



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Builds for Statewide Government Transparency as OhioCheckbook.com Has Received Over 160,000 Searches in the First Five Months

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

COLUMBUS – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with Mahoning County leaders and announced the first partnership between the Ohio Treasurer's office and a county government to place their spending online at OhioCheckbook.com. Last year, Treasurer Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com, which sets a new national standard for government transparency and for the first time in Ohio history puts all state spending information on the internet. OhioCheckbook.com recently earned Ohio the number one ranking in the country for government transparency.

Treasurer Mandel was joined at today's announcement by Mahoning County Commissioners Anthony Traficanti, Carol Rimedio-Righetti and David Ditzler as well as Mahoning County Auditor Ralph Meacham. Mahoning County is the first county in Ohio to announce a partnership with the Treasurer's office to place their spending information on OhioCheckbook.com. Last week, Treasurer Mandel sent a letter to 18,062 local government and school officials representing 3,962 local governments throughout the state calling on them to place their checkbook level data on OhioCheckbook.com and extending an invitation to partner with his office at no cost to local governments. These local governments include cities, counties, townships, schools, library districts and other special districts.

"I believe the people of Mahoning County have a right to know how their tax money is being spent and I applaud local leaders here for partnering with the Treasurer's office to post their finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "My vision is to create an army of citizen watchdogs who are empowered to hold public officials accountable."

"The Mahoning County Board of Commissioners welcomes this transparency opportunity to partner with the Ohio Treasurer's office by displaying Mahoning County expenditures on OhioCheckbook.com," said the Mahoning County Board of Commissioners in a joint statement. "We believe in and practice transparency as a Board every single day, and for that reason we are excited to be Ohio's first county to participate on OhioCheckbook.com. We look forward to working with Treasurer Mandel, Mahoning County Auditor Meacham, other Mahoning County officials and appointed authorities going forward to partner together on this transparency project."

"Along with other county officials, I am excited to announce that Mahoning County will be participating in OhioCheckbook.com," said Mahoning County Auditor Ralph Meacham. "I have been working with Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel and his team for several weeks to usher in a new era of transparency and accountability. Mahoning County is taking a leadership role as the first county in Ohio to commit to this program. Mr. Mandel has offered this initiative without cost to the county."

A large coalition of statewide and local government organizations have expressed support for OhioCheckbook.com and local government transparency, including:

Ohio Municipal League
Ohio Township Association
Ohio Association of School Business Officials
Buckeye Association of School Administrators
County Commissioner Association of Ohio

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County Auditor Association of Ohio
Ohio Newspaper Association
Ohio Society of CPAs
Buckeye Institute
Common Cause Ohio

OhioCheckbook.com was launched on December 2, 2014, marking the first time in Ohio history when citizens could actually see every expenditure in state government. Since its launch, OhioCheckbook.com has received overwhelming support from newspapers and groups across the state and, as of April 10, 2015, there have been more than 160,000 total searches on the site. OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$408 billion in spending over the past seven years, including more than 112 million transactions. The website includes cutting-edge features such as:

- “Google-style” contextual search capabilities, to allow users to sort by keyword, department, category or vendor;
- Fully dynamic interactive charts to drill down on state spending;
- Functionality to compare state spending year-over-year or among agencies; and,
- Capability to share charts or checks with social media networks, and direct contact for agency fiscal offices.

Last month, the U.S. Public Interest Research Group (U.S. PIRG) released their annual “Following the Money 2015” report and Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one transparency ranking in the country for providing online access to government spending data. Ohio was prominently featured in the report after climbing from 46th to 1st in spending transparency as a result of Treasurer Mandel’s release of OhioCheckbook.com. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio received a perfect score of 100 points this year — the highest score in the history of the U.S. PIRG transparency rankings. The Treasurer’s office is partnering with OpenGov, a leading Silicon Valley government technology company, to provide residents of Ohio the ability to view and search local government expenditures in a user-friendly, digital format. “Ohio is setting the standard for financial transparency on an unprecedented scale. We are excited to partner with the Treasurer’s office to bring world-class technology to communities large and small across the state,” said Zachary Bookman, CEO of OpenGov. For more information visit OhioCheckbook.com.

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