



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Village is third government in Fayette County to post spending

Record Herald

By Martin Graham

March 1, 2016

Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced Tuesday the launch of the Village of Octa's online checkbook on OhioCheckbook.com.

In December 2014, Treasurer Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com, which he said 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.

Ohio Treasurer's office employees were joined by Village of Octa Mayor Sherry Newton and Village of Octa Fiscal Officer Penny Johnson. The two were shown how the website works, and the employees allowed time for questions after the demonstration. The website, which keeps accurate and informational charts of the spending of municipalities in the state, is designed to be easy to use. The Village of Octa is the third local government in Fayette County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com. The Village of Milledgeville and the Village of Jeffersonville were the first two to join.

"As leaders in this village, we felt it was important that residents had the ability to access information about their community online," said Johnson. "Places all over the state definitely need to use this. It allows the people to keep a better account of their money. Additionally, there is no cost to the village and it is really simple to use."

The Village of Octa's online checkbook includes over 1,500 individual transactions that represent more than \$250,000 of total spending over the past three years.

"I believe the people of Fayette 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 Mandel. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

OhioCheckbook.com was launched on Dec. 2, 2014, marking the first time in Ohio history when citizens could see every expenditure in state government. Since its launch, OhioCheckbook.com has received overwhelming support from across the state and, as of Feb. 28, there have been more than 472,000 total searches on the site.

On April 7 of last year, 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.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$506 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 137 million



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transactions. The website includes cutting-edge features like a "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 the 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 first in spending transparency as a result of Mandel's release of OhioCheckbook.com. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio received a perfect score of 100 points this year &ndash; 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.

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