



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Perry County Tribune
By Bill Rockwell
March 15, 2016

The State Treasurer's office has launched a new website that documents and tracks local government spending.

The spending habits of more than 560 local governments can be followed at OhioCheckbook.com, a website that State Treasurer Josh Mandel said through a press release will offer a new transparency in how local government agencies budget and spend.

The CheckBook website has been online for over one year, last week the villages of New Lexington, Somerset and Roseville were added, becoming the first three local governments from Perry County to post their spending on the website.

"It's exciting that New Lexington is among the first to partner with the state treasurer," Village Finance Director Heather Rockwell said. "I think that it is appropriate to considering that New Lexington is the county seat."

"I would like to see (the website) expand and I hope that it would someday become a mandatory program," said Village Administrator Scott Bryant.

Government spending is public record; citizens can access the spending from police and fire to water department and other agencies through the website.

"I believe the people of Perry 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 their finances," Mandel said in the press release. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

There are 3,962 local governments across the state, including counties, schools and villages according to the Treasurer's Department. New Lex, Roseville and Somerset went live on the website March 3, bringing the number of governments across the state who partner with the initiative to 565. It is not mandatory for local governments to post their spending on the website, Mandel's office invited each of the nearly 4,000 local governments to participate at no cost.

According to the website New Lexington's online checkbook includes over 8,000 individual transactions over the past year representing more than \$4 million in total spending. The village of Roseville conducted over 7,000 transactions representing more than \$2 million in spending over the past four years and Somerset's online checkbook includes over 100 individual transactions totaling more than \$52,000 over the past year. "By publishing this information online, our residents can ensure their tax dollars are being managed responsibly and effectively," said Somerset fiscal officer Kelly Bream.

The website displays more than \$506 billion in spending over the past eight years across the state, including more than 137 million transactions and offers easy guides to follow spending with its own search capabilities and charts that break down the



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areas where tax dollars are being spent.

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