



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Builds for Statewide Government Transparency as OhioCheckbook.com Surpasses 307,000 Searches in the First Eight Months

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

PERRYSBURG – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with the North Baltimore Public Library officials and announced a partnership with the Ohio Treasurer's office to place their spending online at OhioCheckbook.com. Last year, 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 ranking in the country for government transparency.

Treasurer Mandel announced the partnership at a meeting of the Toledo Chapter of the Financial Executives International in Perrysburg today and presented an interactive demonstration of OhioCheckbook.com to attendees. Treasurer Mandel was joined at today's announcement by North Baltimore Public Library Fiscal Officer Jodi Karhoff, Library Director Connie Phillips, Assistant Director Lori Kaufman and North Baltimore Public Library Board Member Bev Greene.

North Baltimore Public Library is the first entity in Wood County to announce a partnership with the Treasurer's office to place their spending online. North Baltimore Public Library is also the first library in Northwest Ohio and second library in the state to partner with the Treasurer's office to place their spending online.

On April 7th, 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.

"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 the Treasurer's office to post their finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "My vision is to create an army of citizen watchdogs who are empowered to hold public officials accountable."

"OhioCheckbook.com empowers taxpayers to follow where the Library is spending their money," said North Baltimore Public Library Fiscal Officer Jodi Karhoff. "I would like to thank Treasurer Josh Mandel and his office for setting a new national standard for government transparency. North Baltimore Public Library welcomes the spending spotlight and we are proud to be on the ground floor."

"We are happy to be the first library in our area to get on board with this great program," said North Baltimore Public Library Assistant Director Lori Kaufman. "We are the information center of our community, and providing information on how we spend taxpayers' money is yet another step in providing our patrons with the quality service they expect and deserve from the North Baltimore Public Library."

30 EAST BROAD STREET · 9TH FLOOR · COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
PHONE: (614) 466-2160 · WWW.OHIOTREASURER.GOV · FAX: (614) 644-7313



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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 August 31, 2015, there have been more than 307,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$473 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 130 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, 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 – 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.

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For more information visit OhioCheckbook.com.

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