

Blighted property comes down.

Commissioners, Community Services & Planning works with Andover Township to rid landscape of burned-out building on Route 7.

Page 4



State Auditor sends county a “clean audit” certificate —

Page 5



Zip line project creates jobs.

Page 6



Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners
25 West Jefferson St.
Jefferson Ohio 44047



Ashtabula County Insights

October 2017
Volume 1, Issue 8

Festival time draws near



The Graham Road Covered Bridge is a favorite stopping point for motorcyclists who visit the county during Covered Bridge Festival weekend. Explore our county's 19 covered bridges and the countryside surrounding them during this autumn tradition. For a full list of events and activities, see Page 2.

YOUR VOICE

President Kozlowski responds to citizens' questions



Q What is the next step in the implementation of recycling at the county level, that is once local governments have ratified the solid-waste fee?



One the most significant programs that this fee will allow us to reinstate is the Household Hazardous Waste Collection event.

Several years have passed since the county has had funding to provide these important collection opportunities. Our Department of Community Services and Planning gets several calls every week from residents seeking disposal avenues for common household hazardous waste, such as paint, solvents and lubricants. With the decrease in fees that the county received from haulers using the landfill, funding for this service has been unavailable.

One or more of these events will be held in 2018, most likely starting in the spring.

The county also will reinstate Tire Amnesty days in 2018. These tire collection events may be offered as a countywide or community-based program.

See ANSWER, Page 2

Do you have a question for Casey Kozlowski?

Call 576-3750 or email

crkzlowski@ashtabulacounty.us

Ashtabula County INSIGHTS

is published monthly by the Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners:
Casey Kozlowski, President
Kathryn Whittington, Vice-President
J.P. Ducro IV

To have Insights delivered via email, send an email to cefeather@ashtabulacounty.us to be added to the mailing list.

The current and previous issues are always available for download from the county's website, ashtabulacounty.us, and the Ashtabula Wave, ashtabulawave.org.

OCTOBER 2017 meetings

- 3** 9:30 a.m., Commissioners work session
1:00 p.m., Commissioners agenda
- 10** 10 a.m., Commissioners work session
1 p.m. Commissioners agenda
- 17** 10:30 a.m., Commissioners work session
1:00 p.m., Commissioners agenda
- 24** 10 a.m., Commissioners work session
7 p.m., Commissioners agenda
Harpersfield Township Hall
1481 Harpersfield Road, Geneva
Q&A session at 6:30 p.m.

All other meetings held in the commissioner's second-floor meeting room, 25 W. Jefferson Street (old courthouse, Jefferson. Elevator, ramp available.

Covered Bridge Festival is Oct. 14 & 15

The Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners invite constituents and their guests to the Ashtabula County Covered Bridge Festival Oct. 14 and 15 in Jefferson and at our 19 covered bridges.

Commissioners provide the Festival Committee office space in the Old Courthouse and Board President Casey Kozlowski is a member of the Festival Committee.

This year's festival is based at Giddings Park, 100 East Jefferson St., but related events sprawl across the village and county.

A craft show will be held in the Jefferson Community Center, 11 E. Jefferson St., both days.

The Village Fire Hall, 96 E. Jefferson St., will host a mini-bridge contest, scarecrow contest and sell official Covered Bridge Festival Souvenirs.

In Giddings Hall, behind the police station, Megan's Quilt Parlor of Albion, Pa., will present a quilt show.

The Jefferson Historical Society, 42 E. Jefferson St., will have historical displays and the Jefferson Rotary Club will sell its bean soup.

Henderson Memorial Public Library, 54 E. Jefferson St., will offer activities for children and sidewalk chalk painting.

The Jefferson Depot opens 1 p.m. both days and will provide tours of the 1890 village.

Food, vendors and decorations will greet visitors to many of the county's 19 covered bridges both days. Maps to the bridges will be available at the festival grounds.

Ashtabula County Metroparks will host a presentation "The Lost Covered Bridges of Ashtabula County" at 6 p.m. Oct. 14. The presentation is by local author Carl E. Feather ("Covered Bridges of Ashtabula County") and will be held in the Ellsworth Pavilion, Harpersfield Covered Bridge Metropark.

ANSWER, continued from Page 1

Other services that will be made possible include recycling/waste reduction programs in schools and grant opportunities for recycling, clean-up and special event projects.

As Commissioners, we recognize that property owners are asked to bear an additional burden, but we believe it is important to offer residents opportunities to dispose of potentially harmful materials that threaten our environment/health and decrease our quality of life. Constituents can rest assured that we will work diligently to make sure the new revenue stream, estimated at \$180,000 per year, will be put to good use in improving our communities and county.

Saturday, October 14, events

8:30 a.m.-noon **Pancake Breakfast @ Jefferson United Methodist Church
125 East Jefferson Street - Wesley Hall Entrance**

9 a.m. **Festival/ Craft Building Open**

9 a.m.-5 p.m. **Car Show @ Giddings Park**

9 a.m.-12:15 p.m. **Queens Luncheon @ A-Tech (visiting royalty only)**

10 a.m.-10:30 a.m. **Children Choir from UMC**

11 a.m.-4 p.m. **John King as Abraham Lincoln strolling grounds**

11 a.m.-noon **Scribbles and Giggles strolling grounds**

noon-1 p.m. **Red Dust Mountain Boys**

12:30 p.m. **Parade Lineup starts at High School**

1 p.m.-4p.m. **1890 tours at Jefferson Depot**

1:30 p.m. **Parade leaves high school for Giddings Park**

2:15 p.m. **Parade and visiting Royalty Announcements**

3:30-4:30 p.m. **Red Dust Mountain Boys**

Sunday, October 15, events

9 a.m. **Festival Opens/ Craft Buildings Open**

8:30 a.m.-noon **Pancake Breakfast - Jefferson United Methodist Church
125 East Jefferson Street - Wesley Hall Entrance**

8:30 a.m. **Car Cruise gathers @ Giddings Park**

9 a.m. **Car Cruise Rolls Out to visit the Bridges**

9 a.m.-10 a.m. **Church service by Journey Church**

11 a.m.-12:15 p.m. **Black Horse (from Wheeling Jamboree)**

Noon-4 p.m. **John King as Abe Lincoln strolling grounds**

Noon-3 p.m. **Scribbles and Giggles**

1 to 3 p.m. **Jungle Terry's Wildlife Adventures**

1 to 4 p.m. **1890 tours at Jefferson Depot**

2:30-3:45 p.m. **Black Horse (from Wheeling Jamboree)2**

4 p.m.-4:45 p.m. **Raffle Drawings**

This schedule is for events at the festival grounds, 100 East Jefferson St, where food vendors, the Ashtabula County Bi-Centennial Bell, mini-bridge and antique cars and engines will be exhibited. There will be an apple butter making demonstration there, as well. The festival closes at 5 p.m. each day.

Events are held at the covered bridges concurrent with the festival hours in Jefferson.

Operation: PART builds on Opioid Summit success

Dozens of educators register to attend summit at SPIRE Institute and Lakeside High School Oct. 12 and 13

Ashtabula County's highly respected "Opioid Summit" returns Oct. 12 and 13 under a new name, Operation: PART.

Miriam Walton, director of the Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, says the sponsor organization, the Ashtabula County Prevention Coalition, rebranded the summit this year.

"They wanted to keep it fresh. PART—Prevention, Awareness, Recovery, Treatment—encompasses all the ways we try to address all of the issues surrounding drug and alcohol addiction," Walton says.

The summit is open to the entire community in keeping with the scope of the problem. "It is a community problem that needs a community solution," Walton says.

"We are never going to get in front of this thing by ourselves," Walton says of the mental health services sector. "We got to get comprehensive in our approach."

As of the end of September, registration numbers indicated that the community was indeed getting behind the effort. Walton said there were 152 registered for the summit's first day and 246 for the second.

"We are way ahead where we usually are at this point," she said.

Commissioners support the event, first offered six years ago as the Opioid Summit. Walton says at least one commissioner usually attends the summit and the Board of Commissioners has representation in the coalition, which begins working on the event in late-winter.

On a fiscal level, the Board of Commissioners is a conduit for two grants that provide treatment services throughout the year.

"There are all kinds of ways in which they have been very supportive," Walton says.

"I'm looking forward to attending Operation: PART this year," says Board of Commissioners President Casey Kozlowski. "The summit serves as a great community resource helping to educate others in the community about the scope of this issue, and it also helps bring stakeholders together to have a broader discussion on where we go from here."

Nationally recognized speakers

The summit itself is a credit to Ashtabula County, which despite its small size, has been able to pull together a significant event for not just the county, but the region. This year's summit builds on the experience of the five

prior summits and brings Dr. Bruce Perry, Sr., fellow at The Child Trauma Academy, to SPIRE Institute on the first day of the summit. His topic is the Six Core Strengths for Healthy Childhood Development. Perry returns for day two, at Lakeside High School, as the keynote speaker. His topic that day is "A Relational Approach to Working with Maltreated Children."

Afternoon keynote speaker for Friday is Tracy Plouck, director of the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. She will discuss Trauma Informed Care and statewide efforts to curb the opioid crisis.

Walton says trauma in children has emerged as a huge issue that challenges educators.

"I think the schools are noticing this more and more," Walton says. "And they are working hard to deal with some of the issues that their students are dealing with. Trauma is a huge issue and it can come from substance abuse, poverty, deaths in the family."

She says the event will make "top-notch information" about trauma available to regional audiences. At least 47 local educators registered to attend the summit. And Walton knows of 70 educators outside the county who have signed up to attend.

Dr. Perry's visit is funded by an Ohio Department of Youth Services Grant that the Ashtabula County Juvenile Court obtained. Walton says various sponsors that contribute in-kind services as well as cash donations that make the summit possible. The \$50-per-person registration fee for both days covers the cost of breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack for each day.

In addition to the speakers, the summit will provide breakout sessions dealing with each aspect of PART:

Prevention: Danielle Dillon of Columbiana County, will talk about the 40 developmental assets of children;

Awareness: Dr. Nicole Labor, associate director of Addiction Medicine, will focus on the neurobiology of addiction.

Recovery: Individuals and family members in the recovery community will talk about what has kept them on the path to recovery.

Treatment: Evidence-based treatment practices in use in the community will be discussed by panel members.

The Oct. 12 summit gets under way at 9 a.m.; the Oct. 13 summit at 8:15 a.m. For more information, registration, call Katie Park at the MHRS Board office, (440) 992-3121.

Lake Area Recovery Center (LARC) marks 50 years

Commissioners in September issued a proclamation to the Board and staff of Lake Area Recovery Center, LARC, recognizing that organization's 50th anniversary.

The center's first 50 years were celebrated during a gathering Sept. 23 at SPIRE Institute. During the program, LARC's executive director, Kathleen Kinney, was honored, as well. Kinney, who has led the organization for 43 years, is retiring from that post.

LARC has served as a great resource in our community, helping residents by providing addiction treatment services. It's hard to believe it has been 50 years. I congratulate LARC on 50 years and wish them continued success.

President Casey Kozlowski

Miriam Walton, director of the Ashtabula County Mental Health and Recovery Services Board, says LARC has been at the forefront of providing addiction treatment services. "Way back when they started, they were one of the ground-breaking organizations to recognize that addiction is a disease and they pushed that concept forward."

While the mental health field caught up to LARC's innovative stance, LARC continued to move forward, addressing specific needs in the community.

One of the most revolutionary was providing a treatment facility for women and their babies going through withdrawal.

"LARC saw that there was a need and filled it," Walton says. "LARC was very instrumental in moving things along."

"We are grateful for the work of LARC and Kathleen's dedication to the organization and this community for so many years," says Commissioner J.P. Ducro IV.



Commissioners (from left) J.P. Ducro IV, President Casey Kozlowski and Vice-President Kathryn Whittington worked with the Department of Community Services and Planning and Andover Township Trustees to get the money needed to bring down this eyesore on Route 7, south of Andover Village.

Board works with township to bring down eyesore

An eyesore on the landscape along the route to Pymatuning State Park is being cleared up through Community Development Block Grant funding that the Board of Commissioners applied for and obtained for Ashtabula County townships and villages.

The blighted property is on Route 7 Andover Township, south of the village. A former second-hand store, the two-story, frame building burned several years ago. The collapsed, charred structure has been a blight on the community, says Janice Switzer, director of Community Services and Planning for Ashtabula County.

“Our department got involved after the township’s zoning inspector cited the owner. But the owner did not have the funds to take care of the problem,” Switzer says.

Andover Township officials approached her office about the issue. Removal of blighted buildings across the county’s landscape is high priority in the county’s Community Development Implementation Strategy, and \$86,000 was allocated from the most recent round of Community Development Block Grant

(CDBG) funding for that purpose.

“We had this money available that could be used if (the owner) was willing to do a volunteer demolition,” Switzer says.

Under the grant terms, the owner would have to contribute 10 percent of the cost. The other option was a lien against the property for 20 percent of the cost.

The owner did not have the cash, but members of the local Ruritans heard about the need and the group stepped up with the cash match.

Switzer says an asbestos survey had to be performed before the building could be tackled with a backhoe. The cost of the project, with the study, was about \$7,300. Demolition started in late September.

“The property owner will still own the land,” Switzer says of the arrangement. “He is happy to get rid of the blighted structure.”

The demolition marked the first time the county had put CDBG demolition money into Andover Township. She says a Pierpont Township blighted building will be coming down with money from the grant, as well.

“That money is pretty much gone, but I just applied for another \$50,000,” Switzer says.

The county also uses the CDBG demolition money to help bridge funding gaps on projects larger than the \$25,000 maximum grant available through the Neighborhood Initiative Program of the Ohio Housing Finance Agency. Switzer cites a Conneaut demolition project that went over \$25,000 as a use for the CDBG demolition funding.

Commissioners are the grantees for the CDBG money; the Community Services Department administers the grant and follows through on the projects.

“Utilization of CDBG funds to help tear down a dilapidated structure in Andover (Township) will serve the community well and it fits into the county’s Community Development Implementation Strategy of removing blight in our communities, says President Casey Kozlowski. “It is great to see these blighted structures being removed throughout the county,” says Commissioner J.P. Ducro IV. “It is a visible sign of the hard work of the many entities behind the scenes.”

Board serves up fundraiser for United Way

The Board of Commissioners in September revived a long-standing end-of-summer tradition at the Courthouse Complex.

They and department heads on Sept. 22 served a benefit lunch to employees whose donation went to United Way of Ashtabula County. Employees also took a chance to win gift baskets provided by various departments and the staffs of elected officials.

The events raised a total of \$963 for United Way.

Lori Larson, Risk Manager for the Board of Commissioners, Commissioners Vice-President Kathryn Whittington, and Janice Switzer, Director of Community Services and Planning, headed up the effort, which required several weeks of planning and solicitation of donations.

The Board provided the meat (hamburgers and hot dogs) while staff provided sandwich buns. En-

vironmental Services, Community Services, Maintenance and the Building Department provided assorted cookies; Community Services also provided condiments. The county's Emergency Management Agency provided paper products, and Lori Larson made baked beans. Beverages were provided by H.R. Director Lauren Davis. In response to request from several employees, Janice Switzer provided vegetarian burger options. Jake Brand of her department loaned his grill to the effort.

Corporate donors included AVI Food Systems, the vending machine provider, which donated the bagged chips. Cookies were donated by Subway, McDonalds and Legally Sweet.

Gift baskets were provided by:

- Eddie's Grill and the Sezon Family (2 baskets);
- Ashtabula County Auditor,



Commissioners President Casey Kozlowski, Vice-President Katherine Whittington and J.P. Ducro IV serve lunch to Ashtabula County Clerk of Courts Tami Pentek during the United Way fundraiser on Sept. 22. Photo by Randy Jones, United Way of Ashtabula County.

- baking basket;
- Nick Iarocci and prosecutor staff, Jello basket and fall basket;
- Clerk of Courts, warmth and wine;
- County Recorder, bath and beauty;
- County Treasurer, fall fun;
- Administrator Janet Discher and Community Services & Planning, a bird-feeding basket.

Switzer said it probably has been more than a decade since the tradition was last observed.

Budget discussions for 2018 under way in October

Budget discussions for the 2018 General Fund are under way with the Board of Commissioners.

This month, the county's Budget Advisory Committee will begin a series of work sessions with the Board and elected officials as budget requests are presented for 2018.

The members of this committee are volunteers and spend an average of three to five days a year in these meetings.

Returning to the table this year are Bud Hill, Kristen Daubenspeck and Susan Hill. New members Jeff Magyar and David Bogardus will replace Ann Marrison and the late Bob Hegfield on the Advisory.

"I am glad to get started on this process earlier this year and look forward to working with our partners in the county to find ways to be as conservative and fiscally responsible as possible," says Commissioner J.P. Ducro IV.

"I am happy to have the process to start to allow us, the departments, and the budget committee the time necessary to review all the requests for 2018," said Commissioners Vice-President Kathryn Whittington.

County gets 'clean' audit

Ashtabula County recently received an Auditor of State Award and letter of commendation from State Auditor Dave Yost as a result of the county having a clean state audit. County Auditor Roger Corlett says the letter and certificate issued by Yost's office are compliments to both his office and that of the Commissioners and County Administrator Janet Discher, as well as other elected officials and department heads.

"It really is a county thing," Corlett says. "Everybody is responsible for a lot of compliance issues. (The state auditors) just get a lot of information from us, then they go into the various departments and conduct the audit."

The commendation is based upon the financial statements that the County Auditor prepares and the on-site audit.

"It's a nice way to be recognized," Corlett says.

In the past five years, the county has had only one audit that produced a finding, and that was in a department outside of

Corlett's jurisdiction.

He says there is misunderstanding among the public about what a county auditor does. Corlett's position is more similar to that of chief fiscal officer than "auditor."

"The title auditor leads people to believe that the auditor audits the entire county," he says. "The only thing we audit are the expenses of the county. We will not pay bills without making sure that there is documentation and the money has been appropriated."

As the county's chief fiscal officer, Corlett and his staff oversaw a budget of about \$213 million during the audit period, about 10 times that of the county's general fund.

"We appreciate the work of all the county departments, and especially Auditor Corlett, for maintainign the high standards that allowed us to receive this recognition," says Commissioner J.P. Ducro IV.

"A job well done by Auditor Corlett and all the departments," says Commissioners Vice-President Kathryn Whittington.

"I'm pleased that the county received a clean audit," says President Casey Kozlowski. "This is the culmination of hard work by many, and I am thankful for the assistance of many in making this possible."

Zip line feature open at Lodge & Conference Center

Project creates jobs

Canopy Tours Manager Debbie Post says several job opportunities are open at the attraction.

Two additional cashiers, a supervisor, a harness maintenance worker and 15 guides will need to be hired for next year's tour season.

Qualifications, especially for the guides, include safety consciousness and no fear of heights. A great customer service attitude and dedication to teamwork are essential. For more information the job openings, call 866-601-1973.



For more than two hours, the adventurers play like squirrels scampering between tree tops on an October morning, seeking the acorns of autumnal memories.

Their screams, shouts and laughter echo through the hardwood forest of Geneva State Park as the thrill seekers zip between trees at speeds approaching 25 mph.

The thrills continue when they break out of the forest canopy and glide over Cowles Creek, toward the Lake Erie shore.

A couple of years ago, the idea of having a zip line course in Ashtabula County was but a dream for those in the tourism industry. But last year Adventure Zone opened its zip line over the popular miniature golf and amusement park at Geneva-On-The-Lake, and in late September, Debbie Post and Eric Frantz became the first members of the general public to test the new course at Lake Erie Canopy

Tours, adjacent to The Lodge and Conference Center.

"I love it," says Post, who has traveled the zip line three times since it opened Sept. 21, 2017. "I like the last part of it best. It is a short, fast section."

Frantz is general manager of The Lodge and Post is the Canopy Tours manager. The Canopy Tours project includes a challenge course with several difficulty levels, including a children's course. The Challenge Course opened in July and is located in the same section of Geneva State Park as the zip line.

The project is owned by Delaware North Companies, which operates The Lodge for Ashtabula County, owner of state park lodge. Ashtabula County leases the land from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources for both The Lodge and Canopy Tours, as well as the Delaware North cottage development in

Chestnut Grove, to the east of The Lodge.

Delaware North invested \$1.75 million in the Canopy Tours project; last year, the company invested more than \$4 million in the cottages project, which has boosted sales and lodging tax receipts in the county and drawn more tourists to the Gateway to Ohio's Wine Country.

Post says the zip line has garnered considerable media coverage from Cleveland television stations and print media in just the first two weeks of operation. The attention is well deserved because there simply are no other zip line projects like this in Ohio.

"It is unique because you have the woods experience, the lake experience," Post says. "And it ties into the Challenge Course."

For more information visit the Canopy Tours website, lakeeriecanopytours.com, or call 866-601-1973.

Metroparks plans dedication at Eyring Wetlands

All are invited to attend/participate in a park opening ribbon-cutting at the Eyring Wetlands Metropark, at 906 Windsor Mechanicsville Rd, Austinburg Twp, at 2pm on Sunday, October 8, 2017, at the parking lot and trail head for the Metropark. Metroparks has just installed a parking lot, kiosk, signage, and created a park entrance for pedestrians so that the trail can be accessed by the general public from dawn until dusk.

Please celebrate the opening of Eyring Metroparks with Don Eyring, Ashtabula Metroparks Board and staff, public officials, friends and conservationists. Parts of the park are preserved with a conservation easement to protect wetland areas.



Metroparks, wetland/wildlife experts and/or Mr. Eyring will offer nature walks along the property's beautiful trail system. Water and snacks will be provided.

Now 52 acres of habitat, Eyring Wetlands Metropark has trails, remnant farm buildings, and is a fabulous place to enjoy birding, hiking, photography, picnics, and more.

Eyring Wetlands Metropark is the eighth Ashtabula County Metropark now open to the public and available for outdoor education and recreation covering nearly 1,000 acres of habitat. It is the fifth park Metroparks has opened since the passage of the park levy in late 2014. The park system has nearly 40 miles of accessible trails.