



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 475 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

COLUMBIANA ‐ Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the City of Columbiana and the Leetonia Village School District online checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com. In December 2014, 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.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at today's announcement by City of Columbiana Director of Finance Mike Harold, Mayor Bryan Blakeman, City Manager Lance Willard, Accounting Assistant Debbie Dyke, Councilmembers Ted Souder, Dick McBane and Crystal Boggs and Leetonia Village Schools Treasurer Jennifer Coldsnow.

The City of Columbiana is the second city in Columbiana County to post their spending online and Leetonia Village Schools is the first school district in Columbiana County to post their spending online on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

The City of Columbiana's online checkbook includes over 41,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$104 million of total spending over the past five years.

Leetonia Schools' online checkbook includes over 22,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$25 million of total spending over the past three Fiscal Years.

"I believe the people of Columbiana 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."

"The City of Columbiana is proud to announce that it's spending is now part of the State Treasurer's OhioCheckbook.com," said City of Columbiana Director of Finance Mike Harold. "It will allow our citizens and taxpayers to have easy access to the City's spending and can be done from your home computer or laptop."

"The Leetonia Exempted Village School District is excited to partner with the Treasurer of State's Office to provide the District's financial information on OhioCheckbook.com," said Leetonia Village Schools Treasurer Jennifer Coldsnow. "The District believes that the public has a right to know how their money is being spent. With this program, the District's financial information will be transparent."

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On April 7, 2015 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 every expenditure in state government. Since its launch, OhioCheckbook.com has received overwhelming support from newspapers and groups across the state and, as of January 19, 2016 there have been more than 435,000 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 2015, 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

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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:

Columbiana.OhioCheckbook.com;
LeetoniaSchools.OhioCheckbook.com.

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