



Hello Hamilton County

September 2009

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the month:

"A man can succeed at almost anything for which he has unlimited enthusiasm."

~Charles M. Schwab

Hamilton County's Prescription Drug Program Helps Residents Save over \$79,000 in Just Seven Months



Hamilton County residents taking advantage of the County's prescription drug discount card have saved over \$79,000 in just seven months. The program, which began in January, enables Hamilton County residents to get discounts on prescriptions that are not covered by insurance.

Residents saved more money in July than any other month: over \$15,000.

"We're excited that more and more citizens are taking advantage of this program," said Commission President David Pepper. "It's good, because they get medicines they need, and it puts dollars back in their pocket, which helps our economy other ways. It's clearly making a difference."

The prescription drug card is free and is accepted at most pharmacies in Hamilton County. You can join the over 750 residents who saved an average of 22% on the cost of their prescriptions in July, using the discount card.

For more information, visit
www.hamiltoncountyrx.com

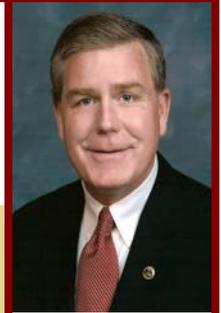
Pick up your free card at any of these locations:

- Branches of the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County
- YMCA Branches
- Many social services agencies, such as the FreeStore Foodbank and Talbert House
- Hamilton County Job and Family Services Offices



Patrick's Perspective

County Leaders Build Relationships to Best Serve Hamilton County



Patrick Thompson,
Hamilton County
Administrator

Cultivating good relationships with other entities is one strategy that Hamilton County leaders are employing fully as we cope with a difficult economic climate.

The Hamilton County Commissioners reach out to multiple businesses, groups, and political leaders to share information and advocate for Hamilton County's best interests. Many other county leaders and I belong to professional associations that enable us to benchmark and learn from our peers in other counties and states. These relationships are mutually beneficial. Everyone involved is able to share best practices and to find ways to work together for the good of our community.

There are many examples that illustrate how Hamilton County leaders are working with other entities to best serve our community. Here are a few:

State Legislative Delegation
Hamilton County hosts a State delegation meeting twice annually. County leaders meet with state representatives and senators to advance issues, such as Job and Family Services funding and criminal justice reform, and to keep current on events happening in Columbus that impact Hamilton County.

Government Cooperation and Efficiency Project

Hamilton County and other jurisdictions work together to explore opportunities for shared services. This group identifies ways to improve service delivery and control costs through cross-jurisdictional cooperation, sharing of services, and possible service delivery consolidation.

Comparable County Budget Group

Hamilton County's Department of Budget & Strategic Initiatives keeps in regular contact with budget officials in Ohio's other urban counties via a monthly conference call and an annual retreat. They share economic forecasts, policy analysis, and compare information regarding budget trends and strategies.

Health Care Benefits Partnership

Hamilton County and the Cincinnati Public Schools are working together as they request proposals for health care benefit packages. Because the two entities combined have more employees than either one individually, working together may provide more leverage regarding rates, coverage, and costs. Also, some smaller jurisdictions in Hamilton County participate in the county's employee health insurance

plan. These jurisdictions get better coverage and rates than they could get without the partnership.

Cabinets, Commissions and Committees

Hamilton County is fortunate to have knowledgeable citizens serving on various cabinets, commissions and committees to advise the Board of County Commissioners on key issues, such as economic growth, tax levys, and criminal justice. The appointees bring a wealth of experience and knowledge from the business sector, the non-profit sector, other public entities, and more. Their sharing of their expertise assists Hamilton County in decision making regarding key issues.

This is just a sample of the cooperative efforts in which Hamilton County is engaged. There are too many to list them all! Each cooperative effort produces positive results for our region. We will continue to partner with other individuals and entities to ensure we're serving Hamilton County the best way possible.



Hamilton County Offers Residents A Chance to Enjoy the County Suite At Paul Brown Stadium



As the Cincinnati Bengals begin their 2009 season, Hamilton County is offering residents an opportunity to watch the Bengals play at Paul Brown Stadium from the Hamilton County's suite.

Hamilton County residents can register to receive two tickets by applying on-line or by sending a postcard entry.

The Hamilton County suite accommodates 16 people. For each game, eight lucky winners will be drawn and be allowed to invite one guest to accompany them to the game. The winners and their guests will be provided with food and soft drinks while in the county suite.

Drawings will be held four times throughout the season, immediately following the Commissioners' public meetings. The first drawing will be held on

Wednesday September 16 for the September 27 game; the second drawing will be held October 14 for the October 25 game; the third drawing will be held October 28 for the November 8 game; the fourth drawing will be held November 18, 2009 for the November 29 game.

In addition to this opportunity being offered to Hamilton County residents, the County also offers the suite to groups such as foster families and veterans organizations.

The drawing is open to Hamilton County residents only. One entry per resident is accepted. The winners must respond within 48 hours following the drawing.

Enter today for your chance to enjoy a Bengals game from the Hamilton County suite!

To enter the drawing for Bengals tickets, Hamilton County residents may:

Apply Online: http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hc/bengals_draw.asp

Send a Postcard containing your name, address and phone number to:

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



Commissioner Hartmann Presents Proclamation Recognizing Honor Flight Tri-State



Commissioner Hartmann presents the Proclamation to Honor Flight Tri-State during their reunion luncheon at Lunken Airport.

On Wednesday, August 12, 2009, Commissioner Hartmann presented a proclamation from the Hamilton County Board of Commissioners to Honor Flight Tri-State during their reunion luncheon at Lunken Airport. The luncheon was for local veterans who have recently participated in an Honor Flight to Washington, D.C.

Honor Flight Tri-State's mission is to help local veterans visit their war memorials in Washington, D.C. The organization is focused on ensuring that World War II veterans visit the war memorial built in their honor which did not get completed until 2004. The local non-profit, run by volunteers, arranges to charter flights free of charge to all veterans who make the day trip.

"Nothing we do can truly provide the thanks our veterans deserve for the sacrifices they make for our country and for our freedom. Often we build monuments to memorialize their heroism and to show them our appreciation and gratitude for what they have done," said Commissioner Hartmann. "Sadly however, many World War II veterans from the Greatest Generation have never seen their

memorial. But, Honor Flight Tri-State is working to change that and send as many WW II vets to Washington, D.C. as possible. I salute all of our veterans and also this organization of volunteers for their work to serve those who have already served our country."

Commissioner Hartmann is encouraging individuals who want to assist this organization or help veterans participate in Honor Flights to take part in the Honor Flight Tri-State 5k in Blue Ash on September 19th. The race is a fundraising event to assist in covering the cost of veterans participating in Honor Flights. Following the 5k there is a free pancake breakfast and award ceremony.

For more information and to register for the race go to: <http://www.airportdays.com/5krun/> for more information about Honor Flight Tri-State go to: www.honorflighttristate.org.

You can link to the race flyer here <http://www.runningtime.net/Races/Airport%20Days/2009/flier%202009.pdf>



Hamilton County Public Health Says You Can Help Prevent the Spread of H1N1 Flu

As H1N1 flu continues to circulate both locally and nationally, Hamilton County Public Health is working hard to prepare for vaccine distribution as well as possible widespread illness this fall.

H1N1 and seasonal flu are expected to co-circulate over the influenza season. The timing, spread and severity of H1N1 virus – in addition to our regular seasonal influenza viruses – are uncertain.

H1N1 virus seems to spread the same way seasonal flu spreads – mainly from person to person through coughing or sneezing by people with flu. Sometimes people may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth or nose. That’s why practicing proper hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette is critical. See p. 6 for good practices to follow.

Vaccines are the most powerful public health tool for control of flu and everyone should consider receiving the H1N1 vaccine, upon availability. Vaccine availability will be limited at first. Therefore, people

at the highest risk for illness will be first priority to receive the H1N1 vaccine.

People at high risk include:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Health care and emergency services personnel that have direct patient contact
- Persons between the ages of 6 months through 24 years of age
- People ages 25 through 64 years with chronic health disorders or weakened immune systems

“The federal government is working with vaccine manufacturers to ensure there is ample supply of the vaccine, but it will likely be a staggered availability,” Tim Ingram, Health Commissioner said. “When vaccine production increases, it will be available for the general public.”

While H1N1 flu has been the focus of attention, it is important that we do not forget the risks posed by seasonal flu. Seasonal flu viruses are still expected to

cause illness this fall and winter – and as usual, illness can range from mild to severe and at times can lead to death.

While it won’t protect you against H1N1 flu, the single best way to prevent the flu is to get a flu shot each fall. By getting a flu shot, you ensure that you will stay healthy and that you will not spread the flu to those who are at high risk for serious flu complications, such as the elderly, young children and people with certain health conditions.

Vaccination is recommended for children (must be older than 6 months) and adults alike. It is not too early to get a seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available in September or October. The protection you get from the vaccine will not wear off before the flu season is over.

This flu season, consider getting vaccinated against both H1N1 and seasonal flu. Some people are more susceptible to developing serious complications from the flu. Therefore, not getting a flu shot may put your friends and family at risk.





Help Prevent the Spread of H1N1 Flu

Tips from Hamilton County Public Health



HAMILTON COUNTY
PUBLIC HEALTH

PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.

- If you are sick, you should stay home until you are fever-free for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medicine.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. If soap and water are not near by, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If a tissue is not available, use the inside of your elbow to cover your cough or sneeze, not your hands.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Try to stay six feet away from people who are coughing or sneezing.

Flu Shots Available for Hamilton County Employees



Hamilton County wants to help keep its employees healthy this flu season. Flu shots will be available for employees and their eligible family members at numerous work sites in October and November.

For information about this year's flu shot program, including the schedule, please visit this link:

<http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hr/Benefits/Wellness/FluShotHome.asp>



Hamilton County Job and Family Services Turns Over Mount Airy Homeless Shelter Operations To Talbert House

Effective September 1, Hamilton County Job and Family Services (HCJFS) no longer handles operations of the Mount Airy homeless Shelter. The agency has transferred operations to Talbert House.

As JFS focuses on mandated services in light of shrinking state allocations, the best course of action was to turn the shelter over to a community provider with more experience providing direct services to this population. HCJFS expects to save \$500,000 annually with Talbert House taking over shelter operations.

To ensure a smooth transition of services, HCJFS staff has worked closely not only with Talbert House, but also with the City of Cincinnati, County Community Development and the Continuum of Care.

Talbert House runs mental health, substance abuse, employment and other programs that will be available to the homeless men at Mount Airy.

Talbert House officials plan to operate the shelter in a similar manner to HCJFS. A plan was put into place to help Talbert House learn about the day

-to-day operations of the shelter. HCJFS employees who worked at the shelter were given the opportunity to apply and interview for the positions at the shelter through Talbert House.

“The HCJFS team, led by Lora Wolfe and Jerry O’Flynn, could not have been more professional or helpful facilitating this transition.” said Neil Tilow, Talbert House president. “Their outstanding work will ensure the men at the shelter will continue to receive the care they need.”

Hamilton County Best in the Midwest At Food Stamp Accuracy

Hamilton County’s Department of Job and Family Services recently received an award for achieving the highest payment accuracy rate in food stamps among the fourteen largest urban counties in a six-state region of the Midwest.

Hamilton County’s accuracy rate of 98.19 percent in Federal Fiscal Year 2008 was the best of the largest counties in Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and Minnesota.

This is the third time the agency has received awards from the BIG TEN Conference in the past 10 years. The BIG TEN is a federal, state and local effort in the Midwest Region of the Food and Nutrition Service to improve Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program payment accuracy and

customer service.

Food stamp accuracy is important because it ensures taxpayer money is spent appropriately, it ensures people who need help get the right amount, and it helps determine an agency’s funding to carry out public assistance programs. Federal officials penalize or reward financially based on an agency’s accuracy rate.

“We attribute this success to staff who work hard and take pride in performing their jobs to the best of their ability,” said Moira Weir, Director of the Department of Job and Family Services. “This is about paying attention to detail, conducting thorough interviews and checking and re-checking to make sure you have it right.”



Hamilton County Human Resources Team Earns Project Gain Recognition



Human Resources employees Sarah Irwin, Patti Singler and Lisa Doerger earned recognition for their cost-saving Project Gain Program.

On August 26, the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners recognized a team of Hamilton County Human Resources employees who successfully completed a Project Gain project. The three employees worked together on a project above and beyond their normal scope of duties that will save Hamilton County approximately \$10,000 annually.

Lisa Doerger, Patti Singler, and Sarah Irwin developed a complex database to track data for the Human Resources Development (HRD) program. Previously, HRD contracted with a vendor to provide a database. Thanks to Doerger, Singler, and Irwin, the data will be tracked at no cost now.

“Not only does the new database provide a big cost savings, it actually serves our needs better than the database we previously used,” said

Laura Maus, HRD Manager. “Lisa, Patti, and Sarah found creative ways to ensure the database would enable HRD to track data more easily and to provide training information more quickly to the county organizations that need it. They did an outstanding job with this big project!”

Project Gain is a recognition program that provides Hamilton County employees the opportunity to earn 50% of the revenue or savings realized when they implement ideas that go above and beyond their normal scope of duties.

Hamilton County employees can work individually or with teams to submit programs to Project Gain. For more information about the Project Gain program, please visit this link:

<http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/hr/Innovation/InnovationHome.asp>

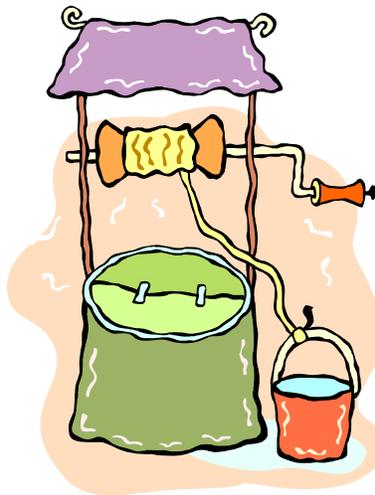


Get Your Well Water Tested By the Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District

If you have your own well, instead of being served by "city water," please mark Friday, September 11 on your calendar. This is the date of the "Test Your Well" event at Cheviot's Harvest Home Fair.

Between 4 p.m. and 9 p.m., private well owners may bring a water sample to the Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District booth for a free, confidential nitrate screening that will be conducted by the Miami Conservancy District. While waiting for results, well owners may gather information about their well and ask local experts about their groundwater concerns.

High nitrate levels are often associated with wells over 30 years old or less than 50 feet deep. Private well owners should have their well water tested annually for nitrate, bacteria, and any other potential contaminant of particular concern.



At the Harvest Home Fair, well owners will also have the opportunity to register for free arsenic testing. Arsenic occurs naturally in many wells in the region, especially deeper wells with high iron levels. This free service is available to residents of Hamilton County's Great Miami River Watershed courtesy of the Miami Conservancy District.

To collect your well water sample properly:

1. Pick up a sample bottle from Hamilton County SWCD or use any clean jar that seals tightly – Wash with hot soapy water, rinse well, and allow to air dry before collecting your sample.
2. Remove any screen or filter from your faucet.
3. Run water for five minutes to clear the lines and bring in fresh water.
4. Do not touch the lip of the jar, inside the jar, or inside of the cap.
5. Fill the bottle, and cap it snugly.
6. Keep the sample refrigerated until tested.
7. Collect the sample on the day it is to be tested.
8. Please do not bring in tap water from a municipal supplier. It will always be negative for high nitrates.

For more information on how to draw a sample of your water for the September 11 Test Your Well nitrate screening at Harvest Home, please call the Hamilton County SWCD at 513-772-7645 or the Miami Conservancy District at 937-223-1278 x.3263.



Invitation to Attend The Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District's Annual Meeting

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District invites you to attend its 64th Annual Meeting. The event will be:

Thursday, September 17, 2009
At the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden
3400 Vine Street, Cincinnati 45220
Events begin at 4 p.m.
Meeting, Banquet and Awards presentation begin at 6 p.m.

- Limited, guided tours of the green storm water practices at the Zoo will be available.
- Learn more about the Soil & Water Conservation District!
- Participate in a silent auction.
- Vote to elect one supervisor that will serve a three year term, beginning January 2010.
- Enjoy a spaghetti and lasagna dinner prepared by Raffel's Catering, Inc.

You must pre-register by Wednesday, September 9 to attend this event. Please visit this link for a registration form: <http://www.hcswcd.org/> If you are unable to attend the meeting, but would like to vote for the supervisor election, please visit <http://www.hcswd.org>.



Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency Employee Earns 2009 Center for Homeland Defense and Security Alumni Fellowship with FEMA

Hamilton County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) Program Coordinator Pam Broughton has earned a Center for Homeland Defense and Security Naval Postgraduate School 2009 Alumni Fellowship.

Broughton applied for the fellowship upon completion of graduate work at the Naval Postgraduate School. She says her thesis, "Measuring Preparedness: Assessing the Impact of the Homeland Security Grant Program," helped her earn the fellowship. Broughton will be working with a program that focuses on the same area as her thesis.

Broughton will spend one year in Washington DC working in FEMA's Grants Preparedness Directive. Specifically, she will work on the "Cost-2-Capability"

project, which is a decision and support tool to help state and local governments measure and maximize how FEMA grants are used to improve capabilities.

"I'm really excited," said Broughton. "I think it's a great opportunity to see how things happen on a national scale and also to play a role in how things will be implemented on a large project that's going to impact state and local governments."

"Pam has been with us for five years, and she has worked very hard," said Mike Snowden, Director of the EMA. I think it's great recognition for her and for Hamilton County and for the EMA."





Learn About Green Living With Hamilton County's Green Speaker Series

As summer draws to a close, the Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District (District) is pleased to offer residents a fall season filled with opportunities to learn about green living in Greater Cincinnati. Beginning in September, the District will host a brand new Green Speaker Series, featuring a variety of local experts sharing their knowledge about sustainability and waste reduction.

The District invites Hamilton County residents to attend each of the following FREE Green Speaker Series events.

Environmental Issues at the Zoo

Tuesday, September 22, 6:30 p.m.

Speaker: Mark Fisher, Senior Director of Facilities and Planning, the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden

With recent development projects such as a new green entrance and LEED-certified buildings, the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden has become the hometown model for sustainability and environmental education. Listen in as Mr. Fisher discusses the zoo's recent sustainability measures and the environmental challenges that face the zoo on a daily basis.

Composting at Home

Tuesday, October 6, 6:30 p.m.

Speaker: John Duke, Master Composter

Local composting expert John Duke knows how to make the most out of waste. Whether you're looking to grow your plants to the next level or simply want to help the environment, Mr. Duke's expertise can help you become a master of composting.

Recycling 101

Tuesday, October 20, 6:30 p.m.

Speakers: Holly Christmann, Manager, Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District
Michelle Balz, Community Outreach Coordinator, Hamilton County Solid Waste Management District
Ever wonder what happens to recyclables once they leave your bin? Learn about the many steps to responsible waste management as Ms. Christmann and Ms. Balz answer questions and discuss the benefits of both recycling and waste reduction.

All three speaking engagements will be held at:

The Miami Township Senior Center
8 North Miami Avenue,
Clevs, Ohio 45002.

The Green Speaker Series is FREE and open to all Hamilton County residents. Light refreshments will be provided. Space is limited. Please RSVP one week prior to each event by contacting Susan Schumacher, 946-7734 or susan.schumacher@hamilton-co.org.

For more information about the Green Speaker Series, visit www.hamiltoncountyrecycles.org.



Caring Families are Needed!



Raja & Ramya

Born August 1997 and March 2002

Raja is personable and outgoing. She enjoys being involved and active in church, youth group, and some sports. Raja likes school even though it can be a challenge at times. She tries hard to maintain her grades.

Listening to R&B music and shopping are just a few of her hobbies. She also enjoys the outdoors, and summer is her favorite time of year. She loves animals. Dogs are her favorite.

Ramya is an eager and comical young lady who loves school. She enjoys math class and recess the most. Ramya is intelligent and achieves good grades.

Ramya's favorite sports are gymnastics and soccer. She plans to be a gymnastic teacher when she grows up. This respectful young lady is very fond of Hannah Montana, Build a Bear and Bratz. She enjoys going to the park and playing.

**To learn more about Ramya & Raja contact Carrie Fiasco at 513-946-7015
or fiascc@jfs.hamilton-co.org**

**For information on becoming a foster or adoptive parent,
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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