



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 690 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

SPENCER – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the Village of Spencer, the Village of Westfield Center, Chatham Township and the Black River School District 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 Village of Spencer Fiscal Officer Sheri Ramey, Chatham Township Fiscal Officer Sue Arters, Chatham Township Trustee Sue Jurkowski, and Black River Schools Treasurer Connie Hange.

Spencer and Westfield Center are the first villages in Medina County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com, Chatham Township is the third township in Medina County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com, and Black River Schools is the second school district in Medina County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

Spencer's online checkbook includes over 9,200 individual transactions that represent more than \$3.1 million of total spending over the past three years.

Westfield Center's online checkbook includes over 2,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$2.7 million of total spending over the past two years.

Chatham Township's online checkbook includes over 1,900 individual transactions that represent more than \$590,000 of total spending over Fiscal Year 2015.

Black River Schools' online checkbook includes over 44,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$28.8 million of total spending over the past two Fiscal Years.

"I believe the people of Medina 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."

"We believe in transparency and the public has a right to know where their tax dollars are going," said Spencer Fiscal Officer Sheri Ramey.

"We believe in transparency and are happy to partner with the treasurer's office for this website," said Westfield Center Fiscal

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Officer Debbie Runser.

"We stand by our financial work and are proud to partner with the Ohio Treasurer's Office in signing up for OhioCheckbook.com," said Chatham Township Fiscal Officer Susan Arters. "Whether our residents check the website often or not is not the point, the point is that the information is available and ready for the residents to see."

"The Black River Local School District is pleased to participate in the OhioCheckbook.com program in support of the Ohio Treasurer of State's transparency and accountability in government initiative," said Black River Schools Treasurer Connie Hange.

"I would like to commend the village of Spencer, Westfield Center, Chatham Township and Black River Schools for embracing this effort to increase transparency in how tax dollars are spent," said Senator Larry Obhof. "I am proud of the fact that local governments in Medina County and across Ohio are stepping up to give taxpayers more information."

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 May 17, 2016 there have been more than 539,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$517 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 142 million transactions. The website includes cutting-edge features such as:

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“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:

Spencer.OhioCheckbook.com;
WestfieldCenter.OhioCheckbook.com;
ChathamTownshipMedina.OhioCheckbook.com;
BlackRiverSchools.OhioCheckbook.com.

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