

GrassrootsClippings

Monthly Newsletter of the Ohio Township Association

November 2009

Newly Elected Officials: A Few Things Townships Should Know

Before your newly elected officials take office, there are some “housekeeping” issues that should be addressed. The following are a few things townships need to implement *before* new officials are sworn in.

Oath of Office: Some townships prefer to swear in their new trustees before the New Year, for example, at a County Township Association banquet or special meeting. Townships can swear in their newly elected trustees at any time before January, however, the new trustees cannot take office until Jan. 1, 2010. Any sworn officer of the court or elected official may administer the oath of office.

Bonds: Townships must bond their township officials before the officials take office. As set forth in RC 505.02, township trustees shall give bond to the state for the use of the township in the sum of \$1,000, for the faithful performance of his/her duty as a trustee. The bonding limits for fiscal officers are related to the annual budget of the township and may be found in RC 507.03.

Health Insurance: If your township does not currently provide health insurance and would like to begin offering it, your township must adopt a resolution prior to Dec. 31, 2009, in order for the health insurance to apply to new trustees. This includes offering any new type of benefits, reimbursement of premiums, HSAs and HRAs. The resolution should include the ORC sections that apply to the change(s) such as RC 505.60, 505.602 and 9.833. Again, this resolution needs to be in place *before* the newly elected trustees take office on Jan. 1, 2010, otherwise your township will not be authorized to provide health insurance to its newly elected officials.

2010 Winter Conference to Include Changes - Registration Now Available

The 2010 Ohio Township Association (OTA) Annual Winter Conference will occur Feb. 17-20, at the Columbus Convention Center. This year's Trade Show will include heavy equipment and nearly 200 booth spaces are available.

Optional events include tours of the Ohio Statehouse and a Legislative Reception on Wednesday, and a Friday Luncheon. Governor Ted Strickland is the invited speaker. Spouse events include a beer and wine tasting with lunch at the Graystone Wine Cellar, and a tour and tea at the Sophia Kelton House Museum.

Registration materials are now available. Forms can be found in the November/December issue of the “Ohio Township News” or on the OTA Web site at www.ohiotownships.org under Events. You may pre-register via fax, mail or online, and the pre-registration deadline is Friday, Jan. 29, 2010. The Columbus Housing Bureau is once again handling hotel accommodations. The preferred method of registration is online, but you may also fax or mail your registration. Housing will open at 10 a.m. on Nov. 2. The deadline for hotel reservations is also Friday, Jan. 29.

Workshop titles will be available in the next issue of “Grassroots Clippings” and descriptions will be published in the January/February issue of the magazine.

If you are interested in serving as a sergeant-at-arms, please contact Kaitlin Hall at 614-863-0045 or hall@ohiotownships.org. Also, if you know of a national anthem singer or color guard, please send that information to Kaitlin as well.

Grant Writing Workshop Taking Place in Toledo

The Toledo-Lucas County Health Department and Grant Writing USA will present a two-day grant writing workshop in Toledo, Nov. 30 - Dec. 1, 2009. Beginning and experienced grant writers from city, county and state agencies are encouraged to attend.

The Ohio Township Association and its members are being offered a special tuition rate of \$395, which includes class workbook and accompanying resource CD that's packed full of tools and more than 200 sample grant proposals. Visit www.grantwritingusa.com/events/write/tooh1109.html to register.

Compensation Charts for 2010

Compensation charts for 2010 will be printed in the December issue of “Grassroots Clippings.” If you need them sooner than the December publication date, they will be posted on the OTA Web site as soon as they are finalized, typically the last week in November. If you do not have internet access, feel free to contact Kaitlin Hall at 614-863-0045 to have a copy mailed or faxed to you.

First Membership Deadline Approaching

The first Ohio Township Association (OTA) membership deadline is quickly approaching. County Township Association's should be hosting reorganization meetings soon after the election, where new officers are elected.

The 2010 County Officers' Form, for purposes of creating the 2010 County Directory, are due to the OTA no later than Jan. 8, 2010.



Newly Elected Fiscal Officers and OTA Dues

Each election year, the OTA receives numerous questions regarding newly elected fiscal officers in relation to OTA membership dues and Winter Conference payment.

Although the fiscal officer's term officially begins April 1, 2010, the OTA only requires one dues payment for the position of fiscal officer.

Additionally, both the old and new fiscal officer are welcome to attend the Annual Winter Conference at the member rate. Conference fees for both fiscal officers may be paid out of the township's general fund.

Looking for a Board Position? The OTA Needs You

Four officers and at least eight of 16 directors will be elected to the Ohio Township Association Board of Directors at the 2010 Annual Winter Conference.

To be an officer or director, you must be a township trustee or fiscal officer, attend five board meetings each year, along with the Annual Winter Conference, and must be dedicated to township government.

If you're interested in serving on the OTA Board, mail your resume to 6500 Taylor Road, Suite A, Blacklick, Ohio 43004, or fax it to 614-863-9751, no later than 4 p.m. on Nov. 10. All officer and director candidates will interview before the appropriate nominating committee on Friday, Nov. 13, at the November board meeting. OTA staff will coordinate interview times for all candidates.

If you have questions, feel free to contact a current officer or director (contact information can be found inside the "Ohio Township News").

Litter Cleanup Grant Available

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) - Division of Recycling & Litter Prevention has announced the release of its 2010 Litter Cleanup Grant application package. The package can be found on the ODNR Web site at www.ohiodnr.com/recycling.

The grant funding is targeted at Ohio counties, municipal corporations, townships, villages, Solid Waste Management Districts or Authorities, Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Keep Ohio Beautiful affiliates and any agencies of the state as defined in the Revised Code.

These grants have a maximum award level of \$2,000 and are competitive. All proposals must contain an actual litter collection component. No cash match is required, but financial or in-kind contributions are encouraged. Both the written and electronic applications must be postmarked or delivered to the division no later than Nov. 6. Questions regarding the 2010 Litter Cleanup Grant should be directed to Marti Kolb, community development coordinator, at marti.kolb@dnr.state.oh.us or 614-265-6376.

"AMERICA'S TOWN MEETING" EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS DVD-ROM

If you missed NATAT's 2009 Annual Conference, "America's Town Meeting", this year in Washington, DC, you don't have to miss out on all of the valuable educational content that was presented. You can experience the meeting just as if you were in the room by purchasing "America's Town Meeting" Digital Library on DVD-ROM.

Purchase **NOW** at www.astutetech.com/natat2009.

With presenters' slides including full-motion video and live audio, you can reference this valuable information at anytime and anywhere that is convenient for you.

Content on this disk includes talks by guest speakers, discussions, and education sessions on the following topics:

- ▶ How to Access Federal Broadband Resources
- ▶ How to Secure Federal Funding for Your Local Priorities
- ▶ Working with the New Administration
- ▶ Strengthening and Rebuilding Our Communities
- ▶ Federal Affairs
- ▶ How to Lobby

Purchase the America's Town Meeting Digital Library DVD-ROM now for only \$49* and take advantage of all the knowledge shared by the leaders in the field.

* excluding taxes, shipping and handling



Forming a Complete Count Committee for Census Outreach

Creating a Complete Count Committee for the 2010 Census can be done in seven easy steps and will increase your constituents' understanding of the census.

1. **Complete the Partnership Agreement Form** - this form can be downloaded from the Ohio 2010 Census Web site at www.census.ohio.gov/StartCompleteCountCommittee
2. **Contact one of Ohio's three Team Leaders to identify your local Partnership Specialist** - (team leaders can be found below)
3. **Return the Partnership Agreement Form to your Partnership Specialist by e-mail or fax**
4. **Download and read the Complete Count Committee Guide** - this can be downloaded from the Ohio 2010 Census Web site at www.census.ohio.gov/StartCompleteCountCommittee
5. **Work with your Partnership Specialist in establishing a Complete Count Committee**
6. **Reaffirm your support by signing a resolution during your kick off meeting** - a resolution can be downloaded at www.census.ohio.gov/StartCompleteCountCommittee
7. **Register your Complete Count Committee on the Ohio 2010 Census Web site to get connected to other committees** - register at www.census.ohio.gov

Contact your respective Team Leader at the information below to get connected to other committees at the city and county level.

Northeast

Gerardo Colon
1350 Euclid Ave., Suite 650
Cleveland, Ohio 44115
216-377-4436 x36
gerardo.colon@census.gov

Central & Northwest & Toledo

Rose Simmons
2192 Dividend Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43228
614-743-9640
rose.simmons@census.gov

Southern & Southeast

Theresa Brundage
801 Linn St., 4th Floor
Cincinnati, Ohio 45023
513-766-1120
theresa.m.brundage@census.gov

Summit on Local Government Sustainability

Ohio's local governments are feeling a level of financial strain unlike anything most have ever experienced. As host of this one-day Summit, Auditor of State Mary Taylor is collaborating with a number of statewide organizations in a non-partisan effort to share leading practices and examine unique strategies and solutions to address these financial difficulties. The Summit will examine how local governments have worked together in the past by looking outside the norm to reduce their financial burdens without sacrificing service to their citizens. The summit will occur Nov. 19, 2009, at the Columbus Athenaeum in Columbus.

Assistance will be provided by the following:

- Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration
- County Commissioners' Association of Ohio
- The Fund for Our Economic Future
- Ohio Library Council
- Ohio Municipal League
- Ohio Office of Budget and Management
- Ohio Township Association

Participants are eligible to receive 5.5 continuing profession education (CPE) hours. The \$15 registration fee includes lunch, but does not include parking or hotel accommodations. Register online at www.auditor.state.oh.us under "Conference Information." E-mail questions to sustainabilitysummit@auditor.state.oh.us.

Upcoming Events

Hancock County
November 4

Adams County
November 6, 7:30 p.m.

Auglaize County
November 7, 6:00 p.m.

Pike County
November 10

Geauga County
November 11, 6:30 p.m.

Darke County
November 12

Hardin County
November 12, 7:00 p.m.

Huron County
November 12, 7:00 p.m.

Scioto County
November 12

Warren County
November 12

OTA Board Meeting
November 13-14

Portage County
November 14

Vinton County
November 14

Ashtabula County
November 19

Clermont County
November 19

Lorain County
November 19

Mahoning County
November 19

Montgomery County
November 19

Washington County
November 19, 7:00 p.m.

Williams County
November 19

Logan County
November 22

Putnam County
November 25, 8:00 p.m.

Thanksgiving Day
OTA Office Closed
November 26

"Grassroots Clippings" is published monthly by the Ohio Township Association. It is disseminated to the fiscal officers of each township, who are then responsible for copying and circulating it to township members and trustees. It can also be found on the OTA Web site at www.ohiotownships.org.

OCC Secures Benefits for Low-Income Customers

As natural gas and electric rates have risen over the past five years, so have the number of disconnections. A study conducted by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners last year revealed that almost half of all residential consumers are unable to make all utility payments on time. Recent data reveals that more than one in 10 Ohio households experienced a disconnection of either their gas or electric service because of nonpayment in 2008.

There is clearly a correlation between these challenging economic times and unaffordable utility rates, payment patterns and the rising number of disconnections.

To combat these disconnections, the first line of defense for the Office of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel is to fight as hard as it can to keep utility costs as low as possible because this helps everyone. This is especially critical for low and moderate income households that have limited financial assistance options.

Electric

Consumer advocacy led to agreements with three utilities on electric security plans. FirstEnergy will provide \$6 million over three years for low income bill assistance. Duke Energy will allocate \$1.75 million per year for low income bill assistance from 2009-2011 for non-PIPP customers. Dayton Power & Light set aside \$61 million over seven years for energy efficiency programs, of which \$7.7 million is for low-income consumers. An additional \$400,000 in annual bill payment assistance will benefit low-income consumers at or below 200 percent of the poverty level or consumers who are at risk of disconnection.

Natural Gas

In the natural gas industry, Columbia Gas will provide \$7.1 million in annual funding for the WarmChoice weatherization program, a \$1.6 million increase over current funding; \$1.85 million over five years for a low-income fuel fund; and will shift billing of security deposits in three installments.

An agreement with Dominion East Ohio achieved \$9.5 million for energy efficiency programs, of which \$6.5 million is for low-income; \$1.2 million for bill payment assistance and education; \$240,000 to fund a \$4 credit per month for up to 5,000 low-income non-PIPP customers; additional limitations on late payment charges; and the billing of security deposits in three installments.

Duke Energy will continue its low-income weatherization program; provide a \$4 credit per month for up to 10,000 low usage non-PIPP customers with incomes below 175 percent of the federal poverty level; and eliminate deposits for PIPP customers.

Vectren Energy Delivery of Ohio agreed to provide \$4.7 million in energy conservation programs over two years for all customers; a \$4 million energy efficiency collaborative with \$1.1 million allocated to continue low-income weatherization programs; and the ability for Vectren to file for up to \$1 million in additional annual funds for customers at incomes below 200 and 300 percent of the federal poverty level. In addition, the first 5,000 non-PIPP low-use customers can receive a \$4 per month discount on their gas bills.

The OCC achieved many significant accomplishments on behalf of residential consumers. Whenever possible, the OCC has sought to combine its efforts with many low-income advocates across the state.



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Ohio Township Association
6500 Taylor Road, Suite A
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