



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 500 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

PLAIN CITY – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the Village of Plain City online checkbook on OhioCheckbook.com. Also announced today are partnerships with Monroe Township, Paint Township and the Ohio Treasurer's office to place their 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 ranking in the country for government transparency.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at today's announcement by Village of Plain City Mayor Darrin Lane, Fiscal Officer Renee Van Winkle, Village Administrator Kevin Vaughn and Chief of Police Dale McKee. Also joining today's announcement was Monroe Township Fiscal Officer Connie Troyer.

The Village of Plain City's online checkbook includes over 7,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$10 million of total spending over the past three years. The Village of Plain City, Monroe Township and Paint Township are the first local governments in Madison County to partner with the Treasurer's office to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

"I believe the people of Madison 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."

"The question isn't why should we show transparency with our finances, the question should be, why would we not!" said Village of Plain City Mayor Darrin Lane.

"It is an honor to be serving the people," said Monroe Township Fiscal Officer Connie Troyer. "We have to be committed to doing the right. We need to be accountable for everything we do. That is why it was important to me that the citizens be provided an online resource. They need to know and be reassured that we are dedicated to the well-being of the township."

"I wanted to make information available to the people so they could educate themselves on township affairs," said Paint Township Fiscal Officer Cindy Mace.

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.

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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 February 9, 2016 there have been more than 458,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$506 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 137 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.

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.

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For more information or to view your local government website, visit the Local Government option on OhioCheckbook.com or click on PlainCity.OhioCheckbook.com.

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