



Hello Hamilton County

August 2009

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

"It is the nature of man to rise to greatness if greatness is expected of him."

~John Steinbeck

Hamilton County Tax Levy Review Committee Wraps Up Review Process for November Ballot Levies



Citizens provided input during the Board of County Commissioners' July 29 public hearing regarding the Cincinnati Museum Center Levy, the MRDD levy, and the Family and Treatment Services levy.

Hamilton County's Tax Levy Review Committee (TLRC) in July wrapped up its extensive process of reviewing proposed tax levies for the November ballot. They have shared recommendations with the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC), and a final public hearing was held on July 29 to get citizens' input.

The TLRC is a group of nine citizens who are appointed to review tax levy requests that agencies are making. They hear from the agencies requesting levies, from members of the public, and from the county and consultants who are evaluating the levy-requesting agency's expenditures.

"This is a unique process," Commission President David Pepper said about the Tax Levy Review process. "Hamilton County is the only major

county in Ohio with a TLRC," said Lisa Webb, Budget Analyst.

The TLRC strives to assist the BOCC in its goal of creating a balance between various levy agencies' funding needs on the one hand and the tax burden on the home and business owners on the other.

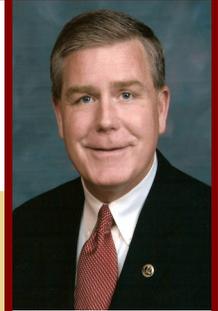
"We follow the mission statement that the BOCC set up and present to them information and a recommendation about what we think is a fair dollar amount as to what the agency is asking for versus what we think the average citizen could pay for," explains TLRC Chair Tim Molony. "That's the fine line we walk."

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Patrick's Perspective

Hamilton County Dedicated to Making Challenging Budget Situation Work



**Patrick Thompson,
Hamilton County
Administrator**

Hamilton County government continues to face ongoing financial challenges.

First, we learned that due to revenue decreases that are greater than anticipated, we need to make a second round of cuts to the 2009 budget. The budget had already been adopted with a \$30 million reduction compared to the 2008 budget. In April, the budget was cut by an additional \$6 million. And now we're cutting an additional 2.5%. That's another \$6 million decrease to a budget that had already been painstakingly reduced.

Second, we are taking another hit for the planned 2010 budget. County departments were already making painful decisions about how to create a 2010 budget that would be \$26.4 million less than the 2009 budget. Now we know it will be necessary to plan a 2010 budget that is actually \$30 million less.

Hamilton County is committed to providing the important services that citizens rely upon, despite severe fiscal constraints. The cooperation that county departments are showing in the face of this situation is helpful and appreciated. Hamilton County has been operating in a fiscally responsible manner, so reducing expenses even further is a daunting challenge. But county leaders understand that we cannot

spend more money than we have. They continue to find ways to cut deeper while retaining service levels at acceptable standards. I appreciate their cooperation.

Reducing expenses is one essential approach that Hamilton County is taking in response to this budget situation. Another important component of our response is economic development.

The Hamilton County Commissioners have stated their commitment to focusing economic development efforts on initiatives that will have the most financial impact on our community in the soonest timeframe possible. We are proactively working to improve the economic situation, even as we cope with the reality of the current economic downturn.

It's important to acknowledge the impact that this tough budget situation is having on our county employees. They are dedicated to serving Hamilton County citizens, and many of our employees have devoted their entire careers to doing so. They care about this community and the services they provide.

We have lost many talented employees to layoffs. Many county employees will be reducing their pay by participating in furloughs in 2009 and 2010. This is a financial sacrifice that is difficult for some, yet should help reduce the number

of layoffs needed overall. Hamilton County leaders recognize that this has been a difficult time for employees.

Despite employees' concerns about how the county budget is impacting them personally, they continue to serve to the best of their ability. I see employees who are determined to focus on their work, despite their worries about the budget and their financial future. I see employees sharing ideas about ways to provide services with reduced resources. And I see employees rising to the challenge of getting the work done—and done well—despite having fewer people to help with the workload. Hats off to our workforce!

We will continue to provide outstanding service to Hamilton County citizens despite limited resources. Even though we are facing an incredibly tough financial situation, the dedicated people working for Hamilton County will rise to the challenge of finding ways to make this work. At the end of all this we will be a leaner organization and may look slightly different, but we will remain Hamilton County, a strong, viable public servant.



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The TLRC thoroughly studies each levy request and advises the BOCC on whether the levy should appear on the ballot, the appropriate level of revenue for the levy, the appropriate duration for the levy, and the terms and conditions that should be inserted in each contract with levy-funded agencies.

The TLRC also oversees the work of outside review consultants who review levy-funded agencies' spending before approval for the ballot, and they check to see if the levy funded agencies' funds have been spent on political campaigns.

On August 12, the BOCC will vote on a resolution regarding which tax levies will be on the November ballot and at what funding levels. But the TLRC's work won't be done, even then.

The TLRC's work continues even after levies go to

the ballot. They conduct mid-term reviews of agencies receiving levy funding to ensure contractual obligations are being met, and they review annual budget reports of agencies receiving levy funding. They make recommendations to the BOCC on programs and services that should be established, eliminated, or efficiencies that can be attained.

The TLRC members do not receive compensation for their work on the committee. They volunteer to share their time and expertise with Hamilton County. When asked what prompts the TLRC members to volunteer, TLRC Chair Tim Molony says, "It's a good, important process, and it makes you feel good when you accomplish your goals."

"I believe in this process of having a group of citizens go through these requests," said Commission President David Pepper. "It's good transparency and accountability."

Thank you Hamilton County Tax Levy Review Committee Members For Your Work in 2009		
Mark Berliant	Timothy Molony, Chair	Stephen Taylor
Tom Cooney	Mark Quarry	Dan Unger
Gwen McFarlin	John Smith	Dale Van Vyven

Columbia Township Hosts Upcoming Hamilton County Commissioners' Meeting

All are invited to attend the Board of County Commissioners' (BOCC) meeting in Columbia Township. It will be:

Monday, August 24, 2009
7 p.m.
Columbia Township Administration Building
5686 Kenwood Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45227

As part of the BOCC's "Community Tour" approach, this meeting provides an opportunity for community leaders and citizens to share information about what is happening in their community — and to explain how the BOCC can help. All are welcome to attend!



Recovery Zone Facility Bonds Available in Hamilton County To Help Stimulate Economy



Hamilton County will be awarding an allocation of \$22,947,000 in Recovery Zone Facility Bonds (RZFBs) in 2009 and 2010 to help stimulate the economy.

RZFBs were recently authorized under the “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.” The County is in charge of awarding the allocation to applicants that provide qualifying projects. These are not grant or loan moneys, but enable the County to issue tax-exempt bonds for the benefit of economic development and industry. The businesses that benefit from the proceeds of the bonds are responsible for repayment of the bonds, not the County or its taxpayers.

RZFBs are intended to benefit for-profit businesses and in some cases, non-profit organizations. RZFBs may be used to assist commercial, retail or manufacturing businesses.

“This is a really exciting opportunity to create jobs in our community,” said Commission President David Pepper. “Our goal is to take these dollars and put them towards the biggest bang for the

buck. We must make sure we’re going with projects that will have a near-term economic impact and will generate revenue to help the County’s budget.”

Qualifying projects must be located in a “recovery zone,” which is an area with significant unemployment, poverty, general distress or home foreclosures, or alternatively, where there has been a military base closing, or where there is an empowerment zone or rural community designation. Projects must consist of depreciable property and be acquired or constructed after the date that an area has been designated as a “recovery zone.”

This borrowing opportunity is only available for 2009 and 2010. Having the ability to benefit from tax-exempt bonds provides for-profit businesses (and in some cases, non-profit organizations) with a low-cost borrowing opportunity to provide “shovel-ready” capital expenditures and, in turn, stimulate the economy through job opportunities, sales tax receipts and other important sources of revenue.

**Interested in applying for Recovery Zone Facility Bonds?
For more information, please contact David Main, Director of the
Hamilton County Development Company: 513-631-8292.**

Hamilton County Publishes Annual Information Statement

If you’re interested in reading some general information about Hamilton County, you’ll enjoy the County’s Preliminary 2009 Annual Information Statement. It describes Hamilton County government’s services and responsibilities, provides information about all sorts of economic activity in the county, and details specific information about Hamilton County government’s finances. Although it’s not light reading, it’s interesting and informative.

Check it out at this link: <http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/administrator/bsi/debt/AIS09-Prelim.pdf>



Hamilton County and City of Cincinnati Submit Bid Proposal to Host FIFA World Cup™ Soccer



The greater Cincinnati area could potentially host the world's largest sporting event in 2018 or 2022: The FIFA World Cup™ soccer tournament.

In July, Hamilton County Commission President David Pepper and Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory submitted a bid proposal to host the FIFA World Cup™ on behalf of the Cincinnati bid committee.

"Cincinnati has a real shot at hosting a couple of these games," said Commissioner David Pepper. "It amazed me through this bid process, just how big soccer is in Cincinnati and Hamilton County. We've received a groundswell of support from fans and businesses."

Cincinnati is one of thirty-seven US cities invited by the USA Bid Committee to apply as hosts for this major sporting event. The USA Bid Committee will announce by the end of the year which cities will be included in the Bid Book that the USA Bid Committee will submit to FIFA in 2010.

Creating the bid proposal was a cooperative effort. The committee that developed Cincinnati's bid consists of leaders from Hamilton County, the City of Cincinnati, and many corporations and local organizations. Those who helped include Chris

Collinsworth, Heather Mitts (gold medalist), P&G, Macy's, Kroger, Chiquita, SAY Soccer, the Cincinnati Bengals, the Cincinnati Reds, and many more.

The bid proposal cited Cincinnati as an ideal host city. It highlights:

- Cincinnati's proximity to 60% of the United States population;
- The multitude of possible soccer venues including Paul Brown Stadium, local universities' soccer fields, and area parks and sports complexes;
- Potential Fan Fest venues in both Ohio and Northern Kentucky;
- Marketing, promotion, and public relations opportunities;
- Traffic, parking, and transportation options;
- Volunteer programs;
- World-class health and medical facilities' availability;
- The region's cultural and sports heritage, including soccer's role in Cincinnati.

If Cincinnati is selected as one of the host cities, the next step will be to see if the United States is named as one of the host countries in December 2010.



Hamilton County Board of MRDD Establishes Pilot Mentoring Program With the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission



The Hamilton County Board of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities (MRDD) has developed a pilot mentoring program with the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission (CHRC). The pilot program began July 1, 2009.

The program is intended to help individuals with MRDD who also have mental health issues and involvement with law enforcement or who are at risk for being involved with law enforcement. The goal of the mentoring program is to help mentees avoid mistakes and learn to make good decisions.

A combination of best practice models for mentoring young adults ages 18-25 years who are ex-offenders or who are at risk of becoming involved in the criminal justice system is being used for this mentoring program

“While we have great expertise in supporting individuals with MRDD, we don’t have as much knowledge of how to work with individuals who have a combination of MRDD and

mental health issues, as well as involvement with law enforcement,” says Cheryl Phipps, MRDD Superintendent. “We are excited to enter into this unique partnership with the Cincinnati Human Relations Commission and its well-established mentoring program to jointly and creatively serve individuals who have proven extraordinarily challenging to our MRDD service delivery system.”

The pilot program is accommodating five mentor/mentee pairs through the end of the year. The client participants are ages 17-25.

CHRC mentors will provide one-on-one mentoring for MRDD clients referred to the CHRC Community Outreach Program by MRDD.

Mentors will develop caring relationships with their mentees. They will serve as positive role models and friends and will engage mentees in a combination of activities that enable them to practice healthy behaviors within a positive social

relationship.

Mentors will coordinate activities with MRDD Service Facilitators to identify areas where mentees need to improve behaviors. Mentors receive orientation to their role as a mentor and to the MRDD system in general. They also receive information about crisis prevention and intervention as well as reporting of incidents and situations that could affect the health and safety of the individual. Mentors will work closely with service facilitation staff at MRDD, attend MRDD team meetings related to the mentee, and will attend CHRC mentor meetings.

People interested in volunteering as a mentor through CHRC may contact Juanita Bohannon at 513 -352-2498 or jhowardbohannon@yahoo.com.

MRDD anticipates that this mentoring program will have positive results. Clients targeted with this program will be served more appropriately with fewer resources and will have a greater chance of success.



Hamilton County Job and Family Services Plans Activities for Child Support Awareness Month

The Hamilton County Job and Family Services' (JFS) Child Support Enforcement Agency celebrates Child Support Awareness Month in August with a variety of activities aimed at getting children the financial support they need from parents who do not have custody of the children.

"In this economy, child support is even more crucial," explains JFS Director Moira Weir. "It can be the difference between a custodial parent keeping or losing their home. Child support puts food on the table, pays electric bills and buys school clothes. In this economy, every penny counts."

The Department's Child Support Enforcement Agency handles about 88,000 cases a year. Last year, it collected \$154 million for families that might not otherwise have had the financial support

necessary to pay for such items as food, medical care, child care, school clothes and school supplies. Many of the children who do not receive child support turn to public assistance, with taxpayers providing financial support.

Hamilton County Child Support uses a variety of tools to collect child support. Many non-custodial parents pay as directed. When parents aren't paying Child Support, JFS can intercept tax returns, deny passports, freeze and seize funds from bank accounts, and suspend driver's licenses.

Another tool is Most Wanted posters. A new poster featuring eight parents who owe more than \$400,000 in child support payments combined is being released as one of many planned activities for National Child Support Month in August.

In addition to the new Most Wanted Poster, JFS has several events planned to celebrate Child Support Month, including a chance at amnesty for those who have their licenses suspended or warrants issued for failing to appear on child support-related charges. They can get plugged back into the system without penalty and have their rights restored by coming forward and making arrangements to start paying on their delinquent support.

"We would love it if people would take advantage of our offer of amnesty and start working with us on supporting their children," Weir said.

To contact JFS regarding child support, please call 513-946-SETS (7387).

Child Support Awareness Month Activities

- A workshop for attorneys, probation officers and others to learn about proposed new child support guidelines: Wednesday, August 5
2:45 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.
at 237 William H. Taft Road, Cincinnati, OH 45219.
Attorneys will receive two hours of Continuing Legal Education. To sign up, call 513-946-8251 or e-mail workshop@jfs.hamilton-co.org.
- A live online chat to answer general questions about child support on Tuesday, August 11 at 2 p.m. To participate, click on a link that will be posted on www.hcifs.org prior to the 2 p.m. start.
- An amnesty initiative to help more than 16,000 local residents who have had their licenses suspended for non-payment of support. To participate, call 513-946-SETS.
- Amnesty for more than 3,000 with child support-related warrants issued through Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts. This will take place the week of Aug. 17-21. To participate, just show up at the courthouse that week. For more information, call 513-946-SETS.



Experience the Hamilton County Fair!

The Hamilton County Fair taking place in August is being billed as “The NEW 154 year old Hamilton County Fair.” The event promises to have new rides, more vendors, and an entire area dedicated to growing green and urban gardening.

“This year’s fair is going to be an exciting fair, and it’s going to be different than we’ve had in a long time,” said Commissioner Todd Portune.

A task force has been working to re-energize interest in and attendance at the fair. They met with the Board of County Commissioners in July to share short-term and long-term recommendations regarding generating publicity, recruiting volunteers, increasing collaboration with organizations, refreshing displays, and expanding events and activities. Many of their ideas are being implemented this year, which will make for a great fair!

The fair opens with a parade on Tuesday, August 11 at 3 p.m. Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartmann will serve as Grand Marshall.

When you attend the fair, check out the fairgrounds! Individuals and groups can rent the fairgrounds for events. Visit www.hamiltoncountyfair.com for more information.

Visit the 2009 Hamilton County Fair!

Dates and times:

Tuesday, August 11— Friday, August 14: 3 p.m.—11 p.m.

Saturday, August 15: 11 a.m.—11 p.m.

Location:

7801 Anthony Wayne Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45216

Admission: \$8.

Seniors admitted free with Golden Buckeye Card. Rides included with admission price.

www.hamiltoncountyfair.com



Hamilton County Board of Elections Conducts Poll Worker Training Workshops



Poll workers attend training on setting up the eSlate voting equipment for people who have disabilities.

Over 150 Hamilton County Board of Elections Presiding and Deputy Judges participated in special training workshops in July to enhance their skills for serving as judges at local polling locations in upcoming elections.

The Board is required to sponsor poll worker training classes for all poll workers every three years and to specifically train Presiding and New Judges every election.

“Elections continue to generate more scrutiny and it has become increasingly important that the poll workers who conduct the elections at the precinct level have a thorough knowledge of election laws and proper procedures. Our staff is thinking outside the box, and exploring new ways to educate poll workers,” said Amy Searcy, Deputy Director.

This year, the Board pioneered the concept of offering supplementary poll worker classes in four critical areas:

- Processing of Provisional Voters

- Understanding the Voter Identification Requirements
- Using Ward/Precinct Street Directories
- Setup of the eSlate voting equipment (used primarily for voters with disabilities).

“This first-of-its-kind workshop was extremely successful, and the judges who attended appreciated the opportunity to have the additional training in a more concentrated manner,” said Joe Mallory, Elections Administrator.

“The workshops not only offered election judges a chance to learn, but to exchange ideas and make suggestions to the Board,” said Director Sally Krisel.

Anyone who wants more information on how to become a poll worker may call Gena Howard at 513-632-7041 or Mike Schrader at 513-632-7042.

If you have any questions, please check the Board web site: www.votehamiltoncounty.org or call 513-632-7000.



MENTORS NEEDED!

HEMI is a program that provides support and educational opportunities to high school foster youth moving from the foster care system to adulthood. Mentors are needed!

Training sessions for all new mentors begin soon. Sessions are available:

Saturday, August 29

9 a.m.—4 p.m.

At UC Campus

Or

Tuesday and Thursday, September 8 and 10

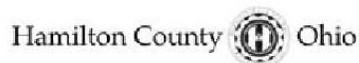
(You attend both Tuesday and Thursday)

5:30 p.m.—8:30 p.m.

At UC Campus

To learn more about HEMI and how you can get involved or to register for training sessions, please contact Annie Dick, Program Coordinator; 556-4368 or annie.dick@uc.edu

HEMI consists of the following prominent organizations:





Go Green in the Office with Free Recycling Assistance

Just because your job is white collar doesn't mean it can't be green, too. If you're a business owner or employee looking to start recycling at work, the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District (District) is here to help.

The District features Recycling at Work, a free program specifically designed to provide local businesses with all of the resources and support they need to launch an office recycling program.

The benefits of starting an office recycling program are enormous.

- Reducing the amount of waste your business throws away can lower the number of garbage pickups you pay for or reduce the size of the waste container your business requires, saving you money.
- Recycling also conserves natural resources, because it makes it possible to create products from used paper, plastic, or metals instead of using raw materials. This reduces pollution, conserves landfill space, and decreases the need for mining, logging, and drilling for natural resources.



- Finally, recycling boosts the local economy, creating an economic impact of 169,000 jobs and \$6 billion in annual wages just in the state of Ohio.

As part of the Recycling at Work program, the District works with you and a recycling hauler to develop the best recycling plan for your business.

Once the recycling plan is created, your business then receives free desk-side recycling containers, a recycling kick-off event, and employee education on what and how to recycle.

Because the District's mission is to provide you with all of the tools, knowledge, and assistance you need to run a successful recycling program, all of these services are offered free of charge to Hamilton County businesses.

With all of the perks associated with the Recycling at Work program, your company has a lot to gain from going green.

**To learn more about the Recycling at Work Program,
contact Michelle Balz, program coordinator, at 946-7789
or michelle.balz@hamilton-co.org.**

You can also visit the District's web site: www.hamiltoncountyrecycles.org.



Cincinnati Named One of America's Top Ten Cities

Outside Magazine's August 2009 edition names Cincinnati as one of America's top ten cities! Why?

There are many great reasons! Among them, the magazine cites a couple of initiatives with which Hamilton County is involved: The Banks Project and the development of a long-term cycling infrastructure plan.

Read all about it at this link:

<http://outside.away.com/outside/destinations/200908/best-towns-america-cincinnati.html>



Cyclists enjoy a bicycle tour in downtown Cincinnati.

Bid on this 1997 Jeep Wrangler Using the Hamilton County Surplus Auction



Using the Hamilton County Surplus Auction, you can bid on items that local governments no longer need. Items frequently available include office supplies, furniture, computer hardware, and vehicles. The auction is easy to use, and you can get some great deals! Check out the bargains you can find using the county's online public auction!

www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com



Caring Families are Needed!



Robert

October 1993

“Funny” is how this active and shy young man describes himself. Robert wants to be a fireman when he grows up. Although school is not one of his favorite places, he does enjoy math class. After school he likes to spend time outdoors. Fishing and riding bikes are two of his favorite activities.

Besides going fishing, Robert also enjoys Kings Island. When indoors, this eager, sweet teenager likes to play boxing video games or with his action figures. Robert’s favorite animals are fish, horses and dogs.

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

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