



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Lima News
By Craig Kelly
April 28, 2016

SPENCERVILLE — After its launch in 2014, OhioCheckbook.com has continued to grow, with over 300 websites now live, including state government agencies, municipalities, townships and school districts. On Thursday, five regional governments joined those ranks, with the villages of Spencerville and Elida, along with Shawnee Township in Allen County, as well as the villages of Ottawa and Ottoville in Putnam County, now listing its spending information online.

Spencerville, Elida and Shawnee Township join Auglaize Township and Lima schools as Allen County representatives on the website, while Ottawa and Ottoville are the first from Putnam County.

"I believe the people of Allen 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," Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel said. "By posting local government spending online, we are empowering taxpayers across Ohio to hold public officials accountable."

Eric Ochmanek, Mandel's deputy chief of staff, walked officials from Spencerville and Elida through the website Thursday at Spencerville Village Hall, noting the ease in which information on government spending can be obtained, helping the state gain a reputation for transparency.

"In 2014, our state's transparency ranking was only 46th in the country," he said. "Just last week, it was announced that we now have the first back-to-back number one ranking among all the states for government transparency."

Spencerville Mayor P.J. Johnson applauded the move.

"The public's always wanting to know (about village finances)," he said. "This is just another tool that puts it out there, so they, at their leisure, in their own home and at their own computer, look and see exactly where all our money's being spent."

Elida Village Administrator Dave Metzger noted that, for not a lot of initial time and energy in submitting the information, being on the website can actually help save time and energy when it comes to dealing with public inquiries on finances.

"It's getting more and more difficult to manage all the public records requests, and we spend countless hours digging through this stuff," he said. "Now here it is. Find it yourself. We're saving everybody time and money."

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