



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 650 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

LEBANON ‐ Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the City of Lebanon, and the Village of Morrow online checkbooks 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 government transparency ranking in the country for a second year in a row.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at today's announcement by City of Lebanon Councilmember Wendy Monroe and Auditor/Tax Commissioner Sharee Dick. The City of Lebanon is the first city in Warren County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com, and the Village of Morrow is the first village in Warren County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com,

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

Lebanon's online checkbook includes over 84,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$194 million of total spending over the past three years.

Morrow's online checkbook includes over 10,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$3.7 million of total spending over the past four years.

"I believe the people of Warren 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 city of Lebanon is excited to take our transparency to the next level," said Lebanon City Auditor/Tax Commissioner Sharee Dick. "The local site will provide information in an easily navigated format that helps our citizens understand how their tax dollars are being spent. We look forward to making Lebanon more open and accessible."

"The process to implement was very easy and now citizens have greater accessibility to information that may be of potential interest to them," said Morrow Fiscal Officer Nichole Knell.

"I am proud to see OhioCheckbook.com being launched in City of Lebanon and Village of Morrow as an effort to promote transparency amongst the government and the people of Ohio," said State Representative Ron Maag. "The people of Warren County and the State of Ohio deserve to know how and where their money is being spent. Treasurer Mandel's initiative to launch OhioCheckbook.com will be nothing but beneficial to the district and the State as a whole."

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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 April 18, 2016 there have been more than 514,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$512 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 139 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.

In April 2016, U.S. PIRG announced that Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one government transparency ranking in the

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country for the second consecutive year in a row. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio again received the highest perfect score of 100 points this year – marking the second time in two years Ohio received the highest possible 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:

Lebanon.OhioCheckbook.com;
Morrow.OhioCheckbook.com.

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