



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

WESTCO is joining other local government entities and school districts making financial records more transparent.

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By Matt Sanctis

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The West Central Ohio Port Authority is placing its financial records online as part of an ongoing statewide project being organized by Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel.

More than 615 local government entities and school districts in Ohio have taken part in the effort so far, according to information from Mandel's office. WESTCO is only the second port authority in the state to take part in the program, said Eric Ochmanek, deputy chief of staff for Mandel.

"If folks want to know what we're spending, we're happy to have them look and ask questions," said Louis Agresta, secretary and treasurer for the organization.

In Greene County, officials from the city of Beavercreek said Friday they will also take part in the online checkbook program.

WESTCO was created by the county commissioners in Champaign, Clark and Fayette Counties to preserve railroad assets and ensure local rail freight services are able to operate. The agency does seek and utilize some grant funding, Agresta said, but the agency is primarily funded through user fees shippers pay for the service.

WESTCO owns 94 miles of railroad tracks in Champaign, Clark, Fayette, Logan and Madison Counties, and leases the tracks to the Indiana and Ohio Railway Company. The online checkbook includes more than 160 individual transactions that represent more than \$630,000 in spending in fiscal year 2014. Local residents are able to view the checkbook online at Ohiocheckbook.com.

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

The website was launched in December, 2014.

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