



JOSH MANDEL

STATE TREASURER OF OHIO

Momentum Grows for Statewide Government Transparency with Over 970 Local Government and School Districts Partnering with OhioCheckbook.com

Press Release - Ohio Treasurer's Office

EAST LIVERPOOL ‐ Ohio Treasurer Josh Mandel announced on Monday the launch of the East Liverpool City School District, Village of New Waterford and Village of Leetonia's 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 the second year in a row.

The Ohio Treasurer's office was joined at the announcement by East Liverpool City School Treasurer Kathy Jo Laughlin.

East Liverpool City Schools is the third school district in Columbiana County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com, and New Waterford and Leetonia are the fourth and fifth villages in Columbiana County to post their spending on OhioCheckbook.com

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

East Liverpool City Schools' online checkbook includes over 409,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$555 million of total spending dating back to Fiscal Year 2000.

New Waterford's online checkbook includes over 9,800 individual transactions that represent more than \$3.9 million of total spending over the past four years.

Leetonia's online checkbook includes over 16,000 individual transactions that represent more than \$5.8 million of total spending over the past four years.

"I believe the people of Columbiana 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."

"East Liverpool City Schools strives to make its finances as accessible and transparent as possible," said Treasurer Kathy Jo Laughlin. "While we provide detailed financial information on our website, the OhioCheckbook allows our district to display it in an easy, interactive format. We look forward to our residents utilizing this information to better understand how ELCS is managing its finances."

"New Waterford is pleased to join other Columbiana County local governments in joining this transparency initiative," said Fiscal Officer Dave Slagle. "The residents of New Waterford can now easily view how their tax dollars are being utilized by simply going online."

30 EAST BROAD STREET · 9TH FLOOR · COLUMBUS, OHIO 43215
PHONE: (614) 466-2160 · WWW.OHIOTREASURER.GOV · FAX: (614) 644-7313



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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 December 12, 2016 there have been more than 678,000 total searches on the site.

OhioCheckbook.com displays more than \$564 billion in spending over the past eight years, including more than 153 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 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.

In April 2016, U.S. PIRG announced that Treasurer Mandel earned Ohio the number one government transparency ranking in the

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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 – 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:

EastLiverpoolSD.OhioCheckbook.com;
NewWaterford.OhioCheckbook.com;
Leetonia.OhioCheckbook.com.

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