



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 440 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

AKRON – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with Summit County local government officials and announced the launch of the City of Barberton, the City of Cuyahoga Falls and the City of Tallmadge online checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com. Also announced today is a partnership with the Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library and the Ohio Treasurer's office to post their spending online. 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 City of Barberton Mayor William Judge and Finance Director Ray Flickinger, City of Cuyahoga Falls Mayor Don Walter and Finance Director Bryan Hoffman, City of Tallmadge Finance Director Mollie Gilbride and Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library Fiscal Officer Linda Sutherland.

The Cities of Barberton, Cuyahoga Falls and Tallmadge are the third, fourth and fifth cities in Summit County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com and the Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library is the first library in the county to partner with the Treasurer's office to post their spending online.

The following is a breakdown of today's local government checkbook sites:

Barberton's online checkbook includes over 92,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$268 million of total spending over the past five years.

Cuyahoga Falls' online checkbook includes over 15,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$59 million of total spending over fiscal year 2015.

Tallmadge's online checkbook includes over 39,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$106 million of total spending over the past four fiscal years.

"I believe the people of Summit County have a right to know how their tax money is being spent, and I applaud local leaders here for partnering with my office to post the finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

"We are excited to be a part of this initiative as we have always maintained transparency with our residents," said Barberton Mayor William Judge. "It is great to be one of the first communities to sign up for this program, per Treasurer Mandel."

"The City of Barberton is excited to partner with Treasurer Mandel on OhioCheckbook.com," said Barberton Finance Director Ray Flickinger. "We view this initiative as a valuable tool for our staff to communicate to our citizens how their tax money is being

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spent.”

“The City of Cuyahoga Falls is happy to participate in the Ohio Online Checkbook,” said Cuyahoga Falls Mayor Don Walters. “Since becoming Mayor, I have pledged a renewed sense of openness and honesty in everything we do, and this is just another example of our willingness to provide transparency and accessibility to the citizens that we serve.”

“Since becoming Finance Director, the city’s checkbook has been open to the public and the Ohio Online Checkbook provides another avenue for the citizens to obtain financial information,” said Cuyahoga Falls Finance Director Bryan Hoffman. “I am happy to be able to provide the information in this user friendly way.”

“The City of Tallmadge is proud to provide residents with online access to its financial data,” said Tallmadge Finance Director Mollie Gilbride. “OhioCheckbook.com allows the City of Tallmadge another means to provide our residents with detailed information online that may not have been affordable otherwise.”

“The Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library welcomes the partnership with the Ohio Treasurer’s office for this free, voluntary initiative,” said Stow-Munroe Falls Public Library Director Doug Dotterer and Fiscal Officer Linda Sutherland in a combined statement. “The Library’s Board of Trustees has put its support behind OhioCheckbook.com, and we look forward to providing our citizens with another avenue to view how their tax dollars are being utilized.”

On April 7th, 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.

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
- 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

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every expenditure in state government. Since its launch, OhioCheckbook.com has received overwhelming support from newspapers and groups across the state and, as of December 29, 2015 there have been more than 420,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$496 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 135 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.

In March, 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 or to view your local government website, visit the Local Government option on OhioCheckbook.com or click on:

- Barberton.OhioCheckbook.com;
- CuyahogaFalls.OhioCheckbook.com;
- Tallmadge.OhioCheckbook.com.

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