



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 530 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

RIPLEY – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Local Schools, Georgetown Village Schools and the Village of Mount Orab online checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com. Also announced today are partnerships with Pleasant Township, Scott Township and the Ohio Treasurer's office to post their spending 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 ranking in the country for government transparency.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at today's announcement by Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Local Schools Treasurer Jeff Rowley and Superintendent Linda Naylor, Georgetown Village Schools Treasurer Eric Toole and Pleasant Township Fiscal Officer Lori Drake.

Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Local Schools, Georgetown Village Schools and the Village of Mount Orab are the first entities in Brown County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com. Pleasant Township and Scott Township are the first townships in Brown County to announce a partnership with the Treasurer's office to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

Ripley Union Lewis Huntington Local Schools' online checkbook includes over 24,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$18 million of total spending over the past two Fiscal Years.

Georgetown Village Schools' online checkbook includes over 43,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$30 million of total spending over the past three Fiscal Years.

The Village of Mount Orab's online checkbook includes over 25,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$23 million of total spending over the past three years.

"I believe the people of Brown 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."

"The Ripley Union Lewis Huntington School District is excited to take our transparency to the next level," said Treasurer Jeff Rowley. "The local site will provide information in an easily navigated format that helps our citizens understand how their tax dollars are being spent without having to make a formal records request. We owe our citizens honesty, integrity, and

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



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accountability, and we look forward to making that the hallmark of our school system.”

“The Board of Education and Administration of Georgetown Schools are excited about the opportunity to partner with the State Treasurer’s Office utilizing OhioCheckbook.com,” said Treasurer Eric Toole. “The project enables us to provide full transparency and accountability to our taxpayers as well as demonstrate our commitment to fiscal responsibility.”

“We really value the citizens of Mount Orab and therefore want to seize every opportunity to be open and transparent,” said Village of Mount Orab Chief Financial Officer Mike Boyd.

“Citizens should be able to access this information online,” said Pleasant Township Fiscal Officer Lori Drake. “It is just as simple as that.”

“This program is a good idea,” said Scott Township Fiscal Officer Joni Wallace. “We should be making information available online that people want to know. Honestly, why not? Especially given that we are trying to modernize the township and keep up to date.”

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 February 16, 2016 there have been more than 464,000 total searches on the site.

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OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$506 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 137 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 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.

For more information or to view your local government website, visit the Local Government option on OhioCheckbook.com or click on:

RipleyUnionLewisHuntingtonSchools.OhioCheckbook.com;
GeorgetownExemptedVillageSchools.OhioCheckbook.com;
MountOrab.OhioCheckbook.com.

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