



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 660 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

JACKSON CENTER ‐ Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the Village of Jackson Center, Village of Russia, Village of Anna, Village of Fort Loramie and the Fairlawn Local School District online checkbooks on OhioCheckbook.com. Also announced today is a partnership with the Village of Botkins and the Ohio Treasurer's office to post the village's 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 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 Village of Jackson Center Fiscal Officer Bev Wren, Village Administrator Bruce Metz and Mayor Scott Klopfenstein, Village of Anna Administrator Nancy Benroth, Village of Fort Loramie Administrator Tony Schmitmeyer and Fiscal Officer Carolyn Gasson, and Village of Botkins Administrator Ryan Piche and Fiscal Officer Tammy Granger.

The Villages of Jackson Center, Russia, Anna and Fort Loramie are the first local governments in Shelby County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com, and Fairlawn Local Schools is the first school district in Shelby County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

Jackson Center's online checkbook includes over 26,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$10.7 million of total spending over the past four years.

Russia's online checkbook includes over 4,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$1.6 million of total spending over the past two years.

Anna's online checkbook includes over 9,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$3.5 million of total spending over the past three years.

Fort Loramie's online checkbook includes over 12,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$5.5 million of total spending over the past four years.

Fairlawn Local Schools' online checkbook includes over 11,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$12.8 million of total spending over the past two Fiscal Years.

"I believe the people of Shelby 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

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spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable.”

“We are excited to join the other villages of Shelby County to become pioneers in transparency,” said Jackson Center Fiscal Officer Bev Wren. “We believe this site will benefit our constituents and our leadership, and will allow more enhanced understating of the spending for Jackson Center.”

“The Village of Anna believes transparency is extremely important and this site will allow us to show our tax payers how we spend their money,” said Anna Village Administrator Nancy Benroth. “We are also very excited to join other villages in Shelby County as being the first entities to open our checkbooks to the public. Constituents can review the site to become more informed and answer any questions they may have.”

“We are pleased to be able to increase our transparency and allow our tax payers the opportunity to understand how their hard earned money is spent,” said Fort Loramie Village Administrator Tony Schmitmeyer.

“The village of Botkins is proud to join many other villages in Shelby County as leaders in transparency,” said Botkins Village Administrator Ryan Piche. “We believe this tool will help both our leadership, and our residents, to better understand the Village’s expenditures.”

“I appreciate Treasurer Mandel’s leadership to make government more transparent, and I applaud the local leaders of Jackson Center, Russia, Anna, Fort Loramie, Botkins and Fairlawn Schools for partnering with the Treasurer on this effort to keep their governments accountable to the taxpayers,” said Senate President Keith Faber.

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

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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 19, 2016 there have been more than 515,000 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 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:

JacksonCenter.OhioCheckbook.com;
Russia.OhioCheckbook.com;
Anna.OhioCheckbook.com;
FortLoramie.OhioCheckbook.com;
FairlawnLocalSchools.OhioCheckbook.com.

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