



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Builds for Statewide Government Transparency as OhioCheckbook.com Surpasses 310,000 Searches in the First Nine Months

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

BOARDMAN &ndash; Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel stood today with Trumbull County, the City of Columbiana, Boardman Township, Boardman Township Park District and Beaver Township local government officials and announced partnerships with the Ohio Treasurer's office 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 announced the partnerships at the Youngstown/Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce event in Boardman today and presented an interactive demonstration of OhioCheckbook.com to attendees. Treasurer Mandel was joined at today's announcement by City of Columbiana Mayor Bryan Blakeman and Finance Director Mike Harold. Boardman Township Fiscal Officer Bill Leicht, Boardman Township Park District Executive Director Daniel Slagle, Jr., and Beaver Township Fiscal Officer Richard R. Lotze were also in attendance.

Trumbull County is the first local government in Trumbull County to partner with the Treasurer's office to place their spending information online. The City of Columbiana and Boardman Township join as the second city and first township in Columbiana County to announce a partnership with the Treasurer's office. Boardman Township Park District is the first park district in Northeast Ohio and the second park district in the state to partner and post their information on OhioCheckbook.com. Beaver Township joins as the first township in Mahoning County to partner with the Treasurer's office.

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 the Mahoning Valley 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."

"The City of Columbiana is proud to partner with the Treasurer's office and join OhioCheckbook.com to post its expenditures online for our citizens to view," said Columbiana Mayor Bryan Blakeman. "We believe this additional layer of transparency will further our city as a leader on this front."

"I appreciate the ease of use and cost (free!) of this program to make our records available to the public," said Columbiana

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Finance Director Mike Harold.

“Boardman Township is excited to join OhioCheckbook.com to provide another layer of transparency for our citizens,” said Board Township Fiscal Officer Bill Leicht. “This free program will help ensure the taxpayer dollars are put to good use.”

“Boardman Township Park, the Green Oasis, believes that OhioCheckbook.com is a very useful tool for the citizens of our community to use in order to see exactly how their tax dollars are being spent,” said Boardman Township Park Executive Director Daniel Slagle, Jr. “We deeply appreciate the opportunity to partner with the Treasurer's office in this innovative program.”

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 September 2, 2015, there have been more than 310,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$473 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 130 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, 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

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Treasurer Mandel's release of OhioCheckbook.com. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio received a perfect score of 100 points this year &ndash; 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](http://OhioCheckbook.com).

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