



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Findlay Courier
By Max Filby
May 27, 2016

Hancock County became the third county in northwestern Ohio and the 18th county in the state to join OhioCheckbook.com on Thursday.

State Treasurer Josh Mandel joined Hancock County Auditor Charity Rauschenberg at the Hancock County commissioners' office on Main Street to announce the county's participation in the state financial website.

"My vision is to create an army of citizen watchdogs who have the power to keep public officials accountable," Mandel said.

Rauschenberg said she was glad Hancock County could become an area leader in financial transparency by joining the checkbook.

"We're proud to be part of OhioCheckbook.com," Rauschenberg said.

Rauschenberg said the resources Mandel and his team offered made the county's transition of data from its MUNIS financial software system to the checkbook a smooth one.

Hancock County's online checkbook includes over 22,000 transactions representing \$66 million in spending during fiscal year 2015, according to the state treasurer's office.

Mandel gave a demonstration of how to use the county's checkbook. He showed how anyone can go so "granular" that they can even pull up a check a department may have written to pay for something like office supplies.

While there will be "followers and leaders" on initiatives such as the checkbook, Mandel said Hancock County was being recognized as a leader for joining. He also praised Hancock County for being the third county in the region and said other counties should follow its lead.

"Do they want to be Blockbuster video or Netflix?" Mandel said. "Do they want to be a taxicab or Uber?"

Mandel said he thinks eventually all local governments and school districts will be on some sort of "open checkbook" such as OhioCheckbook.com.

While Mandel's office has left it up to communities whether to join the state website, he has said he'd like OhioCheckbook.com to continue after he leaves the treasurer's office.



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"This is not a decision we're trying to jam down the throats of local governments," Mandel said.

Fostoria became the first city in Hancock County to join the checkbook on Thursday.

Fostoria's checkbook includes more than 2,700 transactions that represent more than \$4 million in total spending, according to the state treasurer's office.

Fostoria Auditor Steven Garner joined Mandel and Rauschenberg during Thursday's announcement. Garner called the checkbook "a wonderful tool for citizens."

He said transitioning Fostoria's data to the state website was "a painless process."

The Findlay-Hancock County Public Library is also on the checkbook. There are now more than 700 local governments and school districts on the website, Mandel said.

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