In This Issue...

A Message from CCAO President Julie Ehemann

A Message from CCAO Executive Director Suzanne Dulaney

Capital Funding for County Jail Construction

Counties and Courthouses Celebrate Milestones

A Minute with Former CCAO Members-Turned-Lawmakers

Voice of County Leadership - Ron Amstutz Wayne County Commissioner

Dealing with Crises in Montgomery County

Legislator Q&A’s

Improving Productivity by Engaging Employees

Updates from CORSA, CEBCO and CCAOSC

Counselor’s Corner

L to R - Reps. Stephen Hambley, Jason Stephens, Robert Cupp, Scott Wiggam, Speaker Larry Householder, Shane Wilkin, Rick Perales, Dave Greenspan, Bill Roemer and Brian Baldridge
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the 2019 CCAO President 3
Julie Ehemann
Letter from CCAO Executive Director 5
Suzanne Dulaney
Capital Funding for County Jail Construction 6
Counties and Courthouses Celebrate Milestones 8
A Minute with Former CCAO Members Turned Lawmakers 10
Voice of County Leadership - Ron Amstutz 12
Managing Crises in Montgomery County 15
Legislator Q&A - Rep. Jack Cera 16
Legislator Q&A - Sen. Vernon Sykes 17
Legislator Q&A - Sen. Matt Dolan 17
Improving Productivity by Engaging Employees 19
CORSA Winter Safety Tips 23
The Latest News from CEBCO 24
Planning for the OPERS Changes, Planning For Your Future 25
Counselor’s Corner 27
Former CCAO Members-Turned-Lawmakers 28

Photo 2: Policy Analyst Adam Schwiebert leads a discussion at a state budget round table discussion.
Photo 3: The CCAO board of directors thanked Gov. Mike DeWine for strengthening the state-county partnership and his support on the opioid litigation.

County Leader, CCAO’s quarterly e-magazine, provides an in-depth look at the news, programs and policies affecting Ohio’s 88 counties. If you have questions or story submissions, contact Editor Andrew Johnson at ajohnson@ccao.org or 614-220-7986.
A MESSAGE FROM 2019 CCAO PRESIDENT
JULIE EHEMANN, SHELBY COUNTY COMMISSIONER

As fall arrives, thoughts are to getting prepared for new leaders in CCAO. The Nominating Committee will be reviewing board applications and recommending persons to serve in leadership roles in 2020. It leaves me wondering “where in the world did 2019 go?”

I feel very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to serve as your president for 2019. With collaborative efforts from county commissioners, executives, and council members from throughout the state and the CCAO Policy Team, we made serious progress on advancing CCAO’s priorities in the budget. Our visibility, professionalism and cohesive message all worked to elevate the association and has laid the groundwork for our developing partnership with the governor and our legislators.

In addition to our partnership efforts, I have been pleased to assist in networking opportunities for our female commissioners. In May we hosted a German Delegation with a Leadership Workshop, and in September we held a forum to develop ideas for the Commemoration of Women’s Suffrage in 2020. As the president to CCAO, I have been fortunate to represent the association in multiple ways this past year. In addition to assisting in hosting the German Women’s contingency, I have been appointed by Secretary of State LaRose to the Women’s Suffrage Centennial Commission. Through 2020, the commission will oversee the statewide commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of women’s right to vote.

Gov. Mike DeWine has appointed me to serve on the 2020 Complete Count Census Commission. This commission will be working to relay the importance of participating in the census count and work to reach hard to count populations.

In April, I attended a special briefing in Cochise County, Arizona with several of Ohio’s sheriffs where we met with border agents and the sheriff’s office in Cochise County. The trip allowed us to see first-hand the issues local law enforcement and county entities deal with as illegal immigration and drug smuggling are rampant at the United States – Mexico border.

In September, I along with other commissioners and economic development professionals, visited Japan for the Midwest United States/Japan Economic Trade Conference. In addition, we visited International HQ’s of our local leading Japanese owned companies working to promote Ohio and build on relationships so important to our communities. The highlight of our trip was in visiting with Honda officials on the day of their 40th Anniversary to starting business in Ohio.

In March and again in October, I along with many other commissioners visited Washington D.C. The first trip was the annual NACo Legislative Conference. It gave commissioners a great opportunity to become more educated on our legislative priorities at the federal level and to meet with our legislators to discuss those priorities most pressing for us.
In October, commissioners were able to meet with White House staff for the Kentucky, Michigan and Ohio Regional State Leadership Day. The day included briefings and discussion with senior administration officials - including Larry Kudlow (director, National Economic Council), Secretary Betsy DeVos (Education), Administrator Andrew Wheeler (EPA), and Director Jim Carroll (White House Office of National Drug Control Policy) - and panel participants from across the federal family showing the White House is committed to empowering local government to advance shared priorities. These priorities include combating the opioid (drug) crisis, facilitating infrastructure development and rural prosperity, driving economic development through deregulation, and improving disaster recovery and resilience.

With all of these meetings and networking opportunities, I see more and more that there is much work for us as commissioners to do. We all need to look for our chance to promote our communities and county government. We all have a story to tell and can do it in a positive way that relays the needs of our communities. I will continue to do that even after CCAO has new leadership and I look forward to continuing to work with all of my fellow commissioners. I hope you will join me as we continue our work in creating Stronger Partnerships, Stronger Counties and a Stronger Ohio.

County commissioners and CCAO staff in D.C.

Pictured: Adams County Commissioners Diane Ward, Ty Pell and Barbara Moore; Shelby County Commissioner Julie Ehemann, CCAO President; CCAO Executive Director Suzanne Dulaney; Monroe County Commissioner Carl Davis, CCAO 1st Vice President; Preble County Commissioner Denise Robertson; Columbiana County Commissioner Mike Halleck, and Preble County Commissioners Rodney Creech and Chris Day.
LETTER FROM CCAO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUZANNE DULANEY

Hello members! You are in for a great second issue of the new County Leader magazine. It contains some wonderful insights from your peers and legislators that I am sure you will find interesting and informative, along with important items from all of our CCAO program areas.

This fall has been a busy and productive time for CCAO in our continued efforts to strengthen the state-county partnership. In September, CCAO was honored with the opportunity to discuss county priorities with Governor DeWine as he again joined the CCAO board of directors to discuss several key policy areas. In addition to addressing the board, DeWine also took time to meet with ten county commissioners in the state cabinet room to discuss ways the state and counties might work together. Our members brought forth ideas around the state capital budget process focusing on jails and courthouses. Please be sure to read this issue’s article on how CCAO and BSSA are working together on capital funding for jails.

Another focus area has been around the ongoing opioid litigation and how settlement revenues should be allocated. Counties have incurred tremendous costs in combating the opioid addiction crisis in recent years and are seeking compensation from drug makers to offset some of those expenses. There had been discussion regarding legislation which would provide the attorney general exclusive authority over these lawsuits. Governor DeWine indicated early on that such legislation would be a serious mistake, as counties have incurred much of the expense in treating opiate addiction. Governor DeWine recently hosted a meeting on the topic of the opioid litigation where our members were invited to engage in conversations about how Ohio might proceed as the settlement negotiations unfold.

Fall also means the Winter Conference is just around the corner. I know you will be in for a great mix of relevant topics plus opportunities to network and exchange ideas with your peers.

We had great input from our Winter Conference Planning Committee members consisting of Shelby County Commissioner Julie Ehemann (CCAO President and Committee Chair); Monroe County Commissioner Carl Davis (CCAO 1st Vice President); Williams County Commissioner Brian Davis; Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus; Athens County Commissioner Lenny Eliason; Allen County Commissioner Cory Noonan; and Ashtabula County Commissioner Kathryn Whittington.

We look forward to seeing you there!
LEGISLATIVE NEWS
CAPITAL FUNDING FOR COUNTY JAIL CONSTRUCTION
by John Leutz, CCAO Legislative Counsel

The Buckeye State Sheriffs Association (BSSA) and the County Commissioners Association of Ohio (CCAO) are concerned that in many instances our county jails are unable to adequately perform their mission within the criminal justice system due to their age and structural conditions. We are requesting that the state provide $200 million for jail construction and renovation in the next biennial capital appropriations bill and commit to continue a state/county partnership over the next decade to assist counties with construction or renovation that will provide safe and secure jail facilities.

Gov. Mike DeWine noted when he spoke to the Ohio Jail Advisory Board in July that, “The job of the jailer... is a tough, tough job.”

We need to move forward together under a new state/county partnership designed to assure that the conditions of our county jails do not make this job even tougher.

“Bed space in Ohio’s county jails is almost non-existent or at a premium,” added Bob Cornwell, executive director of the Buckeye State Sheriffs’ Association. “It has been many years since the State of Ohio has helped fund construction or renovation of local facilities.”

In the late 1980s to early 2000s, Ohio assisted counties by providing capital funding for jail construction and renovation through its biennial capital appropriations bills. It has now been 15 years since this program was discontinued. It is imperative that state capital funding support for jail construction and renovation be resumed for two major reasons – jail population and facility fatigue.

The population of the county jail has drastically changed. Modification of the current physical space is required to more effectively manage this changing population. Today our county jails serve the inappropriate role of “de facto” mental health and addiction facilities. The significantly increasing female population brings with it a very different, unique and diverse set of challenges. There is also a shortage of jail beds. In 2018, our jails housed an average daily jail population of 20,310. This population exceeds Department of Rehabilitation and Correction recommended capacity figures by approximately 8 percent.

Facility fatigue will require a substantial capital investment for jail construction, expansion and renovation. The age of county jail facilities suggests that there is a crisis on the horizon. The general life span of a jail is between 25 to 30 years, and 32 of our 83 county jails were opened prior to 1988.

County jail facilities are reaching a point where costly updates and repairs to their structural mechanical and operating systems are going to become a necessity in order to maintain safe and secure facilities that are capable of assuring the security and safety of both the inmate population and the jail staff.

Furthermore, the Bureau of Adult Detention is aware of serious operational issues being experienced by some jails that could possibly be resolved through either a significant investment in their current facility or construction of a new facility. We understand that several jails are unable to currently meet the Ohio Minimum Jail Standards due to the limitations of their facilities.

CCAO and BSSA surveyed our members earlier this year to identify the need for new construction or renovation of existing county jail facilities. Approximately 75 percent of our counties responded to the survey. Sixteen counties indicated that they are currently planning for new construction encompassing approximately 3,800 new jail beds. Ten counties are currently planning renovation of approximately 2,000 beds. Twenty-five counties plan either new construction of renovation work between two and five years from now.
Architects who specialize in jail construction and renovation estimate the current per bed cost for a new jail bed to be between $105,000 and $120,000 and renovation costs per bed to be around $80,000. Given these cost estimates the jail survey data indicates the nearly $600 million in jail construction costs are ready to be undertaken.

This request for capital funding will begin to address the needs of county jails at a very critical time. We look forward to working with the DeWine administration and the legislature to secure their commitment for a new state/county partnership designed to overcome deficient jail facilities, address capacity challenges and meet the needs of the county jail population in order to more effectively maintain the safety and security of our county jail employees, those incarcerated, our facilities and our communities.

**Commissioner testimonials:**

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**Commissioner testimonials:**

“The condition of the Lawrence County jail continues to hemorrhage the county’s budget. The number of inmates being transferred out of county cost in excess of $1 million. The failing infrastructure of our aging jail is also a drain on our budget. Our jail situation poses a tremendous liability to us.” - DeAnna Holliday – Lawrence County Commissioner

“The biggest liability for Coshocton County is our Coshocton County Justice Center. Constructed in 1972 and rated by the state as a 15 bed facility, on average, the county houses over 60 inmates each day and recently housed 84 inmates for several days. Our 2017 state jail inspection found us non-compliant with 78 out of 115 inspection standards. 40 of these standards are “essential” and key to providing a safe and secure environment.

Space that once held juvenile offenders has been converted to female housing which is no longer adequate for the numbers we are seeing. A new jail facility with flexibility to handle various populations that incorporates treatment for incarcerated individuals is a must in today’s society. The physical plant itself is failing as well.

We need to replace the HVAC system, and have recently spent nearly $1 million in patchwork repairs. The cell doors are unreliable and require constant repair. The cameras and security locks are beyond their useful life and experience frequent reliability issues. Plumbing clogs and leaks continue to plague the facility requiring maintenance personnel to be called in at all hours to address repairs.” - Dick Gould – Greene County Commissioner

“Greene County’s crumbling jail opened in 1969 and, while it employed the latest in technology at the time, its linear design does not allow for today’s best practices. Additionally, we have been operating under a federal court decree since 1989 that mandates an increasing number of daily prisoner releases due to overcrowding. The male vs. female population rate in our jail has drastically changed over time as well.

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COUNTY NEWS
COUNTIES AND COURTHOUSES CELEBRATE MILESTONES
by Andrew Johnson, CCAO Communications Coordinator

Bake a cake, break out the party hats and alert Al Roker because several Ohio counties and their courthouses celebrated milestone birthdays this year.

On Oct. 18, hundreds of people in Hamilton County made their way to the steps of the courthouse for the building’s 100th anniversary. Gov. Mike DeWine gave an address, which referenced the original dedication given by Sen. Warren G. Harding.

The courthouse doors were also ceremoniously opened to welcome the next 100 years.

The next day, Clinton County celebrated its courthouse’s centennial with an open house that allowed visitors to explore and learn about the courthouse’s history through displays and from volunteers.

Head to Shelby County, and you’ll find they are in the middle of their year-long bicentennial celebration, which kicked off in April. To honor the momentous occasion, the county planned a variety activities, including several presentations from the Shelby County Historical Society, a Native American artifact show, a bicentennial tree-planting ceremony and ordering bicentennial coins.

The county also earned a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records when they simultaneously opened 2,344 pull-tab cans. The event allowed residents to pay tribute to Stolle Machinery in Sidney, which originated and perfected the process for mass-producing pop-top cans.

In addition, the Moeller Brew Bart created a special edition Pilsner - Shelby 1819 Limited, which is the official beer of the Shelby County Ohio Bicentennial Celebration.

The county still has many events to honor the bicentennial including a salute to Shelby County veterans and the Bicentennial Ball on Feb. 20, 2020.

The Auglaize County courthouse turned 125 years old, and the county celebrated in February. The event...
allowed residents to tour the building, which strongly resembles how it looked 100 years ago because of a renovation project that sought to preserve the original structure. Gov. Mike DeWine also spoke at the celebration about the importance of investing in children for the county’s future success.

Last spring, Meigs County honored its bicentennial with a weekend of events that kicked off with the commissioners holding its weekly meeting that marked the 200th anniversary of the first meeting of county commissioners.

The county proceeded to host a variety of events to mark the historical occasion, including a presentation from the historical society, an artillery demonstration from the 7th Ohio Volunteer Cavalry Civil War Reenactment Group and a parade with Grand Marshall Mike DeWine continuing his bicentennial tour.

The Sandusky County commissioners this summer commemorated the 175th anniversary of the completion of the courthouse with an event held before the commissioners’ meeting.

More than two dozen local officials, residents and guests from neighboring counties showed their support for the celebration by attending the celebration, held before the commissioners’ regular meeting.

The courthouse is a hub of county activity, housing the common pleas court, juvenile court, offices for the tax department and other elected officials. Local officials, residents and guests from neighboring counties attending the celebration.

Preble County greeted visitors at the Centennial Celebration and Rededication of the Preble County Courthouse in September.

The day involved a Centennial Program as well as self-guided tours around the Preble County Board of Elections, the Preble County Prosecutor, Preble County Land Use Management and the Board of Preble County Commissioners.

Original molds of the courthouse were on display, as were items from a recently opened time capsule.
A MINUTE WITH FORMER CCAO MEMBERS-TURNED-LAWMAKERS

We asked CCAO members-turned-lawmakers questions about the state-county relationship. Here is what they said:

This session has brought a refreshing new day for the state-county partnership. How can counties and the state continue to encourage and improve this important relationship?

“So far in this General Assembly the working relationship between state and county government has been positive, productive, and impactful for everyday Ohioans. In the future, we can build on the partnership by continuing to be proactive by communicating with each other over policy. The relationship between the state and counties can be continually strengthened by bringing more groups, governments, and people together to work through issues.” - Rep. Brian Baldridge, former Adams County Commissioner

“As a county commissioner, I thought it was important to have a good relationship with my state representative and senator. Now as a state official, I appreciate the county leaders and try to work closely with them. The best advice is to simply call and share what is going on in your county.” - Sen. Bob Peterson, former Fayette County Commissioner

“Work together in educating the public on the vital services which counties provide, while making sure all counties are provided with the technical help and resources needed to provide a county government that is more efficient, effective and equitable in the 2020s.” - Rep. Stephen Hambley, former Medina County Commissioner

“The association between the state and county is vitally important. I regularly communicate with members of both Summit County Council and the Stark County commissioners. The increase in the gas tax which is being allocated to local and county entities in greater proportion than the original gas tax revenue is a perfect example of cooperation between state and county.” - Rep. Bill Roemer, former Summit County Council Member

“I always encourage ongoing communication between the county commissioners and elected officials. I kept telling the commissioners that when the economy improved and the funds were there, we would find a way to improve revenue to local governments.” - Sen. Bob Hackett, former Madison County Commissioner

“The importance of an open dialogue and strong communication between state and county leaders cannot be overstated. If legislation improves the quality of life for Ohioans, whether it’s a democrat or republican bill is insignificant. The end result makes our state stronger.” - Rep. Michael O’Brien, former Trumbull County Commissioner
How did your experience as a county commissioner or county council member prepare you for the state legislature?

“I feel my days as a county commissioner were excellent in preparing me to being a state legislator. Most new legislators do not understand how the system works and it takes months for one to understand the legislative process. Being a county commissioner allows one to “hit the ground running.”

- Sen. Hackett

“It was a great privilege to serve as a four term Adams County commissioner. The experience of dealing with people and policy on a county level is invaluable experience to have while serving the people on a state level. The perspective you gain from county government is important to remember when creating laws that impact all Ohioans”

- Rep. Baldridge

“My 18 years as commissioner taught me that the quality of the people in charge is more important than how smart the people in charge are. In other words, nobody cares how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

- Rep. Hambley

“As a county commissioner, I was intricately involved in every facet of county government. That background has been extremely valuable in my role as a state representative.”

- Rep. O’Brien

“My time as a county commissioner gave me great preparation and background on issues, constituent service, leading change and serving the public.”

- Sen. Peterson

“Serving on Summit County Council was a perfect preparation to serve in the Ohio Legislature. The ability to serve constituents is universal. Commissioners have to balance budgets and make difficult decisions comparable to state legislators.”

- Rep. Roemer

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I decided to defer to Sue Smail so that I could focus on my final months of work as a legislator. But then Commissioner Jim Carmichael, who was running unopposed for re-election in the general election, died in July of 2016. I became convinced that I needed to step in and seek to help out.

What if anything do you wish you knew about counties before your time in the legislature? How would it have helped?
There weren’t big surprises, but it would have been good to go through CCAO’s great new commissioner orientation even earlier. There is a lot to learn, and it would be nice to have an organized way to go through the CCAO Commissioner’s Handbook in a way that would be flexible for commissioners and potential commissioners where we could also learn from each other.

What was the biggest surprise or adjustment after taking office?
I was surprised that there was a need to run a county home levy renewal and then a lot of pressure to also prepare and propose a major jail to the voters in the same year. The county home levy passed by a wide margin, but the jail levy was turned down by a wide margin.
Are there common misconceptions about your job?
Probably the greatest misconception is that the board has wide authority to set county policy, when actually counties are limited to specific authority prescribed by state or federal authorities, except Summit and Cuyahoga counties have more home rule charter powers.

What are your main responsibilities?
At a high level we hold the purse strings with our appropriation responsibility across county government. This puts us into liaison mode with the rest of the county elected official team.

We also hold and provide support for county owned buildings and grounds and directly manage a series of services ranging from our county airport to a series of small wastewater treatment systems.

I also see our voting sessions as being the front steps of county government. These meetings are where our many county functions and projects are made more transparent.

Plus, this is where our array of community partner organizations are highlighted and recognized for their services and roles.

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?
Well, we run pretty lean as one of the few counties with a three quarters of one percent sales tax rate. While I see this as a plus, it continues to be a long journey of recovery from the “Great Recession.” I’ve always enjoyed the challenges of budgeting.

What has your county been doing to enhance the state-county partnership?
We do regularly interact with state officials in all three branches, including what CCAO does as an organization. Of course we also work regularly with our own state senator and state representative. Rep. Scott Wiggam served our county 12 years as county commissioner.

What are you most proud of for having achieved in your time as commissioner?
I would say it’s how well we work together as three very engaged commissioners and the progress we’ve been making at strengthening the relationships with other elected county officials and other local governments. This is an ongoing challenge, given that there is natural tension with other officials from the nature of our job.

What has been the biggest challenge you’ve dealt with as a county commissioner and what are the main challenges now?
Our criminal and civil justice system plays a critical part in our community and consumes more than half our general tax-supported budget.

Our biggest challenge and opportunity is to help orchestrate community efforts to appropriately intervene in the often messy and tough situations with which individuals and families struggle. There are a lot of good people doing good things to help, but there are gaps and weakness in how our many very good non-governmental and governmental programs work.

This requires an “all hands on deck” approach where the commissioners are involved as conveners and catalytic partners in addition to our direct responsibilities.
Another challenge involves the condition of our county roads, maintenance of which has been underfunded for years. Thankfully the long path to restoring them to better condition has been addressed this year by our state officials significantly increasing funding going forward.

What advice would you give your peers in other counties who are facing a similar challenge? It’s all about the hard work of building and maintaining effective relationships. There’s no magic formula. I continue to work on this myself.

Why is it important to be involved with CCAO? We are always more effective when we work together. I’ve held it in high regard for many years. What CCAO offers and accomplishes for our county commissioners and state officials is impressive.

What do you find are the most successful methods for reaching out to the residents of your county to communicate what your office is doing and why it’s doing it? This isn’t easy, given how busy our citizens are — especially the ones who are the thought leaders. We are currently trying to become more our own “publishers” of information through the usual current channels, with an emphasis on the power of personal stories.

What do you see for the future/aspirations? I generally focus mostly on what I’m doing now and what needs to be coming up next. I’ve filed petitions to run for a second term and I have placed my hat in the ring for a second year on CCAO’s board of trustees.

When you aren’t working, what do you do for fun or anything interesting that may surprise your colleagues? I have many interests, but I’ll mention three: I play with my two grandsons, ages three and one; I grind up our yard debris, compost it and return it as rich soil for our flower beds; and I meet with a small group of friends as we start up a Love INC (In the Name of Christ) for our county that will soon assist our faith and non-profit communities as they walk with those who struggle with life issues.

Wayne County was organized under an Act of the Legislature of the State of Ohio, bearing date Jan. 4, 1812, to take effect on the 1st day of March thereafter. The Act provides, “that the county of Wayne be and the same is hereby organized into a separate county.” The same law provided that the people of the county should elect county officers, on the first Monday of April, 1812, to hold their offices until the next annual election. Until 1810, Wayne County was one entire township, by the name of Killbuck, called after the American Indian chief of that name.

(Taken from waynecounty.org)
MANAGING CRISIS IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY
by Debbie Lieberman, Montgomery County Commissioner

Build the relationships and invest in emergency preparedness before disaster strikes... Don’t wait until a crisis hits to prepare!

Montgomery County has seen its share of extraordinary events in 2019. In February we experienced a large-scale water outage that impacted more than 300,000 residents. Our community was also the site of a rally by a band of KKK-affiliated individuals. Then we experienced a series of devastating tornadoes, followed closely by a heartbreaking mass shooting in one of our most cherished downtown neighborhoods.

The Montgomery County Board of County Commissioners helped lead the community-wide responses to these events through our county and regional Emergency Management Agencies. We worked with our partners to ensure that resources and support were coordinated to assist the citizens and businesses who were directly impacted. In the immediate aftermath of the tornadoes, our EMA operation helped coordinate search and rescue operations, water, sewer and other utility repairs, debris removal, and bottled water distribution. We worked directly with our local jurisdictions, and state and federal officials to get the necessary financial and operations support to handle the disaster response.

As I was out in the community the day after the tornadoes doing what I could for individuals, I was getting many questions about where people could find specific help. As an organization, we were putting up information on websites and through traditional media. I realized that most of the affected people no longer had internet or even TV’s. We went ‘old school’ and began creating and distributing paper fliers with as much information as we could.

If I could offer one piece of advice that paid large dividends for us: Build the relationships and invest in emergency preparedness before disaster strikes. Because it will. Long before any of these events happened, we had been working diligently to develop relationships with local jurisdictions, first responders, and community organizations such as the Red Cross and The Foodbank, Inc. We regularly participate in table top and full-scale emergency response exercises, and support our local rescue strike teams by organizing training events. This investment in preparedness proved to be invaluable. In other words, don’t wait until a crisis hits to prepare! You don’t want to be exchanging business cards with someone in the middle of a widespread natural disaster. Work on building that structure and those relationships early on, so that you’re ready when the inevitable happens.

Something else I’m very proud of is our leadership to bring together the massive community long-term recovery structure. We have helped create a long-term recovery structure with all of our area nonprofits, faith-based organizations, businesses, and community groups, and got started right away on planning for long-term recovery. We knew it will be a long haul, so we wanted to set up a structure that would support individuals trying to rebuild their lives, as well as communities trying to rebuild their infrastructure. Our approach has been working, and it has helped us coordinate support for individuals and businesses who need help to get back on their feet.

We are thankful for our community partners and our own staff who all came together to produce a phenomenal response in each event. We know it will be years before our community is truly healed, but I know we will get through this together and be stronger than ever before with such an exceptional group of organizations all working together toward a common cause.
LEGISLATOR Q & A

REPRESENTATIVE JACK CERA, RANKING MEMBER, OHIO HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE

This year’s budget clearly demonstrated a stronger state-county partnership by investing in indigent defense, infrastructure, and children and families. How do you see the partnership strengthening in the future?

As is often the case with state government, getting support for improvements like understanding the importance of the state-county partnership begins at the top. I credit Governor DeWine and both Majority and Minority Leadership for understanding the importance of that relationship. Now that much has been accomplished in this General Assembly, I am hopeful that all members better understand that we need to build on that in the future. Members need to understand the effect that mandates and lack of funding from the state has on the counties and directly on the residents and taxpayers at the local level. While we have not been able to address a larger restoration of the Local Government Fund, it was important that we dealt with issues like indigent defense, infrastructure, and children and families. Perhaps the best way to improve the partnership moving forward is understanding that we can find important, but less costly ways to help our county partners.

CCAO and the Ohio General Assembly are working toward a mutual goal of a stronger state-county partnership. In your experience, why is that partnership important?

From the beginning of my time in the legislature, I learned that the counties are an extension of state government. Without the partnership, the residents in Ohio do not receive the services they deserve. Access to the court system, caring for the children, the elderly and veterans, functioning of all county offices, protection of life and property and much more are provided because of our partnership. Imagine if the state had to provide all of the services provided by our county partners from Columbus. We all realize that this would not work and be more costly. It is important for members of the General Assembly to understand the value of having this partnership. We need to understand that mandates and law changes often have a cost and that budget and tax policy changes that have a negative impact on our state-county partnership should always be given a complete and thorough review.

What advice do you have for commissioners when engaging with their members of the General Assembly?

Ohio is a diverse state and, therefore, our counties are diverse with many different problems. While some issues are the same for all, it is important that the state legislature understand the many different needs of the county. County commissioners should make every effort to communicate with their legislator. Do not wait until an issue is ready to be voted on to express your views. Make sure you have the facts straight when state issues are being discussed during commissioner meetings, especially if they are controversial issues. Most legislators understand that they will receive criticism on issues but don’t forget to thank them in your public meetings when they do something good. Since we are a diverse state, it is important to help your legislator get information to their colleagues throughout the state. Think of ways to help provide that information. During the Transportation Budget hearings, many members had never heard of the problem of road slips in Eastern and Southeastern Ohio. I am sure there are problems throughout the state that members are not aware of their complexity. Educating them to the unique problems of every corner of Ohio will only help us in building our state-county partnership.
LEGISLATOR Q & A
SENATOR VERNON SYKES, RANKING MINORITY MEMBER, OHIO SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

This year’s budget clearly demonstrated a stronger state-county partnership by investing in indigent defense, infrastructure, and children and families. How do you see the partnership strengthening in the future?

I was pleased by the increased level of partnership between the state and counties throughout both the operating and transportation budgets. I think the catalyst for this cooperation was the acknowledgment by the governor that local governments have been hit the hardest by the state’s fiscal policies over the past decade. Cutting the Local Government Fund in half by previous General Assemblies has really put local governments in a tough spot to meet their obligations in terms of providing services to their residence.

Looking toward the future, my hope is the General Assembly will restore the Local Government Fund to pre-recession levels, while also looking at the 2020 Census data to get a clearer picture of where we need to make targeted investments across the state. We see data that shows Ohio trending to be more elderly than the national average, as well as a relocation of young people from the rural and suburban areas to our urban centers. With that in mind, we must tailor our allocation of resources to meet the unique needs of our diverse geographical regions. That could mean putting more money toward non-emergency medical transportation or home-care caregivers in the more rural parts of the state, and building out public transportation systems in our urban centers.

However the state and counties relationship proceeds, a successful relationship will be dependent upon having an open line of communication and a willingness to change or adapt our ideas as new information and experiences come about.

CCAO and the Ohio General Assembly are working toward a mutual goal of a stronger state-county partnership. In your experience, why is that partnership important?

As someone who has served at the local government level, I believe it is critically important for all levels of government to try to work as cohesively as possible. A fragmented process reduces the quality of services, hinders the responsiveness of government, and dissolves confidence and trust between the people and their elected leaders.

Years ago, in Senate Bill 115 of the 112th General Assembly, the State and Local Government Commission of Ohio was created. The function of this commission was to serve as a forum for the discussion and resolution of problems associated with the relationship between local, state, and federal governments. Problems involving the implementation of grant programs, the creation of unfunded mandates, and legislative proposals all fell under the purview of this commission with the lieutenant governor serving as the commission chairman. The establishment of this commission was a concrete step taken to show that the state had a genuine interest in making sure local governments had a seat at the table. Unfortunately, the commission was dissolved during the 124th General Assembly.

I think the state would be better served to reinstitute the State and Local Government Commission, or something similar to it. A lot of the time, local governments are the ones who deliver government services, while the state simply finances them. We need to have an open line of communication so we know what programs and services are working best and which ones need to be revamped. It all comes down to wanting to provide the best product to our constituents in the most affordable way.
What advice do you have for commissioners, council members and county executives when engaging with their members of the General Assembly?
One thing I have always stressed when I was on Akron City Council, in the Ohio House and now the Ohio Senate is to take advantage of the time your state representatives are in the district. Too often I feel people have the idea in their head that they can only meet with their elected officials in their offices in Columbus. I have found, holding meetings in the district, in the areas your districts’ overlap, to discuss challenges or opportunities add a personal touch to the conversation.

Ohio has a part-time legislature, meaning there is a large portion of the year where we are back in our districts. Take that opportunity to meet with your representatives, show them around your city, county or whatever unit of government you represent. If you are having issues with blighted properties, ask to take them on a tour of the areas that need to be addressed. If there are roads that need repaired, show them the troubled areas. If there are projects you would like to see included in the capital budget, take them to the physical location that needs upgraded.

Members of the General Assembly have a lot of different groups and individuals vying for our attention while we are in Columbus, but not so much when we are back home in our districts. I would urge local government officials to take advantage of these opportunities and engage us on the issues that are facing your community. It’s different when you go out and actually see the problem for yourself versus reading a letter or a newspaper article about it.

LEGISLATOR Q & A
SENATOR MATT DOLAN, CHAIR, OHIO SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

This year’s budget clearly demonstrated a stronger state-county partnership by investing in indigent defense, infrastructure, and children and families. How do you see the partnership strengthening in the future?
As long as the administration and legislature continue to listen to our local governments’ concerns and our local governments remain efficient with their tax dollars, I am hopeful that the traditional relationship between the two will continue. One of the most important items missing between the two was communication, that is restored and will be the basis of our future relationship.

CCAO and the Ohio General Assembly are working toward a mutual goal of a stronger state-county partnership. In your experience, why is that partnership important?
It is important because counties are creatures of the state General Assembly. All the powers and the duties they have come from the state government – it is essential for the legislature to remember that as we allocate state tax payer dollars. For years, legislators campaigned against unfunded mandates. County government is a mandate of the state, thus we need to be mindful how we fund them.

What advice do you have for commissioners, council members and county executives when engaging with their members of the General Assembly?
My advice is to maintain communication with your state legislator. The concern of high taxes at the local level is an economic growth concern for Ohio. While it is important to maintain funding for local governments, it is equally as important for local governments to operate in an efficient and effective manner. Understand that partnerships are a two way street.
Strategic planning is important for all organizations. The problem is that the planning process is time consuming and can have little relevance for employees if they do not see results. The problem can be further exasperated if employees are not engaged. To engage employees, Fairfield County used a comprehensive approach for an electronic strategic planning process. The county coordinated its strategic planning across departmental lines, showed how it valued its employees and refreshed communication activities. By focusing on ways to engage employees in components of the planning, productivity increased.

Within one year, the county created its first-ever county-wide strategic plan, implemented policy changes to improve recruitment and retention of employees, developed new tools for employee assessments, implemented a plan for merit-based pay, increased opportunities for communication (creating an ongoing dialogue with employees), and enjoyed new interdepartmental work groups whose work decreased expenditures and increased revenues. There was organizational change to benefit the public.

Efficient Strategic Planning Processes Involve Employees

Counties are faced with complex challenges in many service areas, including justice, public safety, health, human services, transportation, infrastructure and financial management. Multiple departments are governed by different elected officials and department heads who, while cooperative, are often unconnected or disengaged with one another. Leaders are faced with connecting departments to define and meet common goals. The problem is strategic planning at a county-wide level is a major time commitment, and engaging employees in the process can be daunting.

No one is eager to spend hours of work on planning, especially if the resulting product has limited value. Yet, Bryson (2018) asserted strategic planning in the public sector is best when there is extensive use of analysis and synthesis in deliberate settings. Ellinger, Keller and Ellinger (2008) found that increasing interdepartmental connections and documenting exchanges of information were helpful in improving performance and in strategic planning. There is a need for engaging employees and strategic planning.

Further, in Fairfield County, as in many other areas of the state, there were market pressures making it increasingly difficult to attract and retain employees. Private sector job opportunities were becoming more plentiful and lucrative. The county was struggling with its ability to offer attractive benefits and rewards to employees. County leaders were not inclined to increase tax revenues to improve the ability to compete. Instead, the county wanted to engage employees to develop strategies to be of better service to employees and to the public.

Engaging employees was important. Employees have expertise and information to make strategic planning relevant. In addition, employees will feel more engaged when they are trusted to participate in important decisions. To that end, Fairfield County developed an efficient strategic planning process to involve more than 850 employees and 50 partners in an electronic process for strategic planning. In addition, a unique approach was taken to ensure relevance of the plan by demonstrating quick action for a theme that arose from the planning. The aim was to create an ongoing conversation with employees, furthering employee engagement.

The County Used a Program with Three Components

The program consisted of three components: strategic planning, valuing employees and communication. This was a comprehensive effort to engage employees, with a broad approach to strategic planning which underpinned a communication plan as well as the implementation of 20 recommendations to support employee
recruitment and retention (of which eight recommendations resulted in policy changes). Research shows that employees who are engaged are more productive. (Seijts & Crim, 2006). Therefore, the ultimate beneficiary of such an approach is the public.

The first component of the program was strategic planning. An electronic process was used to first communicate the common mission and confirm values. Then, an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats was conducted, also electronically. More than 212 responses were received from a group of about 900. Some responses were incomplete (perhaps listed only strengths or only weaknesses). The response level garnered a general snapshot of employee input. Patterns arose from the review of the responses. “Word clouds” from the SWOT analysis were created to demonstrate the most often reported concepts. The responses were then synthesized into five themes. These themes were further reviewed in face-to-face settings to determine if the themes and initial actions accurately depicted a mid-term strategic approach for the overall county operations, knowing that there were multiple, departmental strategic plans in existence, as well.

There were links made to departmental strategic plans, which aligned with overall themes. The resulting five strategic themes were:

- Fighting the opioid and drug epidemics & implementing community responses.
- Valuing employees & improving recruitment and retention of employees.
- Improving technology and records retention services.
- Improving business opportunities.
- Securing funding and monitoring expenditures to provide resources to meet demands on services.

Following the review and analysis, the resulting strategic plan and its themes were initially discussed in public meetings from May 2018 – August 2018. Those meetings included County Commission meetings, elected official and department head meetings, Fairfield County Family, Adult, and Children First Council meetings, and community group meetings, such as Lancaster/Fairfield County Community Action Board meetings. Kellie Ailes, director of Lancaster/Fairfield County Community Action, stated, “I was excited to hear about the county’s plans. The insights from the plans provided even greater synergy between our organization and our county government. That directly translated into better opportunities for people in our community.” From August 2018 forward, there have been ongoing efforts to reach out to employees for updates to the plan. As the organization learned more about shared goals, new projects emerged.

For example, the county commissioners provided property and a building for a crisis stabilization effort of the Alcohol, Drug, Addiction, and Mental Health Board, which helped to keep costs down and move the project ahead. “We were able to develop our project plans once the critical component of property acquisition was addressed. The collaboration developed because of strategic thinking across departmental lines,” said Rhonda Myers, ADAMH board director.

As the strategic thinking continued, there was clarification of purpose. Employees in the public sector have service as their cause. Seeing this purpose in the forefront of communications in a living document helped to renew the unity of purpose. From the discussions about the strategic plan, there was more awareness about the importance of valuing employees, which was a strategic theme, and one in which there were fewer linkages among departments, perhaps because appointing authority (hiring and firing) at the county is decentralized. To keep the discussion about strategies relevant to all departments, quick action was taken to demonstrate how the county valued employees.

The second component was valuing employees. Shortly after the strategic plan was adopted, an
initial interdepartmental work group focused on the theme of valuing employees. The desire was to retain employees and recruit new employees to meet the county mission. The county was in a competitive environment and wanted to improve efforts in recruiting and retaining employees. After researching the evidence in the fields of public administration and management, the work group developed 20 recommendations in the categories of: organizational culture, communications and employee involvement; financial rewards; performance assessment; career development and training; work-life balance; and health, wellness and benefits. Generally, the recommendations in each of the categories were:

Organizational Culture, Communications and Employee Involvement

- Add at least six new public meeting dates annually to engage employees at multiple locations.
- Advertise opportunities for employees to be involved in interdepartmental work groups.
- Ask employees what they want.

Financial Rewards

- Increase opportunities for merit-based financial rewards.
- Implement a vacation leave conversion program.

Performance Assessment

- Implement new performance assessment tools that are easy to use.
- Increase opportunities for merit-based personal time.

Career Development, Training, and Recognition

- Provide an array of tools for supervisors and managers to review, such as written documents to help with implementing job shadowing programs, leadership development programs, mentoring programs, supervisory training, and various training modules (soft skills and technical skills).
- Adjust the travel and expense reimbursement limits for professional conferences or events held in metropolitan areas if expenditure levels are approved by the appointing authority and estimates are documented prior to the attendance at the professional conference or event.
- Place in the policy manual multiple options for departments to institute for employee recognition.

Work-Life Balance

- Update the vacation accrual schedule to allow employees access to vacation within the first year of employment and to accrue more vacation sooner. (This allowed employees to use vacation at the end of the probationary period of 6 months and to obtain an additional week of vacation at intervals of 5, 10, 15 and 20 years.)
- Adjust the sick leave conversion policy to allow employees using up to 56 hours of sick leave annually to convert sick leave to personal hours on a scaled program.
- Add a holiday to the county approved holiday schedule for the Friday of the Fairfield County Fair, to encourage attendance at the fair, improve business opportunities, honor agricultural values, and promote social and family activities.
- Encourage elected officials and department heads to examine flexible work schedules and the concept of teleworking.

Health, Wellness, and Benefits

- Implement a centralized onboarding program to communicate benefits to new employees.
- Continue the tuition reimbursement program, introduced as a pilot program.
- Continue to improve health and well-being through exercise equipment offerings.
- Pilot the use of filtered water machines as part of the wellness program.
- Introduce a new Health Advocate program to help employees and their families understand benefits.
- Annually, communicate full compensation and benefits to employees.

By October of 2018, all recommendations, including the policy changes, were formally adopted. Rachel Elsea, clerk to the Board of County Commissioners and an employee with a flexible work schedule, said, “Written policies often sound beneficial to employee life balance, but, are difficult to implement to achieve a meaningful work-family balance. Fairfield County has a structured benefit package that can be easily accessed to assure that personal and family needs are met while at the same time maximizing the
productivity that the residents of Fairfield County expect and deserve.”

The legitimacy of the policies was grounded in honest relationships with employees and ethical conduct of leaders. Leaders gave new attention to performance assessment, compensation analysis, and merit-based pay. Braun and Peus (2018) linked authentic leadership to job satisfaction through work-life balance perceptions. The second component of the program encouraged employees and brought about a desire to increase communications even more.

The third component was to refresh the communications strategy and communication plan. County leaders knew that if employees feel disconnected, they will not understand why decisions are being made and will not feel a part of the decision-making process. In addition, they knew that making connections can be complex given the hierarchy of county government. While respecting the structure of county government, the county developed new approaches to keep the conversations about strategies alive. Five new actions were taken to:

1. Create a work group to examine technologies, the use of video communication (especially for large groups of people), website improvements, and a more unified social media approach for communications with internal and external stakeholders.
2. Add four new public meeting dates to the “special” dates calendar (a communication tool to list dates for public meetings and communication opportunities outside of the regularly scheduled board of commissioners meetings), with the purpose of informing and engaging stakeholders.
3. Add at least six new public meeting dates to engage employees at multiple county buildings or locations. These meetings are known as “Time with the Commission.”
4. Create opportunities for employees to be involved in work groups.
5. Conduct additional face-to-face strategic planning sessions.

Employees feel more supported when leaders listen. To complement the in-person exchanges, an electronic idea box was implemented. The purpose of the electronic idea box is to keep a sense of conversation with employees going. Managers also put in place an array of motivational tools, such as an electronic “going the extra mile” reward system, customer service training, and multiple wellness initiatives. Motivational tools strengthen the relationship between organizational support and organizational culture.

**Engaging Employees Resulted in Increased Productivity**

By engaging employees, the county developed a county-wide strategic plan, demonstrated it valued employees, and improved its communications – within about one year. Commissioner Dave Levacy, Board of Commissioners President, stated, “We have been encouraged with the increased information exchanges with employees. Innovation comes at all levels of an organization, and we continue to learn more and accept new ideas for improvement.” The program has improved administration of the government, resulted in new tools to improve organizational culture, upgraded working conditions for employees, and provided information to facilitate effective policy making. The approach provides actionable guidance for organizations who want to engage employees and keep them engaged.

**About the Author:** Carri Brown is the county administrator for Fairfield County, Ohio. As county administrator, Carri recommends and implements policy of the board of county commissioners. She supervises department heads and provides executive level leadership to elected officials, statewide associations, and local agencies to engage governments, non-profits, faith-based groups and businesses, achieving a common mission of community improvement.

Carri is a certified government financial manager and member of several professional organizations. She has earned a Bachelor of Business Administration, Master of Business Administration and Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Management. Her doctoral research was a correlational study on the effect of organizational citizenship behavior on job satisfaction; this was research involving Ohio’s child protective service workers, employees who experience high stress, compassion fatigue and turnover. She can be reached at carri.brown@fairfieldcounty.ohio.gov.
WINTER SAFETY TIPS
by Frank Hatfield, CORSA Interim Managing Director

Winter is just around the corner which can bring additional workplace safety hazards. Here are a few tips before the cold weather hits.

Prevent slip-and-fall
Snow, ice and freezing temperatures in the winter can create wet and slippery surfaces at work that will lead to accidents. Most snow and ice-related slip and falls happen outdoors, so make sure your parking lots, driveways, and walkways are cleared and salted.

Winter workplace accidents can also occur indoors, especially in entryways, hallways, and other rooms where ice and snow have been tracked in from outside. Lay down absorbent mats and set up wet floor signs to help individuals safely move around the offices during the winter months.

Back up utilities, technology, and data
Power outages can happen when weather conditions take a turn for the worse, causing technology and utilities to fail. In case the electricity goes out, keep flashlights stashed around the office so employees can safely navigate their way to the exit. Additionally, pipes can freeze and burst if the heat is off for too long and sump pump failure could cause flooding. Consider investing in a backup power generator to keep the building utilities running smoothly.

A bad storm can also cause electrical surges that can damage expensive technology equipment, such as computers, printers, and data centers. Make sure your devices are hooked into surge protectors to avoid any electrical damage. Additionally, loss of power can result in loss of company data. Regularly back up data and make sure your back-up system is functioning properly before a potential storm hits.

Winterize facilities before winter hits
Now is the time for those responsible for facilities to inspect and winterize them to reduce potential property claims and avoid disruption of operations during the most challenging weather of the year. Review preventative maintenance schedules and energy management plans to ensure facilities are efficiently maintained and served during upcoming winter months. Inspect the roofs of facilities particularly around vents, chimneys, and areas known to pool water.

Perform necessary preventative maintenance such as clean gutters to maintain proper roof drainage. Beware of trees in close proximity to buildings that are at risk of fall due to the weight of snow and ice. Turn off exterior faucets and insulate interior pipes to prevent burst pipes.

Fill and seal cracks in walkways and parking lots. Take the time now to winterize your facilities to avoid property damage and increase the likelihood of uninterrupted operations throughout the winter. For more information contact Frank Hatfield (fhatfield@ccao.org) or Jim Hale (jhale@ccao.org).
CEBCO moving to Anthem Rx on Jan. 1, 2020.
Every three years, CEBCO solicits proposals for Health, Prescription, Dental, and Vision services. During the most recent review process for 2020, the CEBCO Board of Directors made the decision to remain with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield (health), Delta Dental, and Vision Service Plan (VSP). The Board also decided to move the CEBCO Prescription benefits to Anthem Rx, effective Jan 1, 2020.

The value of integrating the health and prescription benefits together allows members with chronic health conditions to have more control of their conditions and simplifies the process of receiving care. It is especially useful in identifying gaps in care and identifying members who need support in managing their care. Members will be receiving a mailing in November with more details of the Rx change and new ID cards will be mailed in December.

Starting Jan. 1, 2020, CEBCO members will have an enhanced customer service experience.
Anthem Health Guide (AHG), a concierge customer service model will help members stay involved in their health, get more value from their benefits, and navigate the healthcare system more easily. AHG leverages skilled teams powered by smart engagement technology and analytics to drive the optimal member experience, regardless of where the member falls on the healthcare continuum. Health guides (customer service representatives) will recommend relevant Anthem clinical programs, offer guided decision support, educate members on open gaps in care, and alert members when Anthem is trying to reach them. Another way CEBCO is helping county employees and their families navigate the healthcare system.

Doug Foust to Retire
Doug Foust, CEBCO’s managing director, has announced his retirement and will be leaving CEBCO at the end of 2019. Under Doug’s leadership, the CEBCO pool has seen steady growth, from 26 counties in 2013 to the current 37 counties, covering approximately 25,000 lives.

In addition to providing the rate stability that our member counties need, Doug has helped introduce many new programs and enhancements to the pool, including the current wellness program through Interactive Health. This program, which includes a 36 panel blood draw, recently completed the 2019 Wellness Year. The results indicate that as many as 40 percent of CEBCO participants may have a medical condition they were previously unaware of and includes a comprehensive report that the member can review and share with their physician. Doug has spent many hours in helping counties devise wellness strategies that emphasize the importance of member engagement.

Though he will be leaving CEBCO, Doug will not be relaxing, as he will continue to be extremely busy with his many hobbies and side projects. We wish him well!
COUNTY LEADER

CCAO SERVICE CORP NEWS
PLANNING FOR THE OPERS CHANGES, PLANNING FOR YOUR FUTURE
by Keith Blosser, CCAO Managing Director of Operations

CCAO DEFERRED COMPENSATION PLAN

When I entered public service back in the 90s, the Ohio pension system I signed with was strong. My vesting schedule was very good and even my spouse was going to have full medical benefits for life after my 10 years of public service.

Back then, I was planning on doing about 30 years and having a retirement of over 75 percent (66 percent plus not being taxed 10 percent for the OPERS) of my highest three years in service. Life was good and back then, I knew already what I was going to have at retirement. Who needs to plan?

Seems like starting in the year 2000, and about every two to three years after like clockwork, there were changes announced in the OPERS program.

I saw my great benefit being chipped away, incrementally, over years and years of service. Just a few years ago now, a major shift happened in OPERS.

They made major adjustments splitting future retirees into three retirement classes of Group A, Group B and Group C. Retirement factors were changed, work time rules were changed, and even your high three salary years became your high five... anything to save the fund actuarially and keep some component of a healthcare bridge for those retiring before Medicare eligibility.

Well, as I write this article today in 2019, I am in OPERS Group B, have lost thousands of dollars a month in projected monthly retirement income and both I and my spouse’s OPERS retirement healthcare coverage is gone completely. Who needs to plan for retirement? You do.

WE OFFER A SOLUTION TO THE EVER-CHANGING WORLD

At CCAO, we are always trying to find a way to help Ohio county government and county employees. Years ago, when the state’s answer to the OPERS changes was to start up a deferred compensation program, they primarily focused on the state agencies. County employees it seemed were last in pay and also last on the minds of the state focused program.

Counties came to CCAO and asked us to provide Deferred Compensation services to their county employees, and we were to build it in such a way as to give the maximum benefit possible to our member county employees at every turn.

I am proud to say we have done that. The CCAO County Deferred Compensation Program is your county benefit to take advantage of. OPERS continues to change, and we continue to step up to make sure county employees are protected from those changes.

The CCAO Deferred Compensation Plan is tailored to county employees specifically and is overseen by county commissioners. We have over 26,000 members and are managing over $760 million of just Ohio county retirement dollars.

WHY WE ARE THE BEST – COUNTIES FIRST!

We are available in all 88 counties. You can sign up today!

- We offer a traditional deferred compensation plan that is pre-tax.
- We offer a Roth deferred compensation plan that is post-tax so what you do save, later at retirement you take out tax fee.
- We offer SEVEN IN-STATE full time county representatives just for you the county employee. The reps have their Series 6 and
Series 36 licenses so they can meet with you one-on-one and can do comprehensive retirement planning for you and your spouse.

- The county deferred comp reps aren’t limited to just helping you with the deferred compensation account you have, they can do holistic comprehensive retirement planning that includes your OPERS account, Social Security, Ohio deferred compensation, IRA’s, military pensions, Roth IRA’s, everything that you have can be “put together” in a strategic way so you can actually see what it all will get you at retirement. They can customize your plan for you! It’s free to you; it’s part of being in the program!

- We offer a loan program so you can take a low interest loan out from your CCAO Deferred Compensation account.

- We offer choices... you can manage your own account and pick the funds and balance your own portfolio, or you have the option to pay a slightly higher fee and have your account professionally managed in our Managed Account Service.

- We offer a conservative fund that, like no other fund, has a cost of zero basis points. That’s right, you can put your hard saved money into the Stable Value Fund. It is very low risk, and there is no fee. Who wants to be exposed to another 2008 market downturn?

- We offer the best and the easiest to understand website in the industry. It can calculate your retirement pay taking into account all your retirement assets. It will provide you a “Lifetime Income Score” so you can see how you are doing toward your goal and what you need to do to make it. It’s simple!

**WE OFFER CHOICES... YOU CAN MANAGE YOUR OWN ACCOUNT OR YOU HAVE THE OPTION TO HAVE YOUR ACCOUNT PROFESSIONALLY MANAGED IN OUR MANAGED ACCOUNT SERVICE.**

- We offer such sophisticated planning tools on our website that even calculate your expected health care cost in your retirement years based on your specific circumstance. Now you can plan with confidence.

This county benefit is for county employees only. Relying on others for your future retirement happiness is a thing of the past. You need to take control of your life, and this county benefit can help you do it.

Even if you are in the Ohio plan of deferred compensation, you can still sign up with ours (yes you can be in two at once) and all it takes is just $10 per pay minimum to take advantage of all this planning, including planning for OPERS and the Ohio Deferred Comp plan and how it all fits together with everything else you and even your spouse have and want to accomplish.

Ask your HR for a sign-up sheet or the contact information to your County CCAO Deferred Compensation Representative. It’s easy, it’s smart and it doesn’t take a lot of dough to participate.
As of April 2019, insurance coverage can now replace elected officials surety bonds in counties. The legislature passed HB 291 which allows counties to utilize a policy of insurance or coverage document issued by insurance pool, such as CORSA, in place of a surety bond, to protect political subdivisions from financial or property loss caused by fraudulent or dishonest actions, including criminal conduct, of an office holder or an employee subject to a surety requirement.

Surety bonds protect the government and public from financial loss caused by a public official and hold the official personally accountable for their actions. Surety bond coverage is different from the standard employee dishonesty faithful performance (EDFP) insurance coverage that a local government would purchase to protect itself from employee-attributable financial losses.

The passage of HB 291 nullified an Ohio Attorney General’s opinion that had determined that the statute specifically requiring an individual bond could not be fulfilled by obtaining “blanket” EDFP coverage instead of an actual surety bond.

Obtaining insurance coverage instead of utilizing a surety bond is optional, and counties that choose not to purchase such a policy must still continue to comply with the existing statutory requirements for the use of surety bonds.

The insurance coverage obtained must cover all officers, employees, and appointees of the county who would otherwise be required to file a bond. The coverage amount for an officer, employee, or appointee must be equal to or exceed the maximum amount of the bond otherwise required by law. If existing law does not specify an amount for the bond, or specifies only a minimum amount, the policy must provide coverage for an amount that is determined by the county commissioners or the county council members of a county. Continuing law states a public official is personally liable for all public money the official or the official’s subordinate receives or collects.
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Rep. Shane Wilkin (Highland County)
Rep. Kris Jordan (Delaware County)
Rep. Robert Cupp (Allen County)

Rep. Dave Greenspan (Cuyahoga County)
Rep. Rick Perales (Greene County)
Rep. Scott Wiggam (Wayne County)
Rep. Stephen Hambley (Medina County)

Rep. Jason Stephens (Lawrence County)
Rep. Bill Roemer (Summit County)
Rep. Brian Baldridge (Adams County)
Rep. Michael O’Brien (Trumbull County)

Sen. Bob Hackett (Madison County)
Sen. Bob Peterson (Fayette County)
CCAo LEADERSHIP

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## CCAO STAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Phone</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brandy Allen</td>
<td>Accountant</td>
<td>(614) 220-0640</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ballen@ccao.org">ballen@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sherry Barbosky</td>
<td>CORSA Underwriting Manager</td>
<td>(614) 220-7995</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sbarbosky@ccao.org">sbarbosky@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keith Blosser</td>
<td>Managing Director of Operations</td>
<td>(614) 220-7978</td>
<td><a href="mailto:kblosser@ccao.org">kblosser@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melissa Bodey</td>
<td>CEBCO Senior Benefit Specialist</td>
<td>(614) 220-7979</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mbodey@ccao.org">mbodey@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Brownlee</td>
<td>CORSA Managing Director</td>
<td>(614) 220-7988</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jbrownlee@ccao.org">jbrownlee@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debi Burnette</td>
<td>CEBCO Enrollment and Billing Specialist</td>
<td>(614) 220-0644</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dburnette@ccao.org">dburnette@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thisbe Butcher</td>
<td>Finance Manager</td>
<td>(614) 220-7990</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tbutter@ccao.org">tbutter@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tricia Callihan</td>
<td>CORSA Program Assistant</td>
<td>(614) 220-7993</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tcallihan@ccao.org">tcallihan@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wendy Dillingham</td>
<td>CEBCO Senior Benefit Specialist</td>
<td>(614) 220-7992</td>
<td><a href="mailto:wdillingham@ccao.org">wdillingham@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suzanne Dulaney</td>
<td>CCAO Executive Director</td>
<td>(614) 220-7977</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sdulaney@ccao.org">sdulaney@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglas Foust</td>
<td>CEBCO Managing Director</td>
<td>(614) 220-7984</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dfoust@ccao.org">dfoust@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Francis</td>
<td>CORSA Senior Claims Representative</td>
<td>(614) 220-0638</td>
<td><a href="mailto:afrancis@ccao.org">afrancis@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Hale</td>
<td>CORSA Risk Control Consultant</td>
<td>(614) 246-1630</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jhaile@ccao.org">jhaile@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Hatfield</td>
<td>CORSA Risk Manager</td>
<td>(614) 220-0639</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fhatfield@ccao.org">fhatfield@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ken Hilty</td>
<td>CORSA Law Enforcement Consultant</td>
<td>(614) 357-6966</td>
<td><a href="mailto:khilty@ccao.org">khilty@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon Honeck</td>
<td>Senior Policy Analyst</td>
<td>(614) 220-7982</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jhoneck@ccao.org">jhoneck@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim Hoverman</td>
<td>Network Administrator</td>
<td>(614) 220-0655</td>
<td><a href="mailto:thoverman@ccao.org">thoverman@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew Johnson</td>
<td>Communications Coordinator</td>
<td>(614) 220-7986</td>
<td><a href="mailto:ajohnson@ccao.org">ajohnson@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Jones</td>
<td>CORSA Claims Representative</td>
<td>(614) 220-0636</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aones@ccao.org">aones@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mike Kindell</td>
<td>CEBCO Senior Benefit Specialist</td>
<td>(614) 220-0645</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mkindell@ccao.org">mkindell@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeff Knapp</td>
<td>CORSA Claims Supervisor</td>
<td>(614) 220-0642</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jknapp@ccao.org">jknapp@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marilou Lamb</td>
<td>Office Manager &amp; Boards Liaison</td>
<td>614-220-7998</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mlamb@ccao.org">mlamb@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Leutz</td>
<td>Legislative Counsel</td>
<td>(614) 220-7994</td>
<td><a href="mailto:jleutz@ccao.org">jleutz@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katie Lininger</td>
<td>CORSA Senior Claims Representative</td>
<td>(614) 220-0637</td>
<td><a href="mailto:klininger@ccao.org">klininger@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Massoud</td>
<td>Policy Analyst</td>
<td>(614) 220-7996</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rmassoud@ccao.org">rmassoud@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Miller</td>
<td>CORSA Claim and Litigation Manager</td>
<td>(614) 220-7989</td>
<td><a href="mailto:emiller@ccao.org">emiller@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Jane Neiman</td>
<td>Public Relations Associate</td>
<td>(614) 220-7979</td>
<td><a href="mailto:mjneiman@ccao.org">mjneiman@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtis Pratt</td>
<td>CORSA Claims Technician</td>
<td>(614) 220-0636</td>
<td><a href="mailto:cpratt@ccao.org">cpratt@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alison Redmond</td>
<td>CORSA Membership Services Manager</td>
<td>(614) 220-7991</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aredmond@ccao.org">aredmond@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Schwiebert</td>
<td>Policy Analyst</td>
<td>(614) 220-7981</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aschwiebert@ccao.org">aschwiebert@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tori Sinclair</td>
<td>CEBCO Wellness Coordinator</td>
<td>(614) 220-0650</td>
<td><a href="mailto:tsinclair@ccao.org">tsinclair@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheryl Subler</td>
<td>Managing Director of Policy</td>
<td>(614) 220-7980</td>
<td><a href="mailto:csubler@ccao.org">csubler@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hannah Whiston</td>
<td>Wellness/Benefits Administrator</td>
<td>(614) 220-0654</td>
<td><a href="mailto:hwhiston@ccao.org">hwhiston@ccao.org</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>