



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

AUGUST 2, 2024

Buckeye Hills Regional Council

### AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order** | Lenny Eliason, President
- II. **Roll Call** | Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary
- III. **Consent Agenda** | Lenny Eliason, President **TAB #1**
- IV. **Legislator and Partner Agency Updates**
- V. **Request for Approval of Expenditure** | Denise Keyes, Fiscal Director **TAB #2**
- VI. **US EPA Community Change Grant** | Chasity Schmelzenbach
- VII. **Executive Director Report** | Chasity Schmelzenbach **TAB #3**
- VIII. **Citizen Participation**
- IX. **Other Business**
- X. **Adjournment**

---

**THE NEXT MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 6, 2024.**

**Minutes of the June 7, 2024  
Buckeye Hills Regional Council Executive Committee Meeting**

The Buckeye Hills Regional Council (BHRC) Executive Committee meeting was held June 7, 2024. The meeting was held at Buckeye Hills, Marietta, Ohio.

In attendance were:

<b>OFFICERS:</b>	Ron Moore, Vice President James Booth, Treasurer	Morgan County (Private Sector) Washington County
<b>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:</b>	Jason D'Onofrio Jeff Dickerson Allen Fraley Brian Howard Mick Schumacher Ken Stewart Adam Shriver	Hocking County Hocking County (Private Sector) Noble County Meigs County Monroe County Alternate Monroe County (Private Sector) Morgan County
<b>GENERAL POLICY COUNCIL:</b>	Kevin Ritter	Washington County
<b>GUESTS:</b>	Kaleb Knowlton Caleb Shriver Cody Pettit Jon Hensler Ed Looman Marisa Vetual Janelle Lee	Office of U.S. Senator Brown Office of U.S. Senator Vance Office of Ohio Treasurer Sprague ODOT, Office of Jobs & Commerce OhioSE OhioSE MAGNET
<b>STAFF:</b>	Jen Huck Denise Keyes Angie Lawrence Jamie Lewis Kylee Nichols Aaron Martin Christa Myers Kimy Porter Jenny Simmons Drew Tanner Eric Wade Jennifer Westfall Emma Yeager Melissa Zoller	Fiscal Assistant Fiscal Director HR & Payroll Manager IT Director Development Specialist Program Assistant Transportation Planning Manager Fiscal Assistant Executive Assistant Communications Director Senior Planner Aging & Health Director Development Specialist II Planning Director

**CALL TO ORDER**

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

**ROLE CALL**

James Booth, Treasurer, conducted roll call.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

James Booth moved to approve the consent agenda which included the minutes from the May 3, 2024 meeting; Statement of Activities; Administrative Expense YTD; Quarterly Budget Adjustments; Aging and Disability Programs Services and Funding Report for period July 1, 2023 through April 30, 2024, and Division and Director's Reports. Allen Fraley seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

### **THE MANUFACTURING ADVOCACY & GROWTH NETWORK (MAGNET)**

Janelle Lee, Director of Client Engagement, MAGNET provided information to the members on the CleanEnergy Manufacturing in Appalachia (CEMA) initiative which provides technical assistance and business support to small and medium manufacturers and enterprises.

### **BHRC SECTION 125 PREMIUM ONLY PLAN**

Brian Howard moved to approve the BHRC Section 125 Premium Only Plan effective July 1, 2024. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

### **LEGISLATIVE & PARTNER AGENCY UPDATES**

Kaleb Knowlton, Office of U.S. Senator Brown, provided updates to the committee.  
Cody Pettit, Office of Ohio Treasurer Sprague, provided updates to the committee.  
Caleb Shriver, Office of U.S. Senator Vance, provided updates to the committee.  
Marisa Vetual, OhioSE, introduced herself to the committee.  
Jon Hensler, ODOT, Office of Jobs & Commerce  
Ed Looman, OhioSE, provided updates to the committee.

### **RATIFICATION OF EXPENDITURES REQUEST**

Allen Fraley moved to approve the Ratification of Expenditures Request presented by Denise Keyes, Fiscal Director, in the amount of \$97,634.14 for laptops and software. Adam Shriver seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

### **PLANNING DIVISION REPORT**

Adam Shriver moved to approve the annual review of the Coordinated Transportation Plan presented by Melissa Zoller, Planner Director. Brian Howard seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Brian Howard moved to allow an increase in funds from \$200,000 for the Noble County Campus Connectivity Project to include additional STBG funding of \$157,359 for a total Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds of \$357,359. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

### **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT**

Melissa Zoller announced that Chasity Schmelzenbach was recently elected to the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Board of Directors and she was attending the NADO Summer Board Meeting along with President Lenny Eliason. Zoller will provide a few updates from the Executive Directors report.

Congratulations to the following counties:

- Athens and Morgan Counties for receiving the Welcome Home Ohio Awards. The Morgan County Land Reutilization Corporation will receive \$500,000 in grants to purchase five residential properties and \$150,000 in grants to rehabilitate those properties. The Athens County Land Reutilization Corporation will receive \$550,000 in grants to purchase one residential property, split into six parcels to support five new builds; \$120,000 in grants to rehabilitate four properties; and plans to utilize \$720,000 in tax credits toward the construction of eight homes.
- Monroe County for receiving ODOT Transportation Improvement District Program Award. Monroe County received \$90,000 for detailed design to stabilize the last of three landslides

that have impacted County Route 26 in Salem Township.

- Washington County for receiving 1,500,000 from the U.S. EPA to inventory sites and conduct a minimum of 25 Phase I and 12 Phase II environmental site assessments. Grant funds also will be used to develop a minimum of five cleanup plans and area-wide plans and support community engagement activities. Assessment activities will focus on the Muskingum River Industrial Park in the village of Beverly, the D.O. Business Hall Center in the city of Cambridge, and the villages of Piketon and Beaver.
- Athens and Noble Counties for receiving funding for Drinking Water Infrastructure projects; Meigs and Monroe Counties for receiving funding for Infrastructure projects; and Hocking, Morgan, and Perry Counties for receiving funding for both water and wastewater projects through Ohio BUILDS Water Infrastructure Grants – Round 6.

#### Announcements:

- Appalachian Ohio State of the Region Conference recording is now available at [sotr.ohio.edu](http://sotr.ohio.edu).
- Workforce Development Grant Opportunity for the Appalachian Region - The U.S. Department of Labor will award up to \$1.5 million to awardees to help affected communities develop local and regional workforce development solutions. These solutions must align with existing economic development strategies to create new, sustainable jobs and long-term economic vitality. Grants are intended to produce quality employment outcomes for Appalachian workers, enabling them to stay and thrive in their communities. View the grant opportunity at [grants.gov](http://grants.gov) under funding opportunity FOA-ETA-24-08. The deadline is June 20, 2024.

#### State Updates:

- HB 519 Clean Ohio Fund for Brownfield Remediation was introduced to create permanent funding for brownfield remediation via the creation of the Clean Ohio Fund.
- Property Tax Committee Chairs lay out work timeline - with the bicameral review of property taxes about two-thirds into the process, the committee's cochairs agreed in interviews that any legislation introduced would represent incremental changes rather than a comprehensive overhaul.
- Ohio Association of Foodbanks launched a new action center on HB 428 which would guarantee eligible older Ohioans at least \$50 per month in SNAP benefits, up from the current federal minimum of \$23 per month.

#### Federal Updates:

- The House & Senate Agriculture Committees released proposals for the 2024 Farm Bill. The current Farm Bill expires on Sept. 30.
- Federal Legislation to watch for older adults:
  - S.4120: Long-Term Care Workforce Support Act
  - H.R.8023: Protecting Seniors from Emergency Scans Act
  - S.4137: Improving Access to Medicare Coverage Act
- U.S. Senator Casey (D-PA) requested that the Government Accountability Office (GAO) study and produce a report about the contributions that unpaid caregivers to older adults and children, as well as others working in some other unpaid roles, make to the country's economy.

#### Upcoming Meetings and Events:

- June 26 - Aging & Health Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting
- June 27 - DriveOhio Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Meeting in Athens
- August 2 - BHRC Executive Committee Meeting
- August 16 - CarFit Event at BHRC
- August 20 - BHRC Community Development Summit
- August 28-30 - Ohio Conference on Freight

### **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

No citizens present wished to address the committee.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

The July meeting will be cancelled if there is no business to bring before the committee since it is close to the holiday. Notices will be emailed to the members.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business, James Booth moved to adjourn the meeting. Jason D'Onofrio seconded the motion. All yeas. Motion carried.

Approved By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chasity Schmelzenbach, Secretary

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

DRAFT



## **STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES** July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024

### **Year to Date Administrative Expense Detail**

Administrative Expenses for Fiscal Year 2024 totaled \$6,720,314.24 at June 30. This total represents 94.54% of the Council's administrative budget utilized. Total spending for this time period is budgeted to be 100%. 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. The cumulative Indirect Cost rate for this period is 47%. Projected Total Indirect Costs for Fiscal Year 2024 are 46%. A final Budget Revision is attached for review and consideration. Increases to the Agency Budget result from new programs and funding being added throughout the year.

### **Aging and Disability Programs Services & Funding Report**

The Aging and Disability Division worked with various service providers and helped administer a multitude of direct service programs to eligible residents of our eight-county region. Between July 1 and June 30, more than \$15 million in direct service dollars were utilized 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.



## Administrative Expense Detail

For the Period July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

	2023 YTD Actual	2024 YTD Actual	2024 Budget	% of Budget
Salary	\$ 3,242,163.62	\$ 3,315,359.91	\$ 3,434,596.71	96.53%
Fringe Benefits	\$ 1,369,616.65	\$ 1,747,587.17	\$ 1,955,214.57	89.38%
Advertising	\$ 229,805.68	\$ 245,146.43	\$ 285,558.00	85.85%
Audit Costs	\$ 36,983.20	\$ 62,492.70	\$ 62,500.00	99.99%
Building Maintenance	\$ 13,182.30	\$ 14,826.91	\$ 14,827.00	100.00%
Communications	\$ 98,561.52	\$ 89,191.58	\$ 89,192.00	100.00%
Conference Registration Fee	\$ 55,232.00	\$ 48,900.55	\$ 52,168.00	93.74%
Contract Services	\$ 42,997.45	\$ 100,724.68	\$ 105,770.00	95.23%
Employee/Governing Board	\$ 26,801.55	\$ 28,272.40	\$ 28,273.00	100.00%
Equipment Purchase/Maintenance	\$ 31,943.36	\$ 59,583.58	\$ 60,500.00	98.49%
Insurance	\$ 40,278.42	\$ 61,694.74	\$ 61,700.00	99.99%
Legal Costs	\$ 2,167.50	\$ 4,785.00	\$ 4,785.00	100.00%
Organizational Dues	\$ 51,243.57	\$ 39,875.90	\$ 40,300.00	98.95%
Other Costs	\$ 19,480.36	\$ 21,280.07	\$ 23,200.00	91.72%
Postage	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 12,054.10	\$ 12,100.00	99.62%
Printing Costs	\$ 24,416.53	\$ 10,169.74	\$ 10,200.00	99.70%
Software & Licenses	\$ 151,740.57	\$ 131,581.76	\$ 131,815.00	99.82%
Space	\$ 255,340.97	\$ 255,340.83	\$ 255,342.00	100.00%
Staff Training Fees	\$ 12,861.11	\$ 11,351.05	\$ 13,500.00	84.08%
Subscriptions	\$ 8,803.78	\$ 9,785.55	\$ 9,836.00	99.49%
Supplies	\$ 200,633.99	\$ 176,036.71	\$ 176,037.00	100.00%
Travel - Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 111,003.88	\$ 156,174.98	\$ 162,101.00	96.34%
Travel - Out of Town Expense	\$ 102,528.73	\$ 118,097.90	\$ 118,861.00	99.36%
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD</b>	<b>\$ 6,143,786.74</b>	<b>\$ 6,720,314.24</b>	<b>\$ 7,108,376.28</b>	<b>94.54%</b>
<b>INDIRECT COST RATE FOR THE PERIOD</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>47%</b>		



**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				\$ 166,120.00	\$ 3,434,596.71
Fringe Benefits	\$ 1,749,214.57				\$ 206,000.00	\$ 1,955,214.57
Advertising	\$ 214,643.00				\$ 70,915.00	\$ 285,558.00
Audit Costs	\$ 32,000.00		\$ 12,000.00	\$ 18,300.00	\$ 200.00	\$ 62,500.00
Building Maintenance	\$ 11,500.00				\$ 3,327.00	\$ 14,827.00
Communications	\$ 104,550.00			\$ (20,000.00)	\$ 4,642.00	\$ 89,192.00
Conference Registration Fee	\$ 36,700.00			\$ 20,000.00	\$ (4,532.00)	\$ 52,168.00
Contract Services	\$ 173,250.00		\$ (17,480.00)	\$ (50,000.00)		\$ 105,770.00
Employee/Governing Board	\$ 15,000.00		\$ 4,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 4,273.00	\$ 28,273.00
Equipment Purchase/Maintenance	\$ 24,500.00		\$ 30,000.00		\$ 6,000.00	\$ 60,500.00
Insurance	\$ 42,000.00			\$ 19,700.00		\$ 61,700.00
Legal Costs	\$ 4,000.00			\$ (1,000.00)	\$ 1,785.00	\$ 4,785.00
Organizational Dues	\$ 40,000.00				\$ 300.00	\$ 40,300.00
Other Costs	\$ 28,200.00			\$ (10,000.00)	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 23,200.00
Postage	\$ 15,000.00			\$ (4,000.00)	\$ 1,100.00	\$ 12,100.00
Printing Costs	\$ 15,600.00			\$ (8,600.00)	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 10,200.00
Software & Licenses	\$ 115,315.00				\$ 16,500.00	\$ 131,815.00
Space	\$ 255,342.00					\$ 255,342.00
Staff Training Fees	\$ 10,000.00			\$ 5,000.00	\$ (1,500.00)	\$ 13,500.00
Subscriptions	\$ 6,520.00		\$ 1,480.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 836.00	\$ 9,836.00
Supplies	\$ 65,875.00			\$ 65,000.00	\$ 45,162.00	\$ 176,037.00
Travel - Mileage Reimbursement	\$ 105,698.00			\$ 45,000.00	\$ 11,403.00	\$ 162,101.00
Travel - Out of Town Expense	\$ 105,698.00				\$ 13,163.00	\$ 118,861.00
<b>TOTAL BUDGET</b>	<b>\$ 6,439,082.28</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 30,000.00</b>	<b>\$ 85,400.00</b>	<b>\$ 553,894.00</b>	<b>\$ 7,108,376.28</b>

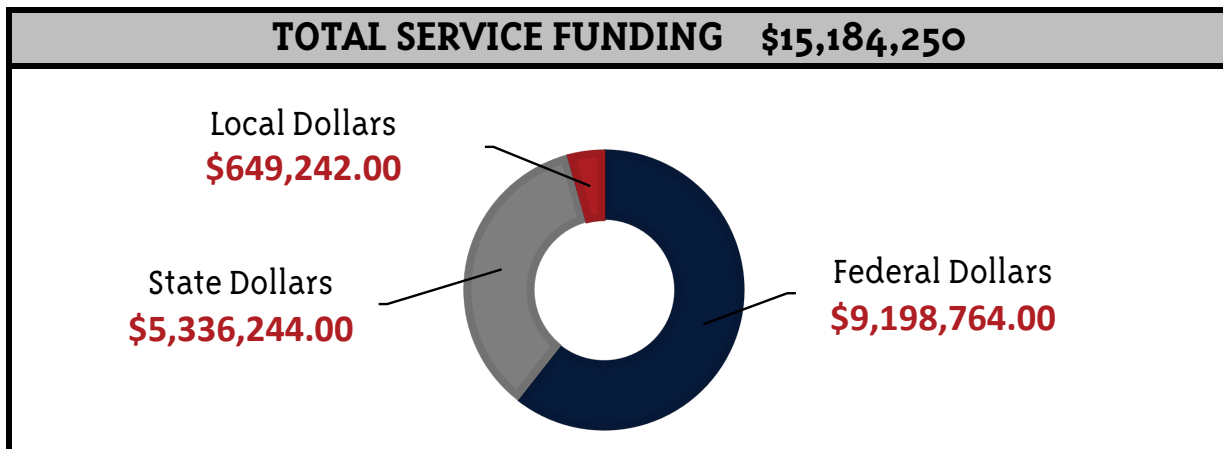


# Buckeye Hills Regional Council

## Aging and Health Programs Services & Funding Report

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

SERVICES PROVIDED		
Direct Service Hours Provided	Transportation Trips	Adult Day Service Days Attended
<b>386,371</b>	<b>17,583</b>	<b>3,131</b>
Adult Day Service Miles Traveled	Meals Provided	Home Medical Equipment & Emergency Response Units
<b>27,847</b>	<b>267,468</b>	<b>1,854</b>
Legal Services Contacts	Home Accessibility Modification And Pest Control Jobs	Senior Farmers Market Coupons Redeemed
<b>1,069</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>20,761</b>
Grocery Shopping and Delivery	Telephone Reassurance	Evidence Based Classes
<b>572</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>5,940</b>
Assisted Living Days	Alzheimers Education Contacts	Senior Volunteer Hours
<b>14,846</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>21,965</b>



REGIONAL STATS		
Total Consumers Served	Total Population	Total Population Eligible for Services by Age (60+)
<b>5,431</b>	<b>249,172</b>	<b>65,746</b>

---

## PROGRAM UPDATES

**Healthy Aging Grants** | The Healthy Aging Grants are required to be expended by Sept 30. All funds must be expended to the appropriate programs or partners.

**Technology Education Programs** | The Technology Education Programs completed with Healthy Aging funds, will be held in both Monroe and Noble counties. The classes will last 4 weeks, meeting 2 days per week. Participants will keep the tablet used during training after the completion of the course. If you would like to register, please contact BHRC at 800-331-2644.

**NCQA Accreditation** | The RFP for NCQA Accreditation has been re-issued and is available on the BHRC website. This accreditation is being completed to streamline BHRC work within MyCare. The process for accreditation should take approximately 18 months.

**Opioid Mental Health Training** | BHRC was awarded a grant from the Ohio Department of Aging to provide training and education regarding substance use and mental health to staff and partner CBOs. Six different sessions are being scheduled throughout the region for individuals to attend. **Mental Health First Aid** is an evidenced based program and is being offered at:

- ❖ Scenic Hills Senior Center, Logan
- ❖ OSU Extension, Belle Valley
- ❖ Blakeslee Center, Middleport
- ❖ O'Neill Senior Center, Marietta
- ❖ Buckeye Hills (x2), Marietta

Registration will be available in the near future.

Attendance at each location is limited to 20 participants.

**Senior Farmer's Market (SFM)** | Senior Farmers Market for the 2024 year is now live. Applications are available on BHRC's website and also available for pick up and can be mailed when requested.

**Consumers Served: 2,851**

Athens: 523	Hocking: 297	Meigs: 306
Monroe: 174	Morgan: 271	Noble: 180
Perry: 371	Washington: 729	

**Waitlist by County (383 individuals) \***

Athens: 65	Hocking: 28	Meigs: 55
Monroe: zero	Morgan: 62	Noble: zero
Perry: 132	Washington: 41	

\*Waitlists are reduced due to additional funding from ODA

## STAFF UPDATES

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*  
1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

**USAging Conference** | Member of the Aging Team traveled to Tampa, Florida for the USAging Conference from July 7<sup>th</sup> to July 11<sup>th</sup>. This allowed staff to learn about new initiatives, advocate and network with partners from around the country.

## **PASSPORT AND ASSISTED LIVING CASELOAD REGIONWIDE**

**PASSPORT: 789 individuals**

**Assisted Living Waiver 59 individuals**

---

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

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*  
1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

**[buckeyehills.org](http://buckeyehills.org)**

---

## PROGRAM UPDATES

**HEAP Outreach** | The Summer Crisis Program runs from July 1 until September 30. Quarter page newspaper ads are running across our eight-county region promoting the program and encouraging individuals to contact their local Community Action Agency. Newspapers include Morgan County Herald, Marietta Times, Logan Daily News, Perry County Tribune, Athens Messenger, Journal Leader, The INNformer (Monroe County), and River Cities Tribune & Register. Social media ads are running weekly.

### **Aging Outreach** |

Outreach has been underway at events across our region. Most recently, we attended:

- Meigs Co. Elder Abuse Awareness Day- June 12- Meigs County
- Perry County Elder Abuse Awareness Day- June 14- Perry County

Upcoming events include:

- CarFit Event at BHRC –August 16- Washington County
- Perry County Senior Center Event – August 21- Perry County
- Washington County Resource Fair – August 25- Washington County
- Athens County Senior Expo & Health Fair –September 20 – Athens County
- MOV Walk to End Alzheimer's – September 21 – Wood County (WV)

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](mailto:areeder@buckeyehills.org).

**PASSPORT Promotion** | The outreach campaign that began in April with newspaper advertising continued through May and June with an email, streaming, and digital advertising push across all eight counties through LocalIQ (Gannet, USA Today) targeted toward 20,000-40,000 potential eligible individuals and caregivers in our region. Approximately 5,000 individuals who interacted with the digital advertising received a postcard in the mail encouraging them to call our 800 number to learn more about PASSPORT and schedule an assessment. This dovetailed into a television ad campaign on WTAP that began in mid-May and continued through mid-June, which aired over 200 30-second commercials that reached households in Washington, Noble, and Morgan counties, as well as a radio campaign targeting Noble and Monroe counties through KC105. This drive has helped lead to increased assessments in recent weeks and our highest PASSPORT enrollment/caseload since November 2021.

**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. We are continuing our partnership with Senior Medicare Patrol and educating seniors about Medicare Fraud and Safety measures.

**Regional Mobility Newsletter** | The Communications team worked with BHRC Transportation Planning Manager Christa Myers and the region's mobility managers to create the inaugural issue of the biannual Hills and Highways newsletter. This newsletter highlights mobility initiatives and the work of mobility managers in each of our eight counties to help educate the public about the resources available in their communities and to help the region advocate for resources to improve mobility and transportation options in Southeast Ohio. More than

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*

1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

1,000 printed copies are being distributed by the mobility managers, and the digital version of the newsletter on buckeyehills.org is being shared on social media and in the Buckeye Hills monthly newsletter. The Winter/Spring edition will be shared with legislators during Ohio Loves Transit Day in February 2025.

**Online Provider Director** | The Communications team continues to make updates to the nearly 700 local provider listings in our online Provider Directory on buckeyehills.org. Since the launch of the new website in mid-March of 2024, the searchable online Provider Directory has already been visited more than 2,600 times by individuals seeking home- and community-based service providers.

**RTPO Return on Investment Report** | The Communications team worked with BHRC Planning Director Melissa Zoller and staff to prepare BHRC's contribution to a joint report on the return on investment of the Regional Transportation Planning Organizations that serve rural Ohio communities. This report will highlight the combined efforts of RTPOs across the state and will be used to advocate for resources to support rural transportation projects.

---

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

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

**A Local Development Summit for Southeast Ohio** | On August 20, Buckeye Hills Regional Council will host our annual Development Summit. Small Communities, Big Impact brings together local leaders, elected officials, practitioners, and more to explore topics related to transformational projects in Southeast Ohio communities. Topics include How to Work with Consultants, an Introduction to the Buckeye Hills Funding Opportunities Database, Brownfields, Micro-Tourism Initiatives, and Appalachian Community Grant Program Projects in the region. Registration is \$25 and includes lunch. Members of the BHRC General Policy Council and Regional Advisory Council will receive complimentary registration out of gratitude for their service to the council. Members of the GPC and RAC may contact [dtanner@buckeyehills.org](mailto:dtanner@buckeyehills.org) to receive the complimentary registration code.

**BHRC Development Division Recognized by State Association** | On July 24, Buckeye Hills Regional Council was named 2024 Community Development Department of the Year by the Ohio Conference on Community Development (OCCD). This award is given in recognition of a department whose programs collectively or one program singly has made a significant impact in their community. 2024 has been a big year for BHRC's Development Division and we're honored and humbled to receive such an award.

## NEWS

### Program & Service Updates

**Buckeye Hills Responds to Comments on C-SITE Application** | On May 29, BHRC and SOPEC applied for a total project cost of \$3,231,742. After the application's submission, reviewers came back to BHRC with comments, concerns and questions that were due on July 1. BHRC and SOPEC worked in tandem to address the questions and provide additional details. Overall, feedback on the application and project were promising. We are hoping to hear about next steps in the next month or so.

**Buckeye Hills Assists Communities with AMLER** | The Division of Mineral Resources Management (DMRM) sought proposals to award sub-grants of Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) funds received from the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE). AMLER program funds are used for the reclamation of AML sites that were mined for coal prior to 1977. The State of Ohio received \$20 million total for projects with an anticipated start date of March 2025. Project sites eligible included unreclaimed, previously reclaimed, or lands adjacent to abandoned coal mine lands or polluted waters or communities impacted by historic coal production. The Development Division assisted more than 10 communities by reviewing their Letters of Intent that were due by July 21, 2024.

## STAFF UPDATES

- **Michelle Hyer** has been working closely with Chasity, Sam and Julia Robinson, ACGP contractor on finalizing the list of ACGP projects that BHRC will administer.
- **Kylee Nichols** has been working on environmental reviews for several projects in the region.
- **Brad Peoples** has accepted a new position with OhioSE and his last day was July 29. We will miss Brad, but we are so excited for this next chapter in his career.

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*  
1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

- **Jada Riley** has been working with partners to further develop the SWOT analysis for the 2025 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy due April 2025 entitled Buckeye Hills Forward: A Regional Economic Plan.
- **Emma Yeager** has been scoring ARC Pre-Applications and has started the round of meetings to each of the county commissioner meetings and these will continue throughout the month of August.

---

**CONTACT:** Sam Miller, Development Director | [smiller@buckeyehills.org](mailto:smiller@buckeyehills.org) | 740-376-1028

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*  
1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

**[buckeyehills.org](http://buckeyehills.org)**



## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

May 4, 2024 through August 2, 2024

### RESIGNATIONS/TERMINATIONS

Robert Collins	Care Management Coordinator	5/16/24
Denise Wheeler	Clinical Assistant	6/26/24
Jodi Rector	Office Coordinator	6/28/24

### RETIREMENTS

Brenda Buttrey	Provider Relations Specialist	5/30/24
----------------	-------------------------------	---------

### NEW HIRES

Jensen Swartz	Clinical Assistant	5/6/24
---------------	--------------------	--------

### PROMOTIONS

Sheena Childress	Team Leader to Program Manager	7/8/24
Scott Winemiller	Provider Relations Specialist to Team Leader	7/8/24

### TRANSFERS

Cheryl Handschumaker	Clinical Assistant to Provider Relations Assistant	5/6/24
----------------------	---	--------

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio*  
1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

**[buckeyehills.org](http://buckeyehills.org)**



## NEWS

### Program & Service Updates

- Online application for ODOT Municipal Bridge opens on July 1, 2024, due on August 15, 2024
- Ohio Maritime Plan Stakeholder Input Forum- August 12, 3-5 pm at Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana Regional Council of Governments (OKI), located at Sawyer Point Building, 720 East Pete Rose Way, Cincinnati

### Staff Updates

- **Melissa Zoller** has been actively engaged in several key initiatives. She collaborated with Eric Wade and Drew Tanner to submit the RTPD Impact Report successfully. She enhanced her technical skills in geographic information systems through ArcGIS training with Eric Wade. In June, she attended the Mayors Partnership for Progress (MPP) meeting. BHRC hosted Lee Shirley from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to discuss potential regional projects, including a site visit to the Athens County Port Authority Spec Building. Melissa also had an introductory meeting with Sam Jurgena, a staff member of the Mayors Partnership for Progress. She attended the Ohio Association of Regional Councils (OARC) Transportation Committee meeting at the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC). She continues to participate in the progress meetings for the Village of Caldwell's water project. She developed maps with mobility managers for Noble, Monroe, and Washington counties to illustrate meeting locations, committee members, poster locations, and meetings attended. Additionally, she and senior planners are engaged with the Caldwell Exempted School District's Noble County Health Center project. Melissa is scheduled to attend the 2024 NADO Transportation Conference & EDD Wealth Creation Summit from July 29 to August 2, 2024.
- **Christa Myers** Christa attended a variety of important meetings and events recently. In June, she participated in Ohio University's Strategic Doing Workshop, MORPC's EV Forum, OPTA's virtual board meeting, the Athens County TAC meeting, Perry County's CarFit event, the Morgan County ATP meeting, the BHRC Area of Aging RAC meeting, the Perry County TAC meeting, and the OARC Transportation meeting at MORPC. In July, she attended the OVRDC RTCC meeting, the Athens Active Transportation Plan/Regional Planning meeting in Nelsonville, and met with OSU's Age Friendly Team and the Meigs County Mobility Manager to discuss their new grant.

Christa led Region 8's Mobility Manager quarterly meeting in June and the newly formed Steering Committee for the regional CTP in July. She and Julia are collaborating on a CarFit training in Washington County in August, with plans to train more mobility managers as technicians and expand the program to additional counties in the region. Christa provided information to ORCA on complete street policies and active transportation plans, participated in two regional coordinators' virtual meetings, and helped orient two new regional coordinators.

The Region 8 Mobility Management Team, BHRC Communications Team, and Christa have developed and released a new Transportation/Mobility Newsletter for the region, debuting it at the Steering Committee meeting in July. Additionally, Christa will attend NADO's Regional Transportation Conference and Wealth Creation Summit in South Carolina at the end of July and the beginning of August, along with Melissa Zoller and Eric Wade.

- **Eric Wade** is working on multiple GIS projects for internal and external stakeholders. BHRC recently entered into a consulting contract with COAD (Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development) for GIS services. He recently attended the ESRI GIS conference in California. He is also working on the Athens County Port Authority EDA grant with Kate. Eric and Melissa are working on finalizing the selection of a consultant for the Hocking County ATP Master Plan. He is working with Christa Myers to collect transit data and engage with county transit directors to develop the regional transit plan. He also recently attended the MORPC and Athens County EV Workshop and the final stakeholder meeting for the Athens County Active Transportation Plan. Melissa, Eric, and Christa are attending the NADO transportation conference at the end of July. He and Melissa also recently kicked off the Washington County Port Feasibility Study project with American Structure Point (ASP). He also attended a meeting with Lee Shirley from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to discuss potential regional projects, the meeting included a site visit to the Athens County Port Authority Spec Building and Marietta Health Campus in Belpre, OH.
- **Kate Dunn** continued to administer the USEPA Brownfields Assessment grant awarded to Buckeye Hills and the EDA grant awarded to the Athens County Port Authority for their speculative building project. She also worked on closing out the demolition and brownfield remediation projects in Noble County and continued to prepare for the next round of ODOD Brownfields and Demolition funding. In a collaborative effort amongst the Planning Division team, the Analysis of Impediments, which supports CDBG funding, was submitted to ODOD on behalf of 6 of BHRC's 8 counties.
- **Kelly Isaly and Julia Hinzman** – Currently, we are working on agendas for the August Transportation Advisory Meetings. The ODOT quarterly report for the sixth quarter has been submitted. We continue to distribute information and resources throughout Monroe, Noble, and Washington counties. We are organizing CarFit events in Washington County and will assist with another event in Cambridge for Noble and Guernsey Technician training. We have secured participation from Marietta Memorial Hospital Occupational Therapy for the CarFit events and will collaborate with the Washington County Career Center on another event. The Mobility Management Program Orientation training with ODOT was held virtually in June. We are actively participating in various committee meetings across Noble, Monroe and Washington counties. Kelly has attended several senior dinners and food pantries in Monroe County. Julia attended the RSVP recognition dinner and completed her CEUs for her Assistant Social Work license, which she has submitted to BHRC. We continue to support Morgan County as they transition into Noble County. Additionally, Julia is actively involved in the Washington County Transit Study through ODOT.

---

**CONTACT INFO:** Melissa Zoller, Planning Director | [mzoller@buckeyehills.org](mailto:mzoller@buckeyehills.org) | 740-376-1027

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*  
 1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

**[buckeyehills.org](http://buckeyehills.org)**

## Perry County Public Transit and Partners Support Local Dog Shelter

Perry County Public Transit, Job and Family Services, and Mobility Management teams teamed up with a local fundraiser to fill a transit vehicle for the Perry County Dog Shelter. The community responded generously, donating dog food, toys, blankets, and cleaning supplies. This event not only supported the shelter with essential resources but also showed how the community could rally together for a worthy cause. The Perry County Dog Shelter expressed deep gratitude, emphasizing how these donations will significantly improve the lives of dogs awaiting adoption.



## Appalachian Regional Commission's ARISE Planning Grant to Assess Transportation Challenges

The ARC is collaborating with Ohio University and other partners to study transportation barriers affecting workforce training, jobs, and healthcare in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. Five counties in the Buckeye Hills Regional Council Region 8—Athens, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, and Washington—are involved. Mobility managers from these counties and the HAPCAP Transit director attended the initial meeting to discuss transportation gaps

in the Appalachian region. Buckeye Hills Regional Council Executive Director, Chasity Schmelzenbach, noted that transportation barriers impact workforce access to education, training, and jobs, healthcare access for aging residents, children, and families, and residents' ability to engage in community activities. The planning team will meet with stakeholders in Pennsylvania and West Virginia and will share their report in fall 2024, aiming to apply for funding to address the identified needs.

## Mark Your Calendar

**CarFit Washington County**  
**August 16 | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.**  
**Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta**  
 For registration, contact 1-800-331-2644 Ext. 6  
 jhinzman@buckeyehills.org or kisaly@buckeyehills.org

**CarFit Noble & Guernsey County**  
**August 23 | 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.**  
**Pritchard-Laughlin Event Center**  
 For registration, contact 740-623-2564  
 tracyhaines@coshocconcounty.net

This newsletter was created by  
  
 in partnership with Southeast Ohio's  
 Mobility Management agencies.



# Hills & Highways

"Transportation News in Southeast Ohio"

Summer/Fall Edition

Hello! I'm excited to introduce myself as your new Region 8 Transportation Planning Manager. A few years ago, ODOT launched a regional approach to enhance mobility and transit, creating regional staff positions to develop coordinated transportation plans. This initiative started in two regions and has now expanded to include six regional coordinators across Ohio.

I come from the mobility management field, having spent two years as the Hocking County Mobility Manager for HAPCAP (Hocking Athens Perry Community Action). I'm eager to bring my experience to Region 8 and work together to improve transportation in our community.

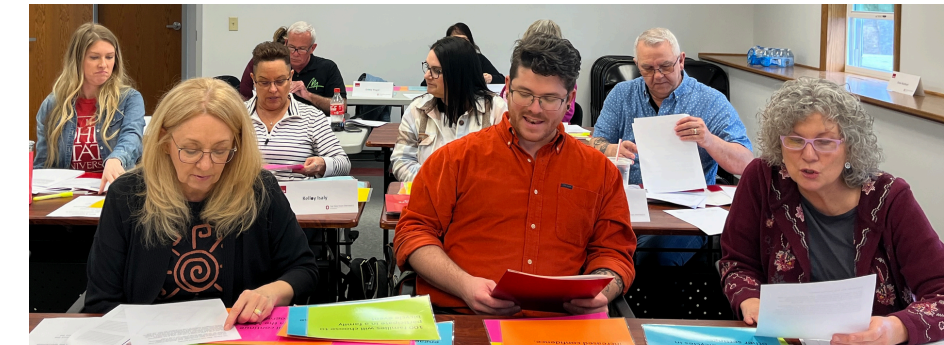
I hope you find the first edition of Hills and Highways enjoyable and informative. Stay tuned for many more updates and stories.

Looking forward to collaborating with all of you!



**Christa Myers**  
 Transportation Planning Manager

## Mobility Managers Attend Grant-Writing Training



Gwynn Stewart, Assistant Professor of Community Development at Ohio State University Extension in Noble County, offered free grant-writing training in March to residents of Ohio's Appalachian counties. Four mobility managers from Athens, Hocking, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, and Washington counties attended to learn how to support their communities' mobility needs. Ben Ziff of the HAPCAP Mobility team, serving Athens and Hocking counties, found this training particularly valuable. He said he appreciated the grant-writing booklet and the presenter's offer to review a future grant. Mobility managers often hear from individuals needing mobility ramps installed or fare assistance, and local grants can help address these needs.

## Increasing Knowledge of Mobility – Ohio's Mobility Manager Conference

Mobility managers from Region 8 attended the Ohio Mobility Manager conference in Newark, Ohio. Representatives from Athens, Hocking, Morgan, Perry, Noble, and Washington counties learned from peers and national leaders like Judy Shanley from NCMM and Easterseals. The conference was hosted by ODOT and the Licking County mobility and transit team, with meals sponsored by NeoRide. The conference featured Perry County's mobility manager discussing leveraging local JFS funds for transportation. Buckeye Hills Mobility Manager Julia Hinzman served on the planning committee. Morgan County Mobility Manager Bobby White says he looks forward to this conference each year for networking and learning about new trends and grants.



## Washington County Transit & Partners Field Trip

Representatives from Washington County recently visited Delaware County Transit for a field day to learn about their daily operations. Delaware County Transit has switched from a fixed route system to county-wide demand response. Organized by Nelson/Nygaard as part of the Washington County Transit Development Plan Study, the trip included a memorable transit ride through the historic downtown area. Stay tuned for exciting changes coming to Washington County!



## Get on The Bus: Advocating for Riding Public Transit

Featuring excerpts from "How We Travel" by Ben Ziff, HAPCAP Mobility Manager

I go to the grocery store fairly regularly, as do many of us. Most often, I drive my car. I would argue that most often, nearly all of us car owners drive our car. We live in an incredibly car-focused world, and thus that becomes our "standard" of travel. It's direct, it's accessible exactly when we want it, its cost is something we have accepted, and most importantly, it's the comfortable standard for a large number of people. But what if, hear me out, you didn't drive there? What if you tried something you hadn't tried before?



Ben Ziff & Paige Gates joined the HAPCAP Mobility Team in January 2024

### CONTACT

ben.ziff@hapcap.org  
740.767.4500 or 740.767.1085

paige.gates@hapcap.org  
740.767.4500 or 740.767.1008



## Longtime Logan Public Transit Manager Retires from HAPCAP

Rog Stivison retired as manager for Logan Public Transit in April after leading the public transit program for 15 years. Some of his accomplishments, as shared in an interview with the Logan Daily News, include tripling the number wheelchair accessible vans in the fleet, more than doubling annual ridership and expanding transit service to the entire county. His most challenging experience was making the expansion decision to cover Hocking County, which is rural and has a dispersed population. Because this happened in late February 2020 he had to quickly re-adjust as ridership plummeted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Rog shared that throughout the public health crisis, LPT never missed a day of business. He also didn't suffer from the shortage of drivers that many other public transits around the state experienced. Ridership has bounced back quickly from a low of 14,000 rides in 2020 to a record high in 2023. He shared two main

indicators that their growth is sustainable: regular services outside Logan, particularly in Laurelville area, are gaining momentum and their ridership is diversifying. A majority of their riders are from the senior and disabled populations, but an increasing number of the customer base are from the general public. HAPCAP is open to new ventures, such as their current offering of a complimentary seasonal weekend loop route to Hocking Hills State Park with support from Hocking Hills Tourism Association.

## Ohio Loves Transit

Every February, the Ohio Public Transportation Association selects a week to celebrate public transportation across the state, culminating in a Legislative Day at the Ohio Statehouse. This year, mobility managers and public transit staff led events in their communities, rode buses and vans to collect rider stories, and met with state elected officials to highlight the importance of public transportation in both urban and rural areas. Colleagues from Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Hocking Athens Perry Community Action, Morgan County Economic Development, and Perry County JFS attended Legislative Day in Columbus. Public transit is an integral part of our communities, particularly for seniors and individuals with disabilities, and supports all residents who do not own or operate vehicles.



## In Case You Missed It...



Mobility Manager, Julia Hinzman was recently awarded the Distinguished Service Award at the Washington County Veterans Hall of Fame and Award Ceremony.

Julia was honored due to her diligent work and dedication to assisting local veterans with rides to their medical appointments. We are very proud of her accomplishments and work within the community.

traveling. When I ride an APT bus, I'm not watching the car in front of me, or worrying about the driver behind me. I'm looking out the windows. I'm looking at the place that I call home from a perspective I hadn't been able to enjoy before. I'm leaving behind the "comfort" of my own car, and allowing myself to experience something new and different. What was once an intimidating prospect, a frightening idea of being thrust into an unfamiliar situation, is now something else entirely: relaxing, enjoyable, exciting, and enriching.

## IMPACT STORY



Kelly Isaly, Mobility Manager and Courtney Briggs, Community Health Worker, have been making a positive impact through visits to the various food pantries throughout Monroe County. Kelly shared: "During our visit to Sardis, we were able to identify needs, educate, and assist a resident who needed transportation for treatments. Our efforts have touched many lives, while distributing valuable information in the communities of Sardis, Woodsfield, and Lewisville."



REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE

August 2, 2024

**Professional Services**

---

**\$60,000**

**AI For All, LLC**

- 2 contracts of \$30,000 each
- Artificial Intelligence Training for 30 BHRC Staff
- Grant Writing, Data Analytics and Ethics and Social Impact

Funding Source: Ohio TechCred Program

**\$22,420**

**Mental Health First Aid**

- Mental Health and Substance Use Training
- Minimum of 6 trainings throughout the region
- BHRC Staff and Community Based Organizations

Funding Source: State Opioid and Stimulant Response

**\$24,539**

**PC Solutions, Inc.**

- Internet education and literacy in Monroe and Noble Counties
- 2 trainings totaling 30 people per county
- 12,869 for Monroe County and 11,670 for Noble County

Funding Source: Monroe and Noble County Healthy Aging Grants

**Supplies**

---

**\$27,591**

**Amazon Business**

- Purchase of Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Detectors, Kitchen Size Fire Extinguishers and Emergency Battery/Crank Radios
- Distribution to consumers in partnership with local fire and EMS

Funding Source: Monroe County Healthy Aging Grant

**\$134,550**

**Total Request**

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio*  
1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

**[buckeyehills.org](http://buckeyehills.org)**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**McConnelsville Recognized as one of Ohio's Best Hometowns** | Congratulations to the Village of McConnelsville! Along with Bryan, Hilliard, Millersburg and Urbana, McConnelsville will be recognized as a great place to live, work and visit in Ohio Magazine's 2024-25 Best Hometowns issue to be published this autumn. To determine the honorees, Ohio Magazine solicited nominations and conducted site visits across the state in the spring and summer. The editors evaluated the nominees in six categories — Community Spirit, Education, Entertainment, Health and Safety, Business Environment, and Culture and Heritage — to help finalize their selections. For more information about past honorees and Ohio Magazine's annual Best Hometowns honor, visit [ohiomagazine.com/besthometowns](http://ohiomagazine.com/besthometowns).

**Local Fellows Graduate from the ARC Appalachian Leadership Institute** | The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) announced that 40 fellows from Appalachia's 13 states graduated from its Appalachian Leadership Institute (ALI), a leadership and economic development program for the region's public, private, and nonprofit leaders. This year's graduates include Bailey Venzin, Executive Director of Hocking Hills Chamber of Commerce, and Jona Rinard, Dean of Transfer and Public Services at Washington State Community College. The curriculum is designed to equip fellows with the knowledge, ideas, and networks needed to create positive change in their communities and strengthen the region's economic opportunity.

**Register for Small Communities, Big Impact** | Registration is filling up quickly for our annual Development Summit, Small Communities Big Impact, on August 20. This one-day event will bring together local leaders, elected officials, practitioners, and more to explore transformational projects in Southeast Ohio communities. Topics include How to Work with Consultants, an Introduction to the Buckeye Hills Funding Opportunities Database, Brownfields, Micro-Tourism Initiatives, and Appalachian Community Grant Program Projects in the region. Registration is \$25 and includes lunch. Members of the BHRC General Policy Council and Regional Advisory Council will receive complimentary registration out of gratitude for their service to the council. Members of the GPC and RAC may use the promo code GPCRAC or email [dtanner@buckeyehills.org](mailto:dtanner@buckeyehills.org) for assistance registering.

**OPWC Applications Due August 30** | The Ohio Public Works Commission (OPWC) State Capital Improvement Program (SCIP) and the Local Transportation Improvement Program (LTIP) application is open for Athens, Belmont, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, and Washington counties. Program information is available at [buckeyehills.org/community-development/funding-opportunities/ohio-public-works-commission](http://buckeyehills.org/community-development/funding-opportunities/ohio-public-works-commission). Applications are due to Buckeye Hills Regional Council on August 30, 2024, by 4:00 p.m. Questions regarding this program should be directed to Jada Riley, Development Specialist, at [jriley@buckeyehills.org](mailto:jriley@buckeyehills.org) or 740-376-7636

**Clean Ohio Greenspace Conservation Program Applications Due September 27** | The Clean Ohio Green Space Conservation Program provides grants for up to 75 percent of the estimated costs for environmental conservation projects, including the acquisition of green space and the protection and enhancement of river and stream corridors. Round 19 applications are due September 27. Visit the Clean Ohio page at <https://buckeyehills.org/community-development/funding-opportunities/clean-ohio/> to learn more and apply online.

**FAO Affiliate Foundations Open 2024 Grant Applications** | Grant applications are now open for the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio's 14 geographic affiliates and the region-wide African American Community Fund. Funding

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*

1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

is available for nonprofits, schools and public organizations serving several counties in Appalachian Ohio, including:

- Meigs County
- Monroe County
- Morgan County
- Nelsonville and the surrounding communities of Buchtel, Carbon Hill and Murray City
- Noble County
- Perry County

In addition, the African American Community Fund is accepting grant applications from Black-led and Black-serving nonprofit and public organizations across Appalachian Ohio's 32 counties. Applications are due September 10 and must be submitted online. Learn more and apply at [appalachianohio.org](http://appalachianohio.org).

**Community Projects in BHRC Region to Receive \$20.8 Million from Capital Bill, Strategic Investments** | The General Assembly passed the Capital Bill and One-Time Strategic Community Investments (HB2) at the end of June, which will direct approximately \$20.8 million to community projects in the Buckeye Hills Region. At \$6.2 billion, the Capital Bill is said to be the largest capital appropriations measure in state history, and it includes an emergency clause to make it immediately effective.

**\$18.5 Million in Water Infrastructure Grants Awarded in Buckeye Hills Region** | The latest round of \$122.7 million in Ohio BUILDS Water Infrastructure Grants from Governor DeWine and the Ohio Department of Development announced on May 31 includes more than \$18.5 million to improve water and wastewater service for residents and businesses in the following communities in the Buckeye Hills region:

- Burr Oak Regional Water District (Athens/Hocking/Morgan/Perry counties): \$4,984,000
- Burr Oak Regional Water District (Morgan County): \$3,601,500
- Noble County Water Authority: \$2,025,263
- Hocking County: \$1,071,099
- Village of Pomeroy (Meigs County): \$2,789,740
- Ohio & Lee Water and Sewer Authority (Monroe County): \$1,298,270
- Village of Stockport (Morgan County): \$475,000
- Village of Crooksville (Perry County): \$870,200
- Village of Junction City (Perry County): \$1,388,601

**CDBG RPIG and Flexible Grants Awarded in Athens County** | On June 3, the Ohio Department of Development **announced a total of \$2.25 million in grants** to upgrade aging infrastructure, eliminate safety hazards, and promote economic growth in five communities, including \$1 million for communities in Athens County.

- Athens County will receive \$750,000 to replace waterlines and improve storage tanks in the Sunday Creek Valley Water District.
- The Village of Glouster will receive \$250,000 to renovate a vacant downtown building, eliminating community hazards and preparing the site for future business use.

**Marietta College McDonough Center Receives ARC Research Grant** | Marietta College's McDonough Center for Leadership & Business has been selected to participate in the Appalachian Regional Commission's Appalachian Collegiate Research Initiative (ACRI) and awarded a grant to fund the project "Assessing Rural Healthcare

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*

1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

Workforce Needs.” The project aims to address socioeconomic gaps in healthcare access and employment in the Appalachian region. Students will gain hands-on experience by organizing pop-up clinics and presenting their findings in Washington, D.C., in December.

## CURRENT INITIATIVES

**The Ridges** | The New Community Authority continues work with Ohio University on the package to propose the land transfer to the State of Ohio. The survey is complete, and the condominium rules are being developed to govern building use. The City of Athens has simultaneously begun prioritizing and seeking funding for the infrastructure expansions needed.

**Appalachian Community Grant Program Updates** | The communities in the Buckeye Hills region were awarded more than \$132 million through the various rounds and initiatives of the Appalachian Community Grant Program. A summary of the recent awards and project description is available in the news section of our website, buckeyehills.org. Our Development Division has prepared a comprehensive overview of all implementation and technical assistance funding that BHRC communities received, including technical assistance provided through the council, the Mayors’ Partnership for Progress, and the Ohio Department of Development’s procured planners. These are being shared during our Return-on-Investment meetings with BHRC members. BHRC has been asked by Ross County and by ILCAO to support their administration of the projects in our region as well as three from the OMEGA region for a total of seventeen (17). The funds paid will allow one of the Contractors under the Program to continue, and the remaining work will be performed by existing staff.

Our focus with those that did not receive funding is now on finding alternative funding sources while we have current plans and project estimates. A Development Specialist has been assigned to each county and they have been reaching out to project owners to discuss options and make recommendations for other sources as appropriate. We will continue to support these efforts individually and for programs that encourage regional applications.

## STATE UPDATES

**Ohio Department of Aging to Host Statewide Series of Assisted Living Feedback Forums** | With the aim of improving the lives of assisted living facility residents, the Ohio Department of Aging (ODA) will be hosting Assisted Living Feedback Forums across the state in August and September. At these Feedback Forums, ODA will hear directly from Ohioans about their experiences with assisted living facilities. Attendees will have access to a prototype of “Version 2.0” of what is currently called Ohio’s Nursing Home Quality Navigator. In addition to forums in Columbus, Dayton, Cincinnati, Bowling Green, Youngstown, and Cleveland, ODA will host a forum on August 8 in Nelsonville:

### **Nelsonville Assisted Living Feedback Forum**

Thursday, August 8, 2024

1:00-3:00 p.m.

The Lodge at Hocking College

15770 OH-691, Nelsonville, OH 45764

**ODOT Seeking Input on Ohio Maritime Plan** | The Ohio Department of Transportation is building the Ohio Maritime Plan from the ground up. Throughout the process, ODOT is seeking the assistance of maritime system stakeholders, which include public port authorities, transportation planning organizations, local government units, private operators, and everything in between. The more voices that contribute to the Plan, the more effective and beneficial the Plan will be. Comments and feedback are welcome at any time during the plan’s development through the target final plan date of March 2025. You can [download and share the flier](#) with stakeholders in your community and learn more and [transportation.ohio.gov/programs/ohio-maritime-plan](https://transportation.ohio.gov/programs/ohio-maritime-plan). Comments and questions about the plan can be sent to Randy Lane, ODOT Statewide Planning Manager, at [Randy.Lane@dot.ohio.gov](mailto:Randy.Lane@dot.ohio.gov) or 614-387-2369. ODOT is hosting a listening forum in Cincinnati on August 12. BHRC is seeing if ODOT will host a forum in our region as well.

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*

1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594



## **Cincinnati Stakeholder Input Forum**

Monday, August 12, 2024

3:00-5:00 p.m.

Sawyer Point Building

720 E. Pete Rose Way, Cincinnati, OH 45202

**Help Shape Ohio's Home Energy Savings Program** | The Ohio Department of Development is inviting community leaders, businesses, contractors, and nonprofit organizations to play a part in shaping a new program aimed at helping Ohio's families save on their electric bills and improve the energy efficiency of their homes. The State of Ohio was allocated \$249 million through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to provide qualifying Ohioans discounts for high-efficiency appliances and equipment, as well as funding for energy efficiency improvements to single- and multi-family homes. Development is hosting a series of virtual and in-person stakeholder engagement sessions to support the planning, design, and implementation of the Ohio Home Energy Savings Program. An **in-person session is scheduled in Athens on August 14, 6:00-8:00 p.m.** at the Athens Community Center, 701 East State Street.

**BWC Reopens Safety Grant Program** | The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) reopened its Safety Grant Program. The program assists employers with the purchase of protective equipment for their employees. The program is accepting applications for the following three grants:

- Safety Intervention Grant
- School Safety and Security Grant
- Firefighter Exposure to Environmental Elements Grant

The Safety Grant Program has \$35 million available to employers in fiscal year 2025. Information on eligibility and policies for each grant can be found at [info.bwc.ohio.gov/for-employers/safety-and-training/safety-grants](https://info.bwc.ohio.gov/for-employers/safety-and-training/safety-grants).

**Grant Funding to Support Local Government Cybersecurity** | A total of \$7 million is now available as part of Ohio's new CyberOhio Local Government Grant Program to assist local government entities with cybersecurity software and services to boost their preparedness and resilience. Eligible security software and services include, but are not limited to, endpoint protection, multi-factor authentication, secure mail, vulnerability management, migration to a dot gov internet domain, and cybersecurity services from the Multi-State Information Sharing and Analysis Center and the Center for Internet Security. Applications are due September 16, 2024. Local governments should visit [cyberohio.gov](https://cyberohio.gov) to apply.

**Legislative Updates** | The summer saw several bills working their way through the General Assembly. Below is a summary of several that are relevant to council members. Additional analysis and a preview of the lame-duck session from Bricker-Graydon's Government Relations Team are attached.

The House unanimously passed House Bill 370, which would require ODOT to maintain state routes within municipal boundaries. A preliminary list of villages affected by the bill lists 550 villages based on 2020 data, while 589 villages are affected. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Jay Edwards (R-Nelsonville). It will now move to the Ohio Senate for consideration.

The House passed House Bill 87, sponsored by Rep. Nick Santucci (R-Howland Twp.) and Rep. Steve Demetriou (R-Bainbridge Twp.). The bill preempts political subdivisions by prohibiting them from purchasing a United States or Ohio flag that was not made in the United States. It will now move to the Ohio Senate for consideration.

The House passed House Bill 315, which largely deals with township laws, but also provides \$3 million in grants for modernized zoning that will apply to municipalities, as well as \$2 million for the state's indigent burial program. The bill is sponsored by Rep. Thomas Hall (R-Madison Twp.) and Rep. Bill Seitz (R-Cincinnati).

The Senate passed House Bill 47, which requires the placement of automated external defibrillators (AEDs) in schools and public recreational facilities. The bill only applies to city facilities -- not villages. It is sponsored by Rep. Adam Bird (R-New Richmond) and Rep. Richard Brown (D-Canal Winchester). The House concurred with the Senate, and the bill is being sent to Gov. DeWine for his signature.

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*

1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

The Senate Ways and Means Committee received proponent testimony from OML on Senate Bill 244, legislation that would allow municipalities to create Residential Stability Zones, where a reduction on increases in assessed property values could occur. The bill is sponsored by Sen. Michele Reynolds (R-Canal Winchester) and Sen. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus).

The Senate Ways and Means Committee received proponent testimony from OML on Senate Bill 271, legislation that would serve as a property tax “circuit breaker” for fixed-income residents to be protected from property taxes rising too much. The bill is sponsored by Sen. Lou Blessing (R-Colerain Twp.) and Sen. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus).

The Senate Select Committee on Housing received interested party testimony from OML on Senate Bill 245, legislation to help alleviate the housing crisis by making changes related to real property law. The bill is sponsored by Sen. Michele Reynolds (R-Canal Winchester) and Sen. Hearcel Craig (D-Columbus).

## FEDERAL UPDATES

**ARC Releases FY2025 Economic Status Designations** | The Appalachian Regional Commission recently released its Fiscal Year 2025 economic status designations for Appalachia’s 423 counties. In FY 2025, the number of Appalachian counties designated as economically distressed will decrease to 77. This is the lowest number since ARC began using this index-based classification system for counties 19 years ago. Below are ARC Economic Status Designations for counties in the Buckeye Hills region:

- Athens: At-risk
- Hocking: Transitional
- Meigs: Distressed
- Monroe: At-risk
- Morgan: At-risk
- Noble: Distressed
- Perry: Transitional
- Washington: Transitional

**USDA Funding Opportunities** | The following funding USDA opportunities are currently open:

- **Broadband Technical Assistance Program:** The Broadband Technical Assistance (BTA) program provides financial assistance through cooperative agreements to eligible entities to receive or deliver broadband technical assistance and training. Applications are due August 30. Guidelines are available at [rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-programs/broadband-technical-assistance-program](https://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/telecommunications-programs/broadband-technical-assistance-program)
- **Rural Energy for America Program (REAP):** REAP provides guaranteed loan financing and grant funding to agricultural producers and rural small businesses for renewable energy systems or to make energy efficiency improvements. Agricultural producers may also apply for new energy-efficient equipment and new system loans for agricultural production and processing. Applications are due September 30. Guidelines are available at [rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency-improvement-guaranteed-loans](https://rd.usda.gov/programs-services/energy-programs/rural-energy-america-program-renewable-energy-systems-energy-efficiency-improvement-guaranteed-loans)

**Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program: Notice of Funding Opportunity Released** | The NTIA has released the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. The application deadline is September 23, 2024. These grant awards will be between \$5,000,000 and \$12,000,000 and require a 10% matching requirement. These competitive grants will resource initiatives that support populations most impacted by digital divides. Low-income households, older adults, justice-impacted people, people living with

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*  
1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

disabilities, rural communities, and racial and ethnic minority groups are among the populations served by this program. Non-profits, local educational agencies, workforce development organizations, political subdivisions, agencies, tribes, and other community anchor institutions are eligible to apply for Competitive Grant Program funds. Questions about the program may be addressed to NTIA at [digitalequity@ntia.gov](mailto:digitalequity@ntia.gov) or to BroadbandOhio at [broadbandohio@development.ohio.gov](mailto:broadbandohio@development.ohio.gov). Learn more at [ntia.gov/program/digital-equity-act-programs/digital-equity-competitive-grant-program](https://ntia.gov/program/digital-equity-act-programs/digital-equity-competitive-grant-program).

**Older Americans Act Reauthorization** | On July 9, the House Appropriations Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor-HHS) Subcommittee released the FY 2025 appropriations report on the bill they marked up on June 27. This report contains the funding numbers for all Older Americans Act (OAA) programs. The House bill proposes a 6.4 percent overall cut for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and a \$21 million cut (less than 1 percent) to the Administration for Community Living (ACL). While the proposed bill includes increases to critical programs like Home and Community-Based Supportive Services and the National Family Caregiver Support Program, it also includes cuts to nutrition programs, the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP), and Adult Protective Services. The Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee has yet to introduce its bill to reauthorize the OAA. It is expected the committee will mark up and pass the bipartisan bill before Congress leaves for the month-long August recess.

**Fifth Circuit Rules Against Fund Used to Provide Phone and Internet Services for Rural and Low-Income People** | On July 24, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against the Federal Communications Commission's Universal Service Fund, which funds telephone service for rural and low-income people, and broadband services for schools, libraries, and health care facilities. The immediate implications of the 9-7 ruling in Consumers' Research v. FCC by the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which described the USF as an unconstitutional "misbegotten tax," were unclear. Dissenting judges said it conflicts with three other circuit courts around the nation. The ruling by the full Fifth Circuit reverses an earlier ruling by a three-judge panel of the same court and sends the matter back to the FCC for further consideration. A Supreme Court appeal appears likely by advocates for broadband access. The Universal Service Fund supports four programs, including the High-Cost Support Mechanism, Lifeline, the Rural Healthcare Support Mechanism, and E-Rate, which provides phone and broadband services to eligible schools and libraries.

**Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program - FY2024 NOFO** | The Department of Transportation has released the 2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Program Fiscal Years (FY) 2024 – 2026 funding. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) established the Reconnecting Communities Pilot (RCP) Grant Program to help reconnect communities previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure. The goal of the program is to advance community-centered transportation connection projects that improve access to daily needs such as jobs, education, healthcare, food, nature, and recreation, and foster equitable development and restoration. The BIL authorized \$1 billion in grant funding from FY 2022-26 for planning, construction, and technical assistance. \$607 million is remaining, all of which will be awarded under the NOFO available at [grants.gov/search-results-detail/355098](https://grants.gov/search-results-detail/355098).

## UPCOMING CONFERENCES & EVENTS:

- **August 6, 10:00 a.m. – Washington County Way2Go Transportation Advisory Committee** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta
- **August 14, 9:00 a.m. – Monroe County Transportation Advisory Committee** | Generations Complex, Woodsfield
- **August 16, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m. – CarFit** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta
- **August 20, 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. – BHRC Community Development Summit** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*  
1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

[buckeyehills.org](https://buckeyehills.org)

- **August 22, 10:00 a.m. – Noble County Transportation Advisory Committee** | Allwell Behavioral Health Services, Caldwell
- **August 28, 10:00 a.m. – BHRC Regional Advisory Council** | Buckeye Hills Regional Council, Marietta
- **August 28-30 – Ohio Conference on Freight** | Cleveland – Visit [ohioconferenceonfreight.com](http://ohioconferenceonfreight.com) for details.
- **August 29, 12:00 p.m. – Buckeye Hills Forward Advisory Group** | COAD, Athens
- **September 4-5 – Appalachian Regional Commission Annual Conference** | Chattanooga, TN

---

**CONTACT INFO:** Chasity Schmelzenbach, Executive Director  
[cschmelzenbach@buckeyehills.org](mailto:cschmelzenbach@buckeyehills.org) | 740-376-1034

*Serving Athens, Hocking, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry and Washington Counties in Southeast Ohio.*  
1400 Pike Street | Marietta, OH 45750 | 1.800.331.2644 | 740.373.6400 | fax: 740.373.1594

**[buckeyehills.org](http://buckeyehills.org)**



Bricker Graydon LLP  
100 S. Third St.  
Columbus, OH 43215  
614.227.2300  
www.brickergraydon.com

---

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Clients and Friends of the Firm

FROM: Bricker Graydon's Government Relations Team

DATE: July 15, 2024

SUBJECT: First Half of 2024 Review, General Election, and Preview of Lame Duck Session

---

I. Overview.

The Ohio General Assembly finished the first half of 2024 with marathon floor sessions on June 26, making up for what had been a slower pace of legislating in prior weeks and months. The legislators tackled the capital budget (H.B. 2) as a priority piece of legislation, which funds various capital projects in state-owned buildings and properties, public universities, and also includes select community projects. Along with the capital budget, legislators appropriated \$700 million extra one-time strategic community investment funds to additional community projects across Ohio. These funds were designated in the 2023 biennial budget (H.B. 33) and made state dollars available to projects that are not normally eligible to utilize the state's bonded capital funds.

Any unfinished legislation will be considered during the General Assembly's "lame duck" session after the November 2024 General Election. The Ohio Senate scheduled five session days, starting the week after the election on November 5th. The Ohio House has yet to announce their lame duck schedule. This year's election features several key races, a challenge to Ohio's longstanding Senator, Sherrod Brown (D), all the Congressional districts, races to decide the partisan balance of the Ohio Supreme Court, possibly one statewide ballot issues, and state legislative races. This memorandum summarizes the legislative work in the first half of 2024, previews the upcoming lame duck session, and offers a brief review of political races in the General Election.

II. First Half of 2024 Review.

Despite the large number of legislation passed at the end of June, the overall number of bills enacted by the Ohio Legislature remains low. Below are brief overviews highlighting some of the impactful legislation acted upon during the first half of 2024.

A. House Bill 2 - Capital Budget and One Time Strategic Community Investment Fund.

Prior to the primary election, the Ohio House amended H.B. 2 to include its members' one time strategic community investment funds for community based projects, designating half of the \$700 million fund for various projects and leaving \$350 million for Senate members to appropriate for their selected projects. This process strayed from the typical capital budget, which traditionally



includes all the projects agreed upon by both the Ohio House and Ohio Senate rather than the two chambers having separate priority lists. At times, it appeared that a separate bill would constitute the capital budget, keeping the strategic community investment fund separated from the traditional construction spending legislation. Senate Republican Leadership resisted the bifurcated process and after several long weeks of negotiations spanning from April to June, it was agreed upon by House and Senate Leadership that the Senate Finance Committee would amend H.B. 2 to include the Senate's portion of the one-time strategic investment funds and also included the traditional capital budget. The finalized version of the capital budget totaled \$3.5 billion in appropriations, which funds capital projects and improvements through the state, including:

1. Mental health care facilities, including the design of a new hospital in the Miami Valley.
2. Higher education infrastructure, cybersecurity, and workforce readiness.
3. Construction and renovation in Ohio's school buildings.
4. Construction and renovation of local jails.
5. Investments of public safety, including the design of a new state-of-the-art crime lab.
6. Improvements to Ohio's state parks and dam rehabilitation.
7. Upgrades at the Ohio Expo Center and State Fairgrounds.
8. Community projects throughout the state, funded either through the strategic community investment fund or through state-issued bonds.

The Legislative Service Commission provides a breakdown of all of the funded projects [by county](#). A list of all community projects, sorted by county, is found [here](#).

Governor DeWine signed the bill into law on June 28, 2024.

#### B. Senate Bill 28- Physician Assistants' Compact Bill.

Senate Bill 28 enters Ohio into the Physician Assistant Licensure Compact to enhance the portability of physician assistant licenses across state lines. Ohio has joined a number of licensure compacts through legislation, helping to address healthcare provider shortages and other workforce needs. The Ohio House Health Provider Services Committee reported S.B. 28 out of committee on June 12, 2024. Following, on June 26, the Ohio House passed S.B. 28 by vote 95-2. On that same day, the Senate concurred with the House amendments to the bill. Now, the bill is headed to the Governor.

#### C. Senate Bill 175- Insurance Omnibus Bill.

The Legislature passed Senate Bill 175, which contains several insurance-related provisions. The bill adopts the latest NAIC model for pet insurance. Additionally, the bill exempts the administrative rules that the Department must adopt for NAIC accreditation purposes from the base inventory used for purposes of continuing law prohibitions concerning reductions in



regulatory restrictions.<sup>1</sup> This is one of the first exemptions permitted to Ohio's regulatory restrictions that passed in budget bill, H.B. 166, in the 133<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly. The bill also requires the Superintendent of Insurance to maintain the confidentiality of information in connection with the merger or other acquisition of control of a domestic insurer. The bill is headed to the Governor's desk for his signature.

#### D. House Bill 179- Statute of Repose /Vicarious Liability.

In response to the decision in *Elliot v. Durrani* case, H.B. 179 clarifies that the tolling of the limitations period during the defendant's absence or concealment does not apply to statutes of repose. The bill also revises the required parties to be named in a tort action alleging respondent superior or vicarious liability case. The Ohio Senate passed the measure, and it is headed to Governor DeWine.

### III. Lame Duck Preview.

The legislature returns to the statehouse in November, following the general election, for the period usually referred to as lame duck session. The final weeks before the end of the General Assembly are often frantic and fast-paced with amendments being added to legislation and moving quickly to the floor. Below is a sampling of pending legislation that might see additional activity before the sunset of the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly.

#### A. House Bill 197- Community Solar.

At one point it appeared H.B. 197, which establishes a pilot community solar program in Ohio, was slated to move out of committee and possibly head to the House floor, but the House Public Utilities Committee cancelled its scheduled meeting prior to session on June 26. The sponsors of the bill, Representatives Sharon Ray (R- Wadsworth) and Jim Hoops (R-Napoleon) remain optimistic for the bill's passage. We anticipate the House will act on this bill when it returns after the November General Election.

#### B. House Bill 257- Virtual Meetings.

After temporary pandemic related authorization expired, public bodies, with the exception of home rule municipalities, could no longer meet virtually. H.B. 257 allows certain public bodies in Ohio to meet virtually, with stringent requirements and controls to ensure public access and accountability. H.B. 257 is pending in the Senate Government Oversight, and received proponent testimony before the end of the spring session. This piece of legislation will likely receive a push over the finish line during lame duck session, but also presents an attractive vehicle for amendments.

---

<sup>1</sup> Ohio Revised Code Section 121.951, in what is commonly referred to as the "2 for 1 law," requires state agencies, with some specified exceptions, to remove two regulatory restrictions before enacting a new regulatory restriction by administrative rule.



#### C. House Bill 358/ Senate Bill 200- Carbon Capture.

The sponsors of House Bill 358 and Senate Bill 200 continue to work on the language establishing a legal framework for carbon capture in Ohio. Substitute bills are expected to be adopted by their respective chambers' committee when the Legislature returns to the Statehouse in November.

#### D. House Bill 503- Feral Swine.

One of the few bills passed unanimously by the Ohio House, H.B. 503, prohibits the transport, sale, purchase or hunting of feral swine in the state of Ohio. Additionally, the bill eliminates the license to garbage feed swine in the state. H.B. 503 is awaiting review from the Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee after the Senate returns to Columbus.

#### E. Senate Bill 60- Certified Mental Health Assistants.

At the end of the first half of 2024, the Ohio Senate passed S.B. 60, which creates a license for certified mental health assistants in Ohio. Northeast Ohio Medical University is the primary proponent behind the bill. Some healthcare provider organizations oppose the creation of the new license, primarily pointing to the duplication of services provided by existing healthcare providers and concerns about resources available for residencies. The House may continue work on the bill during lame duck session.

#### F. Senate Bill 63- Asbestos Claims.

The Ohio Senate passed S.B. 63, which requires a plaintiff in a tort action alleging an asbestos claim to file a sworn statement of specified disclosures within 60 days of filing the complaint. The goal of this legislation is to address the indiscriminate and costly naming of defendants in asbestos cases without proof of exposure—a practice known as over-naming. This legislation may be pushed through the House to cross the finish line before the end of the general assembly.

#### G. Senate Bill 226/ House Bill 212- Ohio Property Protection Act.

Prior to recessing for the summer, the Ohio Senate passed Senate Bill 226. If enacted, S.B. 226 will prohibit certain foreign countries, businesses, individuals, and organizations from acquiring agricultural land in Ohio. Additionally, the restrictions will apply to real property located within 25 miles of any installation under the jurisdiction of the U.S. armed forces, including a military base, camp, or airport. A similar piece of legislation is being considered in House Civil Justice Committee, H.B. 212. Due to both chambers having similar pieces of legislation, we anticipate the sponsors will try to get one of the bills passed by both chambers during lame duck session. Similar legislation has passed in other states.





#### IV. November 2024 General Election Preview.

##### A. U.S. Senate.

Bernie Moreno (R- Cleveland) successfully won the Republican primary to face U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown (D) in the general election. U.S. Senator Brown has served in this role since 2006. This race is a key race that may determine which political party controls the U.S. Senate in 2025.

##### B. Ohio Supreme Court.

Current Justice Joe Deters (R) is challenging current Justice Melody J. Stewart (D), instead of running for the remainder of his appointed term, in which he was appointed to in January 2023 . Franklin County Court of Common Pleas Judge Dan Hawkins (R) is running for the remainder of Justice Deters' current term, which was previously held by Chief Justice Kennedy's seat<sup>2</sup> and expires in 2026. Judge Hawkins faces Eighth District Judge Lisa Forbes (D). Hamilton County Court of Common Pleas Judge Megan Shanahan (R) is challenging current Justice Michael P. Donnelly (D). Ohio Supreme Court Justices serve six year terms.

##### C. Redistricting Reform.

On July 1, 2024, the proponent group, Citizens Not Politicians, filed a petition with the Ohio Secretary of State's office to place the Citizens Not Politicians constitutional amendment on the November General Election ballot that reforms Ohio's redistricting process. The proponent group filed over 731,000 signatures, which is almost double of the constitutional requirement. Secretary of State LaRose is reviewing the signatures and will determine the sufficiency near the end of July.

The proposed amendment changes Ohio's redistricting process by dissolving the current Redistricting Commission comprised of the Governor, the Secretary of State, the Auditor of State, and four members of the legislature representing both chambers and both caucuses. The current Redistricting Commission would be replaced by the Ohio Citizens Redistricting Commission, consisting of five Democrats, five Republicans and five independents. Current or former elected officials, political party officials and lobbyists are banded from serving on the Commission.

If the amendment passes, future election cycles Ohio's legislature could experience a shift in its partisan mix, although Republicans would likely still maintain their majorities in both the House and Senate. Critics of the current process believe that Ohio's current supermajorities are the result of partisan elected officials drawing their own lines, while defenders point to the most recent actions taken by the Ohio Redistricting Commission, where maps were approved unanimously by Commission members of both parties.

---

<sup>2</sup> Chief Justice Kennedy's seat was vacated when she won election as Chief Justice in 2022.



RE: First Half of 2024 Review, General Election, and Preview of Lame Duck Session

July 15, 2024

Page 6 of 6

V. Conclusion.

During the summer months, legislators return back to the districts to campaign and they are not expected back to Columbus for legislative work until after the November General Election. We will continue to provide you political updates during the election season and strategize on maximizing the upcoming lame duck session. We hope you're able to enjoy the summer and don't hesitate to reach out to any member of the Bricker Graydon Government Relations team with questions.