



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Builds for Statewide Government Transparency as OhioCheckbook.com Has Received Over 200,000 Searches in the First Five Months

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

DELAWARE – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with Delaware County leaders and announced the first partnership between the Ohio Treasurer's office and a Central Ohio county government to place their spending online at OhioCheckbook.com. Last year, 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 ranking in the country for government transparency.

Treasurer Mandel was joined at today's announcement by Delaware County Auditor George Kaitsa and County Commissioners Ken O'Brien, Barb Lewis and Gary Merrell. Delaware County is the first Central Ohio county to announce a partnership with the Treasurer's office to place their spending information on OhioCheckbook.com.

On April 7th, 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.

"I believe the people of Delaware County have a right to know how their tax money is being spent and I applaud local leaders here for partnering with the Treasurer's office to post their finances on OhioCheckbook.com," said Treasurer Mandel. "My vision is to create an army of citizen watchdogs who are empowered to hold public officials accountable."

"OhioCheckbook.com will provide Delaware County with a great tool to increase transparency and we are excited to lead the way in central Ohio. Our voluntary partnership with Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel will lead to greater access to our finances and taxpayers can track how their hard earned tax dollars are being spent. We thank Treasurer Mandel for offering this program to all local governments across Ohio and I applaud the support of our Board of County Commissioners for this initiative," stated Auditor Kaitsa.

"I have always advocated for transparency in Delaware County government because transparency is good government. This online checkbook program is a great step toward transparency for our residents, so they may know how their tax dollars are being spent. I urge our residents to take advantage of this information," said Commissioner Ken O'Brien.

"OhioCheckbook.com is another worthwhile way in which we are able to give our residents important information. We are proud to be the first county in Central Ohio to become a part of it," shared Commissioner Barb Lewis.

"It is important that we have a system in place for our residents to serve as watchdogs of government. I am excited to be one of the first counties in the state to make this happen," stated Commissioner Gary Merrell.

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

30 EAST BROAD STREET · 9TH FLOOR · COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
PHONE: (614) 466-2160 · WWW.OHIOTREASURER.GOV · FAX: (614) 644-7313



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

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 6, 2015, there have been more than 200,000 total searches on the site. OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$408 billion in spending over the past seven years, including more than 112 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.

Last month, 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. 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 visit OhioCheckbook.com.

####

30 EAST BROAD STREET · 9TH FLOOR · COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
PHONE: (614) 466-2160 · WWW.OHIOTREASURER.GOV · FAX: (614) 644-7313