



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Geauga Maple Leaf  
By John Karlovec  
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Residents interested in viewing the financial records of the City of Chardon and Chester Township online can now do so anytime.

Representatives from State Treasurer Josh Mandel's office visited Chardon Feb. 3 to announce the two latest Geauga County additions to his online government transparency website OhioCheckbook.com.

Last year, Bainbridge and Russell townships agreed to participate in Mandel's OhioCheckbook.com initiative.

"I believe the people of Geauga 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 Mandel in a Feb. 3 news release. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

According to the release, Chardon's online checkbook includes more than 24,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$15 million of total spending over the past fiscal year.

Chester Township's online checkbook includes more than 19,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$15 million of total spending over the past three years, the same release stated.

"The City of Chardon is proud to partner with the Ohio Treasurer's office on OhioCheckbook.com to take our transparency to another level," Chardon City Manager Randy Sharpe said. "The site provides information in an easily navigated format that will help our citizens and businesses know where their tax dollars are being spent."

Added Sharpe, "This initiative is a great avenue to improve public trust and allows citizens and businesses to see the good job their officials are doing in managing taxpayer dollars."

Chardon Mayor Nancy McArthur commended Mandel's office for launching the program and said the city has taken advantage of other programs the state offers such as performance audits.

"We're really proud of our financial team. We have a great management team here," she added. "We all here at the city want to make sure everything is available that people have questions about. We want to make sure the spending and the expensing are accounted for. We're pretty much all fiscal conservatives here and we want to make sure everything is being funded properly, because it is taxpayers' money and we are accountable to the people who put us in office."

Chester Fiscal Officer Craig Richter expressed township officials eagerness to participate.



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"I am committed, along with the trustees, to create an environment of openness and transparency in our township," Richter said. "We believe that by posting Chester Township's finances on OhioCheckbook.com it will help lead to increased public trust and public participation. If the public is engaged, it should lead to a more effective government and better decisions."

Richter also noted OhioCheckbook.com allows Chester to share financial information with the community at no direct cost to the township.

"I encourage other fiscal officers throughout Geauga County and Ohio to participate in this easy to implement transparency program," he said. "It was actually very painless."

Richter highlighted a feature in the program that allows people to submit questions about any check or to request more information. Added Richter, "Transparency is definitely a goal of mine and you made it easy and to no expense to the township which is great."

Mandel launched the website in December 2014 and in April 2015 invited 18,062 local government and school officials, representing 3,962 local governments throughout Ohio, to place their checkbooklevel data on OhioCheckbook.com.

Since then, Ohio was named the most transparent state for providing online access to government spending, according to the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. In 2014, Ohio was ranked 46th. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio received a perfect score of 100 point in 2015, the highest score in the history of the U.S. PIRG transparency rating, the Feb. 3 release said.

To view Chardon's online checkbook, visit [Chardon.OhioCheckbook.com](http://Chardon.OhioCheckbook.com). To view Chester's website, go to [ChesterTownshipGauga.OhioCheckbook.com](http://ChesterTownshipGauga.OhioCheckbook.com).

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