Medina County Commissioners' Newsletter

Medina County Ohio

MARCH 20, 2026

EMA Director outlines training, projects, grant funding

The Medina County Emergency Management Agency (EMA) kicked off 2026 with a detailed update to the Board of County Commissioners, highlighting last year's activity, ongoing initiatives, and important upcoming training opportunities.

Ben Nau

EMA Director Ben Nau opened the report by noting that 2025 was another busy year for the agency, with staff participating in 79 separate incidents across the county.

These included 37 fire investigations, 13 hazmat responses, 11 EMA support events, and several specialty responses ranging from water rescues to mobile command deployments.

Medina County EMA

As Director Nau explained, incident activity was widespread.

"Every jurisdiction had at least something," he said, emphasizing the countywide nature of EMA's work.

Training remains a major focus for the year ahead. EMA will host EMA 101 for fire officers on Wednesday April 8, covering key topics such as damage assessment, sheltering, and public notification.

The following evening, April 9, the Brunswick Fire Department will hold Skywarn training, open to the public and led by the National Weather Service.

Additional ICS courses are also scheduled, with a full list now conveniently available at MedinaCountyEMA.org/events.

Director Nau also highlighted several ongoing projects, including a complete overhaul of the county's damage assessment process.

This update aligns with Medina County's new GIS initiative and enhances EMA's ability to gather and analyze incident data.

The agency has also refreshed its public-facing spill dashboard, allowing residents to easily view spills reported to the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC).

EMA is preparing for this year's

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Visit the Commissioners' Webpage at www.medinaco.org/county-commissioners/ *for more information on:*

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- ***Resolutions***
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- ***Board Meeting Minutes***
- ***Bid Projects***
- ***Commissioner Meeting Video Archives***
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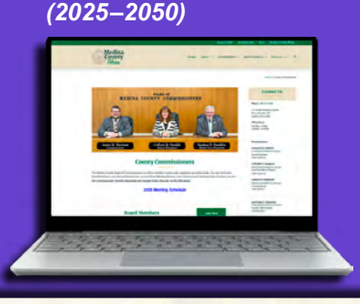
- ***Public Records Requests***
- ***Medina County's Demographic Future (2025–2050)***



Construction activity rebounds as county prepares for busy season

Matt Strehle

During the Tuesday, March 17 meeting of the Medina County Commissioners, Chief Building Official Matt Strehle provided an encouraging update on activity within the Building Department.

After what he described as "a pretty slow January," Strehle reported that commercial construction activity is rebounding, noting that February's numbers are "looking a lot better" and bringing the department back in line with last year's performance.

On the residential side, most indicators are trending upward except for the average cost per home, a figure Strehle said he intends to examine more closely because "the numbers aren't really jiving" when compared across recent charts.

Still, overall momentum remains strong. As Strehle highlighted, "everything's up 21 percent compared to last year as far as our receipts."

Internally, the Building Department continues to move forward on process improvements and staff development.

Strehle praised the progress of the department's new clerk, Danica, sharing with a bit of humor that "we had her answering telephones the second day she was there, which mortified me," though she has handled the challenge exceptionally well.

The department also reached a long-awaited decision on new software, opting for an out-of-the-box solution after extended debate.

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Dog Warden reports strong adoption numbers, increased volunteer support

Dog Warden Del Saffle recently provided an encouraging update to the Medina County Commissioners last week, highlighting continued positive trends at the County's Dog Shelter.

Del Saffle

From December through early March, the shelter took in 41 dogs — 36 strays, four owner surrenders, and one police hold.

Of those, 16 were adopted and another 16 were reunited with their owners. Five dogs were transferred to rescue partners, and as of last week, nine dogs remain in the shelter's care.

Saffle noted that many pets are finding homes quickly, sharing that "the nice ones come in, and there's people ready to adopt them already" as soon as applications are processed.

Volunteer support continues to play a vital role in day-to-day operations, with roughly 280 volunteer hours recorded over the winter months.

One longtime volunteer, Dan, even used his blacksmithing skills to fabricate a new metal latch for the outdoor play area and custom hooks for kennel leashes — items he simply took it upon himself to create.

"We didn't ask him," Saffle said. "He's like, I'm gonna do this."

His contributions, paired with consistent help walking and socializing the dogs, have made a noticeable impact on shelter efficiency and enrichment.

Several community-focused events are also on the horizon.

The shelter plans to host its annual Christmas in July celebration again this summer, tentatively scheduled for Saturday, July 25, pending the availability of their volunteer Santa.

This month, on Saturday, March 21, a local Daisy Girl Scout troop will visit the shelter to spend time with the dogs and bring homemade treats.

Saffle also shared final statistics from 2025, during which the shelter impounded 197 dogs. Eighty-four were adopted, 93 were returned to their owners, and 14 went to rescue organizations.

Impressively, no dogs were euthanized in 2025, resulting in what Saffle described as "a hundred percent placement," with only a few dogs rolling over into the new year still awaiting adoption.

Commissioners praised the shelter's progress, citing improvements in the volunteer program and adoption process as contributing factors.

"I think there's a lot of things trending in the right direction," Commissioner Aaron Harrison said. "I think we're headed in the up direction."

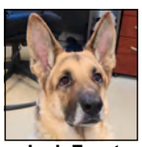
Adoptable Dogs as of 3/18/26

Annabell

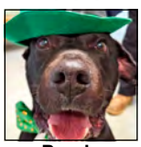
Athena

Draco

Freddy



Jack Frost



Panda

Parker

Rufus

EMA Director outlines training, projects, grant funding...

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LEPC full scale exercise, which will simulate a railroad incident in Medina City by August.

Meanwhile, early 2026 has already seen a spike in activity, with 22 incidents recorded year to date, more than double the number from this time last year. These include fire investigations, hazmat responses, water rescues, and technical rescue support.

Grant funding remains steady for the department. EMA is in the process of drawing down a $10,000 Enbridge grant and is expecting $101,000 from the Emergency Management Performance Grant once federal awards are finalized.

Additional funding includes a $25,000 hazardous materials emergency planning grant, which supports hazmat training throughout the year.

Director Nau also noted that Ohio's Severe Weather Awareness Week is underway, focusing on alert readiness — even if the week brought more snow than spring weather.

He reminded residents to stay prepared.

"Have a weather radio… make sure wireless emergency alerts are turned on," he said.

Residents can also sign up for Medina County Emergency Alerts through EMA's website at bit.ly/4b-0godl, a resource the Commissioners praised as timely and valuable.

Commissioner Steve Hambley closed the discussion by recognizing the county's ongoing commitment to readiness, noting that Medina County is one of only 40 counties in Ohio to earn the National Weather Service's StormReady certification, thanks to the coordinated efforts of EMA and local communities.

Construction activity rebounds as county prepares for busy season...

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Staff are now coordinating with IT and the sanitary department to determine the specific system that will best support operations moving forward.

Looking ahead, the Building Department is preparing for the busy construction season that typically arrives with warmer weather.

Strehle noted that despite the chilly conditions on meeting day, summer is "right around the corner," and activity is expected to accelerate quickly.

Montville Township continues to lead the county in residential development, maintaining its position at the forefront of growth.

The commissioners thanked Strehle for the update and the department's ongoing work as preparations ramp up for the months ahead.

PLANNING SERVICES

Explore zoning, land use, community planning in 2026 Workshop Series

The Medina County Department of Planning Services (DPS) is pleased to announce its 2026 Workshop Series, offering a range of educational opportunities designed to support community leaders, zoning officials, and residents interested in local planning and land-use issues.

All workshops will be held in Balcony Room B on the third floor of the Medina County Administration Building, located at 144 N. Broadway St. in Medina. Attendees are asked to RSVP to jkassouf@medinacounty.gov or cheinly@medinacounty.gov.

The series kicks off on Tuesday, March 24 at 6 p.m. with Zoning Board Basics, an introductory session offering a comprehensive overview of zoning board roles and responsibilities. The workshop will be moderated by Planning Director Denise Testa and Planning Commission President Jeff Brandon.

On Thursday, April 9 at 6 p.m., attendees can join a timely discussion on Data Centers & Township Laws, exploring how the rising demand for digital information processing is impacting Ohio communities. A Q&A session with Attorney Peter Griggs will follow at 7:30 p.m.

The program continues on Tuesday, May 12 at 6 p.m. with Zoning Law Updates, which provides insight into recent legal case history and best practices for implementing or revising zoning laws. Attorney Jenn Huber will host a Q&A session at 7:30 p.m.

She will also return for the Thursday, June 11 at 6 p.m. workshop on Short-term Rentals and Zoning, where participants will learn about regulatory tools and enforcement options as short-term rentals become more common across Medina County.

On Thursday, July 9 at 6 p.m., Planning Director Shawna Gfroerer of Copley Township will lead a workshop on Comprehensive Land Use Plans, guiding communities through the steps of building effective longterm planning frameworks. A Q&A session will follow at 7:30 p.m.

The series concludes on Thursday, Aug. 13 at 6 p.m. with Strategies for Cleaning Up Nuisance Properties, where Attorney Amy Gill will discuss regulatory methods to address problem sites and persistent property maintenance issues. A Q&A session will follow at 7:30 p.m.

The DPS invites township officials, municipal leaders, and interested residents to participate in this informative workshop series.

Department Directory

BUILDING DEPARTMENT
www.medinaco.org/building-department
330-722-9220

COMMISSIONERS
www.medinaco.org/county-commissioners
330-722-9208

COUNTY HOME
http://medinacountyhome.com
330-723-9553

DOG SHELTER
www.medinaco.org/dog-shelter
330-725-9121

FINANCE
No website
330-722-9205

HUMAN RESOURCES
www.medinaco.org/hr
330-722-9209

JOB AND FAMILY SERVICES
www.mcjfs.us
330-722-9300

PLANNING SERVICES
www.medinaco.org/planning
330-722-9293

SANITARY ENGINEER
www.medinaco.org/sanitary
330-723-9585

SENIOR & ADULT SERVICES
www.mcsas.org
330-723-9514

SOLID WASTE DISTRICT
http://recyclemedinacounty.com
330-769-0289

TRANSIT
http://medinacountytransit.org
330-723-9670

Click here to visit our website with the full directory of public officials at www.medinaco.org

SENIOR & ADULT SERVICES

Older adults encouraged to apply for Home Energy Assistance

Application Deadline – Sunday, May 31, 2026

The Ohio Department of Development and Medina Senior & Adult Services want to remind older Ohioans that assistance is available to help with their home energy bills.

The Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) helps Ohioans at or below 175% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines for a household of up to eight members and 60% of State Median Income for a household of nine or more members to pay their heating bills.

Applied directly to the customer's utility or bulk fuel bill, the benefit can help manage heating costs.

Older Ohioans may go to their local Area Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) Agency on Aging office for help with assembling the required documents and completing their HEAP application.

They may also visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov to apply online or to download a copy of the application.

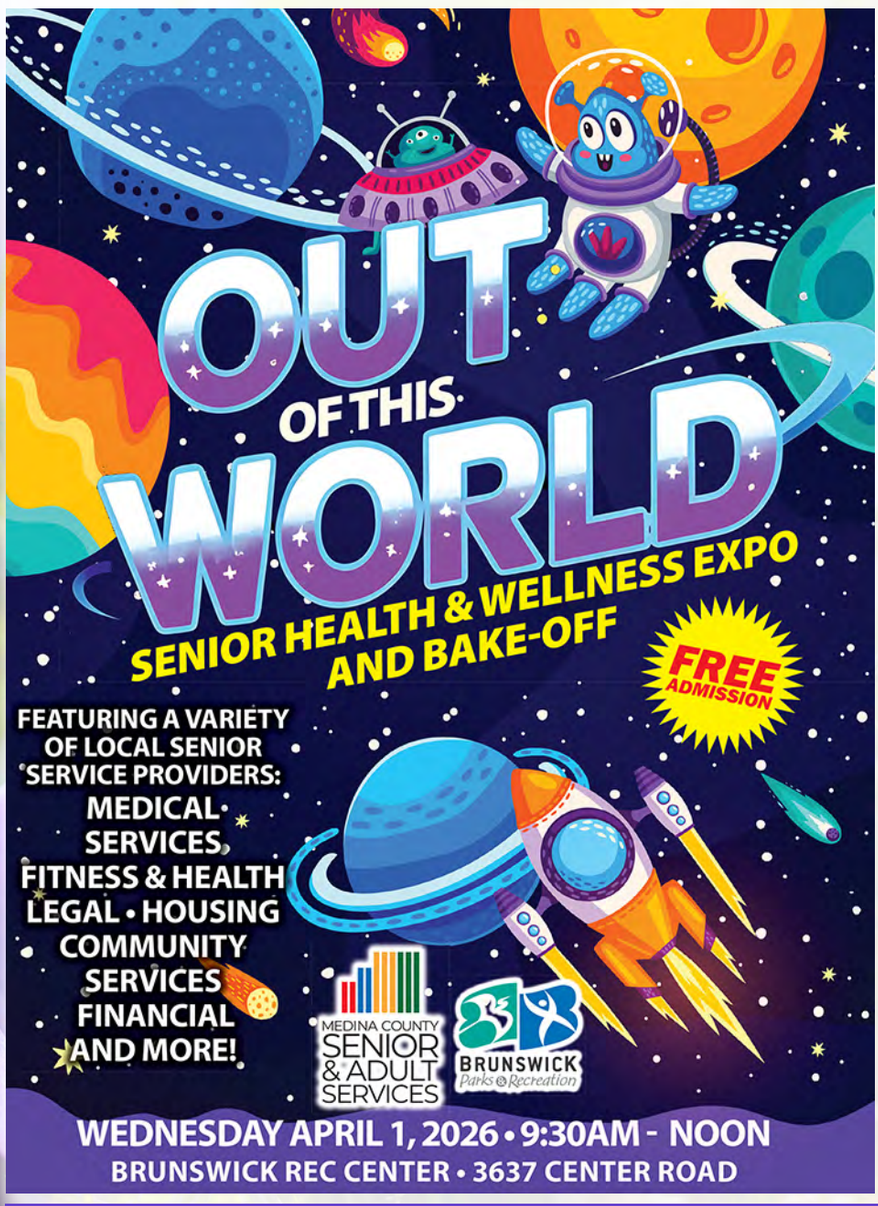
When applying, individuals need to have copies of the following documents:

- Most recent utility bills.
- A list of all household members (including birth dates and Social Security numbers).
- Proof of income for the past 30 days for all household members (12 months for certain income types).
- Proof of U.S. citizenship or legal residency for all household members.
- Proof of disability (if applicable).

HEAP benefits are applied to an individual's energy bill after Jan. 1. Applications for the HEAP program must be received by May 31, 2026.

For more information or assistance with applying for a HEAP benefit, contact Medina Senior & Adult Services at 330-723-9514.

To be connected to your local Energy Assistance Provider, call (800) 282-0880 (hearing impaired clients may dial 711 for assistance) or visit www.energyhelp.ohio.gov.



COUNTY HOME

Superintendent shares positive update on residents, staffing, renovations

During the Tuesday, March 17 meeting of the Medina County Commissioners, County Home Superintendent Greg Brown delivered an update on resident census, staffing progress, ongoing renovations, and community activities.

Brown reported that the Home is currently caring for 44 residents, along with two adult daycare participants.

Staffing remains tight, with openings for full-time aides on all three shifts, but Brown emphasized that coverage remains steady thanks to flexible scheduling and supplemental support.

"We have a lot of PRN positions that we have in place for a reason, and using those and a little creativity, we're fully staffed," he explained.

Recent hiring includes one PRN nurse, with two PRN aides in progress.

Renovation and rebranding efforts continue throughout the facility. Brown highlighted the transformation of the former sports room, which has been painted, refurnished, and redecorated — including new peacock-themed décor — to serve as a dedicated sitting room for the wing.

"That wing's never had a sitting room of its own, so we've designated that for them," he noted.

Additional facility upgrades include a new camera installation in the dining room and a major project led by Maintenance and Memory Builders to convert the second floor tub room into a more functional shower room, easing the tight bathing schedule for residents.

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BOARD OF DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

Scholarship available for county high school students

The Medina County Board of Developmental Disabilities (MCBDD) is proud to offer a scholarship opportunity for local Medina County high school students.

The scholarship was founded to recognize and support young persons who are considering a career which may serve individuals with developmental disabilities.

The field of developmental disabilities is faced with a growing crisis in its workforce.

Finding and recruiting trained professionals for positions that range anywhere from administrators and therapists to educators and direct care workers is a daily struggle in the field.

The MCBDD hopes to address this workforce shortage by encouraging students to make an impact through public service and help improve the lives of thousands of individuals with developmental disabilities.

The MCBDD Donor Scholarship is offering one $1,500.00 scholarship this year.

Applicants must be a current Medina County high school senior and have been accepted into an accredited program in a field which may provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities, (i.e. special education, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, social work, behavioral sciences, etc.).

Applicants must also demonstrate involvement in, or provided services to, individuals with developmental disabilities through activities such as Special Olympics, classroom activities, volunteering, job shadowing, etc.

Interested students must complete and submit a MCBDD Donor Scholarship application form before Tuesday, March 31 to be considered.

Forms are available by calling 330-725-7751 ext. 273 or at www.mcbdd.org.

COUNTY HOME

Superintendent shares positive update on residents, staffing, renovations...

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Brown also acknowledged the challenges created by recent windstorms. Power outages affected the property as well as the Home itself.

Crews from Ohio Edison worked through severe conditions to restore service. Brown recounted their efforts with appreciation, saying they "were up in that bucket in that wind" to ensure power was restored safely.

February and March brought a full schedule of resident events.

The Home hosted a Super Bowl party, multiple Valentine's Day celebrations, and an educational program on the Toledo War.

Residents also enjoyed the annual Chatham Sugarbush Pancake Breakfast, with 29 residents attending this year.

Community partners remain active as well — Access the Arts provided craft activities, Friends of the Medina County Home continued their monthly birthday party tradition, and the Chippewa Chipmunks 4-H group prepared for their upcoming bingo visit.

A special surprise is planned for Friday, March 27, made possible through a grant from the Senior Service Network.

Looking ahead to April, staff are preparing a volunteer luncheon to honor the many community members who support the Home throughout the year.

Commissioners thanked Brown for the update and noted upcoming coordination with a newly formed CCAO committee that will monitor legislation affecting county homes statewide.

30TH ANNUAL MEDINA COUNTY
EARTH DAY FESTIVAL
FOOD, ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT
FREE FAMILY FUN EVENT

SATURDAY, APRIL 25TH
10 AM - 4 PM

BUFFALO CREEK RETREAT
8708 HUBBARD VALLEY RD.
SEVILLE, OHIO

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- ANNUAL FAMILY FISHING DERBY 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM
- NATE THE GREAT MAGIC SHOW 1:00 PM & 3:00 PM
- KIDS FACE PAINTING 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM
- COLORING CONTEST AWARDS 12:00 PM

ALL DAY EVENTS

- ECO FAIR & MARKET Shop local vendors
- LIBRARY BOOKMOBILE Borrow or return books!
- BUG ZOO A hands on fan-favorite!
- HOUSE PLANT SWAP Bring a houseplant cutting or seedling and swap from our selection with the OSU Master Gardeners
- TREE SEEDLING GIVEAWAY Collect a native tree for your yard
- RAFFLE PRIZES $1/1 ticket or $5/6 Tickets
- LOCAL FOOD TRUCKS

RECYCLING STATION

- Eyeglasses
- School Supplies
- Household Batteries
- Dental Supplies

CLOTHING & TEXTILE DRIVE — Planet Aid

Donate gently used clothing, shoes, and household linens at Planet Aid's drop-off at Hubbard Valley Park. View full list on website.

Scan for a full list of recycleable items and event details.
Or visit https://medinaswcd.org/earth-day/

DON'T FORGET!
BRING YOUR REFILLABLE WATER BOTTLE!
Refill Station presented by Clearwater Systems

Follow us on Social Media!
@medinacountyearthdayfestival
@medinacountyearthdayfestival

Curious about foster parenting? **Join us for**

Coffee & Conversation

Have you ever wondered what it's *really* like to be a foster parent?
Come hang out, grab your favorite drink, and learn more in a relaxed, no-pressure setting.

The Grind Coffee Bar
124 N. Court Street, Medina
Tuesday, April 7th
6:30-8:00pm

6:30 PM – Meet & Greet
Purchase your own coffee, connect, relax.
7:00 PM – Info Session
Learn the basics of foster care, requirements, and next steps.
7:15 PM – Foster Parent Panel
Hear real stories & experiences from current foster parents.
7:30 PM – Q&A
Ask questions in an open and supportive environment.

Scan to register. Registration is not required.

Questions?
Call/text Layne at (330) 667-0167
www.fostermedina.com

MCJFS Medina County Job and Family Services

Current Open Positions

Postings current as of March 20, 2026

Click here to visit the County's Employment website for full job descriptions

- **Administrative Secretary** *(FT)* – County Engineer
- **Assistant Prosecuting Attorney** *(FT)* – Prosecutor's Office, Civil Division
- **Bus Driver** *(PT)* – Transit
- **Cleaning Technician** *(FT)* – Maintenance
- **Cleaning Technician** *(PT)* – Maintenance
- **Construction Engineer I** *(FT)* – Highway Engineer
- **Deputy Director** *(FT)* – Veterans Service Officer
- **Deputy Dog Warden** *(PT)* – Dog Shelter
- **Director** *(FT – Exempt)* – Job & Family Services
- **IT Technician Support** *(FT)* – Information Technology
- **Juvenile Probation Intake Officer** *(FT)* – Common Pleas Court, Probate & Juvenile Divisions
- **Line Maintenance Worker** *(FT)* – Sanitary Engineer's Office
- **Police Officer** *(FT)* – Park District
- **Seasonal Park Laborer** – Park District
- **Seasonal Park Planner** – Park District
- **Seasonal Steward** – Park District
- **Wastewater Plant Operator** *(FT)* – Sanitary Engineer

(FT) = Full-Time • (PT) = Part-Time

Click here to download an Employment Application!

Enjoy the BENEFITS of working for Medina County! Apply Today!

Click here to visit our website for any updates: www.medinaco.org/hr/employment/

HUMAN RESOURCES

LINE MAINTENANCE WORKER (FULL-TIME)
SANITARY ENGINEER'S OFFICE

The Medina County Sanitary Engineer is currently accepting applications for an opening in the Line Maintenance Division.

Location: 2417 Plum Creek Parkway, Brunswick, Ohio.

Job Description: Applicants should have a background in the construction and maintenance of water distribution and sewer collection systems. Typical work duties will include the repair and replacement of water and sanitary sewer mains, hydrant flushing and repair, water taps and service line installation within the right-of-way, television inspections of sanitary sewer lines, as well as other assorted duties directed by supervisors. Working mainly in an outdoor environment, being in a standing, crouched, kneeling, or crawling position of a frequent basis, and lifting up to 50 pounds in any given day. Performing confined space entries and traffic control on a routine basis.

Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and additional hours as need to complete work or handle emergencies. Employees are required to be part of an On-Call rotation and available for after-hours emergency work. You must be able to arrive at any location within the County within one (1) hour of receiving the call.

Qualifications: Minimum 18 years of age. High school diploma or GED. Valid Class A Ohio Commercial Driver's License (CDL) with tanker endorsement, clean driving record, and proof of adequate vehicle insurance.

This is a Bargaining Unit position.

Rate of Pay:

	Start	One (1) Year	Two (2) Years
2026	$28.84	$30.39	$31.93

Employees who obtain a Class 1 Water Distribution or Class 1 Wastewater Collection license shall receive an additional one dollar ($1.00) per hour to the above listed base rate, for each license.

Benefits: Paid sick time, 12 paid holidays, vacation accrual, insurance (medical, dental, vision, disability, life), OPERS pension.

Medina County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. All potential candidates must pass a background check and drug screening.

Please email resumes to ewalter@medinacounty.gov or mail them to: Medina County Sanitary Engineers, Attn: Emily Walter, 791 W. Smith Road, Medina, Ohio 44256

Commissioner Department April Birthdays

Building
Amanda B.
Paul W.

County Home
Lindsay J.

Finance
Laura L.

Human Resources
Connor K.

IT
Timothy H.

Job & Family Services
Nishayla C.
Pamela C.
Shelli H.
Christopher H.
Kristine H.
Christopher S.
Kelly S.
Kellie S.

Maintenance
Kevin C.
Robert L.
Ashley M.
Alyssa N.

Sanitary
Wesley D.
Tyler H.
Ethan J.
Logan M.
Frank O.
Jeremy S.
Jonathan S.
Grant U.

Senior & Adult Services
Susan J.
Lorenda T.
Barbara V.

Solid Waste
Dusty E.

Transit
Christine C.
David D.
James K.
Shirley L.
James S.
Deborah S.

Commissioner Department Milestone Work Anniversaries

5 YEARS
4/26 – Cheyenne E. – IT

20 YEARS
4/10 – David K. – Sanitary
4/17 – Laura L. – Finance
4/24 – Jessica G. – JFS

COUNTY HOME

History comes alive with Toledo War presentation

by Greg Brown
Superintendent

Residents at the Home enjoyed a lively trip back in time this week thanks to a special visit from Carl, who delivered an engaging presentation on the Toledo War — the historic border dispute between Ohio and Michigan in the 1830s.

Carl brought the era to life with vivid stories, colorful characters, and little-known facts about the conflict that once put the two states at odds over a narrow strip of land.

Residents were fascinated to learn how the dispute unfolded and how it ultimately helped shape Ohio's history.

The presentation sparked plenty of conversation and curiosity, making it a memorable and educational experience for all who attended.

It was a wonderful reminder of how even lesser-known chapters of our past can still captivate and connect us today.

Chatham Township's Annual Sugarbush Pancake Breakfast

Twenty-nine residents celebrated the sweet arrival of spring at Chatham Township's annual Sugarbush pancake breakfast, hosted by the Chatham Volunteer Firemen's Association (VFA) at the Chatham Memorial Hall, 6299 Avon Lake Rd.

For more than 60 years, this all-you-can-eat breakfast fundraiser has been a beloved tradition for Medina County Home residents, who look forward to the event each year.

The Chatham VFA once again graciously welcomed our residents and drivers at no cost, offering an atmosphere filled with warm hospitality and delicious food.

As always, the breakfast did not disappoint. Plates were quickly filled with pancakes, syrup, and all the fixings, and the smiles from residents showed just how much the outing meant to them.

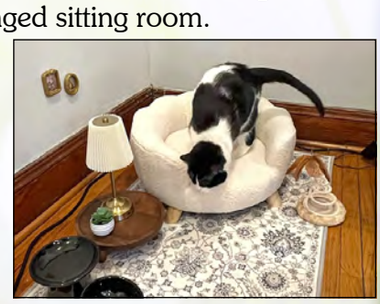
A heartfelt thank-you goes out to the dedicated volunteers who prepared and served the meal.

Your kindness, generosity, and friendly service made the morning truly special for our residents

Sundae Settles Into Her New Sitting Room

Our resident cat, Sundae, has been living her best life in her newly arranged sitting room.

The cozy space has quickly become one of her favorite spots to relax, observe the day's happenings, and, of course, enjoy a well-deserved nap or two.



CONTACT US

Medina County Commissioners
144 North Broadway St., Room 201,
Medina, Ohio 44256

Office: 330-722-9208
Toll Free: 844-722-3800
Clerk: Rhonda Beck,
rbeck@medinacounty.gov

Commissioner Meetings are held every Tuesday morning at 9:30 a.m.

Please join us at:

www.facebook.com/MedinaCountyCommissioners

Commissioners' Meeting Agenda & Public Meetings

To be added to our weekly Agenda and Public Meetings distribution list, please email Clerk of the Board Rhonda Beck at rbeck@medinacounty.gov and request to be added to the agenda distribution list.

Commissioners' Newsletter

To be added to our bimonthly newsletter mailing list, please contact Public Information Officer Brian Gallatin at bgallatin@medinacounty.gov, or visit our website at www.medinaco.org/newsletter-sign-up/