



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 695 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

XENIA &ndash; Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the City of Xenia and the Village of Spring Valley 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 City of Xenia Finance Director Mark Bazelak, Assistant Finance Director Jason Lake and City Manager Brent Merriman. Xenia is the second city in Greene County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com, and Spring Valley is the second village in Greene County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

Xenia's online checkbook includes over 213,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$209 million of total spending over the past five years.

Spring Valley's online checkbook includes over 2,500 individual transactions that represent more than \$1.3 million of total spending over the past three years.

"I believe the people of Greene 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."

"It is the mission of the City of Xenia to provide exemplary municipal services through responsible stewardship of community assets, and the promotion of economic, environmental, and social vitality," said Finance Director Mark Bazelak. "The implementation of OhioCheckbook.com gives us the transparency necessary for our citizens and businesses to hold us accountable on our financial stewardship of City assets. The City of Xenia remains one of the most affordable communities in Greene and Montgomery counties. Now citizens will be able to go online and see for themselves how we spend taxpayer dollars. I would like to thank the State Treasurer's office for developing OhioCheckbook.com and also Assistant Finance Director Jason Lake for working with the State Treasurer's office on this endeavor for the City of Xenia."

"As new Mayor of the Village of Spring Valley, I really wanted to bring the village into the 21st century," said Mayor Doug Walters. "Adopting the checkbook website is an important step in reflecting our commitment to implement these essential technological advances."

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“Providing transparency is necessary at all levels of government, as this promotes accountability, while providing essential government information to our citizens,” said Senator Bob Hackett. “Thus, I am thrilled that Spring Valley and Xenia have decided to join Treasurer Mandel’s online checkbook.”

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 May 23, 2016 there have been more than 542,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$517 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 142 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

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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:

Xenia.OhioCheckbook.com;  
SpringValley.OhioCheckbook.com.

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