



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 560 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

NEW LEXINGTON – Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the Village of New Lexington, the Village of Somerset and the Village of Roseville 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 ranking in the country for government transparency.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at today's announcement by Village of New Lexington Finance Director Heather Rockwell, Village of New Lexington Administrator Scott Bryant, Village of Somerset Fiscal Officer Kelly Beem, Village of Roseville Finance Director Heidi Milner and Village of Roseville Mayor Dave Carroll. The Village of New Lexington, the Village of Somerset and the Village of Roseville are the first local governments in Perry County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

The Village of New Lexington's online checkbook includes over 8,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$4 million of total spending over the past year.

The Village of Somerset's online checkbook includes over 100 individual transactions that represent more than \$52,000 of total spending over the past year.

The Village of Roseville's online checkbook includes over 7,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$2 million of total spending over the past four years.

"I believe the people of Perry 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 village of New Lexington is excited to be one of the first local governments in Perry County to post its spending on OhioCheckbook.com," said Village of New Lexington Finance Director Heather Rockwell. "This free tool increases transparency for Ohio's local governments, and allows our citizens to access the village's spending information in a convenient and interactive format."

"The Village of Somerset is proud to join OhioCheckbook.com and serve as a transparency leader in Perry County," said Village of Somerset Fiscal Officer Kelly Beem. "By publishing this information online, our residents can ensure their tax dollars are being managed responsibly and effectively."

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"The Village of Roseville is excited to participate in the OhioCheckbook.com website because it offers a way for our residents to explore the finances and ask questions from the place they feel most comfortable, their home," said Village of Roseville Finance Director Heidi Milner. "We encourage all residents to explore the website so they can gain accurate knowledge on what Roseville's expenditures are and where the revenue comes from. The website offers an intimidation free zone. OhioCheckbook.com is set up so that you don't have to be an accountant to understand it. It's easier to explore and understand than the financial statements provided by the fiscal officer."

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 March 1, 2016 there have been more than 473,000 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

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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 or to view your local government website, visit the Local Government option on OhioCheckbook.com or click on:

NewLexington.OhioCheckbook.com;
Somerset.OhioCheckbook.com;
Roseville.OhioCheckbook.com.

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