ODH Sets Public Hearing on HSTS Rules

In a follow-up to last week’s alert, the Ohio Department of Health has filed proposed household sewage treatment system (HSTS) rules with the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR). The rulemaking process is described at JCARR’s website, http://www.jcarr.state.oh.us/home.

In accordance with Chapter 119 of the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Department of Health shall conduct a public hearing on proposed changes to rules that have been submitted to JCARR. The public hearing has been set for Wednesday, September 3, 2014, at 2:00 p.m. and will be held at 35 E. Chestnut Street in Columbus.

The Department of Health is proposing to rescind current HSTS rules and replace them with language that has been discussed since the beginning of this year. The rules will provide standards for the siting, design, installation, inspection, monitoring, maintenance and abandonment of STS and grey water recycling systems in Ohio.

At the hearing, people affected by the proposed rules may appear and be heard in person, by an attorney or both; may present their positions, arguments, or contentions orally or in writing; and may present evidence tending to show that the proposed rules, if adopted, will be unreasonable or unlawful.

To aid in getting visitors through security, persons wishing to testify and those simply wishing to observe the hearing are encouraged to pre-register by contacting the Ohio Department of Health at (614) 466-4882 or by sending an email to odhrules@odh.ohio.gov.

Copies of the proposed rules are available at http://www.registerofohio.state.oh.us/.

Attorney General Opinion

2014-032 Trustee Compatibility

Syllabus:

A township trustee may serve simultaneously as an unpaid, auxiliary deputy sheriff within the same county when the township has not contracted with the county sheriff’s office for police protection. A township trustee who serves simultaneously as an unpaid, auxiliary deputy sheriff should abstain from any deliberations, discussions, and votes concerning a township tax levy in excess of the ten-mill limitation when the county has already placed a levy for support of the county sheriff’s office on the ballot. (1961 Op. Att’y Gen. No. 2311, p. 335, distinguished.)

State Projects Revenue Surplus For FY 2015

One month into FY 2015, the state is projecting a $480 million surplus for the year, according to the Office of Budget and Management (OBM). The latest estimates have the “unencumbered ending fund balance” at more than $631 million. When the customary cash carryover amounts are subtracted, the state surplus is $476 million.

The surplus is being attributed to several things. First, the state had higher than normal tax receipts for the month of July. Second, Fiscal Year 2014 ended with a cash balance of $1.7 billion, as reported by OBM. Finally, spending was more than $800 million less than anticipated last year for Medicaid costs.

Governor Proposes Workers’ Compensation Rebate

On Tuesday, Governor Kasich announced that the Bureau of Workers’ Compensation is proposing Another Billion Back for Ohio’s private employers and public-taxing districts, including townships. Building on last year’s Billion Back plan, the new proposal calls for an additional commitment to safety of up to $35 million over the next two years and for creating several new safety initiatives that leverage BWC’s occupational health and safety expertise to create innovative solutions for improving Ohio’s workforce.

If approved by the BWC Board in August, each rebate would equal 60% of the employer’s annual premium and checks will be distributed beginning in October. Only private employers and public-taxing districts that pay premiums into the State Insurance Fund and have active, up-to-date policies will be eligible for the rebate. Public-taxing districts must have been in an active or reinstated status as of September 5 to be eligible. Employers with an outstanding BWC balance will have their rebate first applied to that balance.

Safety initiatives being proposed include a variety of areas. BWC will work with higher-education institutions and research organizations on advanced research in workplace safety and health. BWC expects to fund 10-15 projects a year at an annual cost of approximately $2 million. The proposal calls for an expansion of the Safety Council Program to incorporate health and wellness. The popular Safety Grants Program is proposed to receive an additional $15 million in funds for the next two years to help employers purchase equipment that will substantially reduce or eliminate injuries and illnesses. BWC is also proposing to collaborate with business, labor and higher-education to create, implement and fund safety programming as part of required training in high-risk specialties such as carpentry, welding and plumbing. Finally, BWC is proposing that $1 million in funding be provided to the State Fire Marshal and the Ohio Emergency Medical Services to fund training for firefighters that would improve safety, preparedness and response time during emergencies.
National Association of Towns & Townships (NATaT) Federal Update

Weekly Federal Alerts Available
Each week NATaT publishes a weekly federal legislative alert. To view the federal update, please visit www.ohiotownships.org and click on NATaT and then Federal Legislation.

OTA Now Accepting Suggestions for 131st General Assembly Legislative Priorities
The OTA provides Ohio’s legislature with a list of legislative priorities at the start of each General Assembly. The 130th General Assembly Legislative Priorities are available online at www.ohiotownships.org under “Legislation.” The 131st General Assembly priorities will be approved by the OTA Board of Directors at the November meeting. A copy of the Legislative Priorities will be available online and will be published in the January/February issue of the Ohio Township News.

If you have a suggestion for inclusion in the 131st General Assembly Legislative Priorities, please contact Heidi Fought at fought@ohiotownships.org.

2015 MARCS Grant Period Now Open
The Ohio Department of Commerce’s Division of State Fire Marshal is accepting applications for the 2015 Multi-Agency Radio Communication System (MARCS) Grant. Applications are available online and must be postmarked no later than August 30, 2014 to be considered. If you have any questions or require additional assistance, please contact Kimberly Hodnett, at kimbely.hodnett@com.state.oh.us or (800) 515-0023. Complete information and forms can be found at: http://www.com.ohio.gov/fire.

OPERS Newsletter Now Available
The August 2014 newsletter from OPERS is available. Please find the August 2014 OPERSource attached.

Salt Shortage a Possibility This Winter
The OTA received a call from the County Engineers Association of Ohio this week to inform us that there are numerous counties around the state having difficulties filling the 2014 winter salt supply. Some counties have received absolutely no bids for salt and other counties have had to reject bids because of the high costs. Bids have come back at over $100 a ton, whereas the 2012-2013 average price in Ohio was $58 a ton.

Fred Pausch, executive director of the County Engineers Association, said that this is happening all over the Midwest, as other states are also experiencing issues with delivery of necessary salt supplies for the upcoming winter. The County Engineers are working with ODOT to try and resolve the issues. Townships are encouraged to work with their county engineer on this matter.

Unemployment Rate Rises in July
Ohio’s unemployment rate increased to 5.7%, up from 5.5% last month, according to the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services. Employment in goods producing industries lost a net of 2,300 jobs last month, with losses in manufacturing outweighing gains in construction. Government employment added 1,500 jobs largely in local government which offset losses in state and federal government positions.

Ohio Balanced Growth Program’s Best Local Land Use Practices - Looking for Feedback
With the completion of an online resource update in 2012, and the successful Ohio Land Use Conference and Regional Information Sessions in 2013, the Program’s focus has shifted to implementation of best practices. To that end, assistance has been provided to communities on a variety of projects. The Program would like to continue to expand and keep up-to-date the online resources, including case studies, and check lists for zoning and comprehensive plan review. To view the Best Local Land Use Practices Summer 2014 newsletter, please visit http://balancedgrowth.ohio.gov/Portals/0/BLLUP/BLLUP%20Update%202014-07-08.pdf.

As part of their ongoing effort to be responsive to community needs, the Program has a short (5 question) survey. Please take a moment to let the Ohio Balanced Growth Program know how they are doing, and what would be useful to you going forward. The survey can be found at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YDJYCBT.

For more information, please contact:
Kirby Date, AICP, Community Planning Program Manager
Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs Cleveland State
University Tel. 216-687-5477
k.date@csuohio.edu
www.urban.csuohio.edu/cpp
2014 Grant Workshops Planned

Does your township need a new garage or is looking to begin a cooperative agreement with a neighboring entity, but doesn’t have the funds to do so? Get started with an OTA grant workshop! The OTA is holding grant workshops in 2014. You may choose from two sessions: Grant Basics and Grant Budgets & Administration. The Grant Basics workshop is not a prerequisite for Grant Budgets & Administration.

**September 15 - Grant Basics**  
**October 27 - Grant Budgets & Administration**

All workshops will be held from 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the OTA office located in Blacklick, Ohio. If at least 15 people are not registered two weeks prior to a session, it will be cancelled. The cost to attend each workshop is $65 and payment may be made via check or credit card (Visa or MasterCard only). You may download a registration form by visiting the OTA website at www.ohiotownships.org.

Agricultural Easement Purchase Meeting

Representatives of townships, counties and soil & water conservation districts who are either currently operating Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program (LAEPP) programs or are interested in doing so, are invited to attend the Office of Farmland Preservation’s annual statewide Technical Committee meeting on Friday, September 5 at 10:00 a.m. at the Ohio Department of Agriculture.

The agenda includes general information on the certification and application process and then more specific information for those that are already participating in the program.

The Application for Local Sponsor Certification is open from September 15-October 15, 2014, two weeks earlier than last year. Any organization interested in being a local sponsor for the 2015 landowner application must apply during this time period. The application may be found at http://www.agri.ohio.gov/divs/FarmLand/FarmLand.aspx?div=LAEPP_Local_Sponsor/2015.htm.

If you are interested in attending the Technical Committee, please R.S.V.P. by August 29 by emailing FarmLandPres@Agri.ohio.gov. All questions, concerns or suggestions may also be sent to this email address.

Has Your Township Sent In LGF Data?

The OTA is looking to compile updated information about the LGF. We need your help! Has your township returned the survey below? If not, please fill out the information and return it to the OTA office.

Township ____________________________  
County ______________________________

Total township budget in 2010: $______________  
Township General Fund budget in 2010: $___________

Total LGF revenue received in 2010: $______________  
Total township budget in 2013: $______________  
Township General Fund budget in 2013: $___________

Total LGF revenue received in 2013: $______________

Feel free to send the information to the OTA office via fax at (614) 863-9751 or email at fought@ohiotownships.org. We appreciate your participation in this effort!

Thank You to Our 4th Annual Golf Outing Sponsors!

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Integrys Energy Services Joules Angstrom Pengwyn  
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