula County and counties throughout Ohio. I continue to use many of the things I learned during that time in my work today.

The relationships I built have also been tremendous, and I still rely on many of those contacts. As many of us know, county commissioners are in the relationship business. Building and



Commissioner Kozlowski and CCAO's Cheryl Subler attend meetings at the National Association of Counties on behalf of Ohio's counties.

maintaining strong relationships can be extremely helpful as we navigate our roles and work on behalf of our counties.

Do you have specific advocacy advice for county commissioners, having previously been a legislator?

Break your issue down into simple terms and prioritize what you bring to legislators. They have so many things thrown at them at any given time, so you want to get to the point and clearly explain your concerns.

Also, don't just present them with a problem and tell them to fix it. Share your thoughts and ideas about possible solutions. That makes it easier to have a productive conversation and work together.

It's also important to build relationships with your legislators and not call them only when you need something. Look for ways to help them reach their goals, and use that as an opportunity to build a partnership that can help both of you.

For legislators who may not have local government experience, take the opportunity to educate them about your role and the important work counties do. At the same time, look for opportunities to work together and find common ground.

Could you discuss your involvement with CCAO and your experience as an active member?

I really enjoy being involved with CCAO. I have served on the Board of Directors for most of my time as county commissioner, and I'm also a member of several committees that I participate in whenever I'm able. I serve on the Executive Committee and am presently the association's first vice president.

Ashtabula County also participates in several CCAO programs, including CORSA, the energy program for our county buildings and several other initiatives.

I attend in-person meetings whenever possible, including the Summer Symposium and Winter Conference. These are all great opportunities to network with fellow commissioners and learn more about the many things our association is working on.

We are blessed to have awesome people at CCAO who work every day on behalf of Ohio.

CORSA NEWS

2027–2028 CORSA Renewal Underway





Sherry Barbosky
CORSA Underwriting Manager

Brandy Allen
CORSA Underwriter

As autumn arrives, the CORSA Underwriting Team begins one of its busiest periods of the year: the annual renewal process. CORSA staff, local agents, and member counties are working together to ensure a smooth and successful renewal for the 2027–2028 coverage year.

CORSA officially launched the renewal process with its annual Agent Renewal Webinar on October 6, 2026. The webinar provided agents and customer service representatives with an overview of application requirements, underwriting updates, and important renewal procedures. This annual event reinforces the value of collaboration among CORSA, its local agents, and member counties.

Accurate underwriting information is essential to evaluating property and liability exposures, determining appropriate coverage and pricing, and identifying opportunities to reduce risk. Recognizing that renewal coincides with county budget season, CORSA continues to streamline its application process to minimize administrative demands while gathering the information necessary for sound underwriting decisions.

RENEWAL APPLICATIONS AND SCHEDULES

Local agents and county representatives should review applicable applications and schedules to ensure information is complete and accurate. These include:

- County and Non-County Renewal Applications
- Corrections Facility Renewal Applications
- Location and Mobile Equipment Schedules
- Vehicle and Watercraft Schedules
- Bridge and Drone Schedules

The deadline for submitting completed renewal applications is Monday, November 16, 2026.

CORSA appreciates the continued partnership of its local agents and member counties. Timely submissions and open communication help ensure coverage appropriately reflects each county's operations and exposures.

As we prepare for the upcoming coverage year, CORSA remains committed to providing comprehensive coverage, responsive service, and effective risk management solutions to protect Ohio counties.

RENEWAL CONTACTS

Sherry Barbosky | CORSA Underwriting Manager
740-815-3164 · sbarbosky@ccao.org

Brandy Allen | CORSA Underwriter
614-357-2810 · ballen@ccao.org

Members with questions regarding the renewal process are encouraged to contact their local agent or the CORSA Underwriting Team.

CEBCO NEWS

CEBCO Health and Wellness



Kevin Williams

Managing Director, Health and Wellness

RENEWAL MEETING

CEBCO held our 2026 renewal meeting, virtually, at the end of July. For 2027, the average rate increase will be 9.5%, slightly lower than last year. The minimum/maximum renewal increases are 2%/16%, respectively. Our benefit specialists work diligently with their respective counties to assist them in making the most cost effective plan design choices to benefit county employees and their families. The CEBCO Board had previously voted to move the renewal meeting to earlier this year by a month to give counties more time to make their benefit plan decisions.

WELLNESS PROGRAM AND WELLNESS COORDINATORS COLLABORATION MEETING

Over the past several months, the CEBCO Board's Wellness Committee and staff have been evaluating the future direction of our wellness program. In consideration of the timing, the CEBCO Board voted to transition to a new program but to provide time for member counties participation in the development of the new program. The Board voted to maintain the current wellness grant and CEBCO Rewards 200 program in place for the upcoming program year to provide time for the transition. CEBCO is utilizing information gathered from recent wellness surveys, and gathering additional input from stakeholder meetings to shape programming to meet the needs of member counties.

CEBCO held a Wellness Coordinators Collaboration Meeting in mid-October with 50+ staff and county wellness contacts from our member counties attending. Updates for the program were provided and much of the meeting was devoted to small group interactions among the county wellness contacts whereby they could connect and share information about wellness best practices, and collectively identify needs and opportunities for shaping the future of the wellness program. Going forward, a new online CEBCO Wellness Coordinators group has been created to provide ongoing improved communication via channels for Coordinator Discussion, Wellness Ideas and Best Practices, Resources and Materials, and 2027 Program Collaboration.

CEBCO REWARDS ACTIVITY CHALLENGE

The first Team Challenge of this Wellness Program year, The Great Wall of China, ran from October 5 through October 23. With 550+ teams of up to ten members being formed across our member counties, thousands of employees and their covered spouses joined forces to log steps with the goal of collectively reaching the Great Wall by the end of the challenge. Members of teams that successfully reached the goal earned $25 through the CEBCO Rewards 200 program.

WELLNESS TOPICS

Wellness topics that are being emphasized this fall include: What to Know About ADHD for Kids and Adults, The Connection Between Diabetes and Exercise, Understanding Diabetes, and Seasonal Affective Disorder. Please use the following links to learn more about these topics to help improve your and your family's overall health.

- ADHD in Kids and Adults
- The Connection Between Diabetes and Exercise
- Understanding Diabetes And How Your Family Can Support You
- Understanding and living with Seasonal Affective Disorder

SERVICE CORPORATION NEWS

CCAO Service Corporation Expands Purchasing Opportunities Through New Partnership with NACo Public Promise Procurement

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO SERVICE CORPORATION



Steve Caraway
Managing Director of Enterprise and Retirement Services

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio Service Corporation (CCAOSC) is expanding its commitment to helping Ohio counties operate more efficiently and maximize taxpayer dollars through a new partnership with the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Public Promise Procurement (PPP) program.

This new relationship provides Ohio's 88 counties with access to a national cooperative purchasing program designed to simplify the procurement process, reduce administrative burdens and deliver competitive pricing on goods and services essential to county government operations.

As counties continue to face increasing costs, limited resources and growing demands for public services, finding innovative ways to stretch taxpayer dollars has never been more important. Through Public Promise Procurement, CCAOSC is helping Ohio counties leverage the collective purchasing power of public agencies across the country.

A SMARTER APPROACH TO PUBLIC PURCHASING

Public Promise Procurement offers a cooperative purchasing model that allows eligible public agencies to purchase goods and services through competitively solicited contracts with established suppliers.

At the heart of the program is its Lead Public Agency (LPA) model, which allows a public agency to conduct a competitive solicitation and award a contract that can be made available to other participating government entities.

Rather than requiring each county to independently conduct a lengthy procurement process for similar products or services, participating agencies can access existing contracts that have already undergone a competitive solicitation and evaluation process.

The program features single-award contracts with selected suppliers, providing participating agencies with established pricing, contract terms and purchasing options. An advisory committee of experienced public-sector procurement professionals helps review contracts and supports the program's commitment to transparency, accountability and sound purchasing practices.

For county commissioners, administrators, purchasing departments and other county officials, the benefits can be significant: less time spent navigating repetitive procurement processes and more time focused on delivering essential county services.

NATIONAL PURCHASING POWER, LOCAL BENEFITS

One of the greatest advantages of cooperative purchasing is the ability to leverage purchasing volume across multiple government agencies.

Across the United States, more than 3,000 counties collectively spend hundreds of billions of dollars annually, while approximately 90,000 public agencies represent trillions of dollars in purchasing activity. By bringing public agencies together through cooperative purchasing, programs such as Public Promise Procurement create opportunities to achieve economies of scale that individual counties may not be able to secure independently.

Through NACo Public Promise Procurement, Ohio counties can explore a growing portfolio of competitively solicited contracts covering a variety of operational needs.

Available purchasing categories and supplier offerings include elevator and escalator maintenance and services, public safety equipment, commercial equipment rentals and purchases, document and data management solutions, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and government recruitment services.

These offerings demonstrate the wide range of opportunities available to counties, from maintaining public facilities and supporting law enforcement operations to modernizing infrastructure and improving administrative efficiency.

For counties with limited purchasing staff or specialized procurement needs, having access to established contracts and suppliers can be particularly valuable.

Importantly, counties maintain control over their purchasing decisions. Participating agencies can evaluate available contracts, compare options and determine which solutions best meet their operational needs, budgets and applicable procurement requirements.

A PARTNERSHIP THAT GIVES BACK

Beyond the potential for cost savings and administrative efficiencies, Public Promise Procurement offers another important benefit: its connection to NACo and the broader mission of strengthening county government.

The program supports reinvestment in NACo initiatives and programs that benefit counties across the country, creating value that extends beyond an individual purchasing transaction.

This approach aligns closely with CCAOSC's mission of developing partnerships and programs that provide meaningful benefits to Ohio counties.

From employee benefits and energy purchasing to workers' compensation, facility investment and maintenance services, the CCAO Service Corporation continues to identify opportunities that help county governments reduce costs, improve operations and better serve their citizens.

The addition of Public Promise Procurement further strengthens that portfolio by providing another valuable resource for counties seeking practical, cost-effective purchasing solutions.

HELPING COUNTIES MAKE EVERY DOLLAR COUNT

The new partnership reflects CCAOSC's ongoing commitment to identifying innovative solutions that address the evolving needs of county government.

Whether a county is purchasing equipment, maintaining facilities, exploring new technology or seeking specialized services, access to competitively solicited contracts can help simplify purchasing decisions while promoting the responsible stewardship of public funds.

Ohio counties interested in exploring Public Promise Procurement can review available contracts, learn more about participating suppliers and register as a participating agency through the program's website.

For additional information, visit publicpromiseprocurement.org or reach out to CCAO's Steve Caraway at scaraway@ccao.org.

Through this new collaboration, CCAOSC continues its work to connect Ohio counties with trusted partners, innovative solutions and valuable resources that help local governments make the most of every taxpayer dollar.



Healthier communities lead to healthier people

We believe that people are only as healthy as the communities they live in. Anthem values and nurtures our local ties — it's why we have been working with CEBCO since 2004. Together, we can improve overall health, advance equity, and strengthen communities.

Anthem

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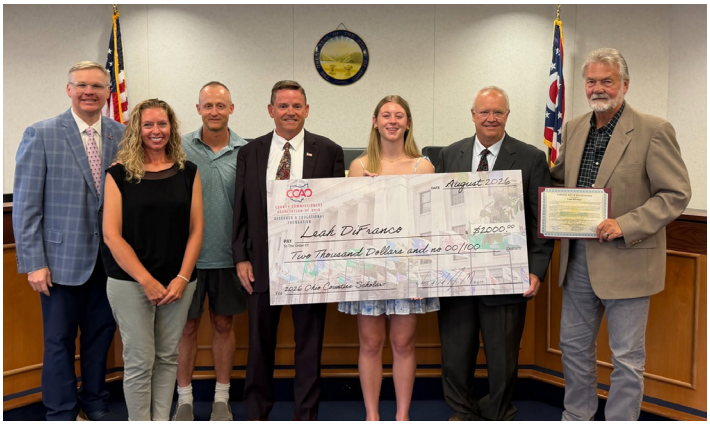
CCAO RESEARCH AND EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION NEWS

Foundation Awards $10,000 in Scholarships



Steve Caraway
Managing Director of Enterprise and Retirement Services

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ASSOCIATION OF OHIO
RESEARCH & EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION



CCAO's Steve Caraway, Mr. & Mrs. DiFranco, Lorain County Commissioner Marty Gallagher, Leah DiFranco, and Commissioners David Moore and Jeff Riddell.

The future of Ohio's counties is in good hands, and five outstanding young Ohioans are helping lead the way.

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) Research and Educational Foundation recently recognized five high school graduates as recipients of the 2026 Ohio Counties Scholarships, awarding a total of $10,000 to students who have demonstrated academic achievement, leadership and a desire to make a difference through public service.

Each year, the Foundation awards five $2,000 scholarships, one in each of CCAO's five districts, to students who aspire to careers in public service in Ohio. The program recognizes not only academic excellence but also an understanding of the important role county government plays in the everyday lives of Ohioans.

Since the scholarship program began in 2023, the Foundation has awarded $40,000 to 20 deserving students, helping support the next generation of public servants and county leaders.

This year's recipients represent five counties across Ohio, with career aspirations ranging from engineering and law to public administration, military service and healthcare. While their professional goals differ, each shares an appreciation for the work of county government and a commitment to giving back.

Northeast District: Leah DiFranco, Lorain County

Leah DiFranco was recognized by the Lorain County Board of Commissioners for her outstanding achievement and commitment to public service.

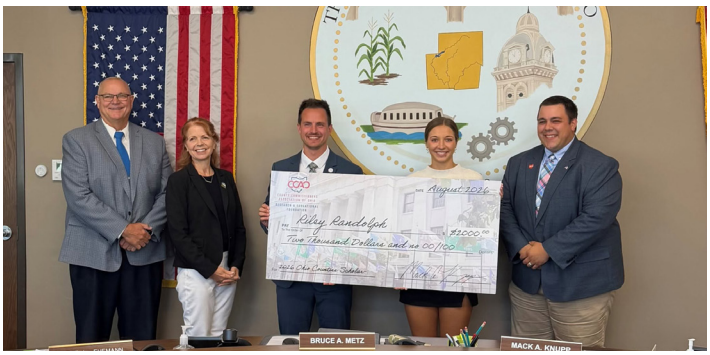
In her scholarship essay, Leah highlighted the importance of local government and its ability to make meaningful improvements in the lives of citizens.

"Lorain County continues to launch community-benefiting projects because they know their work matters and makes a positive difference in the lives of their residents," she wrote.

Leah plans to pursue a future in public administration or public works, with a goal of partnering with local governments and organizations to develop programs, infrastructure and policies that strengthen neighborhoods and provide opportunities for residents to succeed.

Her vision for the future reflects the very purpose of the Ohio Counties Scholarship: encouraging young Ohioans to recognize the value of public service and pursue careers that make a lasting difference.

Northwest District: Riley Randolph, Shelby County



Shelby County Commissioners Bruce Metz and Julie Ehemann, CCAO's Tim Hoverman, Riley Randolph and Commissioner Mack Knupp.

Riley Randolph of Shelby County was recognized by the Shelby County Board of Commissioners for her academic accomplishments and commitment to serving others.

In her scholarship essay, Riley emphasized that county government is often the level of government most directly connected to the people it serves.

“When people think about government, they often picture something distant or complicated. In reality, county government is one of the most direct ways people receive help, support and protection in their daily lives,” Riley wrote.

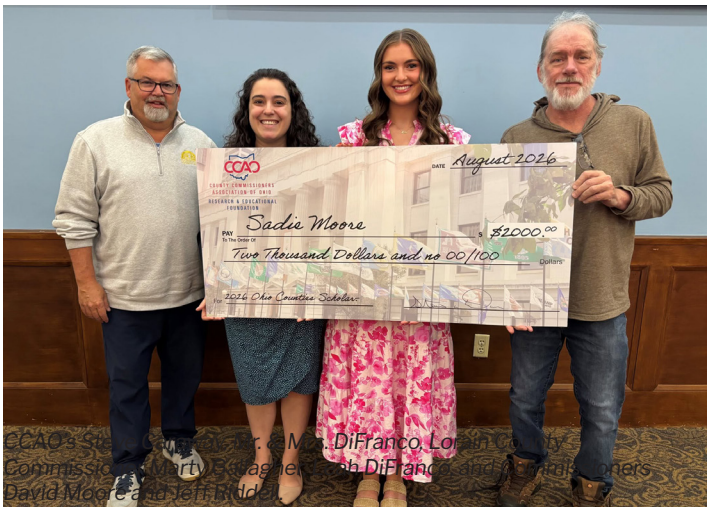
“In Shelby County, I have seen firsthand how these services make a difference—not just through policies, but people.”

Riley plans to pursue a career in law and hopes to one day return to Shelby County to serve the place she calls home.

Her appreciation for the people behind county government and her desire to return home to serve demonstrate the lasting impact that local public service can have on future generations.

Central District: Sadie Moore, Fairfield County

Sadie Moore of Fairfield County was recognized by the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners as the Central District scholarship recipient.



Fairfield County Commissioner Jeff Fix, CCAO’s Rachel Reedy, Sadie Moore and Commissioner Steve Davis.

In her essay, Sadie reflected on a quote from President George H.W. Bush that she believes captures the essential role of county government:

“The heart of our government is not here in Washington; it’s in every county office, every town, every city across this land.”

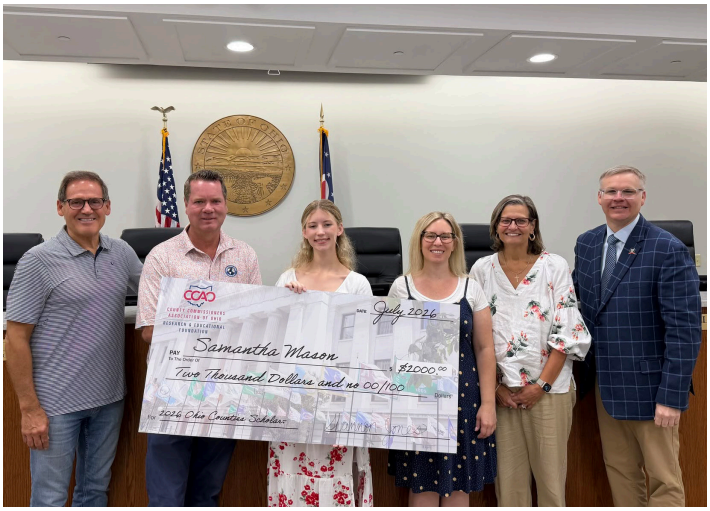
Sadie explained that county government serves as a foundational layer of public service, providing essential functions such as public safety, infrastructure, and health services.

Her essay demonstrated an understanding that while state and federal governments often receive the most attention, county governments are responsible for many of the services that directly affect the quality of life of Ohioans.

Southwest District: Samantha Mason, Warren County

Samantha Mason of Warren County was recognized for her academic achievements, perseverance and commitment to serving others.

Samantha plans to serve in the United States Air Force



Warren County Commissioners Tom Grossmann, David Young, Samantha Mason, Samantha’s mother, Commissioner Shannon Jones, and CCAO’s Steve Caraway.

before pursuing her dream of becoming an orthodontist, combining her dedication to military service with a desire to help others through healthcare.

In her scholarship essay, Samantha reflected on how her family’s personal experiences helped shape her understanding of county government and the support it provides to citizens during difficult times.

“My experiences during my family’s struggling years have shown me that county governments have a real and meaningful impact on people’s lives,” Samantha wrote.

“Warren County’s commitment to improving the lives of its citizens has given me direction and motivation to give back in the future what it gave to me.”

During her scholarship presentation, the Warren County Board of Commissioners had a special surprise, officially proclaiming July 28, 2026, as Samantha Mason Day in Warren County.

The recognition celebrated not only her accomplishments but also her determination to turn personal experiences into a lifetime of service to others.

Southeast District: Ryan Lamonica, Muskingum County

Ryan Lamonica of Muskingum County was recognized on July 27 during a presentation with the Muskingum County Board of Commissioners in Zanesville.



Ryan Lamonica with Muskingum County Commissioners Drake Prouty, Melissa Bell, and Cindy Cameron, along with CCAO's Steve Caraway.

Ryan hopes to pursue a career in engineering, with the ultimate goal of becoming a county engineer and helping improve public infrastructure.

In his scholarship essay, Ryan emphasized the often-overlooked but essential role county government plays in maintaining infrastructure, protecting citizens and planning for the future.

"Although county government may not always receive the same attention as state or federal government, their impact is felt every day," Ryan wrote.

"Through infrastructure, emergency response and thoughtful planning, county leaders help create communities where citizens can live, work and feel safe."

Ryan hopes to use his future career to contribute to projects that strengthen Muskingum County and improve the quality of life for its residents.

His career aspirations reflect the direct connection between county government and the infrastructure that supports Ohio's citizens and economy.

SUPPORTING TOMORROW'S COUNTY LEADERS

Established in 1991, the CCAO Research and Educational Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting educational opportunities, research and initiatives that strengthen county government in Ohio.

The Ohio Counties Scholarship program is one of the Foundation's signature initiatives, made possible through the generosity of CCAO members, partners and supporters.

Funding for the scholarships is supported through initiatives such as the annual County Classic Golf Outing and proceeds from the Ohio Counties Collection, along with other contributions to the Foundation.

The Foundation also extends its appreciation to the county commissioners who volunteer their time to serve on the scholarship review committee each year. Their participation helps make the program successful and reinforces the importance of supporting young Ohioans who aspire to make a difference.

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of this year's scholarship recipients is their shared understanding that public service is more than a profession. It is a commitment to improving the lives of others.

Whether through the legal system, infrastructure improvements, healthcare, public administration or military service, these five students represent the next generation of leaders who will help shape Ohio's future.

For the CCAO Research and Educational Foundation, investing in these students is more than providing financial assistance for their education. It is an investment in the future of Ohio's 88 counties and the citizens they serve.

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