

GrassrootsClippings

Monthly Newsletter of the Ohio Township Association

September 2009

NEOSO and FirstEnergy Solutions Partner to Deliver Electric Generation Savings to Nonprofits

The Northeast Ohio Sourcing Office (NEOSO), a council of governments and nonprofit organizations that manages group purchasing programs, has signed an agreement with FirstEnergy Solutions to supply electric generation to NEOSO's public and nonprofit sector participants served by FirstEnergy's Ohio utility companies - Ohio Edison, The Illuminating Co. and Toledo Edison.

NEOSO created its electricity savings program to help organizations save on their electric bills. By partnering with FirstEnergy Solutions, NEOSO will be able to offer its smaller participants a guaranteed savings of 5.75 percent off the Price to Compare through May 2011, while larger participants can request a free savings analysis.

"We are pleased that our participants can expect to save 5.75 percent on the generation portion of their electric bill each month during the contract term. FirstEnergy Solutions took the time to understand our participants' requirements and created an offer that will significantly reduce costs," said Jani E. Memorich, NEOSO's business manager. "By working with NEOSO, participants have access to dedicated service representatives, education resources and a wide range of value added services through this unique program."

"NEOSO took advantage of the competitive pricing being offered by FirstEnergy Solutions and was able to maximize the amount of savings for its members," said Arthur Yuan, vice president of sales and marketing at FirstEnergy Solutions.

FirstEnergy Solutions, the competitive subsidiary of Akron, Ohio-based FirstEnergy Corp., provides competitive electric generation supply and other energy-related products and services, and is a licensed supplier in Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Michigan and Illinois.

NEOSO participants interested in saving money on their electric generation requirements can download and complete the necessary forms at www.neoso.org/electricity. There are no fees to join NEOSO, and participation simply requires the completion of a short agreement form to save on electric generation through May 2011. Membership is available to any public or nonprofit entity such as municipalities, school districts, park districts and counties.

2010 Winter Conference to Include Location Change

Now that the last-ever summer conference is complete, the Association is quickly moving on to plans for the 2010 winter conference. The 2010 conference will take place Feb. 17-20, at the Columbus Convention Center, which is attached to the Hyatt Regency.

The change in location will allow room for heavy equipment in the trade show, something the OTA has been unable to provide in recent years. Workshops and other optional events, such as the Friday Luncheon, which was held for the first time last year, will also occur at the Convention Center.

The OTA staff and Board of Directors are looking forward to these changes and hope you will join us in making next year's conference a success. Check your November/December issue of the "Ohio Township News" for more details, including registration materials.

OTA Accepting Board Resumes

Every other year, the Ohio Township Association elects board officers and directors. Officers serve for two years and directors serve for four years.



The OTA is now accepting resumes for the 2010 election. To be an officer or director, you must be a trustee or fiscal officer and must have the time to commit to the service, including attending five board meetings each year, as well as the annual winter conference. According to the OTA Constitution, no more than one director or officer can be elected from the same county.

If you're interested in serving on the Association's Board, send your resume to 6500 Taylor Road, Suite A, Blacklick, Ohio 43004, no later than 4 p.m. on Tuesday, Nov. 10. All candidates must interview before the appropriate nominating committee on Friday, Nov. 13, during the November board meeting. OTA staff will coordinate interview times.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact the OTA at 614-863-0045 or a current officer or director, whose names can be found on the OTA Web site at www.ohiotownships.org.

Below are the nominating committee members:

Officers Nominating Committee:

Karl Stroh, Wayne County (Chair)
Terry Bell, Jefferson County
Ron Cronley, Hardin County
Tom Hans, Darke County
Fred Leber, Huron County
Nanette Yoder, Holmes County
Larry Burkholder, Fulton County
Marilyn Winn, Columbiana County
Columbus Cheadle, Morgan County

Directors Nominating Committee:

Dave Miller, Licking County
John Zizka, Portage County
Larry Mansfield, Putnam County
Shelly Webb, Coshocton County
Stephen Bradley, Muskingum County

OPERS Health Care Plan Open Enrollment Scheduled

OPERS' health care open enrollment is just around the corner. Retirees participating in the OPERS health care plan can make certain changes to their plan and add or remove coverage for eligible dependents during the month of October. Any changes will become effective Jan. 1, 2010.

Changes for 2010

Also effective Jan. 1, 2010, are some changes OPERS has made to its retiree health care plan with the goal of improving the health care experience for retirees and extending the solvency of its health care fund.

The action OPERS has taken to extend the life of its health care fund and improve retiree health care beginning in 2010 is two-fold: First, OPERS has negotiated new contracts with two medical plan administrators. These contracts will provide participants with an estimated savings of \$92.4 million over the next three years. Humana will administer the medical portion of the OPERS health care plan for Medicare-eligible retirees. Medical Mutual will serve as the administrator for retirees not yet eligible for Medicare.

Not only will the new administrator relationships provide a cost savings, they also offer retirees better coordination of care, increased preventive test coverage and programs designed to help seniors achieve their best possible health including the Silver Sneakers fitness program for Medicare-eligible retirees.

Second, OPERS has modified its medical plan design to incrementally increase retiree cost-share. The increase will be seen in changes such as increased out-of-pocket maximums, deductibles and co-pays, as opposed to charging retirees more to participate in the plan. These changes will provide approximately \$73.6 million in savings in 2010.

More information

Retirees will receive a *Personal Health Care Open Enrollment Statement* and a *2010 Open Enrollment Guide* in the mail prior to the end of September. The statement will provide monthly cost information and alternate coverage options (if applicable) and the guide will provide coverage details and general information.

OPERS will be conducting open enrollment seminars around the state beginning in late September and through the month of October. Please visit www.opers.org for a schedule of seminars. Registration is required and can be made by phone at 800-222-7377 or online by using the OPERS Member Benefits System (MBS) at www.opers.org.

2010 Membership Process Begins this Month

OTA membership packets will be mailed to the county township association membership coordinators no later than Sept. 18. If you are the membership coordinator for your county and do not receive your packet by Sept. 30, please contact Kaitlin Hall at 614-863-0045 or hall@ohiotownships.org.

If you are a trustee or fiscal officer, we encourage you to recruit new associate members. Associate members are anyone interested in township government. First and foremost, this includes all township employees, such as zoning inspectors, road foreman and fire chiefs. This can also include local businesses or your township legal counsel, such as the county prosecutor. See below for 2010 membership deadlines.

November 12, 2009 - January 8, 2010
County reorganization meetings held;
county officer's form and new official's form due no later than January 8.

January 15, 2010
Final membership deadline. As this is an election year, it is imperative that this deadline is met so membership cards are received before conference.



**Thank you OTA
Summer Conference
Sponsors!**

***Burnham & Flower
Insurance Group***

Frank Gates/Avizent

Zoning Sessions Repeated - Sign Up Now

The fall zoning registration form is now available. Due to an overwhelming response to the spring zoning workshops, the topics are being repeated in October.

Each session is limited to 40 registrants and the cost for each session is \$50 for OTA members and \$65 for non-members. The workshops are held at the OTA office in Blacklick from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. with an hour for lunch.

If you have a suggestion for a future topic, please contact Heidi M. Fought, director of governmental affairs, at 614-863-0045 or fought@ohiotownships.org.

The registration form is available in the September/October issue of the magazine and online at www.ohiotownships.org under Events.

Below is the schedule of seminars:

- Friday, Oct. 16 - Role and Function of the BZA
- Friday, Oct. 23 - Role and Function of the Zoning Inspector
- Friday, Oct. 30 - Role and Function of the Zoning Commission

Ohio Land Use Conference to Include Relevant Sessions

The Ohio Land Use Conference will take place Sept. 16, at the Nationwide and Ohio Farm Bureau 4-H Center on OSU's campus. The conference is hosted by OSU Extension.

This year's conference reflects the evolving issues affecting land use in Ohio today and includes many topics of interest to resource professionals. Presentations by keynote speakers include:

- Is Sprawl Dead?
- The New Federal Partnership for Sustainable Communities
- A Balanced Growth Program for Ohio

Break out sessions will also occur and cover the following topics, among others: Ohio Transportation Planning; Rural Zoning Law Update; Planning for Renewable Energy; and Best Practices for Stormwater Planning.

The registration fee is \$60 per person and includes meals and materials. For more information or to register, visit www.comdev.osu.edu/landuse_conf.html.

BWC Offers Safety Resources

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) Division of Safety & Hygiene offers educational and safety consulting services at no additional cost. Safety & Hygiene consultants assist employers by identifying safety and health hazards and assessing safety programs and making recommendations for improvements. The Division of Safety & Hygiene provides the following services:

- Safety Audits
- Ergonomic Studies
- Industrial Hygiene Consulting
- Reference Materials, Videos, etc.
- Safety Publications
- Employee Safety Training
- Safety Councils

For more information, call their toll free number at 800-OHIOBWC or 800-644-6292, ext. 22.

Additionally, the Division of Safety & Hygiene offers more than 60 occupational safety, health and ergonomics courses throughout the state as well as online. These courses are offered at no extra cost to Ohio employers with active workers' compensation policies.

To view and/or sign up for an upcoming course, visit www.bwclearningcenter.com.

Scholarship Application Available

For the second year in a row, the Ohio Township Association (OTA) is offering three \$1,500 scholarships to high school seniors.

Applicants must reside in one of Ohio's 1,308 townships and plan on attending a two or four-year college or university in the fall of 2010.

The OTA scholarships are funded by county township associations, personal donations and a percentage of OTA merchandise sold.

This year, two Local Government Achievement Scholarships and one Academic Achievement Scholarship will be awarded. The application can be found in the September/October issue of the

magazine or online at www.ohiotownships.org. We encourage you to distribute the form to high schools in your township and/or county. The deadline for this year's process is Jan. 29, 2010.



Upcoming Events

Labor Day Observance
OTA Office Closed
September 7

NATaT's Annual
Town Meeting
September 8 - 11

Knox County
September 8

Pickaway County
September 8

Pike County
September 8

Auglaize County
September 9

Erie County
September 10

Holmes County
September 10, 7:30 p.m.

Scioto County
September 10

Fairfield County
September 12

Paulding County
September 12

Adams County
September 14, 7:30 p.m.

Allen County
September 17, 6:00 p.m.

Ashtabula County
September 17

Clermont County
September 17

Lorain County
September 17

Seneca County
September 17

Putnam County
September 30, 8:00 p.m.

"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.

Changes in Medicaid Billing for EMS Transports



In the final negotiations of House Bill 1, Ohio's operating budget, a provision was included that changes how billing is handled for some Medicaid patients.

Effective Aug. 1, 2009, nursing facilities were granted a \$3.91 consolidated per diem increase for the increase of certain services. Included in these services is transportation which includes Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

transports.

As a result of this bundling of services EMS providers, such as townships or joint fire/EMS districts, can no longer bill Medicaid directly for the transport of Medicaid patients to and from nursing facilities. EMS providers will now have to bill the nursing facilities for service. Nursing facilities will not have to comply with Medicaid's prompt-pay requirements and are free to negotiate rates with their suppliers. Again, this only applies to patients with Medicaid that are being transported to and from nursing facilities.

At this time there are a number of questions that have yet to be addressed and the overall impact of this change is not yet known. Townships or joint districts that bill for EMS are encouraged to contact their billing company or their legal counsel to discuss this issue and determine what changes, if any, will need to be made to EMS billing procedures.

Upcoming HB 9 Trainings

House Bill 9, passed by the 126th Ohio General Assembly, requires all elected officials or their appropriate designees to obtain three hours of public records training per term in elected office. See below for upcoming session dates and locations, offered by the Attorney General and Auditor's Office.

Attorney General - call 800-282-0515 or visit www.ag.state.oh.us/publicrecords/training.asp to register

Oct. 15
1:00 - 4:15 p.m.
Lakeland Community College
7700 Clocktower Drive
Kirtland, Ohio 44094

Oct. 20
1:00 - 4:15 p.m.
Ohio University Chillicothe
101 University Drive
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601

Oct. 26
Ohio State University Mansfield
9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
1760 University Drive
Mansfield, Ohio 44906

Nov. 11
Wright State University
9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
3634 Colonel Glenn Highway
Dayton, Ohio 45435

Auditor - visit www.auditor.state.oh.us/conferenceinformation/HB9/Default.htm to register

Oct. 3
9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.
Licking County Administration Building
20 S. Second St.
Newark, Ohio 43055

Nov. 5
5:00 - 8:15 p.m.
Union County Services Center
940 London Ave.
Marysville, Ohio 43040



September "Grassroots Clippings"
Ohio Township Association
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