



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

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By Linda Martz
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MANSFIELD - Mansfield has joined a growing number of local governments posting its spending records online through the state's OhioCheckbook.com site.

Mansfield Finance Director Linn Steward and State Treasurer Josh Mandel held a press conference at the city building to announce that spending transactions would be available, starting Friday, for voters, citizen watch group members and others to view on the Internet.

"Right now, we just have 2014 on. (But) we can put these reports online monthly, so it could be real-time - and we probably plan to do that," she said.

Steward said the treasurer's office sent an email last spring inviting local government finance officers to start posting their information on its website, increasing transparency on spending.

She liked the idea and committed to the program with finance department staff uploading the required information as time permitted, Steward said.

At the press conference, Mandel said Mansfield was among about 3,900 government entities in Ohio that could participate.

"We were the 340th to participate, and we are one of the bigger cities," Steward said.

"I believe one of my most important responsibilities to taxpayers is to communicate how our tax dollars are spent," Steward said. "OhioCheckbook.com greatly enhances the information available to the public."

The program comes at no cost to the city, she added.

Those using the website first choose the entity whose spending they'd like to look at "You can sort and really drill down. You can search by vendors. It is hopefully going to cut down on public records requests. It'll be good for citizen watch groups," Steward said.

The finance director said she hopes to eventually provide an online dashboard from the city's own website, providing additional information as well.

OhioCheckbook.com was launched on Dec. 2, marking the first time in Ohio history when citizens could see every expenditure in state government.



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Madison Township was the first local government entity to begin using the site. Mansfield is second.

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