



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

FEBRUARY 2, 2024

Buckeye Hills Regional Council

AGENDA

- I. Call to Order | Ron Moore, Vice President
- II. Roll Call | Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary
- III. Appointment to Fill Treasurer Vacancy | Ron Moore, Vice President
- IV. Appointment to Appalachian Development Corporation | Ron Moore, Vice President
- V. Consent Agenda | Ron Moore, Vice President **TAB #1**
- VI. Ratification of Action by Officers for Expenditure Request Approval | Denise Keyes **TAB #2**
- VII. Legislator and Partner Agency Updates
 - a. Bradley Kennedy, Office of U.S. Senator Vance
 - b. Juli Stephens, Office of Congressman Wenstrup
 - c. Susanne Simpson, Office of Ohio Auditor of State Faber
- VIII. Development Division Update | Sam Miller, Development Director **TAB #3**
 - a. Resolution Granting Permission to Enter into a Contract with Chmura Economic & Analytics
- IX. Planning Division Update | Melissa Zoller, Planning Director
 - a. Environmental Design Group Contract for GIS Services
 - b. Hocking County Master Plan & Washington County Port Proposal
- X. Executive Director Report | Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director **TAB #4**
- XI. Citizen Participation
- XII. Other Business
 - a. General Policy Council Updated Roster | Chasity Schmelzenbach **TAB #5**
 - b. Conflict of Interests and Code of Ethics Signature Pages | Chasity Schmelzenbach
- XIII. Adjournment

THE NEXT REGULAR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 1, 2024

**Minutes of the December 1, 2023
Buckeye Hills Regional Council Executive Committee Meeting**

The Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) Executive Committee meeting was held December 1, 2023. The meeting was held at Buckeye Hills, Marietta, Ohio.

In attendance were:

OFFICERS:

Ron Moore, Vice President	Morgan County (Private Sector)
Kevin Ritter, Treasurer	Washington County
Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary (non-voting member per Bylaws)	BHRC Executive Director

EXECUTIVE

COMMITTEE:

Steve Patterson	City of Athens
Jason D'Onofrio	Hocking County
Ty Moore	Noble County
Jeff Dennis	Perry County (Private Sector)
Josh Schlicher	City of Marietta

GUESTS:

Kaleb Knowlton	Office of U.S. Senator Brown
Amber Kohler	Office of Congressman Johnson
Allie New	Office of Congressman Johnson
Holly Reitano	AEP Ohio

STAFF:

Jen Huck	Fiscal Assistant
Michelle Hyer	Program Manager
Denise Keyes	Fiscal Director
Angie Lawrence	HR & Payroll Manager
Sam Miller	Development Director
Christa Myers	Transportation Planning Manager
Kimy Porter	Fiscal Assistant
Amanda Reeder	Communications Specialist
Jenny Simmons	Executive Assistant
Drew Tanner	Communications Director
Jennifer Westfall	Aging & Disability Director
Emma Yeager	Development Specialist
Melissa Zoller	Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER

Ron Moore, Vice President, called the meeting to order.

ROLE CALL

Chasity Schmelzenbach conducted roll call.

CONSENT AGENDA

Steve Patterson moved to approve the consent agenda which included the minutes from the October 6, 2023, meeting; Statement of Activities, Administrative Expense YTD; Quarterly Budget Report, Aging and Disability Programs Services and Funding Report for period July 1, 2023, through October 31, 2023, and Division and Director's Reports. Kevin Ritter seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

LEGISLATOR AND PARTNER AGENCY UPDATE

Kaleb Knowlton, Office of U.S. Senator Brown, were present for the meeting.

Amber Kohler and Allie New, Office of Congressman Johnson, were present for the meeting.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Kevin Ritter moved to approve the Management Committee Report recommended by the Management Committee. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

ANNUAL EXPENDITURES RENEWALS 2024

Josh Schlicher moved to approve the Annual Expenditures Renewal 2024 recommended by the Management Committee. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

COST ALLOCATION PLAN

Steve Patterson moved to approve the Cost Allocation Plan for FY July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025, recommended by the Management Committee. Josh Schlicher seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

AGING AND HEALTH DIVISION UPDATE

Kevin Ritter moved to approve the Resolution Approving the Submission of an Application to the Ohio Department of Development's Program Year 2024 Housing Assistant Grant Program presented by Jennifer Westfall, Aging and Health Director. Jeff Dennis seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Jason D'Onofrio moved to approve the PY2024 and PY2025 Older Americans Act Funds recommended by the Regional Council on Aging (RAC). Kevin Ritter seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

DEVELOPMENT DIVISION UPDATE

Steve Patterson moved to approve the Resolution Granting Permission for Ohio Department of Development Building Demolition and Site Revitalization Grants for Hocking and Noble Counties. Kevin Ritter seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Jason D'Onofrio moved to approve Buckeye Hills to enter into contract with MIOVISION not to exceed \$50,000 for traffic counters. Josh Schlicher seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Kevin Ritter moved to approve Buckeye Hills to enter into contract with SIXMO not to exceed \$100,000 for building assessments. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Chasity Schmelzenbach provided announcements, current initiatives, state updates and federal updates to the members:

- Local projects received ARC POWER Grants: Morgan County; Appalachia Ohio Manufactures' Coalition; New Lexington Schools; Federal Valley Resource Center, Inc.
- FY2024-25 Capital Bill Update
- Ohio Senate selected committee on Housing Hearing in Marietta
- The Ridges
- Appalachian Community Grant Program (ACGP)

Schmelzenbach provided upcoming meeting dates:

- December 6 at 11:00 am is the Regional Advisory Council (RAC) meeting at Buckeye Hills.
- December 13 at 10:00 am is the District 18 Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) Executive Committee meeting at Buckeye Hills.
- December 13 at 10:45 am is the Regional Transportation Planning Organization (RTPO) Committee meeting at Buckeye Hills.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

No citizens present wished to address the committee.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ron Moore stated that the 2024 Meeting Schedule was located in the front of the meeting binder behind the agenda.

Chasity Schmelzenbach thanked the committee for their time over the last year and their support to the mission of Buckeye Hills to help communities within the region.

ADJOURMENT

With no other business, Kevin Ritter moved to adjourn the meeting. Josh Schlicher seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Approved By: _____
Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary

Date: _____

DRAFT



STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

July 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023

YEAR TO DATE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSE DETAIL

Administrative Expenses for Fiscal Year 2024 totaled \$3,121,846.40 on December 31. This total represents 48.48% of the Council's administrative budget utilized. Total spending for this time period is budgeted to be 50%. Individual line-item budgets and expenses are monitored monthly to ensure funds are utilized appropriately and budget revisions are requested from funding agencies as needed. Agency-wide quarterly budget revisions will be presented for review and approval. Specific line-item expenses over the budgeted spending percentage are the result of yearly renewals paid and staff travel increases due to the end of the Public Health Emergency. The cumulative Indirect Cost rate for this period is 48%. Projected Total Indirect Costs for Fiscal Year 2024 are 46%.

AGING AND DISABILITY PROGRAMS SERVICES & FUNDING REPORT

The Aging and Disability Division worked with various service providers and helped administer many direct service programs to eligible residents of our eight-county region. Between July 1 and December 31, over \$6 million in direct service dollars were used to provide the units of service listed in the report. BHRC continues to support our provider network to evaluate the needs of the communities and serve area seniors in the best way possible.

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Administrative Expense Detail

For the Period July 1, 2023 -December 31, 2023

	2023 YTD Actual	2024 YTD Actual	2024 Budget	% of Budget
Salary	\$ 1,602,419.01	\$ 1,585,737.90	\$ 3,268,476.71	48.52%
Fringe Benefits	\$ 679,097.22	\$ 772,926.89	\$ 1,749,214.57	44.19%
Advertising	\$ 123,345.02	\$ 144,140.34	\$ 214,643.00	67.15%
Audit Costs	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 40,220.00	\$ 44,000.00	91.41%
Building Maintenance	\$ 4,851.06	\$ 4,467.00	\$ 11,500.00	38.84%
Communications	\$ 50,909.13	\$ 42,908.82	\$ 104,550.00	41.04%
Conference Registration Fee	\$ 19,768.00	\$ 22,022.80	\$ 36,700.00	60.01%
Contract Services	\$ 23,743.75	\$ 19,982.66	\$ 155,770.00	12.83%
Employee/Governing Board	\$ 14,012.16	\$ 16,720.56	\$ 19,000.00	88.00%
Equipment Purchase/Maintenance	\$ 13,237.43	\$ 44,430.77	\$ 54,500.00	81.52%
Insurance	\$ 20,867.16	\$ 21,994.74	\$ 42,000.00	52.37%
Legal Costs	\$ 1,942.50	\$ 1,831.25	\$ 4,000.00	45.78%
Organizational Dues	\$ 24,056.26	\$ 16,343.20	\$ 40,000.00	40.86%
Other Costs	\$ 13,270.42	\$ 8,577.96	\$ 28,200.00	30.42%
Postage	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 6,054.10	\$ 15,000.00	40.36%
Printing Costs	\$ 12,105.66	\$ 309.00	\$ 15,600.00	1.98%
Software & Licenses	\$ 45,766.80	\$ 60,080.86	\$ 115,315.00	52.10%
Space	\$ 127,670.48	\$ 127,670.43	\$ 255,342.00	50.00%
Staff Training Fees	\$ 11,506.28	\$ 6,835.75	\$ 10,000.00	68.36%
Subscriptions	\$ 5,934.85	\$ 7,119.17	\$ 8,000.00	88.99%
Supplies	\$ 76,516.66	\$ 49,381.30	\$ 65,875.00	74.96%
Travel - Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 49,266.14	\$ 74,326.47	\$ 105,698.00	70.32%
Travel - Out of Town Expense	\$ 45,956.33	\$ 47,764.43	\$ 105,698.00	45.19%
TOTAL EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD	\$ 2,980,242.32	\$ 3,121,846.40	\$ 6,469,082.28	48.26%
INDIRECT COST RATE FOR THE PERIOD	45%	48%		



Quarterly Budget Adjustment
For the Period July 1, 2023 -June 30, 2024

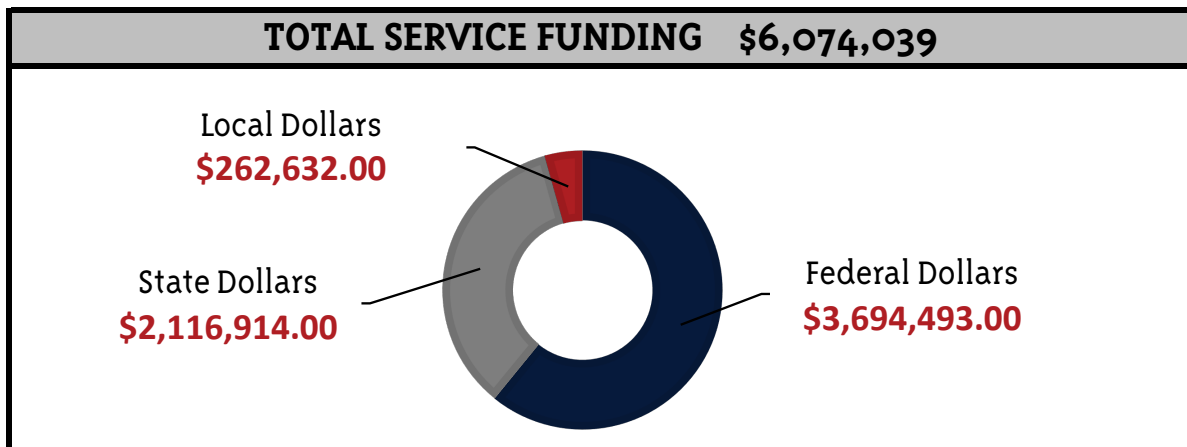
	Original Budget	07/23 - 09/23 Change	10/23 - 12/23 Change	01/24 - 03/24 Change	04/24 - 06/24 Change	Final Budget
Salary	\$ 3,268,476.71					\$ 3,268,476.71
Fringe Benefits	\$ 1,749,214.57					\$ 1,749,214.57
Advertising	\$ 214,643.00					\$ 214,643.00
Audit Costs	\$ 32,000.00		\$ 12,000.00			\$ 44,000.00
Building Maintenance	\$ 11,500.00					\$ 11,500.00
Communications	\$ 104,550.00					\$ 104,550.00
Conference Registration Fee	\$ 36,700.00					\$ 36,700.00
Contract Services	\$ 173,250.00		\$ (17,480.00)			\$ 155,770.00
Employee/Governing Board	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 4,000.00			\$ 19,000.00
Equipment Purchase/Maintenance	\$ 24,500.00		\$ 30,000.00			\$ 54,500.00
Insurance	\$ 42,000.00					\$ 42,000.00
Legal Costs	\$ 4,000.00					\$ 4,000.00
Organizational Dues	\$ 40,000.00					\$ 40,000.00
Other Costs	\$ 28,200.00					\$ 28,200.00
Postage	\$ 15,000.00					\$ 15,000.00
Printing Costs	\$ 15,600.00					\$ 15,600.00
Software & Licenses	\$ 115,315.00					\$ 115,315.00
Space	\$ 255,342.00					\$ 255,342.00
Staff Training Fees	\$ 10,000.00					\$ 10,000.00
Subscriptions	\$ 6,520.00		\$ 1,480.00			\$ 8,000.00
Supplies	\$ 65,875.00					\$ 65,875.00
Travel - Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 105,698.00					\$ 105,698.00
Travel - Out of Town Expense	\$ 105,698.00					\$ 105,698.00
TOTAL BUDGET	\$ 6,439,082.28	\$ -	\$ 30,000.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,469,082.28

Buckeye Hills Regional Council

Aging and Disability Programs Services & Funding Report

July 1, 2023 - December 31, 2023

SERVICES PROVIDED		
Direct Service Hours Provided	Transportation Trips	Adult Day Service Days Attended
170,859	8,916	1,326
Adult Day Service Miles Traveled	Meals Provided	Home Medical Equipment & Emergency Response Units
13,264	134,269	1,063
Legal Services Contacts	Home Accessibility Modification And Pest Control Jobs	Senior Farmers Market Coupons Redeemed
341	40	20,975
Grocery Shopping and Delivery	Telephone Reassurance	Evidence Based Classes
291	365	720
Assisted Living Days	Alzheimers Education Contacts	Senior Volunteer Hours
6,662	197	29,192



REGIONAL STATS		
Total Consumers Served	Total Population	Total Population Eligible for Services by Age (60+)
3,375	249,172	65,746



**RATIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE REQUEST
APPROVED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS**

January 4, 2024

Insurance

\$10,577.00

Schwendeman Agency, Inc.

- Annual Renewal of Cyber Insurance

Funding Source: Indirect

\$10,577.00

Total Request

Open Enrollment | Open enrollment ended on December 7th of 2023. Over the enrollment period 205 individuals were served with an overall savings of \$164,201.40. Over 123 hours were provided by employees Brandi Hesson, Gerri Vannoy, Judy Kuhn and Kara Wright. We are grateful to our OHSIP trained staff!

MyCare Implementation | Aging staff continue to participate in workgroups with other AAA staff and state leaders to prepare for the implementation of MyCare statewide in January of 2026. Workgroups include definitions for consistent payment, payment rate needs and concerns regarding rural AAAs.

NCQA (National Committee for Quality Assurance) Accreditation | AAA Staff have begun obtaining NCQA Accreditation for the AAA programming. NCQA accreditation will be valuable/required as we move forward with Managed Care Organizations and the implementation of MyCare. This process will take many months of preparing processes and documents followed by a site visit. Aging Management will be leading the work on this objective. More information can be found at <https://store.ncqa.org/accreditation/case-management-cm.html>

Older Americans Act | Area Plan updates and Program Monitoring have been completed and submitted to ODA for review.

BHRC Housing Grant and Home Modification Program | Completed and submitted the grant application for the next fiscal cycle. Although BHRC has not received a funding decision as of this report's date, we still need independent contractors to complete general contracting work. The types of work completed include bathroom remodels, ramps, doorways and minor roof repairs. Please reach out the Dave at dherbert@buckeyehills.org if you have any questions or a referral.

Completed housing projects for the 2023 program year: **PASSPORT: 20 HAGP: 36**

Assessments completed as of December 2023: 66 (see Table)

Table 1: Assessments

Athens	9
Hocking	5
Meigs	6
Monroe	7
Morgan	7
Noble	0
Perry	12
Washington	26
Total	66

PASSPORT AND ASSISTED LIVING CASELOAD REGIONWIDE

- The current PASSPORT caseload is **760 individuals** and **55 individuals** on the Assisted Living Waiver.

CONTACT: Jenn Westfall, Aging and Health Director | jwestfall@buckeyehills.org, 740-376-1038
Dawn Weber, Home Care Director | dweber@buckeyehills.org, 740-376-1041

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CURRENT INITIATIVES

HEAP Outreach | Billboards are up in eight counties promoting the HEAP program and directing individuals to call their local community action agencies. The new HEAP application deadline is May 31. Social media continues to be used to promote the program weekly.

Aging Outreach | New materials and handouts have been ordered, and supplies restocked for our upcoming spring outreach events. We are currently scheduled to attend the following events:

- Scenic Hills Health & Wellness Fair – March 14 – Hocking County
- Perry County Senior Fair – March 15- Perry County (sponsoring event)
- Hocking County Senior Fair – April 5 – Hocking County (sponsoring event)
- Washington County Roundtable – April 18- Washington County
- O'Neill Center Health Fair – April 19 – Washington County

If there is an upcoming outreach event in your community that we should attend or a civic group that would like to have a speaker on Aging topics, please contact Amanda Reeder at areeder@buckeyehills.org.

Aging Staff worked with LocalIQ in December on an advertising campaign focused on households with family members age 55 and older. The campaign included online ads, emails, and postcards to individuals who interacted with the online ads. The results were very strong, with BHRC ads being viewed 146,619 between December 7 and January 7 with a click-through rate of 0.19%, compared to an industry benchmark of 0.04%. The email campaigns reached 20,000 individuals with an open rate of 18.7% (benchmark 10%) and a click-through rate of 2.21% (benchmark 2%). Normally, our Information & Assistance staff see a lull in calls during the month of December. However, December 2023 saw 316 calls, compared to 208 calls in December 2022 and 238 calls in December 2021. Additionally, website traffic for the month of December saw an increase of 273% year-over-year, for a total of 9,087 visitors.

Medicare Outreach | General Medicare posts and information on Extra Help, Medicare Savings Programs, and Preventative Services run on a weekly basis across our social media channels. A contract with Medibag has been secured to distribute prescription bags at pharmacies in six of our eight counties starting in March. Each pharmacy will receive 24,000 bags. Through a partnership with Senior Medicare Patrol, half-page newspaper ads are running in all eight of our counties through April.

Communications Internships | Rachel Schofield (Marietta College, '23) completed her internship in December 2023. Rachel verified the information for the 600+ service providers listed in our Aging & Health division's County Resource Guides, which will be a major component of our Spring 2024 website overhaul. She also assisted with several writing and content review projects. Gabby Smith (Ohio University, '24) came to us through Ohio Department of Development's Diversity & Inclusion Tech Internship Program and is creating video and photo content that will be incorporated into the new website as well as future program outreach via social media. She recently completed a video about our Aging Information & Assistance process with Brandi Hesson, which can be viewed on our YouTube Channel at youtu.be/19DXEzLvaOM. This video will be featured on our updated website.

2024 State of the Region Planning | Planning continues to move forward for the May 14, 2024, State of the Region Conference at Ohio University, in partnership with the Voinovich School and our sister Local Development

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Districts. Buckeye Hills Regional Council staff will be reprising the Downtown Development Tools and Success Stories that was part of our 2023 Development Summit.

Website Redesign & Development | CH Web Agency of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, continues to make progress and is on schedule for the redesign and development of buckeyehills.org. Initial design concepts were shared with the BHRC division and department directors on December 7 and subsequently approved by Communications. Communications staff have been working through revisions and updates to site content, which will continue through February 9. The target completion date is March 15, 2024, allowing time for the new website to be introduced at the April 2024 General Policy Council meeting.

Local Development District Report | The Communications team is spearheading the creation of our joint report of 2023 ARC- and GOA-funded projects with our sister Local Development Districts. The report will be presented in meetings with congressional staff and representatives during the March 2024 NADO/DDAA Washington DC Policy Summit.

NEWS

• Recent News, Press Releases, and Notices

- November 20-30 – various: [HEAP helps Ohioans pay for their home energy bills](#)
- November 21 – WOUB: [ARPA funds made 2023 a bumper year for the Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program, but 2024 funding may shrink](#)
- November 26 – The Post (Athens): [The Ridges construction date set for 2025](#)
- November 29 – Morgan County Herald, various: [Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program has record year in southeast Ohio](#)
- December 6 – WTAP: [Village of Matamoras receives \\$1.5 million H2Ohio grant](#)
- December 13 – NDIA: [NDIA Recognizes Record-Setting 47 Digital Inclusion Trailblazers](#)
- December 19 – River Cities Tribune & Register, various: [Buckeye Hills offers architectural and structural assessments for buildings in river communities](#)
- December 22 – Marietta Times: [Commissioners support Nourishing Networks](#)
- December 27 – Ohio Capitol Journal, various via Associated Press: [Nearly 75% of Appalachian Ohio doesn't have access to minimum internet speeds](#)
- December 31 – American Builders Quarterly: [Dominick Brook Helps Ohio University Preserve Buildings Going Back Centuries](#)
- January 10 – WTAP: [How to protect yourself from Medicare scams](#)
- January 10 – Benton Institute: [Reactions to Lawmakers' Introduction of Legislation to Extend the Affordable Connectivity Program](#)
- January 17: WTAP: [Mobility managers work to increase transportation access](#)
- January 17: River Cities News & Tribune, various: [Buckeye Hills Forward workshops to plan for the future of Southeast Ohio](#)
- January 18: WTAP: [Buckeye Hills looks to hold workshops to help SE Ohio](#)
- January 26 – NADO.org/ruraldowntowns: [Investing in Rural Downtowns: What Role are EDDs Playing?](#)

CONTACT INFO: Drew Tanner, Communications Director | dtanner@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1030

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CURRENT INITIATIVES

Buckeye Hills Forward: A Regional Economic Plan | As an Economic Development District designated by the U.S. Economic Development Administration, Buckeye Hills Regional is responsible for working with local leaders and residents to draft and update a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that encompasses our region. The next version of the CEDS, which looks ahead to 2025-2030, is titled Buckeye Hills Forward: A Regional Economic Plan.

In February and March 2024, Buckeye Hills Regional Council is hosting a series of community workshops in all eight of the counties we serve. Each workshop will provide the opportunity for individuals, local officials, private industry, and other stakeholders to have meaningful conversations about efforts that best serve economic development and improve the quality of life in our region. Find a workshop near you and register today! All workshops will take place 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

- February 13: Morgan County - Twin City Opera House, 15 West Main Street, McConnelsville, OH 43756
- February 15: Meigs County - The Blakeslee Center, 100 Blakeslee Drive, Middleport, OH 45760
- February 20: Athens County - Ohio University Innovation Center, 340 West State Street, Room 103, Athens, OH 45701
- February 22: Hocking County - Logan Theater, 86 East Main Street, Logan, OH 43138
- February 26: Perry County – Perry County Job & Family Services, 5250 State Route 37 East, New Lexington, OH 43764
- February 29: Monroe County - Generations Complex, 47115 Black Walnut Parkway, Woodsfield, OH 43797
- March 4: Noble County - OSU Extension Office, 46049 Marietta Road, Suite 2, Caldwell, OH 43724
- March 7: Washington County – Buckeye Hills Regional Council, 1400 Pike Street, Marietta, OH 45750

Buckeye Hills Forward Advisory Group | The Buckeye Hills Forward advisory group is made up of public- and private-sector representatives from across the Buckeye Hills region to help guide the CEDS process and content. A roster of the advisory group is attached to this report. Advisory Group meetings are scheduled for the following dates at Buckeye Hills Regional Council 1400, Pike Street, in Marietta. All meetings begin at 12:00 p.m.

- February 1, 2024
- April 25, 2024
- August 29, 2024
- December 12, 2024

Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative | Development staff are working on a project for the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative (AGCI) called the Buckeye Hills Recreation Corridor. Working alongside communities in Noble, Morgan, Perry, and Hocking counties with 11 popular State Park destinations and Ohio's only National Forest, the goal is to learn best practices of maintaining a sense of place while working to integrate park visitors into our local economies. A team of stakeholders will have the chance to play a pivotal role in shaping the future of our community to maximize its potential. You will collaborate with like-minded individuals, access resources for community projects, and contribute to the overall well-being of our region.

Village of Caldwell Waterline Break | The Village of Caldwell experienced a waterline break in a line feeding their plant that is difficult fix. There are efforts underway to supply Noble Water Authority from their emergency interconnect with the Village of Byesville. This interconnect was possible from their last extension project which

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our Development staff supported funding both with ARC dollars and by supporting Noble County's presentation to the Small Communities Environmental Infrastructure Group (SCEIG). That presentation allowed 3 other funding sources to contribute to bring the project to reality. This is an ongoing incident and Michelle Hyer from the Development team has provided assistance on an emergency funding request with the Ohio Public Works Commission. Thank you to Michelle and the team who quickly worked to help the Village of Caldwell.

Contract with Chmura Economics & Analytics | BHRC would like to enter into a 2-year contract with Chmura Economics & Analytics to access their JobsEQ platform. This software will replace others that we currently use whose contracts are coming up for renewal. JobsEQ will allow staff to easily understand and analyze data on local demographics, industries, occupations, wages, and more. The contract for two years will be \$22,000 and will need board approval.

NEWS

Program & Service Updates

Development Team Grow | Kylee Nichols has accepted the position of Development Specialist. Nichols is a native of Morgan County and a recent graduate of the University of Michigan with a Master's degree in Environmental Policy and Planning. Her primary focus will be assisting communities access federal and state funding for energy efficiency and resiliency projects. Her first day will be Feb. 20. We're excited to bring her onboard!

US House Takes up FY2024 ARC Funding | On Jan. 18, the House and the Senate approved a new continuing resolution that will avoid a government shut-down when the current continuing resolution expired on Jan. 19. The measure will extend government operations until March 1 for those agencies, such as ARC, whose appropriations expire tomorrow and until March 8 for those agencies whose appropriations are slated to expire on February 2. The goal is to provide additional time for negotiators to work out details on the regular full-year appropriation bills for government agencies.

Buckeye Hills Development Selected for NDIA Trailblazer Award | Buckeye Hills Regional Council was named one of 47 communities as National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) 2023 Digital Inclusion Trailblazers. These recognize the efforts of local governments to close the digital divide. These communities span 23 states, and demonstrate the important role municipal, county, and regional governments have in digital inclusion. Sam Miller and Emma Yeager will represent BHRC at the Net Inclusion conference in Philadelphia February 13-15, 2024, where we will be recognized as Digital Inclusion Trailblazers.

Mapping a Pathway to Successfully Access New All Ohio Future Fund Opportunities | In anticipation of the launch of the new All Ohio Future Fund, Bricker Graydon has put together a checklist to help communities, economic development organizations, and private developers prepare for the details of the fund's deployment, available at bricker.com/insights-resources/publications/mapping-a-pathway-to-successfully-access-new-all-ohio-future-fund-opportunities. The Ohio Department of Development will be issuing guidelines for the \$750 million All Ohio Future Fund soon.

STAFF UPDATES

- **Michelle Hyer has worked regularly on the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) program since Ryan Collins left.** Michelle has also been working with staff on the Ohio Public Works Commission infrastructure program and Community Development Block Grant programs. She has also stayed active with the team on the Appalachian Community Grant Program.

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- **Brad Peoples** has been working with OneOhio Region 12 to revise bylaws and continue preparing the committee for when funding is available.
- **Jada Riley** has been working on the CEDS rewrite and preparing for the workshops and advisory group meeting.
- **Emma Yeager** has been working with Washington and Meigs counties as grantees on the ARC ARISE Connect Humanity project. We researched and completed the demographics sections of their checklists for the project. She applied for Woodsfield Wastewater and Treatment Plant for the Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Grant. Currently, she's working on creating a team to apply for the Appalachian Gateway Communities Initiative through ARC.

CONTACT: Sam Miller, Development Director | smiller@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1028

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BUCKEYE HILLS FORWARD

A REGIONAL ECONOMIC PLAN

Join us for a community workshop near you February 13 through March 7

What does the future hold for Southeast Ohio? What does economic prosperity and resilience look like for those who live here? Buckeye Hills Regional Council is hosting a series of community workshops on these topics and more in February and March 2024. Each Buckeye Hills Forward workshop will provide the opportunity for individuals, local officials, private industry, and other stakeholders to have meaningful conversations about efforts that best serve economic development and improve the quality of life in our region.

Morgan County

February 13, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Twin City Opera House
15 West Main Street
McConnelsville, OH 43756

Meigs County

February 15, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

The Blakeslee Center
100 Blakeslee Drive
Middleport, OH 45760

Athens County

February 20, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Ohio University Innovation Center
340 West State Street, Room 103
Athens, OH 45701

Hocking County

February 22, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Logan Theater
86 East Main Street
Logan, OH 43138

Perry County

February 26, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Perry County Job & Family Services
5250 State Route 37 East
New Lexington, OH 43764

Monroe County

February 29, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Generations Complex
47115 Black Walnut Parkway
Woodsfield, OH 43797

Noble County

March 4, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

OSU Extension
46049 Marietta Road, Suite 2
Caldwell, OH 43724

Washington County

March 7, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Buckeye Hills Regional Council
1400 Pike Street
Marietta, OH 45750

REGISTER & TAKE THE SURVEY:



BUCKEYEHILLS.ORG/FORWARD





BUCKEYE HILLS FORWARD: A Regional Economic Plan

Buckeye Hills Forward Advisory Committee

Join us as we embark on reenvisioning our comprehensive economic development strategy. Your input will allow us to achieve success and also provide a platform for you to actively shape the future of our region. Your unique perspective and commitment to our region will undoubtedly enrich our discussions and decision-making processes.



JOIN US

February 1

April 25

August 29

December 12

12:00 pm - 2:00 pm

Lunch will be provided

Buckeye Hills
Regional Council
1400 Pike Street
Marietta, OH 45750

Buckeye Hills Forward Advisory Group 2024 Roster

Name	Email	Organization
Jason Jolley	jolleyg1@ohio.edu	Voinovich School – Ohio Univ.
Faith Knutsen	knutsenf@ohio.edu	Voinovich School – Ohio Univ.
Adam Kody	AdamK@acenetworks.org	ACENET
Tasha Werry	twerry@buildingbridgestocareers.org	Building Bridges to Careers
Joy Evangelista	jdavis@hockingcountycic.com	Hocking County CIC
Gwynn Stewart	stewart.1818@osu.edu	OSU Extension – Noble
Jesse Roush	jesse@seohioport.com	SE Ohio Port Authority
Sarah Arnold	sarah@ohiose.com	OhioSE
Jen Seifert	jen@saopseoh.org	Survivor Advocacy Outreach Programs
Tony Huffman	thuffman@thecareercenter.net	Wash. County Career Center
Alyssa Stephens	stephens.967@osu.edu	OSU Extension – Monroe
Megan Riddlebarger	mriddlebarger@coadinc.org	COAD
Bailey Venzin	bailey@hockinghillschamber.com	Hocking Hills Chamber
Ryan Collins	ryan@digitalinclusion.org	NDIA
Justin Denius	justin.denius@gozeps.org	Noble Local School District
Jeff Slack	administrator@rosevilleoh.com	Village of Roseville
Luann Cooperrider	jlc@perrycountycourt.com	Thornville Economic Development
Jason Hamman	jason@hammanconsulting.com	Monroe County Port Authority
Shannon Wells	shannon.wells@morgancounty-oh.gov	Morgan County Econ. Dev.
Fred Redfern	fredredfern@yahoo.com	Village of Crooksville
Jessie Powers	jessie@orcaohio.com	ORCA
Greg Gifford	ggifford@caldwell.k12.oh.us	Caldwell Local School District
Daniel Leffingwell	dleffingwell1@wscc.edu	Washington State Community College
Amy Grove	acgrove.68@gmail.com	Retired/Ohio's Winding Road
Brian Howard	bhoward@hrs.org	Health Recovery Services
Perry Varnadoe	perryvarnadoe@icloud.com	Meigs County Economic Dev.
Mollie Fitzgerald	mollie@athenscountyohedc.com	ACEDC/Athens Port Authority



MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

December 2, 2023 through February 2, 2024

RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS

Carrie Kempton	Care Management Coordinator	1/5/24
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RETIREMENTS

Theresa Whitlatch	Care Management Coordinator	1/31/24
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NEW HIRES

Cynthia Young	Administrative Assistant	12/4/24
Robert Collins	Care Management Coordinator	12/4/24
Jamie Fabian	Information & Assistance Specialist	12/11/24
Aaron Martin	Program Assistant	1/2/24
Eric Wade	Senior Planner	1/2/24
Megan Coy	Care Management Coordinator	1/8/24

PROMOTIONS

None

TRANSFERS

None

NEWS

Program & Service Updates

- **Regional Coordinated Plan for Transportation** | BHRC is working with ODOT and the county mobility managers to develop the regional plan.
- **Opportunity Appalachia** | Webinar is being held February 27 @ 2:00 pm.
- **Surface Transportation Block Grant Funds** | Applications are due February 20, 2024 4pm submission can be made through the BHRC website.

Staff Updates

- **Melissa Zoller** | Has been working with the newly hired Senior Planner Eric Wade. She and Kate met with Hocking County Commissioner about upcoming demo grant submission. She and Christa are developing a pathway regional mobility plan. Entered into a contract with SIXMO for resiliency in River villages architectural and structural assessments. The application deadline was January 19th more information will be available at the next executive committee meeting. She attended the ODOT open house for the US 33 Ravenswood connector in Pomeroy. RTPO advisory committee held a meeting and opened the application process for rounds 3 & 4 of the surface transportation block grant. Those applications are open to the public and are due February 20th.
- **Kate Dunn** | Has been working on Brownfields and Demolition programming throughout the region and on completing data requests for Buckeye Hills related reports. Kate has also been working with the Perry County BRECC Action Challenge team cohort to finish up the Economic Diversification study ahead of the NACO BRECC Action Challenge capstone event on February 9th in Washington D.C. Opportunity Appalachia held their launch webinar on January 18th and the Ohio Opportunity Appalachia launch webinar will be held on February 27th at 2:00pm. This signals the opening of the next round of Opportunity Appalachia funding and all interested applicants should inquire with Katy Farber, VP at OhioSE for more information.
- **Eric Wade** | Started with Buckeye Hills on January 2, 2024. He has already been engaged with projects such as Impediment Analysis, Buckeye Hills Forward, LRTP, and Brownfield/Demolition(s). Eric has also become the lead on multiple GIS projects for both the agency and external stakeholders.
- **Christa Myers** | Has met with ODOT staff and other regional coordinators to learn more about her regional coordination role. She has planned a regional Mobility Managers meeting at BHRC, which was attended by all mobility managers and many of their supervisors. She has attended 6/8 counties Transportation Advisory Council meetings (by end of January). She is also scheduling individual meetings with region 8 mobility teams in their communities and will do this with transit agencies too. With the help of the communications team at BHRC and other R8 agencies, she plans to produce a semiannual newsletter focusing on mobility and transportation providers. She is supporting Ohio Public Transit Association's upcoming Ohio Loves Transit week and OLT Legislative Day activities for Region 8. She has started to supervise the BHRC Mobility Management team of Julia Hinzman and Kelly Isaly at the beginning of January.
- **Kelly Isaly & Julia Hinzman** | Were able to expend the 2023 Capital Cost of Contracting grant in the amount of \$156,000. This resulted in 1,960 rides in Monroe and Washington counties. Fourth quarter reporting has been submitted to ODOT for Mobility Management. Completed OTAP training on disability awareness, defensive driving, and customer service and reasonable suspicion. They have participated in Region 8

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Mobility meeting in Marietta. They have begun to mentor a new mobility manager out of Pike County. They are working with other mobility managers to prepare for Legislative Day in Columbus on February 13th to advocate on behalf of our communities to District Representatives and Senators. They are serving on the committee preparing for Mobility Conference in May in Newark, OH. Julia has completed event coordinator training for CarFit, Kelly is looking to complete the second half of the technician training.

CONTACT: Melissa Zoller, Planning Director | mzoller@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1027

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**RATIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE REQUEST
APPROVED BY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OFFICERS**

January 4, 2024

Insurance

\$10,577.00

Schwendeman Agency, Inc.

- Annual Renewal of Cyber Insurance

Funding Source: Indirect

\$10,577.00

Total Request



A RESOLUTION GRANTING PERMISSION TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH CHMURA ECONOMICS & ANALYTICS

Resolution # 2024 02-02

Whereas, Buckeye Hills Regional Council has an obligation as an Economic Development District to follow and analyze data on local demographics, industries, occupations and wages; and

Whereas, Buckeye Hills Regional Council currently uses multiple digital tools to access this information to inform our plans such as the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Long-Range Transportation Plan; and

Whereas, Buckeye Hills Regional Council would like to streamline the necessary tools to retrieve this data into one tool called JobsEQ; and

Whereas, Chmura Economics & Analytics owns and operates JobsEQ platform and has shown Buckeye Hills Regional Council the efficiency of this tool; and

Whereas, pursuing another round of request for proposals solicitation would delay this project from the designated completion date of March 2022; and

Whereas, Chmura Economics & Analytics has offered Buckeye Hills Regional Council a contract for 2 years in the amount of \$22,000; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY BUCKEYE HILLS REGIONAL COUNCIL Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director, is authorized to enter into a current contract with Chmura Economics & Analytics for 2 years in the amount of \$22,000.

Passed on this second day of February 2024.

Lenny Eliason, President

Ron Moore, Vice President

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **Buckeye Hills Forward Workshops to Plan for the Future of Southeast Ohio** | What does the future hold for Southeast Ohio? What do economic prosperity and resilience look like for those who live here? Buckeye Hills Regional Council is hosting a series of community conversations on these topics and more this February and March. These workshops will provide an opportunity for individuals, local officials, private industry, and other stakeholders to have meaningful conversations about efforts that best serve economic development and improve quality of life. Visit buckeyehills.org/forward to learn more and register for a community workshop near you. A flyer with dates and locations is included in your board packet.
- **US DOT Awards \$8.7 Million to Improve Safety and River Freight Movement on Ohio River** | The U.S. Department of Transportation awarded \$8.7 million to the Ohio Department of Transportation and the Washington County Engineer's Office for the "Logistics Lane" project. The project will make State Route 7 safer for drivers by constructing a grade-separated crossing for County Road 10 and other safety improvements to SR 7 to prevent accidents between traffic on the highway and trucks that load and unload barges on the Ohio River and serve other businesses in the corridor. The project will also improve the Central Ohio River Business Association's Central Ohio River Information System to facilitate better freight movement on barges and trucks along the river, and it will prepare the corridor for future smart mobility improvements. The funding comes as part of a larger package of \$4.9 billion in grants awarded to 37 projects across the U.S. via the federal administration's Investing in America initiative. The Logistics Lane project is being funded through the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant program, one of two grant programs handling these funds.
- **Roger Wright Recognized as County Engineer of the Year** | Congratulations to Washington County Engineer Roger Wright! Wright has been named Engineer of the Year by a vote of his peers in the County Engineers Association of Ohio. He received the award last Thursday in Columbus at the three-day joint Winter Conference of the 88-county engineers' group and the County Commissioners Association of Ohio. Wright, who earned his Professional Engineer and Professional Surveyor degrees at Ohio University, has worked in the Washington County Engineer's office since 1999 and has served as County Engineer for 11 years. Wright also serves on the Buckeye Hills Regional Transportation Planning Organization Committee and the District 18 Ohio Public Works Commission Integrating and Executive committees.
- **District 18 Natural Resources Assistance Council Seeking Nominations** | Nominations to serve on the District 18 Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC), will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. **February 9**. District 18 includes Athens, Belmont, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, and Washington Counties in Ohio. There is one vacant position for a local government representative to be filled on the NRAC committee. For details and requirements, please see the call for nominations at buckeyehills.org/news. Questions can be directed to Brad Peoples, at bpeoples@buckeyehills.org or 740-376-7662.
- **February 13 Meeting on U.S. 33 Expansion** | A total of 25.57 miles of U.S. 33 in Athens and Meigs Counties will be converted from a two-lane highway to a four-lane, divided highway. These are the last remaining two-lane segments of U.S. 33 between Columbus and the Ohio River. U.S. 33 is the direct route between Central Ohio and the southeastern U.S. via a connection with Interstate 77. It is an emerging freight corridor, with trucks making up an increasing percentage of the average daily traffic. The Ohio Department of Transportation is hosting a pair of open house public meetings to present the proposed improvements, answer questions, and gather feedback to assist in project decision-making. The first was on January 22 in Pomeroy. The second will be at the **Athens Community Center on February 13, 4:30-6:30 p.m.** Comments can be left on the project webpage

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(transportation.ohio.gov/projects/mega-projects/mega-projects/33-expansion) by February 5. Comments may also be submitted via email, phone, or mail to:

John Coen, P.E.
ODOT District 10 Design Engineer
338 Muskingum Drive
Marietta, Ohio 45750
Phone: (740) 568-3966
Email: John.Coen@dot.ohio.gov

- **Surface Transportation Block Grant Deadline Extended to February 20** | The application deadline for local Surface Transportation Block Grant projects has been extended to **February 20**. Eligible applicants must be a public agency within the BHRC RTPO counties of Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Morgan, Monroe, Noble, Perry, and portions of Washington legally allowed to enter a contract with ODOT. Non-profit organizations, school districts, and non-public organizations are not eligible applicants but may coordinate/partner with an eligible applicant. The sponsoring agency assumes responsibility for project execution and completion. The sponsoring agency must own, hold an easement, or acquire the land on which the project is located. The sponsoring agency must approve a resolution or other legislation committing the agency to the project. The program guidelines and application are available at buckeyehills.org/transportation-planning.
- **ARC Seeks Local Government Applicants for No-Cost Training Program, Access to Funding** | The Appalachian Regional Commission's READY Local Governments program is offering a nine-week training program, expert guidance, and funding opportunities to help local governments in the Appalachian Region better apply for, manage, and implement federal funding. Applications are **due February 29**. Visit: arc.gov/ready/localgovs to learn more.
- **Brownfield Remediation Program Applications Due April 1** | The Ohio Department of Development has announced that nearly \$175 million in Brownfield Remediation Program grant funding is now available to help communities clean up contaminated properties and prepare them for new development opportunities. This new round of funding was made possible with the support of the Ohio General Assembly in the most recent biennium budget bill, House Bill 33. As required by the bill, each county will have access to a \$1 million set aside, with the remaining funds awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Projects that assess or remediate brownfield properties are eligible for funding. Each county has designated a lead entity to apply for funding on behalf of the county. Entities that contributed to the contamination of the properties are not eligible to apply. Applications are now being accepted until 11:59 p.m. on **April 1**. Visit development.ohio.gov/community/redevelopment/brownfield-remediation-program for more information.
- **Mayor Patterson Testifies Before Senate Banking, Housing, & Urban Affairs Committee** | Athens Mayor and BHRC Executive Committee member Steve Patterson testified on January 26 before the U.S. Senate Banking, Housing, & Urban Affairs Committee Majority Committee, chaired by Sen. Sherrod Brown, about the critical need to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program. A recording of his testimony is available on the National League of Cities YouTube channel.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

- **The Ridges** | The New Community Authority continues work with Ohio University on the surveying and package to propose the land transfer to the State of Ohio. The City of Athens has simultaneously begun prioritizing and seeking funding for the infrastructure expansions needed.
- **Appalachian Community Grant Program Updates** | The applications were submitted December 8 and are being reviewed by ODOD and GOA for recommendation to the State Controlling Board. We have been advised this *Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio*.
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will happen at one of the two meetings in March. We continue to work with Planners, our communities and lead applicants to move projects along through design. The philosophy taken by BHRC has been beneficial as we have used the TA funds awarded to supplement targeted activities such as building assessments, legal services for title search and contracts, land survey and geotechnical activities. We expect by the end of next week all funds from the \$1,625,000.00 Technical Assistance Grant awarded to BHRC will be allocated. This has been accomplished in less than a year and has truly been an “all-hands-on-deck” activity in our Development, Planning, Fiscal, and Communications divisions to support the goals of our communities. As we transition from the application timeframe to implementation, our development staff is continuing their efforts. Projects that did not make it into an application have been assigned a Development Specialist to seek additional funding and continue project development. After the awards are announced in March, those who are not funded will also be assigned accordingly. The BHRC team partnered with OVRDC, OUGVS, and the MPP to apply for Thriving Communities. BHRC is currently considering representing a corridor from Seneca Lake in Noble County to Hocking Hills in Hocking County to connect nearly a dozen state parks and national forest areas for a planning effort to capitalize on a gateway initiative with hopes of identifying funding for many projects created during ACGP efforts. We hope many of your communities have been taking advantage and applying for programs that have been identified in the Member and Partner Update as they are available, such as Brightening Ohio Communities, Clean Ohio, Surface Transportation, etc.

- **Clean Energy Initiatives** | BHRC has been working with Ohio EPA on their planning efforts to identify target sectors and potential projects around the Climate Pollution Reduction Program. Over the past few months, several community stakeholders have partnered with businesses and industries on potential projects, and our region is set for some incredible potential. One of these early wins received one of only two awards in Ohio: The Sustainable Ohio Public Energy Council was awarded \$12,545,691.00 to upgrade infrastructures and install EV chargers from Dayton eastward to Athens, with many locations in between. Several other projects are in development currently, including 3-D printed houses using coal byproducts, multi-modal transportation with solar energy components, the generation of electricity with a mechanism that uses simple lever action and the weight of water, heating and modulating the flow of electricity and heat with an unrelated commercial business operation while creating the byproduct of heating a greenhouse to grow fresh food. Many genuinely innovative ideas and more funding programs for this type of innovation are coming. The focus of BHRC is to convene par partners, connect them to resources and one another as their projects benefit them, and work with regional partners to bridge the gap from our economies that are historically reliant on coal to be able to find value in a transitioned economy using similar skill sets and coal byproducts, etc. To learn more, please attend the Ohio EPAs webinar on February 21 at 10:30am. Register at:

https://uso2web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_zcRp14buRlCkKpDZOzZPyA#/registration

STATE UPDATES

- **Brian Chavez Selected to Replace Sen. Frank Hoagland** | The Ohio Senate announced late Monday that Brian Chavez, of Marietta, has been selected to fill the 30th District seat of former Sen. Frank Hoagland, who resigned effective December 1. Chavez is the manager and owner of Reno Oil & Gas, Inc., which manages the drilling and field maintenance of more than 450 conventional gas and oil wells. He is also the owner of Chavez Well Service, LLC., and the CEO of Deeprock Disposal Solutions, LLC. He was sworn in on Wednesday, December 6. The 30th District covers Washington, Athens, Belmont, Meigs, Morgan, Monroe, Noble, Harrison, and Jefferson counties, as well as a portion of Guernsey County. Chavez can be reached at: Senate Building, Ground Floor, 1 Capitol Square, Columbus, OH 43215; by phone at 614-466-6508; by email at <mailto:Chavez@OhioSenate.gov>; or online at ohiosenate.gov/brian-m-chavez.
- **Ohio BEAD Challenge Portal Live** | BroadbandOhio has announced the kick-off of the Ohio Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program Challenge Process. The goal of the BEAD Challenge Process is to finalize the map that will be used for Ohio’s BEAD subgrantee selection process, which is expected to begin in Q2 2024.

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The map of eligible locations for the Challenge Process is published in the challenge portal and at broadband.ohio.gov/explore-broadband/bead-challenge-process. Service providers, state and local government members, and nonprofit representatives can register at broadbandregister.ohio.gov/register/bead. Individuals can also participate in this process by taking a speed test and responding to a survey about their internet connectivity at broadbandregister.ohio.gov. Broadband Ohio will host a webinar about the challenge process on **February 14 at 2:00 p.m.**

- **February 8: OEPA Water Supply Revolving Loan Account Program Webinar** | OEPA staff will host a webinar on February 8 at 1:30 p.m. to review program updates and what's new for the Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) in program year 2025. The WSRLA offers low-interest loan funds for a wide range of public drinking water system needs. The webinar provides an update on activities and priorities that may be new or revised for the upcoming program year, including project evaluations for principal forgiveness and readiness-to-proceed. Also, information regarding the project nomination process for planning, design, and/or construction projects seeking funds during the 2025 program cycle will be reviewed. Register at register.gotowebinar.com/register/208110106944696156.
- **Development Announces Availability of Nearly \$12 Million in Grants to Drive Coal Innovation** | The Ohio Department of Development announced the availability of nearly \$12 million in grant funding dedicated to advancing innovation in coal technologies, fostering economic growth, job creation, and environmental sustainability across the state. The funding is available through the Ohio Coal Research and Development Program, which supports projects aimed at modernizing the use of Ohio coal through innovative technologies and processes such as rare earth element extractions for manufacturing, alternate uses for coal waste, and even the conversion of coal into high-quality materials for housing construction. This new round of funding was made possible with support from the Ohio General Assembly in the most recent capital budget. Funding opportunities for this grant program range from \$100,000 to a maximum award of \$5 million, with priority given to "project-ready" applications. All projects are required to be completed within either 12 or 24 months. Visit development.ohio.gov/community/economic-development/ohio-coal-research-development-program for program guidelines. Applications are due March 15.
- **House Passes Virtual Meetings Bill** | In a 73-3 vote, the House passed a plan (HB 257) authorizing certain public bodies to meet virtually. The bill specifies which bodies are excluded from virtual participation, including the General Assembly and its committees and subcommittees, and specific circumstances that require in-person meetings. The bill moves on to the Senate for consideration. If passed and signed, the Ohio Attorney General's Office will post updated open meeting guidance to its website and update future versions of the online Ohio Sunshine Laws manual and resources. BHRC will continue to share updates as the bill progresses.
- **Governor DeWine Announces Details of New Housing Tax Credits and Grants** | On December 12, Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, and Ohio Department of Development Director Lydia Mihalik released official program guidelines for the new \$150 million Welcome Home Ohio program, developed to improve access to affordable housing across the state. The program will provide \$100 million in grants over the course of the biennium for landbanks to purchase, rehabilitate, or build qualifying residential properties for income-eligible Ohioans. Additionally, \$50 million in nonrefundable tax credits will be made available to landbanks and eligible developers over the biennium for qualifying rehabs and new construction once a property is sold. **The grant application period will close at 11:59 p.m. February 9, 2024**, with rolling applications accepted from February 12 to May 31, as funds are available. Tax credit applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until funds are expended. Program information and complete guidelines can be found at development.ohio.gov/community/redevelopment/welcomehome.
- **Governor DeWine Announces Expansion of H2Ohio** | Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced the expansion of H2Ohio, the state's comprehensive, data-driven strategy to improve water quality throughout Ohio. Since launching in 2019, H2Ohio has primarily focused on water infrastructure replacement in low-income areas, statewide wetland creation, and the reduction of algal-bloom-causing agricultural runoff into Lake Erie. The new H2Ohio Rivers program will expand the initiative's overall goals to also focus on improving and maintaining the health of Ohio's large rivers. The expansion of H2Ohio is taking place with support from the Ohio General Assembly, which allotted approximately \$270 million in funding to H2Ohio in the state's current operating budget. Of the total funds, around \$47 million is dedicated to the H2Ohio Rivers program over the biennium to support the work of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), Ohio Department of Natural Resources

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(ODNR), Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA), and various local partners to examine a variety of issues impacting river health. These issues include, but are not limited to:

- PFAS River Contamination Studies (including the Hocking and Muskingum rivers)
- Dam Removal and Mussel Studies (statewide)
- Land Conservation and Riparian Buffers for Farmers

Read the full announcement at h2.ohio.gov.

- **Governor DeWine Announces Guidelines for \$750 Million All Ohio Future Fund** | Ohio Governor Mike DeWine, Lt. Governor Jon Husted, and Ohio Department of Development Director Lydia Mihalik recently announced details of the new All Ohio Future Fund, which will provide \$750 million to local communities to help increase the state's inventory of project-ready economic development sites. Funding awarded through the All Ohio Future Fund will be used toward one-time local infrastructure costs that are necessary to prepare sites for future economic development projects. The Ohio Department of Development will administer the program in coordination with the Office of Budget and Management. The program application will open in early 2024 to local government entities, including counties, cities, villages, townships, port authorities, community improvement corporations, transportation improvement districts, land banks, nonprofit organizations, and for-profit organizations willing to develop project-ready sites. Applications will be received and awarded on a rolling basis. Awardees will be expected to find site occupants within five years. Eligible costs include public roadwork, water and wastewater infrastructure, design and engineering, demolition, wetland mitigation, utility gap funding, and one-time site enhancements. Funding will primarily come in the form of 0% interest loans that may be partially forgivable. Details of the program are available at development.ohio.gov/community/economic-development/all-ohio-future-fund.
- **Ohio Senate Select Committee on Housing Regional Hearing Recording Available** | The recording of the December 4 Senate Select Committee on Housing hearing that took place at Washington State Community College is now available online at ohiochannel.org/collections/ohio-senate-select-committee-on-housing. Thanks to BHRC Executive Committee members Washington County Commissioner Kevin Ritter and Athens Mayor Steve Patterson for attending and speaking before the committee. They were joined by several partners and voices from across the region. Their testimony can be downloaded from ohiosenate.gov/committees/select-committee-on-housing/meetings/cmte_s_housing_1_2023-12-04-1000_902.

FEDERAL UPDATES

- **Congress Sets New March Deadlines for FY 2024 Funding** | Congress passed, and President Biden signed into law, a short-term continuing resolution (CR) that sets new deadlines in March for a final FY 2024 funding package. This is the third CR of the FY 2024 appropriations process, and like the prior CR, it sets two funding deadlines: March 1 and March 8, with the latter date being the deadline for Labor/HHS funding.
- **Affordable Connectivity Program Ending** | The Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, is set to run out of funding this spring. Without additional Congressional appropriations for the program, no new ACP enrollments will be accepted after February 7, and program funding will run dry in April. Internet service providers have been instructed by the FCC to begin notifying customers of the discontinuation of the program. Through the ACP, more than 1.1 million Ohio households have received a discount of up to \$30 per month on their internet service bills. The ACP also provides eligible households a one-time discount of up to \$100 to purchase a laptop, desktop or tablet if the household contributes between \$10-\$50 to the purchase price. On January 10, U.S. Senators Vance and Welch introduced a bi-partisan bill to extend the program. The companion, House and Senate bills, are currently in their respective appropriations committees.
- **USDA Rural Business Development Grant Applications Due February 28** | The purpose of the program is to promote economic development and job creation projects through the awarding of grant funds to eligible entities. Applications will compete in two separate categories, business opportunity grants, and business enterprise grants, for use in funding various business and community projects that serve rural areas. Grants may be made to a public body/government entity or a nonprofit entity primarily serving rural areas. There is no cost-sharing requirement. Program guidelines are available at www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/business-programs/rural-business-development-grants.
- **USFS Eastern Region Seeking Recreation Advisory Committee Members** | The USDA Forest Service's Eastern Region is seeking volunteer committee members to advise the agency on recreation fee changes at national forests throughout the northeastern United States. Recreation RACs make recommendations on implementing or eliminating

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standard amenity fees, expanded amenity fees, and non-commercial individual special recreation permit fees; expanding or limiting the recreation fee program; and increasing or decreasing fee levels. Currently, the Eastern Region does not have a functioning RRAC. Nomination packets and details are available at www.fs.usda.gov/main/r9/workingtogether/advisorycommittees or by contacting Krystal Fleeger, Regional Recreation Fees & Reservations Coordinator by e-mail: sm.fs.r9_rrac@usda.gov. **Nominations are due March 1.**

- **ARC INSPIRE Letters of Intent Due March 8** | Applications are now available for the Appalachian Regional Commission's Investments Supporting Partnerships In Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative. Interested projects should prioritize recovery-focused programs for substance-use disorder that will lead to workforce entry or re-entry. Ohio applicants are encouraged to work with their Local Development Districts to prepare their applications. INSPIRE Timeline:
 - Application portal opens: January 22
 - Virtual **pre-application workshop**: February 8
 - Letters of Intent due: March 8
 - Awards: Fall 2024

Program details are available at arc.gov/grants-and-opportunities/sud/inspire-initiative-application-information/

UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS:

- **February 9, 10:00 a.m. – OneOhio Region 12** | John McIntire Library, Zanesville
- **February 13, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Morgan County** | Twin City Opera House, McConnelsville
- **February 14, 9:00 a.m. – Monroe County Transportation Advisory Committee** | The Generations Complex, Woodsfield
- **February 15, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Meigs County** | The Blakeslee Center, Middleport
- **February 20, 10:00 a.m. – Washington County Transportation Advisory Committee** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta
- **February 20, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Athens County** | OU Innovation Center, Athens
- **February 22, 10:00 a.m. – Noble County Transportation Advisory Committee** | Allwell Behavioral Health Services, Caldwell
- **February 22, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Hocking County** | Logan Theater, Logan
- **February 26, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Perry County** | Perry County JFS, New Lexington
- **February 28, 10:00 a.m. – Aging & Health Regional Advisory Council** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta
- **February 29, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Monroe County** | The Generations Complex, Woodsfield
- **March 1, 11:30 a.m. – BHRC Executive Committee** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta
- **March 4, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Noble County** | OSU Extension, Caldwell
- **March 7, 6:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward: Washington County** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta

CONTACT INFO: Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director

cschmelzenbach@buckeyehills.org | 740-376-1034

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LOCAL FUNDING DATES TO REMEMBER

2024

JANUARY							FEBRUARY							MARCH							APRIL						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3						1	2		1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	28	29	30				
													31														

MAY							JUNE							JULY							AUGUST						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4							1		1	2	3	4	5	6					1	2	3
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
26	27	28	29	30	31		23	24	25	26	27	28	29	28	29	30	31				25	26	27	28	29	30	31
							30																				

SEPTEMBER							OCTOBER							NOVEMBER							DECEMBER						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			1	2	3	4	5						1	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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29	30						27	28	29	30	31			24	25	26	27	28	29	30	29	30	31				

LOCAL DATES TO REMEMBER

- Jan. 5 Safe Routes to School Program (SRTS) funding application opens
- Jan. 31 Last day to submit TAP funding application
- Jan. 31 Last day to submit Systemic Safety funding application to Central Office*
- Mar. 1 Last day to submit SRTS funding application
- Mar. 31 Last day to submit Formal Safety funding application to Central Office*
- May 1 On-line application period for Small City Program opens
- Jun. 15 Last day to submit Small City funding application
- Jul. 1 On-line application period for Municipal Bridge opens
- Aug. 15 Last day to submit Municipal Bridge funding application
- Aug. 31 Last day to submit Formal Safety funding application to Central Office*
- Sep. 1 On-line application period for Local Major Bridge Program opens
- Oct. 1 On-line application period for TAP opens
- Oct. 15 Last day to submit Local Major Bridge funding application
- Nov. 30 Last day to submit TAP funding application

HOLIDAYS

- Jan. 1 New Year's Day
- Jan. 15 MLK Jr. Day
- Feb. 19 President's Day
- Mar. 31 Easter
- May 27 Memorial Day
- Jun. 19 Juneteenth
- Jul. 4 Independence Day
- Sep. 2 Labor Day
- Oct. 14 Columbus Day
- Nov. 11 Veteran's Day
- Nov. 28 Thanksgiving Day
- Dec. 25 Christmas Day

*Local governments must coordinate with their respective District Safety Staff at least six (6) weeks in advance of the deadline of the Safety funding applications



READY Local Governments Training Program

The *READY Local Governments Training Program* helps local government leaders develop the skills needed to implement federally-funded projects in Appalachian communities. Learn about:

- Project Identification, Research, and Planning
- The Grant Lifecycle
- Federal Grant Application Development
- Community Engagement
- Federal Grant Regulations and Compliance
- Federal Grant Financial and Risk Management

After completing nine weeks of virtual training in spring 2024, participants can apply for up to \$50,000 in funding (no match required) to implement capacity-building projects that will help them better serve communities.

**Apply by February 29
for training and
funding opportunities!**



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