



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Expenditures can be viewed
Fulton County Expositor
By David J. Coehrs
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As of Tuesday, Swancreek Township is among the latest of Ohio's governmental and educational entities, and the only one in Fulton County, to offer financial transparency online.

The township has adopted OhioCheckbook.com, a free state service that displays all of its expenditures online. The checkbook currently displays 4,000 individual transactions totaling more than \$3.1 million in Swancreek Township spending over the last three years.

The township is the first governmental or educational entity in Fulton County to use the service.

Launched 16 months ago by State Treasurer Josh Mandel, OhioCheckbook.com places the entirety of the state's spending on the Internet. It also extends the service to cities, counties, townships, and school districts. Richfield Township in Lucas County has also adopted the online checkbook.

"I believe the people of Lucas County and Fulton 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," Mandel said in a statement. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

The service has elevated the state from a national ranking of 46 for transparency to number one, according to U.S. PIRG.

Currently, more than 620 government and educational entities across the state have committed to a partnership with the service, which displays over \$512 billion in spending over eight years, and includes over 139 million transactions.

Josie Stultz, Swancreek Township's fiscal officer since April 1, said she hopes to post new transactions each month.

"I think it's amazing," she said. "For something that is free, it puts it right out there. Any public entity should get on board with that. You can see where the money is spent."

Citizens visiting the online service can view every township transaction, including the amount of the check, to whom it's written, and why. The site also features pie charts and comparisons.

"Government in general, people don't trust," Stultz said. "This is a tool to restore trust. I'm a big advocate of this."

Dawn Wheatley, the township's former fiscal officer, had an idea similar to Mandel's. The trustees approved its implementation,



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but Wheatley discovered the cost of the necessary software was prohibitive.

For that reason, she was glad when Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com and offered it for free. She applied on the township's behalf in December.

"It's going to help communication between the township and the constituents," Wheatley said. "It shows everyone where their money's going. It shows the township's use of their money. I'm excited to see how well it's responded to by the public."

It can be viewed at SwanCreekTownshipFulton.OhioCheckbook.com or through a link on the township's website.

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