



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 390 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

SALEM – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with Columbiana County local government officials and announced partnerships with the Ohio Treasurer's office and the City of East Liverpool, Beaver Local Schools, Unity Township and Salem Public Library to post their checkbooks on 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 was joined at today's announcement by City of Salem Auditor Betty Brothers, City of East Liverpool Mayor-Elect Ryan Stovall and Beaver Local Schools Superintendent Louis Ramunno and Treasurer Stacy Williams.

East Liverpool is the third city in Columbiana County to partner with the Treasurer's office to post their spending online and Beaver Local Schools is the first school district in the county to announce a transparency partnership with the Treasurer's office. Unity Township is the first township in Columbiana County to partner with the Treasurer's office and Salem Public Library is the first library in the county to announce a partnership with the Treasurer's office.

In addition to today's announcement, Treasurer Mandel presented a live demonstration of the City of Salem's online checkbook, which launched live September 24th. The City of Salem was the first city in the county to partner with OhioCheckbook.com.

"I believe the people of Columbiana 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."

"I am very excited to be supporting transparency in Ohio and partnering with the Treasurer of State by bringing the online Open Checkbook to the City of Salem," said City of Salem Auditor Betty Brothers. "The Open Checkbook allows the taxpayers not only the opportunity but also the ability to see exactly how their tax dollars are being spent."

"Success in government can only be achieved through transparency and accountability," said East Liverpool Mayor-Elect Ryan Stovall. "The citizens of East Liverpool deserve to know how their money is being spent, OhioCheckbook.com will allow for that. After all it is the people's money we are spending."

"Beaver Local School District is pleased to partner with the Ohio Treasurer's office by participating in the OhioCheckbook.com project," said Beaver Local Schools Superintendent Louis Ramunno. "Increased transparency is a win for everyone."

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“Beaver Local is committed to a culture of fiscal transparency,” said Beaver Local Schools Treasurer Stacy Williams. “This project will allow our taxpayers to easily see how their hard earned dollars are being spent to educate the children of Beaver Local. I am very excited at the opportunity to be an early adopter of this great initiative!”

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.

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 November 30, 2015 there have been more than 395,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$490 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 134 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

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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.

For more information visit OhioCheckbook.com.

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