



Hello Hamilton County

October 8, 2007

E-News for Hamilton County citizens and employees

Quote of the week: ***“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”***

~Margaret Mead

Air Quality Improving in Southwest Ohio Despite Busy Smog Season

Most of us have heard the slogan, “Do your share for cleaner air.” It was necessary for all of us to do our share this summer, as smog season 2007 was one for the record books! The earliest Smog Alert ever issued took place on May 23rd and lasted for four days. To bookend the summer, the latest Smog Alert ever issued began on September 20th and ended on September 24th.

So what are smog alerts all about, anyway? Well, the Hamilton County Department of Environmental Services (DOES) monitors air quality. They measure a number of different things, including levels of ozone and particulate matter that are in the air. The goal is for our air quality to comply with the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. If data and weather conditions indicate that we may not comply with these standards, DOES issues a Smog Alert. The Smog Alert warns people who have respiratory disease, young children, and the elderly to avoid prolonged outdoor exertion. The Smog Alert also warns everyone to do their share for cleaner air by taking steps to avoid activities that could contribute to higher smog levels.

Although we had six Smog Alerts issued this summer that were in effect for 24 days total, that does not mean that we were out of compliance on all measures on all of those days. Unfortunately, there were instances where some measures were not in compliance. But even though the 2007 smog season was an active one, Southwest Ohio’s air quality is improving.

Since the 1980s, one-hour ozone exceedences have consistently declined to the point where no exceedences were recorded in 2006 and 2007. There are several reasons for this improvement in air quality. Things like increased air pollution regulations for automobiles, improvement of air pollution control technology in power plants, and a federally-required reduction in oxides of nitrogen have all helped contribute to improved air quality.

We can each take steps to help improve air quality, too. To reduce the amount of air pollution we produce, we can decrease the number of cars on the road by carpooling, riding the bus, or riding a bike instead of driving. We can conserve electricity. This saves energy, which in turn reduces the amount of coal burned to generate power. Getting regular maintenance on automobiles makes them run more efficiently and use less gas. These little things that we can do can make a big difference in our air quality.

For more information on smog season 2007 or to learn more about clean air actions, please visit www.hcdoes.org or call Sarah Dowers at (513) 946-7748. To learn more about the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, please go to <http://epa.gov/air/criteria.html>.

Air Quality is affected by smog, ozone, and particulate matter.

What is smog?

Smog is formed when pollutants (such as ozone and particulate matter) are present in the air and react chemically in the presence of sunlight.

What is ozone?

Ozone is a colorless gas that can be found in the air we breathe. Ozone exists naturally in the earth’s upper atmosphere, but it is also found close to the earth’s surface. This ground-level ozone, because we breathe it, is a harmful air pollutant.

What is particulate matter?

Particulate matter (dust, soot, ash and other solids and aerosols) can come from a variety of sources, including wood burning, diesel engines, gasoline engines, factories and power plants. Individually, these particles and droplets are invisible to the naked eye, but collectively, they can appear as clouds or a fog-like haze.



Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners Offers Its Employees a New Adoption Assistance Program

Effective January 1, 2008, the Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners will offer its employees a new adoption assistance program. The Board introduced this program because, "Hamilton County believes in offering adoptive families with comparable benefits provided to families with biological children," reads the new Adoption Assistance Program policy.

This innovative program provides employees with a choice of two options, so they can select the benefit that best meets their needs. Eligible employees may choose to:

- Be reimbursed for up to \$5,000 per adoption for eligible adoption expenses;
Or
- Receive up to 6 weeks of paid adoption leave.

The program, while providing a very welcome benefit to adoptive families, does not increase county expenses. Any costs are paid using the existing budgets of departments whose employees use the benefit.

County Commissioner David Pepper hopes that this program will serve as a model for other employers in our community. He says, "So many of our Hamilton County employees have the heart and the commitment to grow their families through adoption, unfortunately there is a cost to that loving decision. With the Adoption Benefit Program, we are committed to removing the financial barriers in order to build stronger local families."

Employees may use this program for up to three adoptions and can even use it for two adoptions within the same year. The benefit applies to both domestic and international adoptions. Interested employees who serve under the Board of County Commissioners may contact the County Personnel Department at 946-4700 for more information.

To see the complete Adoption Assistance Program policy, please see pp. 139—142 at this link: http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/Personnel/PDF/BOCCPPM09_21_2007.pdf



Juqucetta
Born April 5, 1993

A Caring Family is Needed!

A respectful and intelligent young lady, Juqucetta would like to become a motivational speaker someday. She likes school, especially English class, and gets good grades. After school she enjoys spending time watching television, playing basketball or listening to music.

Like other teenagers, Juqucetta loves hanging out at the mall, watching movies and going to the community rec center. She also enjoys reading books, especially drama or love stories. Someday this strong and bold girl would like to visit Italy.

Juqucetta needs parents who will encourage academic excellence, as well as help her learn to express her feelings of anger and aggression appropriately. Ongoing therapy will be a requirement for Juqucetta, and she will need support in dealing with separation and loss.



Hamilton County Job and Family Services Child Support Achieves Success with Programs and Child Support Awareness Month

Hamilton County Job and Family Services' (HCJFS) Child Support division is receiving two best practice awards, and they enjoyed success during child Support Awareness Month in August.

Best Practice Awards

The Ohio Child Support Director's Association is honoring HCJFS Child Support with Best Practice Awards for two programs: The REAL Dads Fatherhood Program and the Early Intervention Program for Incarcerated Obligor.

REAL Dads, operated in conjunction with Lighthouse Youth Services and Messer Construction Co., assigns life coaches to mentor fathers on ways to stay connected to their children and become better fathers. The mentors help fathers learn to provide support — both financial and emotional.

The Early Intervention Program for Incarcerated Obligor works with mothers and fathers who are about to be released from prison and have child support obligations in the county.

"What is great about these programs is that they are about more than making the parent pay up," said Jeff Startzman, Assistant Director in charge of Child Support. "We're also helping people become better fathers and more productive members of society. Without our employees' hard work and dedication, these programs wouldn't be possible."



Jeff Startzman,
Assistant Director,
HCJFS Child Support

Child Support Awareness Month

Opposite approaches both proved successful for Hamilton County during Child Support Awareness Month in August. One approach involved tracking down chronic non-payers, and the other approach involved encouraging them to turn themselves in. Combined, the approaches helped reconnect to the system more than 460 non-paying parents.

Some of the 460 parents were reconnected when they were tracked down through license suspension. Others turned themselves in, taking advantage of Juvenile Court's warrant amnesty week. In August, one of the eight chronic parents on the Most Wanted poster issued in conjunction with Awareness Month turned himself in, and another was captured.

The County received more than \$88,000 in payments, established wage withholding for many, and received current contact information as a result of activities during Child Support Awareness Month.

WANTED

In Hamilton County, Ohio

FOR NON-PAYMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT

 Hudson Elam (Hickson) Amount of Child Support in Default \$73,856.19 Age: 33 Physical Description: Hispanic Last Known Address: 1984 Park St., Cincinnati, OH 45216	 Dante Starnes Amount of Child Support in Default \$12,807.36 Age: 38 Physical Description: Black Male Last Known Address: 2542 Campbell Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45225	 Victor Ramirez Amount of Child Support in Default \$26,482.25 Age: 31 Physical Description: Dominican Last Known Address: 22 & Taylor Avenue SE Apt 214, Marietta, OH 45752
 Duke Farnsworth Amount of Child Support in Default \$53,346.25 Age: 36 Physical Description: Hispanic Last Known Address: 2800 Sycamore St Apt 15, Cincinnati, OH 45229	<p>If you have information on the whereabouts of any of these offenders, please contact the Hamilton County Sheriff's Fugitive Warrants Unit 513-946-5350</p>	 Thomas Stansbury Amount of Child Support in Default \$67,329.12 Age: 45 Physical Description: Caucasian Last Known Address: 2121 Winton Ave. East P.O. Cincinnati, OH 45227
 Dwongwan Smiters Amount of Child Support in Default \$102,518.58 Age: 32 Physical Description: Korean Male Last Known Address: 2800 Sycamore St Apt 15, Cincinnati, OH 45229	 Dymon Lantier Amount of Child Support in Default \$110,865.64 Age: 34 Physical Description: Black Last Known Address: 2586 Ross St., Cincinnati, OH 45225	 Dymon Scott Amount of Child Support in Default \$54,613.96 Age: 34 Physical Description: Black Male Last Known Address: 2800 Sycamore St, Cincinnati, OH 45229

For a full listing of local parents with outstanding child support, visit the Hamilton County Sheriff's Office website at www.hcso.org and choose "Deadbeats" from the Public Service menu.
 *This poster is a public service of the Hamilton County Child Support Services.
 JOB & FAMILY
 CHILD Support Services • www.hcso.org



Hamilton County Introduces New Medical Plans For Employees

Hamilton County, like most employers, is facing increased premiums for medical coverage for employees. The premium increase for renewing the County's current level of benefits for 2008 was 19.9 percent, which would have represented an increase of over \$8 million.

As of January 1, 2008, Hamilton County will be offering SmartSuite[®] from Humana to employees. The County reached this decision after reviewing a number of options from national medical plan providers. SmartSuite offers a combination of traditional health plans and consumer driven health plans (CDHP). Employees will be able to choose plans that meet their individual, personal needs, taking into consideration important issues, such as:

- employee paycheck contributions,
- out-of-pocket costs (such as copayments, deductible and co-insurance),
- protection from catastrophic claims,
- network/non-network providers.

This allows the County to continue to offer a meaningful benefit plan within serious budget constraints. Hamilton County is partnering with Humana to provide communications about the new plans in a variety of ways. Not only will employees receive detailed enrollment material and benefit summaries, they will have access to web tools and employee meetings, enabling them to learn about their options in health plans and the enrollment process.

Fresh Ideas Program Kickoff

County Administrator Patrick Thompson and other employees of departments under the Board of County Commissioners participated in Hamilton County's "Fresh Ideas" program kickoff on September 25th. The event featured activities and information designed to inspire employees to share ideas that can benefit Hamilton County. To learn more about the Fresh Ideas program, check out this link:

<http://www.hamiltoncountyohio.gov/Personnel/BenefitsDivision/FreshIdeas/FreshIdeasHome.asp>





Buy it from Hamilton County!

Visit Hamilton County's award-winning internet surplus auction
to see the bargains you can find on great items!
www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com



Items Currently Accepting Bids

- Lot of 40 Leeds & Northrup Speedomax Recorders
- 1995 White Chevy Sports Van (Only 42,841 miles!!!)
- 1993 Acura Legend
- 1999 Ford Escort
- 1988 Honda Accord
- 1988 Toyota Camry
- 1989 Oldsmobile RBF
- 1991 Honda Accord
- WEIGHT ROOM EQUIPMENT
- Lot of 13 File Cabinets
- 5 Metal Desks & Metal Credenza
- Lot of 70 Telephones
- GE Profile Refrigerator
- 3 Ford E350 Super Duty Van Back Seats
 - (Two 2003 seats & One 2006 seat)
- Lot of 6 Gateway E-3400 PCs & Monitors
- Three lots of Gateway Solo 2500 Laptops with Docking Stations
- 3 HP Vectra VL420 PCs
- Lot of Dell GX110 Tower PCs
- Lots of 4 Compaq EP600 & 3 Monitors



You can bid this 1993 Acura Legend
at www.hamiltoncountyohioauction.com!



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

Hello Hamilton County is published twice each month. 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 web pages. If you have questions, suggestions, or article submissions, please contact Laura Maus or Eric Stuckey.

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