



Hello Hamilton County

August 2008

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

*"Wherever we look upon this earth,
the opportunities take shape within the problems.."*

~Nelson A. Rockefeller

Board of County Commissioners Approves Resolution Enabling County Employees to Earn Regular Pay While Serving as Poll Workers



On August 13th, the Board of Hamilton County Commissioners approved a resolution allowing Hamilton County employees who work under the Board of County Commissioners to be compensated with regular pay while serving as poll workers. The Ohio General Assembly had passed legislation (H.B. 262) granting employees of the State of Ohio and its political subdivisions leave with pay for the purpose of being poll workers on Election Day.

The resolution cites that the Commissioners recognize the critical importance of the proper administration of Elections in Hamilton County. They also understand that dramatic changes in the technology used to conduct elections limits the pool of competent and qualified poll workers.

Having a limited pool of competent, qualified poll workers could hurt, as there is a big need for poll workers. The Hamilton County Board of Elec-

tions must recruit, train, and field approximately 4,000 poll workers for Primary and General Elections. By passing this resolution, The Board of County Commissioners is assisting the Board of Elections in fulfilling its statutory mandate to fully staff each polling location with qualified and competent poll workers.

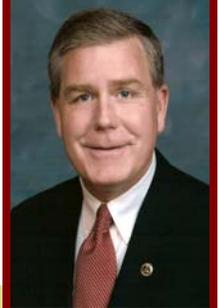
The passed resolution will result in a new policy enabling employees to serve their community with pay as an election official on the November 4, 2008 Election Day and future Election Days in Hamilton County.

The Deputy Director of the Hamilton County Board of Elections, John M. Williams, says, "We are pleased and gratified that the Commissioners support the Board of Elections in this important matter and look forward to utilizing our co-workers in the upcoming November election."



Patrick's Perspective

Hamilton County Keeps Focused On Results



Hamilton County
Administrator
Patrick
Thompson

How are we doing? This is a question we all ask ourselves from time to time as we seek to evaluate our performance as a team and individual performer. For our favorite sports team or athlete, we simply look at the standings, box score or stat sheet provided by the morning sports section or on the daily SportsCenter broadcast. For a local government team, it is not quite as simple and direct.

In 2008, the Board of Commissioners working closely with County Administration has sought to focus organizational performance on three key priority areas:

- Fiscal Stewardship
- Criminal Justice Reform & Public Safety
- Quality of Life

To help “keep score” of our progress in these key priority areas, the Board has adopted specific, measurable performance indicators. The measures comprise our management “dash board.” These dash board measures are tracked

by the senior management team on an ongoing basis and are reported to the Commissioners publicly on a quarterly basis. Accompanying the dash board is the monthly management work plan update that tracks over 70 specific tasks and objectives to make progress towards the Commission’s priorities.

On the following pages, you can see the mid-year dash board recently shared with the Board of County Commissioners. It’s also at this link on Hamilton County’s website: http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hc/hc_pdfs/PerformanceDashboard.pdf

As I reflect on our performance, I am encouraged by the results and proud of the County workforce that is striving so hard to achieve them. Much work remains to be done, but I am confident that together, we will achieve positive results for the citizens of Hamilton County. Thank you.



Hamilton County, Ohio Commission Priorities:

- **Fiscal Stewardship**
- **Criminal Justice Reform & Public Safety**
- **Quality of Life**

2008 Performance Dash Board

Mid-Year Results

1	A.	2008 expenditures remain within originally appropriated funding level.	<p>Through the efforts of County departments and the Budget Office, the 2008 year-end projected general fund expenditure budget will be \$255,000 (less than one percent) over the 2008 approved general fund budget of \$271 million. This projection is based on expenditures through May 30, 2008. Continued diligence and fiscal discipline should close this gap in the remaining months of the fiscal year.</p> <p>NOTE: Based on the continued poor performance of the major general fund revenue sources (see June 19, 2008 budget projections report), the Administration has recommended a reduction in remaining general fund budget expenditure balances of 6.0%. Fully implemented, this reduction will allow the general fund to end the year with a 5% fund reserve (see goal 1b).</p>
	B.	Increase reserve to 5% or more of general fund.	<p>The Administration has explored several options to build up the general fund reserve. Among the options considered is the securitization of the Drake lease proceeds. This option is not possible based on the advice of the county's bond counsel and financial advisor. The County Commission approved the issuance of general obligation bonds to reimburse the general fund for the \$8 million Coroner's judgment. As noted in goal 1a, reductions in remaining 2008 budget balances totaling 6% should provide additional fund balance to meet the Commission's policy goal of a 5% general fund reserve.</p>
2	A.	Decrease the number of early releases from the jail 5% from same calendar quarter in 2007.	<p>During the first half of 2007 and 2008, there were no early releases for male inmates. For female inmates, there were 37 early releases in the first half of 2007 and 11 in the first half of 2008 for a reduction of 26, or 70.3%. The Criminal Justice Commission (CJC) is forwarding several initiatives to reduce the number of jail bed days including streamlining the extradition process, reviewing bond setting practices, expanding day reporting and the six-day OVI programs, and eliminating aging warrants. Additionally, the number of arrests in 2008 has decreased within the city of Cincinnati with the elimination of sheriff patrols in the Over the Rhine neighborhood and with the Sheriff's Office resuming per diem charges to Cincinnati for city ordinance arrests. NOTE: Early releases have been more prevalent during the summer months (3rd quarter) when jail capacity is regularly exceeded.</p>
	B.	Decrease the number of "process only" arrests 5% from the same calendar quarter in 2007.	<p>During the first half of 2007 and 2008, there were no process only arrests for male inmates. For female inmates, there were 2,489 process only arrests in the first half of 2007 and 1,349 in the first half of 2008 for a reduction of 1,140, or 45.8%. Similar to goal 2a, the efforts of the CJC noted above will result in decreased jail bed usage in the coming quarters. Process only arrests are more prevalent during the summer months (3rd quarter) when jail capacity is regularly exceeded.</p>



Hamilton County, Ohio Commission Priorities:

- **Fiscal Stewardship**
- **Criminal Justice Reform & Public Safety**
- **Quality of Life**

2008 Performance Dash Board

Mid-Year Results

3	A.	Increase the number of foster homes in Hamilton County by 100.	The foster parent recruitment campaign continues to show success as demonstrated by a significant increase in licensed foster homes. Total homes (foster/adopt) approved in 2007 = 44. In comparison, total homes (foster/adopt) approved in the 1st half of 2008 = 44. It takes an average of 130 days to complete the home study process and to approve a home. The SACWIS (new state-wide system implemented in HCJFS May 2008) learning curve has slowed the process to an average 160 days. The increase in time is anticipated to be short-term and should improve as assessors' technical skills improve.
	B.	Increase the number of adoptively placed children by 15% over the 2007 total.	In 2007, the total number of adoptively placed children was 135. The goal for 2008 is 155. Currently, the total number of adopted children in the first half of 2008 is 52 compared to 54 in the first half of 2007. As of July 2, 2008 we are projecting a minimum of 127 adoptions by year end based on current placements and matches. This does not include children who have not yet been permanently committed to JFS. While we strive to meet the target of increasing the total number of adoptions by 15%, we are confident that our recruitment strategies and specifically the efforts of our Child Specific Recruiters will have a positive impact on all of the children available for adoption, especially children 9 years of age and older.
4	A.	Facilitate business investment in Hamilton County in excess of \$50 million.	Through the first half of 2008, completed development deals and loans resulted in the investment of \$15.5 million in Hamilton County businesses. Currently, there are proposals in process that represent an additional investment of \$3.6 million. There are projects in the development stage that could result in significant additional investment. Ongoing multi-year, brownfield and financing projects through the Port Authority are estimated to generate \$610.9 million in private investment including the Port's financing role in the Queen City Square project which broke ground in June.
	B.	Through demonstrable County activity create 1,000 new jobs.	During the first half of 2008, completed development deals and loans resulted in the creation of 397 new jobs and the retention of 1,552 jobs in Hamilton County. Currently, there are proposals in process that could result in the creation of 156 new jobs and the retention of 1,401 jobs. There are projects in the development stage that could result in over 800 new jobs and retention of approximately 2,000 jobs. Ongoing multi-year, brownfield and financing projects through the Port Authority are estimated to generate 5,750 jobs.



Hamilton County Offers its Residents a “Suite Deal”



Paul Brown Stadium

Hamilton County is offering its residents an opportunity to watch a Bengals game from the county's Paul Brown Stadium (PBS) suite. It's a great chance for Hamilton County citizens to enjoy a game and see the stadium that our community helped build. Sixteen winners and their guests will be selected to see one of two Bengals' games:

- Sunday, October 19, Cincinnati vs. Pittsburgh, or
- Sunday, November 30, Cincinnati vs. Baltimore

If you would like to register to win tickets to a game, please:

- Register online at www.HamiltonCountyOhio.gov or by sending a postcard entry, including the Hamilton County resident's name, address, and phone number to:

Bengals Drawing
c/o Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
138 East Court Street, Room 603
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Entries will be accepted until November 10, 2008. Entries are limited to Hamilton County residents with one entry per citizen. The drawing for the October 19 game (Pittsburgh) will be held on October 1st, following the County Commissioners' meeting. The November 30th game drawing (Baltimore) will be held on November 12th, following the Commissioners' meeting. Winners must respond within 48 hours of the drawing.

The kickoff for both games is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. Food and soft drinks will also be provided for the winners and their guests. In addition to this opportunity for residents selected through random drawings, the suite at Paul Brown Stadium will again this year be used by groups such as foster families, county volunteers, the county's Employees of the Year, and volunteer instructors in the county's employee training program. Get those entries in so you have a chance to win tickets. Good luck!



Seek Work Program: A Child Support/ Workforce Development Partnership



**Allen Clay, HCJFS
Seek Work Coordinator**

We'll help you get a job so you can pay child support. If you don't take advantage of this offer, you'll face the consequences. Under the new Seek Work program, unemployed or "under-employed" people with child support obligations are being ordered to participate in job training and placement services. Those who don't appear and/or participate face administrative actions such as license suspension and maybe even contempt of court.

Earlier this year, the county began ordering unemployed child support obligors to the SuperJobs Center, 1916 Central Parkway. Super Jobs offers job leads and referrals, access to computers, fax machines and copiers, one-on-one career counseling, workshops and financial assistance for training.

The Hamilton County Department of Job and Family Services (HCJFS) plays an important role in the center, a partnership among social service providers, employment experts and business. The agency's Workforce Development unit oversees a contract with Arbor E&T, which handles day-to-day operation of Super Jobs. "We are building a bridge between Child Support and Workforce Development as part of our efforts to better serve the community," said

Jeff Startzman, the Hamilton County JFS assistant director who oversees both programs. "On the Child Support side, we have a lot of absent parents who need jobs. Meanwhile, Workforce Development helps people find jobs or better jobs, and helps employers find needed workers."

Workforce Development began reporting to Startzman last year with programs such as Seek Work in mind. Startzman, who came to HCJFS in 2005, had seen successful Child Support/Workforce Development partnerships in other Ohio counties. Montgomery County has had a Seek Work program for a number of years. He helped develop the program there as Domestic Relations Court Administrator.

Child Support technician Allen Clay serves as Seek Work coordinator. Clay conducts group orientation sessions, answers individuals' questions, tracks participation in services, and gives progress reports about each individual to the courts and Child Support hearing officers. He works closely with Angela Storms of Workforce Development and her supervisor, Robert Harper, as well as Child Support Section Chief Germaine Sheppard and supervisor Al Howard.

"Once the participants are linked to employment, the program is a win-win for everyone," Clay said. "Participants find employment to become self-sufficient, and the children receive child support as ordered by the courts."

Those who fail to fulfill their Seek Work commitment face actions such as license suspension and contempt of court citations, Clay added. "The objective is for people to find and keep a job," Clay said. "We want them to report their employment, so we can initiate wage withholding. We want them to overcome barriers, comply with court-ordered child support, maintain stable employment, become self-sufficient, and reunify with their children."

Startzman sees Seek Work as one of many initiatives designed to improve customer service, develop positive relationships with Child Support customers, and strengthen the community. "Working cooperatively, we can get more money into the hands of families as they pay for expenses such as food, medical care and education for their children," Startzman said. "The purpose of the child support program is to give children the opportunity for a better life."



Hamilton County Earns National Recognition With National Association of Counties (NACo) Award Winners

Hamilton County has earned national recognition with three National Association of Counties (NACo) award winning programs! The NACo Achievement Award Program seeks to recognize innovative county government programs. The three programs described below received awards. Congratulations to the employees whose efforts were recognized for making a positive difference for our county and our community.

Project Impact – Hamilton County Regional Planning Commission (HCRPC).

Through Project Impact, HCRPC works with communities to develop ways to reverse population and job loss and to conserve the unique traditional, historic, authentic, and urbanist qualities of Hamilton County's First Suburbs. Project Impact was first offered to Hamilton County communities in 2006 and it continues to assist local communities struggling with inadequate housing stock, aging infrastructure, shrinking tax bases, obsolete commercial and industrial properties, and increasing social service costs.

Based on HCRPC capacity, Project Impact has been undertaken in six communities over the past two years with significant measurable results.

Employees contributing to this project: Catalina Landivar, Dean Niemeyer, Jay Springer, Karen Ambrosius, Caroline Statkus, K.D. Rex, John Huth, Bryan Snyder and Todd Kinskey.

Collaborative Purchasing or "Show Me the Savings" Program— Administration

Beginning in early 2007, Hamilton County's Purchasing Department began to extend its bidding and online obsolete equipment auction services to other Hamilton County jurisdictions.

Currently, 10 jurisdictions are using the "master bid" service and 14 jurisdictions are using the online auction service. More are considering joining these services each day. The County has benefited by extending the positive impact of both of these services, increased revenue generation through fees collected by system users, and helped enhance the efficiency of local governments throughout the county.

Employees contributing to this project: Purchasing Director Amy Hoh and her team including JoAnn Cramer, Mike Hopper, Tom Kamphaus, Gina Richmond, Amanda Russell, Shelly Walls, and Jill Williams.

Employee Incentives for Innovation program—Human Resources

The Hamilton County Commissioners asked staff to develop programs that would encourage employees to develop innovative ideas about how to do business and to recognize them for these ideas. The Project Gain and Fresh Ideas programs recognize innovative ideas. Project Gain rewards groups of employees whose ideas are above and beyond the normal scope of their duties and save money or generate revenue. Employees and the County share in the savings realized or revenue generated. Fresh Ideas rewards individual employees for ideas that have a positive impact in the County.

Employees contributing to this project: Evelyn Stephenson and Kim Pennekamp. Former employee Sharon Booker also did much to research, develop and implement Project Gain prior to her retirement.



When it comes to keeping your neighborhood healthy and safe, protecting the air is an obvious must. How to actually detect problem signs and improve the air, however, isn't always such a no-brainer.

Fortunately for all air-conscious community members, the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services (HCDOES) Air Quality Management Division—which serves Butler, Clermont and Warren counties in addition to Hamilton County—has several programs to help you get to know that air you've been breathing—and what you can do to keep it clean.

Addressing Air Quality Concerns

If you suspect a problem with the air outside your home or business, such as unusual smoke, odors or dust, call the HCDOES 24-hour Air Quality Hotline (513-946-7777). Investigators will promptly respond to problem and help you identify the mystery air and its source.

HCDOES also offers the Summa Canister Sampling Program, for reoccurring air quality issues. The canisters allow individuals to capture their own air samples at the instant the issue arises without having to wait for a HCDOES inspector. Taking

the samples is easy, and HCDOES inspectors come to the spot to retrieve the data. *To learn more about the Air Quality Management Division, the Air Quality Hotline or the Summa Canister Sampling Program, visit www.hcdoes.org.*

Education and Outreach

If you're ready to do your part to improve neighborhood air quality, you've got support. HCDOES offers a variety of FREE outreach and education programs, including:

Events: HCDOES will bring resources and informational booths to community events, health fairs, workshops and more

Publications on various air quality topics, including pollution, allergies and clean air practices and policies

Presentations about air quality for businesses, schools and community organizations

Children's Resources, including activity books and newsletters, available for download

To check out the complete list of FREE outreach and education services from HCDOES, visit www.hcdoes.org.





Hamilton County's 2008 Employees of the Year Award Recipients

In April, Hamilton County announced the names of Hamilton County's Employees of the Year. These employees represent the best of the best! You can read about the employees and their achievements in the next few editions of "Hello Hamilton County."

This month, we highlight the winner of the Administrative/Clerical Support Award, Bridgette Johnson, and the winner of the Extra Mile Award, the Integrity Trendsetters.

Employee of the Year: Administrative/Clerical Support Award Bridgette Johnson Hamilton County Job and Family Services



Going above and beyond her current job duties comes naturally to Bridgette Johnson, an Office Support Specialist in Child Support Administration with the Department of Job and Family Services. On a daily basis, she consistently processes her work in a timely manner.

Bridgette always looks for proactive ways to make things better in the Cashier's Office and for the customers she works with in the office, both external and internal. Bridgette provides exceptional work on projects, tasks and assignments.

Bridgette always comes in with a smile, whether

she has had a bad day or not, and she is always willing to help others and to make things better

for all. Many "kudos" have been received by those both inside and outside of Job and Family Services on her efficiency and her kindness.

Bridgette says she was excited to earn the award. Cristina Schneider, Team Leader, nominated Bridgette.



Employee of the Year: Extra Mile Award: Integrity Trendsetters Team Hamilton County Job and Family Services



Members of the Integrity Trendsetters Team received their Employee of the Year Awards in May.

The Integrity Trendsetters Team is responsible for the togetherness within Family and Adult Assistance 3 at the Hamilton County Department of Job & Family Services. The mission of the committee is to generate, integrate and create ways to motivate FAA3 staff in ways that positively affect attitudes and behavioral changes for the improvement of our social and environmental conditions.

The committee's first major project was to plan a team-building retreat, which was held Oct. 19, 2007, at Maple Ridge Lodge in Mt. Airy. Seventy-seven employees from FAA3 attended the retreat.

Group members also implemented the "bucket" concept. Every person within FAA3 has a bucket on their desk that is filled

with slips of "thank you" and encouragement from co-workers. Group members have made a difference within this section by motivating their co-workers. They are to be commended for all of their hard work in improving the atmosphere of FAA3.

The team was nominated by Kameshia McKenzie, Eligibility Technician.

Employee of the Year Award Recipients: Integrity Trendsetters Team Members

Congratulations to the Job and Family Services employees who are members of the award-winning Integrity Trendsetters Team.

Caryl Creighton
Crystal Young
Kameshia McKenzie
Keith Reed
Jennifer Kinney
Felita Smith
Sandra Loring

Shanta Wakefield
Stephanie Waldon
Yonas Asmerom
Ebony-Nicole Thomas
Lynn Rogers
Christine Wallace

Stacy Ware
Patricia Williams
Jennifer Ruff
Jackie Ward
Vicki Beare
Pam King



A Caring Family is Needed!



Nikiah
May 1995

This eager and dynamic pre-teen loves being with her friends and talking on the phone. Nikiah is an outgoing and friendly young girl who loves cheer-leading, but doesn't really care for other sports. She loves playing dress up and going to Penn Station. When she grows up she wants to be a movie star or a professional singer.

Nikiah likes school, especially math and choir. After school this active and pleasant young lady participates in an after school program with her friends. Nikiah also enjoys visiting her sister when she is able.

**To learn more about Nikiah and others available for adoption,
Please call 513-632-6366 or visit www.hcadopt.org.**



Please post "Hello Hamilton County," so everyone can see what's going on!

Hello Hamilton County is published monthly. It is designed to inform citizens and employees about news and events related to Hamilton County government and our community in general. You can find current and archived editions on the County's website. If you have questions, suggestions, or article submissions, please contact Laura Maus or Eric Stuckey.

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