



# JOSH MANDEL

## STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 685 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

WEST JEFFERSON &dash; Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced today the launch of the Village of West Jefferson, Somerford Township, Monroe Township and Paint Township 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 government transparency ranking in the country for a second year in a row.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at today's announcement by Village of West Jefferson Mayor Ray Martin, Fiscal Officer Debbie Dileo, Council President Steve Johnston and Council Vice President Doug Eakins. Somerford Township Fiscal Officer Pam Hochadel also attended today's announcement.

West Jefferson is the second village in Madison County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com, and Somerford Township, Monroe Township and Paint Township are the first townships in Madison County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com.

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

West Jefferson's online checkbook includes over 19,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$22 million of total spending over the past four years.

Somerford Township's online checkbook includes over 2,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$1.9 million of total spending over the past three years.

Monroe Township's online checkbook includes over 1,400 individual transactions that represent more than \$569,000 of total spending over the past three years.

Paint Township's online checkbook includes over 700 individual transactions that represent more than \$460,000 of total spending over the past three years.

"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."

"I am very interested in being transparent," said West Jefferson Mayor Ray Martin. "This is an important step in making information more readily available to the public."

"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

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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.

“I am very pleased that our local entities have decided to participate in the Treasurer’s online checkbook,” said Senator Bob Hackett. “As an original co-sponsor of this legislation, I believe strongly in all levels of government providing transparency to our citizens.”

“I commend the work of Treasurer Mandel’s office for initiating this excellent program and I am pleased to see it implemented in my home district,” said Representative Bill Dean. “I also applaud the local governments that are participating for their dedication to transparency and ensuring that the hard-working people of Madison County can see exactly where their tax dollars are going. Government accountability is of the utmost importance and I believe that this program will continue to serve as a helpful resource to all Ohioans.”

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 May 16, 2016 there have been more than 538,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$517 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 142 million

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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 &ndash; the highest score in the history of the U.S. PIRG transparency rankings.

In April 2016, U.S. PIRG announced that Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one government transparency ranking in the country for the second consecutive year in a row. Due to the launch of OhioCheckbook.com, Ohio again received the highest perfect score of 100 points this year &ndash; marking the second time in two years Ohio received the highest possible 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:

- WestJefferson.OhioCheckbook.com;
- SomerfordTownshipMadison.OhioCheckbook.com;
- MonroeTownshipMadison.OhioCheckbook.com;
- PaintTownshipMadison.OhioCheckbook.com.

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