



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

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By Beth Church
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The City of Rossford became the first area municipality to join the state treasurer's OhioCheckbook.com project.

As of last week, \$22 million of city expenses from fiscal years 2013 to 2016 has been uploaded for public viewing. The data includes about 20,000 checks.

City and state officials announced the participation at a press conference July 7.

In December 2014, Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel launched OhioCheckbook.com, allowing citizens to see every expenditure in state government. Last year, he invited nearly 4,000 local governments and school districts to place their checkbook level data on the website at no cost to local entities.

"It's a tool for government finance officers to convey what they're doing and increase the public trust," said Seth Unger, senior policy advisor for the state treasurer's office.

The website includes 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.

"We're happy to help shine a light on spending," Mr. Unger said. "We think it's a big accomplishment."

In addition to the transparency, he cited a number of benefits including increased efficiency of government entities, decreased costs for public records requests and increased competitiveness of bidding on government projects.

Mr. Unger said 370 other government entities have their data on the website and 739 others are in the process of participating.

Mayor Neil MacKinnon III thanked Finance Director Karen Freeman, members of Rossford City Council and the finance committee for their commitment to participating in the web project.



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"We're putting it all out there-you can look at it 24/7," he said.

Noting Rossford's rare AAA Standard and Poor rating, he added, "We do a lot with very little, and we work very hard."

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