

# MADISON COUNTY

The Official Newsletter

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## County receives \$5 million in grants for critical water infrastructure upgrades

Madison County is receiving state grants to address critical water and wastewater infrastructure projects.

The funding comes from Governor DeWine's Ohio BUILDS (Broadband, Utilities, and Infrastructure for Local Development Success) water infrastructure grant program, administered through the Ohio Department of Development.

According to Madison County Commissioner Chris Wallace, "Madison County is primed for growth with these critical infrastructure investments. With growth comes the opportunity for higher paying wages, more amenities, and a higher quality of life for the residents of Madison County." Commissioner Mark Forrest added that projects such as these help galvanize our economic security and enhance the health and safety of our population.

The award will support the Madison County Water System project, which includes a new water distribution system along the Route 38, U.S. 40, U.S. 42, and Route 29 corridors. Along the water main, there are 50 fire hydrants and a 250,000-gallon elevated water storage tank located at the intersection of U.S. 42 and Interstate 70. Approximate 25 commercial entities and 65 residential customers will have the opportunity to connect to the distribution system.

Funds awarded will help reduce or eliminate the local financial burden associated with critical infrastructure needs such as the construction of new water systems, the replacement of aging water lines, and the installation of new water mains. Grants will also fund projects to prevent sewer system backups and replace failing household sewage treatment systems with new sewers.

"Ohio is the heart of opportunity, and for our state to continue to thrive, we must ensure that more communities have steady access to reliable, clean water," said Governor DeWine.

### THIS MONTH

- Water/wastewater infrastructure
- New fiber ring project
- Auditor: Property valuation update
- Social Services

### Commissioners Office

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M-F: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m



The county is one of 70 projects receiving state grants to address water and wastewater infrastructure projects in the state. In total, 58 counties will receive more than \$114 million.

## **FIBER RING PROJECT UNDERWAY**

Madison County recently kicked off a significant fiber ring project. The move is part of a continuing effort to bring higher paying jobs and broadband to residents.

Officials are working with the Miami Valley Educational Computer Association (MVECA), a not-for-profit council of governments (COG) out of Yellow Springs, to install a fiber ring within the county. MVECA currently provides IT services to schools, governments and non-profit organizations in Madison, Greene, Clinton, Fayette, Highland, Ross and Montgomery counties.

David Kell, assistant county administrator, said the organization will partner with Madison County to install approximately 577,000 feet of fiber that will connect London, West Jefferson, Plain City and Mt. Sterling with a spur line that will extend to Midway and South Solon.

“The estimated project cost is between \$6-8 million,” he said. “The county is investing \$3 million into the project from its general fund, while pursuing fund from other sources at the state and federal level to help offset costs.”

As the need for broadband services in work-from-home environments continues to grow, especially following the changes in recent years following the pandemic, county officials said in addition to access to services that improved quality of life, there is an importance from an economic development standpoint as well.

“Fiber access also allows the county control over its costs associated with connectivity to the Internet, local network resources, off site back up, and telephone services, saving nearly \$100,000 annually,” says Rob Slane, county administrator. “Additionally, having more fiber in the county allows for more opportunities with commercial, light industrial and more technical employers, which bring higher paying jobs.”

After the design phase, the project will go to bid, then move forward to construction. The county anticipates the project to be done in the next few years, depending on the availability of materials and labor, as well as the cooperation of weather.

## **Questions on Fiber**

Madison County will continue its strategy of bringing higher paying jobs and broadband to the homes of Madison County residents. For questions regarding the fiber ring project, please contact Rob Slane, Madison County Administrator at :

P: 740-852-2972

E: [rob.slane@madison.oh.gov](mailto:rob.slane@madison.oh.gov)



## AUDITOR'S OFFICE: PROPERTY VALUATION UPDATE



**Jennifer Hunter, Auditor**

The Madison County Auditor's office has completed a three-year update of property values. This update is one of the many statutory duties required of the County Auditor's office. Property values are required to be reappraised every six years with an update of values done every three years in between.

Property values are on the rise across Ohio, including in Madison County. The Ohio Department of Tax Equalization (DTE) has final approval of all property values. DTE had initially mandated an overall increase of 36% for Madison County residential values, but this office held the residential value increase to a county-wide average of 32.3%. As in 2020, location is the biggest factor in the changes.

While a few Madison County neighborhoods have experienced a large growth in value since the last revaluation, other neighborhoods only had a modest change.

If you are curious to see how your property will be affected, tentative values are now showing on our website at [auditor.co.madison.oh.us](http://auditor.co.madison.oh.us). We will be having an "open book" period so that you may have any opportunity to speak to an appraiser about your value. It is important to remember that a rise in property values does not equate to the same rate increase in property taxes.

Agricultural values are set using the Current Agricultural Use Value (CAUV) tables. These rates are set by the State of Ohio and are updated every three years. Over the last few updates, CAUV values have remained constant or perhaps decreased slightly. Due to a "perfect storm" of high yields, crop prices and interest rates, CAUV rates for tax year 2023 are on the rise. Madison County currently has 263,636 acres in the CAUV program with over 50 different soil types. Our most predominant soil type in the County is Kokomo silty clay loam – the CAUV valuation of this soil will be increasing from \$2250 per acre to \$3780 per acre for tax year 2023 billed in 2024. My office will be having an informational session regarding the CAUV program and valuations in the next few months. All property owners in the CAUV program will be notified of the time and location of the meeting. All upcoming meetings and notices will also be posted on the Auditor's website. If you have any questions or concerns about your property valuation, please contact our office at (740)852-9717.

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## DJFS: Miller named Support Staff of the Year

Madison County DJFS worker Felicia Miller was recently honored by the Public Children Services Association of Ohio (PCSAO). Miller currently works as a screener for the county but has done many jobs since her start in 2011.

"Felicia takes personal pride in making sure the workers get the training and support they need," said Director Robin Bruno in her recommendation letter to the state. "She has told me on more than one occasion that she wants her unit to be the best unit in the agency and she does whatever is needed to make sure that is true."

She went on to say her "dedication extends beyond her job description, as she consistently goes above and beyond to support her colleagues, helping wherever needed."

"When her agency struggled with delays processing drug screenings, she eagerly stepped in to oversee the process and greatly improved the agency's compliance," Bruno said.



**L to R: Director Robin Bruno, Miller and Julie Harris, Protective Services Administrator.**