



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 645 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

RISINGSUN &dash; Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the Village of Risingsun, the Village of Haskins, the Village of Luckey, the Village of West Millgrove and the Village of Weston 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 government transparency ranking in the country for a second year in a row.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at today's announcement by Village of Risingsun Mayor Rick Wetzel. The Villages of Risingsun, Haskins, Luckey, West Millgrove and Weston are the first local governments in Wood County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

The Village of Risingsun's online checkbook includes over 4,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$815,000 of total spending over the past four years.

The Village of Haskins' online checkbook includes over 3,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$1.9 million of total spending over the past two years.

The Village of Luckey's online checkbook includes over 2,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$1.1 million of total spending over the past two years.

The Village of West Millgrove's online checkbook includes over 750 individual transactions that represent more than \$72,000 of total spending over the past three years.

The Village of Weston's online checkbook includes over 6,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$1.9 million of total spending over the past three years.

"I believe the people of Wood 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 Village of Risingsun is excited to be one of the first entities in Wood County to place their expenses online," said Village of Risingsun Mayor Rick Wetzel. "We want our constituents to be able to see where their hard earned tax payer dollars go."

"Haskins Village is very excited to show how we are good stewards of tax paying dollars," said Village of Haskins Treasurer Lisa Heft.

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"The Village of Luckey is excited to be a pioneer in transparency within Wood County and help Ohio lead continue to lead the nation in transparency," said Village of Luckey Fiscal Officer Connie Heflin.

"Everyone in our community should have the opportunity to see how public funds are spent," said Village of Weston Fiscal Officer Sarah Schroeder. "The Village of Weston's participation with Ohio's Online Checkbook will give our residents the ability to be well informed citizens with regard to our town's fiscal status."

"The Village of West Millgrove is excited to be a pioneer in transparency within Wood County and extremely pleased to join other villages across the county in opening their checkbooks," added Mayor Ann Schreiner.

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 April 13, 2016 there have been more than 510,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$512 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 139 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;

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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 &ndash; the highest score in the history of the U.S. PIRG transparency rankings.

In April 2016, U.S. PIRG announced that Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one government transparency ranking in the country for the second consecutive year in a row. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio again received the highest perfect score of 100 points this year &ndash; marking the second time in two years Ohio received the highest possible 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:

Risingsun.OhioCheckbook.com;  
Haskins.OhioCheckbook.com;  
Luckey.OhioCheckbook.com;  
WestMillgrove.OhioCheckbook.com;  
Weston.OhioCheckbook.com.

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