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STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

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Editorial

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Ohio's "online checkbook" site, launched 6 months ago by State Treasurer Josh Mandel, already has gotten national notice and recently helped earn Ohio the top state ranking for transparency in the country from the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. It's welcome news for central Ohio residents and taxpayers that Franklin County has become the largest local government to date to partner with the treasurer's office to put all its spending online in an easily searchable format.

"This type of partnership fosters government transparency previously unseen in a county this size and creates an even higher level of accountability for the use of those tax dollars," said Franklin County Auditor Clarence Mingo in announcing the move on Tuesday.

The announcement comes a week after Delaware County said it also will join the online-checkbook effort, becoming the third of Ohio's 88 counties to do so. Mandel sent letters last month to 18,062 officials representing 3,962 local governments, inviting them to partner with his office to put their own checkbook information online. Other types of municipalities, school districts, library systems and the like also have been invited to take part.

Mingo's office expects to have its information up sometime this summer. The state-level information is available now on OhioCheckbook.com. It goes back seven years and is searchable by category, vendor and agency. This type of information can be a valuable resource for watchdogs, researchers and taxpayers wanting to see how their money is spent.

As more counties, cities and organizations sign on, it also will allow people to easily compare their own communities' local spending with that of others around the state.

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