



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Youngstown Vindicator
By Peter H. Milliken
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BOARDMAN

An official of the state treasurer's office came to Boardman Township Park to announce the township park district's participation in the OhioCheckbook.com program that promotes accountability and transparency in government.

The park district here is only the third park district in the state to join the Ohio checkbook program, and it is the only Northeast Ohio park district online in the program.

The Boardman Park District joins many other local government entities that have begun participating in the Internet-based program launched by Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel in December 2014.

Nine Mahoning County entities are online participants: county government itself; the Boardman Park District; the villages of Sebring and New Middletown; Boardman, Beaver, Springfield and Jackson townships; and the South Range Local School District.

Youngstown City Schools are expected to be online in the system soon, said Jared Borg, a regional representative of the Ohio Treasurer's Office.

The checkbook initiative is "about empowering the people," and enabling them to "follow the money," Borg said Wednesday. "He wanted to create an army of citizen auditors to hold elected officials accountable," he said of Mandel.

"It's important that the taxpayers be able to look at the spending of any local government, especially in today's world, and they have a right to do that," said Dan Slagle, Boardman Park District executive director.

Last April, Mandel appeared at a Youngstown news conference with Mahoning County Auditor Ralph Meacham and the county commissioners to announce that Mahoning would be the first county to join the OhioCheckbook.com initiative.

Shortly thereafter, Youngstown city officials said they, too, wanted to join the initiative.

As of September, Mahoning County was among the first local entities whose information was released on the checkbook website.

Borg said 480 local government entities and school districts have so far agreed to join OhioCheckbook.com, and 185 of them are actually online with their financial information.



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"We're happy with the 480 partnerships," Borg said. The number of participants is "growing each day," he added.

Major categories of Boardman Park information posted on the checkbook site include payments to park concert performers, playground expenses, landscaping, maintenance and improvement costs, property and liability insurance expenses, workers' compensation costs, contributions to the Ohio Public Employee Retirement System, medical costs and employee compensation.

The Boardman Park District has 11 full-time and five part-time employees.

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