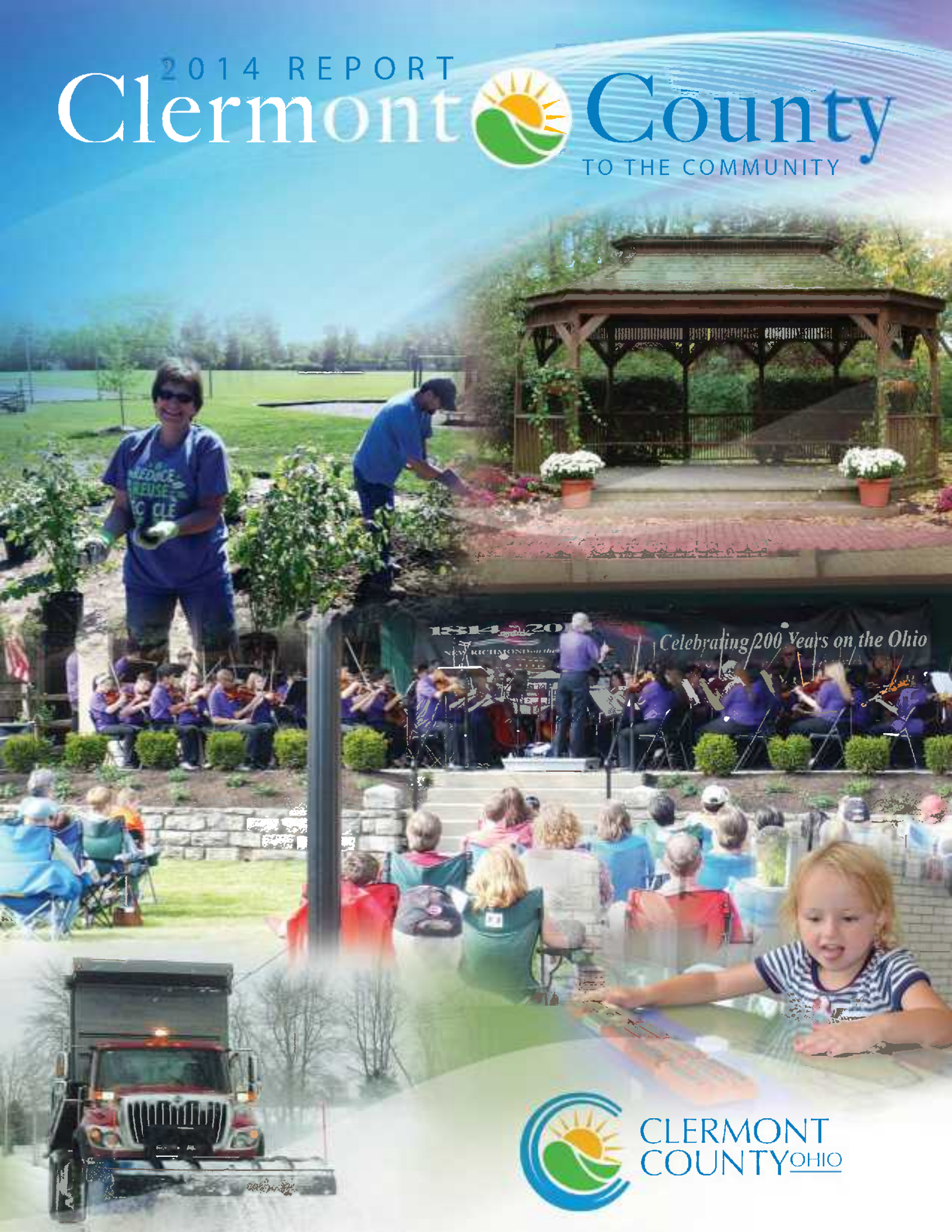
2014 REPORT

Clermont County

TO THE COMMUNITY



CLERMONT COUNTY OHIO

2014 a year of challenge and change for Clermont County.

We want to mention:

911 system upgraded
Our 911 system is more accurate than ever, thanks to a field project that led to thousands of new data points entered into the system.

A new name
We rechristened the building that houses the Department of Job and Family Services. It's now the Clermont Family Support Center.

Progress on the bridge
Our only covered bridge, in Stonelick Township, collapsed in the midst of repairs in February. By the end of the year, reconstruction was almost complete.

Our sincere thanks
Always proud of our men and women in uniform, we continue to honor them and their families during the year at County Commissioners' sessions.

Eastgate gets easier
The mass of road construction, expansion and rerouting around Eastgate made significant progress in 2014. The remaining work on the I-275-SR 32 interchange will be completed in 2015. Commutes are getting easier, and access to and from this retail hub has improved.

Tackling addiction
Recognizing the seriousness of heroin and opiate addiction in Clermont County, many leaders in the community began the Opiate Task Force, determined to develop a more cohesive and unified response to the epidemic. Innovative approaches to dealing with the problem, such as the Community Alternative Sentencing Center and the Family Dependency Treatment Court, have launched.

Happy 200th!
New Richmond and Batavia turned 200 years old! These historic villages celebrated their birthdays throughout the summer with music, parades, festivals and fireworks.

Letter from Board of County Commissioners

To our community:

As 2014 drew to a close, it was clear that Clermont County was finally putting the Great Recession behind. Our sales tax revenue grew, and the number of new jobs in our county grew as well. Private sector job growth, as seen with announced expansions by companies such as Multi-Color Corp. and L-3 Fuzing & Ordnance Systems, continues to provide new opportunities for county residents. We look forward to more of these partnerships in 2015.

A key to our continued growth is constant investment in infrastructure. Nowhere is that more apparent than at the Interstate 275-SR 32 interchange, where construction advanced rapidly in 2014. Longer term, we expect to see significant improvements made to SR 32 East, which will open up even more of our county to new jobs.

In 2015, public safety remains a priority. The Clermont County Jail will be adding nearly 50 beds, primarily for women, in response to the heroin scourge whose impact in our county cannot be underestimated. We applaud the county's Opiate Task Force and its law enforcement, courts, government, health, education, and family stakeholders. Their coordinated and dedicated efforts are needed if we are to get this epidemic under control.

After several years of planning, the county will implement a new radio communications system in Spring 2015. This system will allow seamless communications among dispatch and first responders both within the borders of Clermont County and in the surrounding counties in Southwest Ohio. The current system, which became operable in 1999, is technologically obsolete, difficult and costly to maintain. The new system represents a big step forward for the county and Southwest Ohio emergency management operations.

We are looking forward to the U.S. Rowing Club National Championships, which will be held at Harsha Lake in July. We expect 2,000 athletes to be there. What a great opportunity to show off the natural beauty and hospitality of our county! We know how special Clermont County is, and we welcome all opportunities to showcase that to others.

Sincerely,

Ed Humphrey | Bob Proud | David Uible

CLERMONT COUNTY OHIO

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Growing our economy

Community and Economic Development

Economic development continues to be a priority for the Commissioners. In 2014, several companies announced investments in facilities and equipment totaling $23 million. Nearly 300 new jobs will be added and more than 1,000 jobs retained by Clermont County manufacturers. These jobs total approximately $80 million in payroll, some of which will be spent in the county for goods and services, helping service-oriented businesses grow as well.

Also in 2014, the Planning Division completed Clermont County's first ever Comprehensive Plan. The plan serves as a single place for citizens, businesses and developers to find local land use and infrastructure plans. With this plan, the county will be able to compete more aggressively for grants and other funding opportunities. Other planning activities included the review and approval of four residential subdivisions – creating 137 buildable lots – by the Clermont County Planning Commission.

Company	New jobs
Multi-Color Corp.	86
L-3 Fuzing and Ordnance	84
General Data	60
A&P Technology	36
Savor Seasonings	10
SpectraTech	9

Under the Community Development Program Grant administered by the Ohio Development Services Agency, Clermont County was awarded $642,300. This amount includes $212,300 as a competitive Critical Infrastructure Award for reconstruction work on Walnut Street in the Village of Felicity. Other approved infrastructure projects include: Clermont County Public Health septic rehabilitation program for $150,000; the Village of Williamsburg South Fifth Street sidewalk improvement project for $64,000; and Clermont Community Services for repairs to the parking lot at the James Sauls Homeless Shelter for $55,000.

The county continued to utilize funds provided through the Community Housing and Improvement Program (CHIP), which was funded in FY2013 in the amount of $400,000. These funds have assisted low- to moderate-income homeowners with necessary repairs to their homes, as well as assisting qualified applicants with down-payment assistance to become homeowners. The county will reapply for CHIP funds in the upcoming 2015 program year.

A grant of $558,235 was awarded to the county through the Ohio attorney general's office to aid communities in the removal of blighted and vacant properties. The Moving Ohio Forward demolition program has helped to fund the demolition of over 69 deteriorated residential structures in Clermont County through the 2012-2014 grant period.

Andy Kuchta, Director
101 E. Main St., Batavia
513-732-7825
www.clermontcountyohio.biz

Permit Central/Building Inspection Department

If you build or renovate in Clermont County, you use our office. We administer state and local building codes and regulations; and our inspectors perform site, building, mechanical, and electrical inspections to ensure compliance. Our department issues permits for non-residential and residential projects in most of Clermont County and non-residential sites in most of Brown County.

Permit Central also processes applications for the Planning Department, Public Health District, County Engineer, and the Water Resources Department, making for a one-stop shop.

In 2014, the Building Inspection Department issued a total of 4,598 permits with a declared value of $142.7 million. The Building Inspection staff processed 170 cases in 2014. Cases ranged from emergency responses to complaints filed by citizens and work without permits.

Carl Lamping, Director
2275 Bauer Road, Batavia
513-732-7213
www.permit.clermontcountyohio.gov

Protecting our resources

Water Resources Department

We completed more than $6 million in capital improvements throughout the water and wastewater systems, including:

- Rehabilitation and repainting of the Gaynor Elevated Water Storage Tank in Goshen Township.
- Replacement of 1,400 feet of sanitary sewer main and manholes under SR 32 just east of Old SR 74 and Shayler Road in Union Township to provide additional capacity and replace aging infrastructure.
- Rehabilitation of 13,400 feet of sanitary sewer, 45 manholes, and 133 laterals using cured-in-place pipe trenchless technology throughout Miami, Pierce and Union townships.
- Replacement of 11,000 feet of cast-iron water main originally installed in 1959 along Wards Corner Road in Miami Township and SR 132 in Stonelick Township.
- Eliminated Tanglewood Lift Station in Miami Township and Turnberry Lift Station in Pierce Township with installation of new sanitary sewer.

Lyle Bloom, P.E., Director of Utilities
4400 Haskell Lane, Batavia
513-732-7970
www.wrd.clermontcountyohio.gov

Emergency Management Agency

In 2014, EMA made great strides toward improving public awareness. EMA conducted training on personal disaster planning, government emergency planning, and continuity of operations planning. Moving forward, EMA will continue efforts to enhance preparedness planning and coordination of public safety resources to ensure that Clermont County can respond to and recover from large-scale disasters.

Working with the county public safety agencies, EMA facilitated multiple tabletop exercises to test local capacity to respond to floods, blizzards, high wind, and water contamination incidents.

In January 2014, EMA supported the City of Loveland as it activated a shelter to help residents who needed a place to stay when the temperatures plunged and many homes lost power.

EMA responded to the Duke Energy Beckjord Station diesel spill into the Ohio River Aug. 18-23. We coordinated an after- action conference to identify lessons learned from the spill response and recovery efforts.

EMA also worked with local public safety agencies, Clermont County Public Health, the Coroner's Office, and Mercy Health Clermont Hospital to plan for a potential Ebola incident.

Pam Haverkos, Director
2279 Clermont Center Drive, Batavia
513-732-7661
www.ema.clermontcountyohio.gov

Office of Environmental Quality

- Implemented an educational program for county schools
- Began a household hazardous waste voucher program
- Diverted recyclables from the landfill via the drop-off recycling program.

By the numbers:

- 780 volunteers and 1,277 bags of trash removed during East Fork and Ohio River Sweeps (photo, right)
- 73 tons of litter and 753 tires picked up through the Municipal Court Alternative Sentencing program
- 9,800 tires turned in during amnesty days

Paul Braasch, Director
4400 Haskell Lane, Batavia
513-732-7894
www.oeq.net

Supporting families, protecting children

CPS team works on adoptions.

Department of Job and Family Services

Our department comprises several divisions – Children's Protective Services, Child Support Enforcement, Public Assistance, and OhioMeansJobs Clermont County. At the heart of them are programs and services designed to assist individuals and families with self-sufficiency, support a healthy community, and keep children safe.

Judy Eschmann, Director
2400 Clermont Center Drive, Batavia
513-732-7111
www.djfs.clermontcountyohio.gov

Children's Protective Services

Each day, we are driven by our belief that every child in Clermont County has a right to be raised in a safe and permanent family. Everything our dedicated staff does speaks to that core belief. We respect the dignity, integrity and uniqueness of each family, and believe that intervention is warranted only when children are found to be at risk.

In assuming this responsibility, we also try our best to preserve families. Children belong in families, hopefully the one they are born into. We prefer that a child remain at home while we provide services to stabilize the family. If a child cannot live safely at home, we first look for an appropriate relative to care for the child. If a relative is not available, the child will go into foster care or other placement. In every case, the safety of the child is our main concern.

We also believe in permanence for children. Children need stability and they need permanence. If the crisis in a birth family cannot be resolved, it is our responsibility to seek an alternative, permanent family for those children in a timely manner.

In June of 2014, we implemented a statewide program called Alternative Response, whose purpose is to stabilize families and prevent children from being separated from their parents.

In 2014, we conducted more than 1,500 child abuse investigations, initiated through calls from the community. We had 329 children in CPS custody during the year. In the midst of these troubling numbers, each year we celebrate another number: those children who find their forever families. In 2014, 47 children in our custody were adopted by loving and caring parents. Through our Wendy's Wonderful Kids recruiter – a position funded through a grant from the Dave Thomas Foundation – we found homes for older children, who face the most challenges in finding a family.

As always, the generous benefactors of our Community Toy Chest came through with Christmas gifts for all the children in our care, making those children's holidays much happier and brighter!

513-732-STOP to report abuse
www.cps.clermontcountyohio.gov

513-732-7765 for information about becoming a foster or adoptive parent
www.clermontforkids.org

Overwhelmed by Toy Chest donations.

Child Support Enforcement

At the end of 2014, Child Support Enforcement was administering 14,288 open cases serving 42,451 individuals (28,576 adults and 13,875 children). During 2014, our division collected more than $36 million in support payments.

In 2014, the Ohio Department of Job & Family Services recognized Clermont County for its excellent performance in establishing paternity for children born out of wedlock.

513-732-7248
www.clermontsupportkids.org

Public Assistance

The Division of Public Assistance administers a number of programs, including Food Assistance, Medicaid, and Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation. Our division is also responsible for fraud investigations and recovery of benefits from those investigations.

On Jan. 1, 2014, Medicaid was expanded in Ohio to include those who fell below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level. This meant that a previously uninsured population could receive preventive and other health-care services. The caseload for Medicaid increased by 31% in Clermont County; by the second half of the year, we cleared the backlog created by this increase in customers.

In 2014, these programs served the following number of individuals in Clermont County:

- Food Assistance – 29,788
- Ohio Works First Cash Assistance – 1,925
- Medicaid – 39,185 of which 12,879 were new Medicaid expansion recipients
- Child Care Program – 743
- Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation – 11,556 trips for 1,852 riders

In 2014, the Public Assistance Benefit Recovery Unit collected $410,763 and earned $76,906 in collections incentive funding.

513-732-1111
www.publicassistance.clermontcountyohio.gov

OhioMeansJobs Clermont County

Our mission is simple: We connect people looking for jobs to companies looking for people to fill their jobs.

In 2014, job seekers came through our doors more than 14,000 times. OMJ Clermont County arranged for and financed career training for 64 citizens and provided $276,840 in tuition and related supplies. Job seekers completed training in health services, transportation, advanced manufacturing, and information technology.

Local employers posted 2,358 job opportunities with us, and 61 companies were represented at hiring events – with 1,642 citizens seeking employment at these events. One major job fair was conducted at OMJ Clermont for 23 different companies, with over 100 job candidates attending. In addition, OMJ Clermont continued as the exclusive application site for Huhtamaki USA. Over 360 applications have been collected in this effort.

In April, OMJ Clermont hosted the 11th Annual Clermont Youth Career Expo at UC Clermont. Nearly 200 local high school juniors and seniors (photo below) were trained in formal job-readiness classes, participated in a tour of the UC Clermont campus, and visited 30 local businesses to learn about careers available in their industry and the training necessary to work in those professions.

756 Old State Route 74, Cincinnati
513-943-3000
www.ohiomeansjobs.com/clermont

CONNECTING PEOPLE TO WORK
Jessica Fitzgerald walked into OhioMeansJobs Clermont County in August 2013, looking for some help to find a job. "I needed a job!" she said. She took classes in interviewing and resume building, and began to work at OMJ as an administrative aide. Her job coach there connected her to Clermont County's Job and Family Services, where she began doing filing work for Child Support Enforcement. Today, she is working full time at the front desk for Child Support Enforcement. "I love this job," she says. "I work well with people and I love the multi-tasking that this job requires."

Clermont Transportation Connection

Our buses and vans take people to jobs, doctors, schools, shopping and entertainment in Clermont County and downtown Cincinnati. In 2014, we transported 98,775 passengers.

The Route 2X New Richmond Express and Route 4X Amelia Express provide non-stop service into downtown Cincinnati. Dial-A-Ride is a door-to-door public transit service that operates like a taxi cab. Passengers must call the dispatch office and schedule a ride. The service is open to any person in Clermont County. All vehicles are wheelchair accessible.

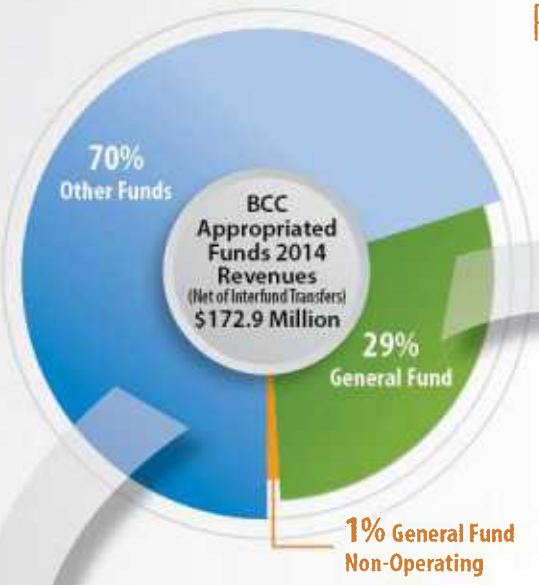
We are open 6 a.m.-6 p.m. Monday through Saturday.

Lisa Gatwood, Director
4003 Filager Road, Batavia
513-732-7433
www.ctc.clermontcountyohio.gov

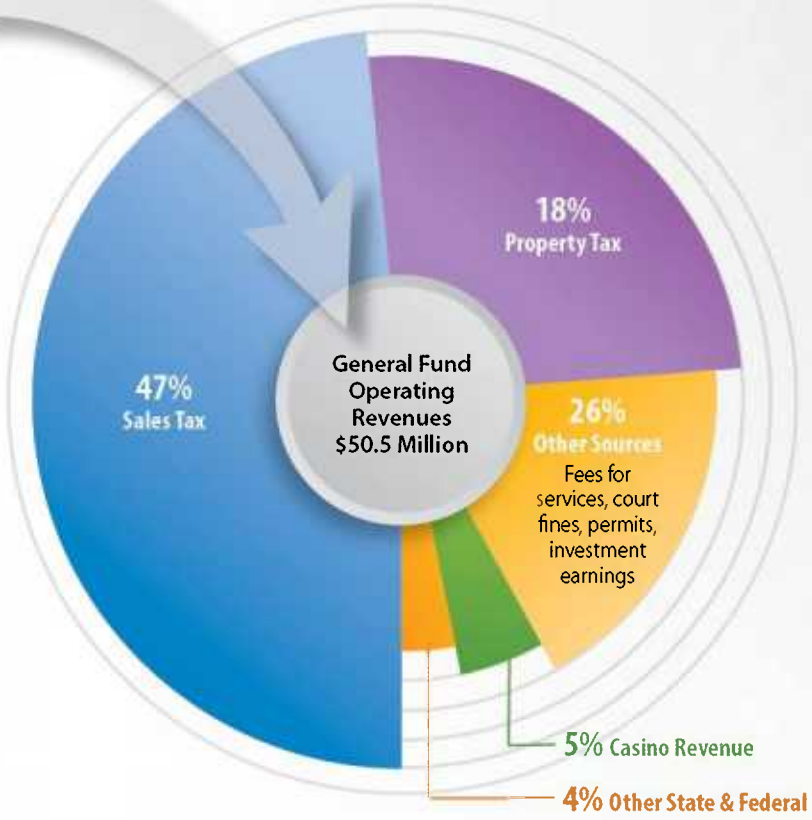
2014 Clermont County Financials

We're out of the recession, thanks to a slowly growing economy, and we've managed our expenses frugally. Here is a closer look at our General Fund and other funds in 2014.

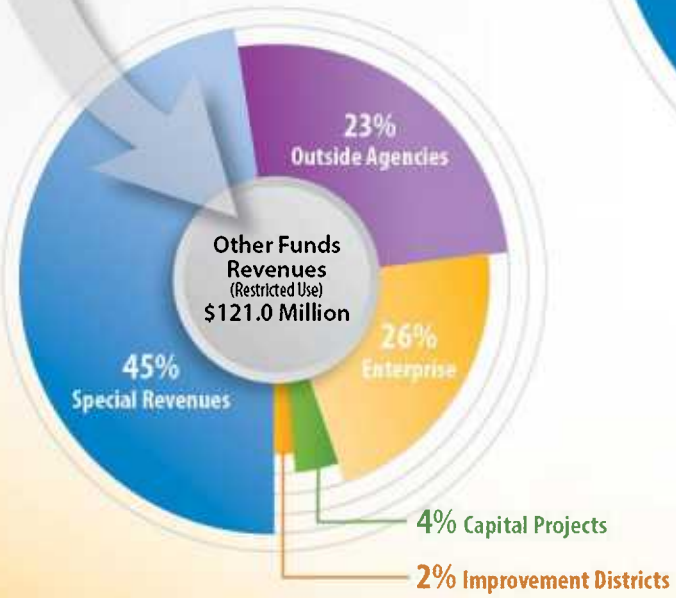
REVENUES



- Interfund transfers are monies moved from one fund to support another fund
- Non-operating are one-time monies or are dedicated to a specific purpose
- See below for Other Funds



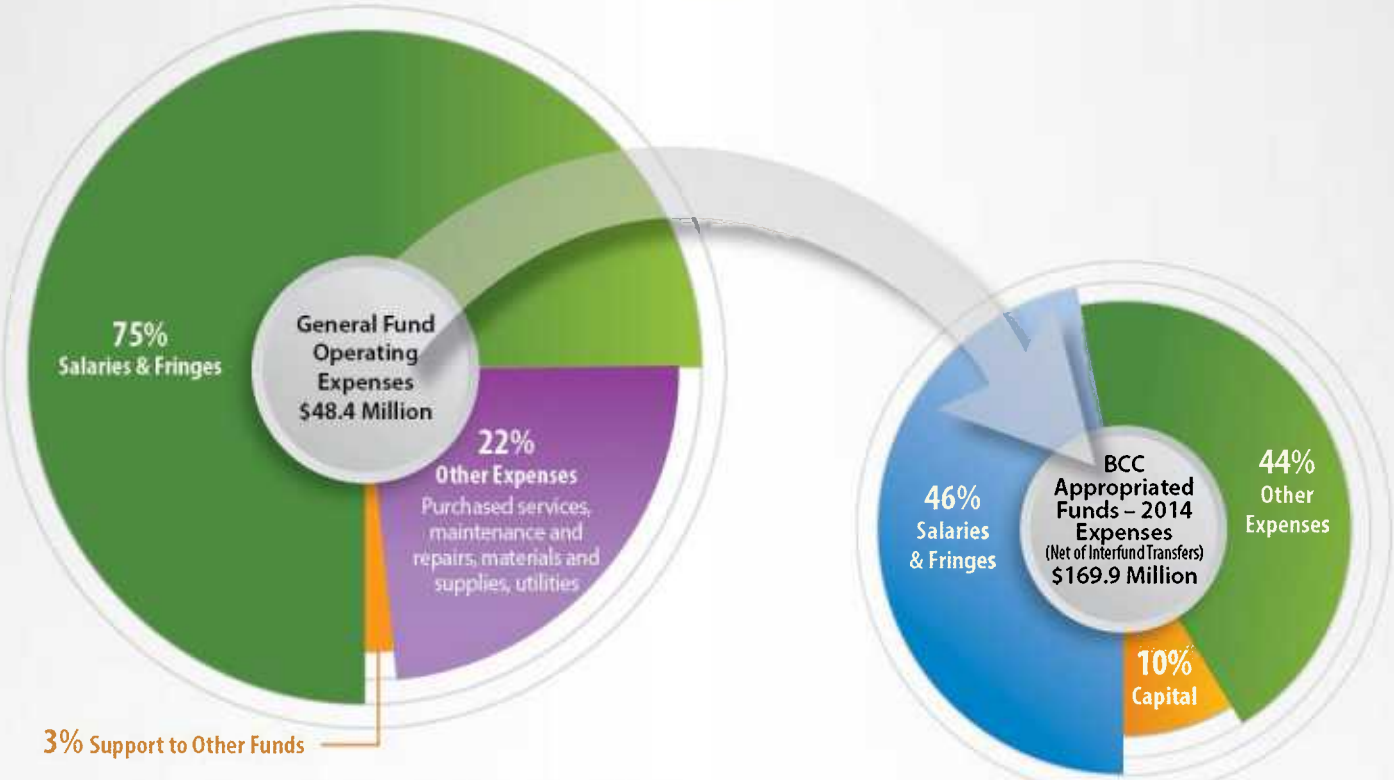
- General Fund is the main source of discretionary funding and supports 20 of 21 county elected officials
- Our fund balance has helped us retain a favorable credit rating
- Sales tax grew more than expected
- Our operating budget is balanced



- Major special revenue funds: Clermont Transportation Connection, Real Estate Assessments; Certificate of Title Administration; Job and Family Services funds (federal/state/local); Motor Vehicle and Gas Fund, block grants.
- Enterprise funds: Water and sewer monies
- Outside agencies: Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, Park District, Soil and Water Conservation, Solid Waste Management

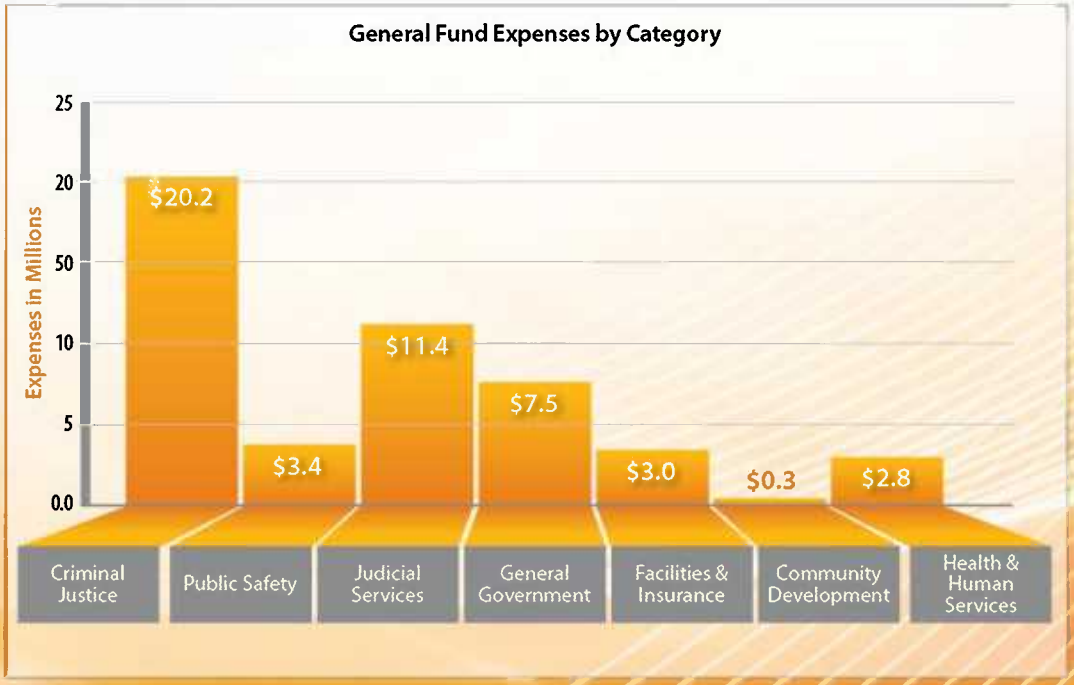
All numbers included here are unaudited at the time of this report, therefore may differ from final audited amounts reported in the Clermont County Auditor's Financial Statements. Charts exclude Internal Service Funds and Special Assessments.

EXPENSES



- Began Community Alternative Sentencing Center
- Contracted out food service at jail
- Modest salary increases for county employees

- Includes General Fund and Restricted Use Funds



Criminal Justice:
Sheriff, Juvenile and Adult Probation and Detention

Public Safety:
Coroner, Communications Center and Building Inspection

Judicial Services:
Courts, Prosecutor and Public Defender

General Government:
Board of Elections, Recorder, Commissioners, Auditor, Treasurer, and Prosecutor's Civil Division

Community Development:
Geographic Info Services and Planning

Health & Human Services:
Veterans Services, TB Clinic, Payments for Handicapped, Local Funds to DJFS

Protecting our citizens, enforcing the laws

Sheriff's Office

Crimes solved

The investigative component of the Sheriff's Office solved a number of challenging cases in 2014, including an aggravated robbery at the Batavia Community Pharmacy, an aggravated arson in Franklin Township, and an aggravated robbery at the Fifth Third Bank in Batavia Township – which resulted in an arrest and the recovery of the stolen money. Investigators and the Clermont County Narcotics Unit, investigating a rash of residential burglaries and thefts totaling $70,845 in property, resulted in 30 cases being closed, and the arrest of four males for burglary, firearm theft and tampering with evidence. A drug overdose death investigation in the Village of Felicity resulted in the arrest of three females for involuntary manslaughter and tampering with evidence.

Narcotics investigations

The Clermont County Narcotics Unit responded to and destroyed 61 methamphetamine laboratories and seized almost 8,000 grams of methamphetamine in 2014. Seventy-three of the 223 persons arrested during the year were for methamphetamine-related charges. The Narcotics Unit also seized over 350 grams of heroin, 77 grams of powder and crack cocaine and nearly 900 pounds of marijuana. Almost 80,000 doses of prescription medication were seized or diverted as a result of illegal criminal activity. In December, following a month's long investigation, the unit served six search warrants and indicted 45 persons on 156 felony counts in an effort to dismantle an established illegal drug operation located within the Piccadilly apartment complex in Union Township

Corrections

The Clermont County Jail currently operates 278 beds, over capacity for most of the year. To curb the population issue, the county will open an additional 50 beds for females in the south end of the jail. Our Community Alternative Sentencing Center (CASC) is also operated in the south end. This program addresses the complications associated with repeat offenders who commit non-violent crimes due to substance abuse and addiction. Inmate programs, including drug education, and chapel services, continue to be well attended.

New canines

Our office acquired two new dogs in 2014. Canine Paik is a 2-year-old German shepherd; his handler is Deputy James Kirker. Purchased with a grant given to our office by the Washington Township trustees, Paik will be used on patrol in drug detection, tracking and apprehension. Canine Dozer was acquired to replace Deputy Gary Summers' previous bloodhound, Guy, who was lost to illness. Dozer is a 4-year-old bloodhound, donated by a New Hampshire state trooper who sustained an injury and could no longer handle the dog

Ohio Police and Fire Games

In June our office hosted the 2014 Ohio Police and Fire Games. This was the first time in the Games' 35-year history that they were held in Clermont County. More than 500 participants from throughout the U.S. and other countries competed in 30 events.

A.J. Rodenberg, Jr., Sheriff
4470 S.R. 222, Batavia
513-732-7500
www.clermontsheriff.org

Sheriff Rodenberg visits a third grade class at Amelia Elementary school.

Jim Malloni, left, Bill Epeards, Mary Gregory and Sheriff Rodenberg during the archery competition at the Police and Fire Games. Epeards, a probation officer for the county, is a professional archer.

Court of Common Pleas General Division

In 2014, Common Pleas Court handled a total of 2,528 cases; of those, 1,697 were civil and 831 criminal.

Courthouses throughout Clermont County once again hosted the district and regional Ohio State High School Mock Trial competitions (photo left) under the direction of Judge Jerry McBride. The program engages students from area high schools in developing critical thinking skills by analyzing a hypothetical legal action and developing and presenting arguments for each side of the case.

The court also began a construction project that will add eight probation offices and a meeting room in the basement level.

The following judges served the Common Pleas Court in 2014: Judge Jerry McBride, Judge Victor Haddad, Judge Richard Ferenc and Judge Thomas Herman.

Judge Victor M Haddad, Administrative Judge
Judge Richard P. Ferenc, Presiding Judge
270 E. Main St., Batavia | **513-732-7108**
www.clermontcommonpleas.com

Clermont County Public Defender

In 2014, the Public Defender's Office provided legal representation to indigent defendants in 4,976 municipal cases, 1,574 common pleas cases, 1,290 juvenile cases, and 84 domestic relations cases.

The Clermont County Public Defender is appointed by the Public Defender Commission. R. Daniel Hannon has been the director for 35 years and is responsible for managing the office, maintaining records of all cases, as well as appointing the assistant public defenders and all supporting personnel.

The Public Defender's Office currently has two locations. The main office relocated in 2014 to 302 E. Main Street in Batavia and handles Common Pleas, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Courts. An auxiliary office is located in the Municipal Courthouse and handles municipal court cases exclusively.

R. Daniel Hannon, Director
302 E. Main St., Batavia
513-732-7223 (main)
513-732-7418 (Municipal Court)

Adult Probation Department

In 2014, our department received 363 new offenders on probation and supervised an average of 1,253 offenders each month. These offenders were assigned to various units for the most appropriate level of supervision, depending on the offender's needs and level of risk. Our caseload at the end of 2014:

- 38% property offenders
- 32% drug law offenders
- 15% nonsupport offenders
- 5% assault/personal injury offenders
- 4% sex offenders
- 2% "other" offenders
- 1% weapons-related offenders
- 1% domestic violence offenders
- 1% felony DUI offenders
- 1% traffic-related felony level offenders

Julie Frey, Director of Probation Services
270 E. Main St., Batavia
513-732-7265
www.clermontcommonpleas/adultprobation

Protecting our citizens, enforcing the laws

Municipal Court

In 2014, 33,015 new cases were filed in Clermont County Municipal Court: 22,340 traffic cases, 6,083 criminal cases, and 4,592 civil cases. The court collected over $125,500 in restitution for victims of crime. Total receipts for traffic, criminal, and civil cases combined totaled $6.9 million.

In 2013, Clermont County opened the Community Alternative Sentencing Center (CASC) – the first in Ohio – as an alternative to jail for misdemeanor offenders with alcohol and addiction problems. In 2014, 351 persons were accepted into CASC; 117 of the 351 had offenses related to operating a vehicle impaired (OVI).

The court utilized several alternatives to incarceration when appropriate. Judges referred 468 offenders for reporting, intensive supervision, and intensive treatment community control supervision; and 81 offenders for pre-sentence investigation reports. A total of 204 misdemeanor offenders were sentenced to electronically monitored house arrest and 211 defendants with pending misdemeanors were placed on reporting bond as an alternative to incarceration.

The Clermont County OVI Court is a specialized docket designed to reduce the risk of new crimes by multiple offense OVI defendants through the use of treatment, alcohol and drug testing, and frequent court hearings. In 2014, 45 misdemeanor offenders who were convicted of two or more OVI-related offenses in a lifetime participated in the program and paid $25,222 in fines/costs/restitution. Eleven participants successfully graduated from the Clermont County OVI Court program in 2014.

Group activities are part of the CASC program.

A total of 1,853 persons completed 54,012 hours of community service work during 2014, including litter pickup. More than 7,249 bags of litter and 753 tires were removed from over 1,251 miles of state, county and township roadways.

Judge Anthony W. Brock,
Judge George E. Pattison and
Judge Kevin T. Miles
4430 S.R. 222, Batavia
513-732-7911
www.municipal.clermontcountyohio.gov

Juvenile/Probate Court

In 2014, Juvenile Court heard 6,313 cases. Many of our cases are now driven by the heroin and opiate epidemic in our county. In response, we created the Family Dependency Treatment Court, which offers treatment and other services to addicted parents whose children are in the custody of Children's Protective Services. The ultimate goal is to reunite the parents and their children. The court aggressively sought grants to support this new docket. Among them:

- $40,000 from the Supreme Court of Ohio to support a coordinator position
- $86,680 from the Ohio Department of Public Safety for services to adults participating in this court
- $34,815 from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to support a case manager position
- Juvenile Court also received $18,000 from the Ohio Department of Youth Services (DYS) to implement an evidenced- based program called "Strengthening Families." We received two competitive grants from DYS to serve youth and families over the next three years.
- Parent Project: $150,000 over three years to serve low-risk juveniles
- Dimensional Family Therapy: $300,000 over three years to serve medium- to high-risk juveniles with intensive home-based services for families to reduce the number of out-of-home placements

Judge James Shriver is the new chair-elect of the Ohio Judicial Conference, which includes all 722 Ohio judges as members, and provides the opportunity for all Ohio judges to consider issues of mutual concern and work to improve the administration of justice.

In 2014, 2,073 cases were filed with Probate Court. Marriage licenses and estates made up the largest majority of those cases.

Judge James A. Shriver
2379 Clermont Center Drive, Batavia
513-732-7696
www.probatejuvenile.clermontcountyohio.gov

Domestic Relations Court

Our year was filled with challenges, changes and many accomplishments. In 2014, the court:

- Handled 2,603 cases; of those, 1,532 were new and 1,071 were post-decree.
- Opened a monthly Help Clinic for the public to offer guidance with paperwork. The sessions, held at the Union Township library on the first Saturday of each month, are run by the court's compliance officer along with University of Cincinnati law students and their supervising professor. More information: www.domesticcourt.org.
- Established an Early Neutral Evaluation ("ENE") program. ENE is a confidential process that helps parties evaluate their positions rationally and reasonably. Cases are more likely to resolve quickly and efficiently, with less stress on divorcing parties and their children.
- Continued to offer mediation at no cost to the litigants, and partnered with Beech Acres Parenting Center to offer parents inexpensive or free programs, classes, and resources to help them raise healthy children.
- Moved toward electronic filing with the purchasing of licensing and software maintenance in 2014; we expect to purchase a server in 2015.
- Continued to see a significant increase in the need for interpreter services. Since 2012, the court's expenditures for the service have increased fivefold. In 2014, the court purchased wireless audio equipment which reduces the need for multiple interpreters and allows "real-time" interpreting.

Kathleen M. Rodenberg,
Judge of Domestic Relations Court
2340 Clermont Center Drive, Batavia
513-732-7327
www.domesticcourt.org

Judge Rodenberg at a CASA event.

CASA for Clermont Kids

In 2014, CASA for Clermont Kids continued the tradition of strong advocacy through our dedicated community volunteers.

During 2014, 52 advocates served 196 abused and neglected children in Clermont County. Forty-seven of these children achieved permanency in a safe and stable home, and 25 children were able to be safely reunified with their family of origin. To achieve these results, our volunteers logged 2,771 hours advocating for the children, and drove 33,391 miles to assess the safety and the needs of the children CASA serves.

Also in 2014, we added 13 more volunteers. These new advocates completed 40 hours of pre-service training, and were sworn in by Judge James A. Shriver, enabling them to represent the best interests of the children of Clermont County in Juvenile Court.

CASA for Clermont has two full-time and three part-time staff. Our slim budget and small staff mean that we rely heavily on the zealous and tireless efforts of our 52 volunteers. With their efforts, we are able to provide strong advocates who make a difference in the life of a child.

Nathan Bell, Executive Director
2400 Clermont Center Drive, Batavia
513-732-7160
www.casaforclermontkids.org

Auditor's Office

In 2014 our office completed the reappraisal of all properties in the county. This update, mandated by the state, is required to be done every six years. Value information can be viewed at www.ClermontAuditor.org. Our real estate site continues to be a comprehensive source of property data, tax and land information.

The Auditor's Office combined the real estate website and auditor website into one website that contains all facets of the auditor's office. The office also launched a mobile app that allows users to research properties on the go and find property details using their location.

Linda L. Fraley, Auditor
101 E. Main St., Batavia
513-732-7150
www.clermontauditor.org

Recorder's Office

Our office processed 26,477 documents in 2014, collecting a total of $1,440,100. The funds are distributed according to state law. A total of $716,450 was deposited into the Ohio Housing Trust Fund and the remaining $723,650 was deposited into the county general fund.

Records in our office are public records and can be accessed by coming into the office or through our record management system, available online. Records from 1993 forward can be accessed from our online site, US Land Records, www.uslandrecords.com. An additional link, Archive Viewer, provides access to records back to 1976 and indexes back to 1953. Information and links to these sites can be accessed through the Recorder's website.

Deborah Hall Clepper, Recorder
101 E. Main St., Batavia
513-732-7236
www.recorder.clermontcountyohio.gov

Treasurer's Office

Our office continued its aggressive efforts pertaining to the collection of taxes. In 2014, the office collected $248 million in real estate taxes, $695,000 in manufactured home taxes, and $6,000 in personal property taxes.

As of Dec. 31, 2014, a total of 95 real estate tax foreclosures were filed and the county's real estate tax delinquency rate was 1.62 percent.

J. Robert True, Treasurer
101 E. Main St., Batavia
513-732-7254
www.clermonttreasurer.org

Board of Elections

A low voter turnout characterized the primary and general elections in 2014: only 17,245 residents voted in the May 6 primary – a dismal 13% turnout – and 51,522 voted on Nov. 4, for a 39% turnout. The low turnout meant that the Board of Elections spent only $911,400 of $1,015,000 appropriated for the elections.

The lower voter turnout is reflected in the fact that it is becoming even more difficult to recruit poll workers – now known as Precinct Election Officials or PEOs – to work both the primary and general elections. A PEO is paid approximately $130 for working on Election Day. With 166 voting precincts manned by four PEOs in each precinct, the board has a PEO payroll of approximately $90,000 per election

The Board of Elections is exploring replacing and upgrading its election equipment, which is 10 years old. A new bill has been drafted in the Ohio Legislature to fund the purchase of electronic pollbooks, which would be used to check voters in at their correct polling location.

Judy Miller, Director
76 S. Riverside Drive, Batavia
513-732-7275
www.clermontelections.org

Improving our roads

Engineer's Office

Several road construction projects made for a busy 2014 for the Clermont Engineer's Office and the Clermont Transportation Improvement District. These highlighted projects will ease congestion, expand access to business and shopping, and improve safety for all who travel through the area.

Eastgate Boulevard over SR 32
This project included the reconstruction and widening of the Eastgate Boulevard structure over SR 32, the relocation of existing westbound entrance and exit ramps from SR 32 to Eastgate North Drive instead of Eastgate Boulevard, and the reconstruction of the westbound loop ramp from Eastgate Boulevard to SR 32. Construction began in the summer of 2013 and was completed in the fall of 2014.

Clough Pike widening
A center turn lane was built along a 1.3-mile section of Clough Pike, between Mount Carmel Tobasco Road and Gleneste Withamsville Road. Other improvements included sidewalks, better drainage, and traffic signal upgrades. Construction was completed in the fall of 2014.

I-275/SR 32 interchange improvements
These ongoing improvements represent the most significant change to traffic patterns in the area. Planned improvements include:

- Widening portions of SR 32 from Old SR 74 to Eastgate Square Drive.
- Constructing new ramps to provide new access to SR 32 from I-275, as well as new ramps and structures on I-275 that will allow for the reconnection of Aicholtz Road under the interstate.
- Improving safety by increasing the spacing distance between on and off ramps to eliminate weaving traffic.

Construction is expected to be completed by the fall of 2015.

Branch Hill Guinea Pike improvements at SR 28
Important safety and pedestrian improvements were made on Branch Hill Guinea Pike, including wider travel lanes, a new center turn lane, and improved pedestrian access with a sidewalk along the east side of the road. This work was part of a coordinated regional plan to address travel needs for local businesses, retailers, and homeowners. Construction was completed in the fall of 2014.

Intelligent Transportation System – Phase II
New technology was installed in more than 50 traffic signals across the county. In addition to upgrading to energy-efficient LED displays and providing battery backup to the new signals, the new software connects and synchronizes the signals to better monitor and control the flow of traffic through a given intersection. This was completed in the fall of 2014.

Patrick J. Manger, P.E., P.S., Engineer
2381 Clermont Center Drive, Batavia
513-732-8857
www.clermontengineer.org

Stonelick Williams Corner covered bridge
The Stonelick Williams Corner Covered Bridge, the last remaining covered bridge in Clermont County, has been closed to traffic since 2011. We were successful in getting grants from the National Historic Covered Bridge Program, OKI Enhancement funds, the Ohio Public Works, and local funds to pay for its restoration, at a cost of almost $1 million. The rehabilitation started in the fall of 2013, but the bridge unexpectedly collapsed on Feb. 11, 2014. Fortunately, no one was injured. The construction work began again a few months later, and the bridge is expected to be reopened to traffic in early spring of 2015.

Protecting our health

Clermont County Public Health

New name and logo in 2014, same public health services! The Clermont County General Health District changed its name to Clermont County Public Health and adopted a new logo in 2014. The name Clermont Public Health makes the agency's role and responsibilities more understandable to the community and speaks to the broad range of services offered by the agency. The logo emphasizes Prevent, Promote, and Protect, which are the three focuses of public health.

Clermont County Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

In 2014, we had almost 14,000 visits to our nursing office, and administered almost 2,000 vaccinations to adults and children. We performed more than 14,000 environmental and regulatory inspections including food services, pools, campgrounds, nuisance complaints, private water and septic systems, and plumbing. We issued 3,724 birth certificates and 3,987 death certificates.

In conjunction with numerous public health system partners, we released Clermont County's 2014-2019 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). The CHIP identified four key health issues that need to be improved in the county:

- Obesity
- Tobacco use
- Drug addiction
- Mental health

The CHIP sets specific goals, strategies and activities to decrease baseline numbers and improve the health of all Clermont County residents. The overall goal of the CHIP is to increase awareness of health issues impacting the community, and provide education and opportunities to the public to improve their health. Its vision is to make Clermont County a thriving, vibrant, and healthy community in which to live, play, work, learn, and grow. A copy of the full report and workplan can be found online.

Julianne Nesbit, Commissioner
2275 Bauer Road, Batavia
513-732-7499
www.ccphohio.org

Board of Developmental Disabilities

In 2014, we served 1,223 individuals with developmental disabilities: 95 worked in community settings, with 26 placements in 2014; 44 students were served at the Wildey School through a partnership with their local school districts; and 460 babies and toddlers received services through the Early Intervention Program. Others received Adult Services, as well as Community Support Services that include family support services, behavior support coordination service/support administration.

The board made the decision to downsize Adult Services in 2014, and staff spent most of the year assisting individuals to choose other service providers in their community. A grant from the Duke Energy Foundation through the Clermont County Soil and Water Conservation saw students and individuals from CCDD getting their hands dirty in June – a rain garden was built on the Wildey Center Campus to help rain water stay within the soil, rather than running off into drains and creeks (photo below). We were excited to be part of this project and proud to help preserve the environment in Clermont County.

Dan Ottke, Superintendent
2040 U.S. 50, Batavia
513-732-7000
www.clermontdd.org

We said goodbye to Sharon Woodrow, who retired on Dec. 31 after 11 years as DD superintendent. She received the prestigious Betty Macintosh Award from the Ohio Association of County Boards in early December. Dan Ottke, former Adult Services Director and Assistant Superintendent, became superintendent on Jan. 1, 2015.

Serving the vulnerable

Clermont Senior Services

More than 5,000 Clermont County senior residents benefited from our services in 2014. These ranged from transportation to home care to Meals on Wheels, adult day services, and lifelong learning.

Frank Buschmeier, above, a Milford resident, is a customer of Clermont Senior Services and a proud, highly decorated, veteran of World War II. Currently, Mr. Buschmeier utilizes homemaking and Meals on Wheels. "These services allow me to keep my freedom and that is important to me," he said. That sentiment is echoed by many of the seniors who use our services.

Cindy Gramke, Executive Director/CEO
2085 James E. Sauls Sr. Drive, Batavia
513-724-1255
www.clermontseniors.com

Veterans Service Commission

For the members of the Clermont County Veterans Service Commission, every day is Veterans Day.

Our staff of service officers – all veterans – see more than 1,500 Clermont County veterans a year to help with everything from disability claims to filing for health care insurance offered through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Many of our customers are Vietnam veterans who need help with disability claims, although veterans of all eras come into our office.

By the numbers:

- 710 veterans received emergency financial assistance, totaling over $708,000
- 1,290 veterans used transportation services
- Total compensation awards for disability claims were $5,672,801

Howard Daugherty, Executive Director
76 S. Riverside Drive, Batavia
513-732-7363
www.clermontcountyveterans.com

Mental Health and Recovery Board

In fiscal year 2014, funding from our board supported treatment services to more than 2,800 individuals, as well as prevention and support services to several thousand more.

The most dominant issue we faced in 2014 continued to be opiate addiction – prescription drugs and heroin – which shows no signs of abating in Clermont County. (Sixty-two people died of an overdose in the county in 2014, with a number of cases pending.) The Opiate Task Force, a group of 60 representing agencies, law enforcement, courts, government, communities, and families, is working to address opiate addiction.

As noted by Chief Scott Gaviglia of the Union Township Police Department and co-chair of the Opiate Task Force, "I have been on calls involving every income strata in Clermont County – the epidemic knows no boundaries in terms of race, class or gender. The opiate epidemic affects us all, even if we don't have a loved one who is addicted."

Opiate Task Force activities in 2014 included:

- Distributing opiate fact sheets and overdose fact cards
- Developing a billboard for opiate awareness and a link for help
- Holding town hall meetings in Bethel, Miami Township and Goshen

Finalizing an action plan for the next two years
A two-year grant from Interact for Health allowed us to purchase Narcan kits, which have been distributed to the Sheriff's Department and the Clermont Recovery Center. Narcan, administered as a nasal spray, prevents overdose deaths. The County Crisis Hotline (513-528-SAVE) was expanded to help those with addiction as well as mental health problems.

Balloons released at vigil to remember lives lost to suicide.

We also began the final year of our six-year Federal System of Care grant, FAST TRAC, which provides mental health services and support for children and families. Evaluation results clearly indicate that children and families have benefited from the program. As one mother stated about wraparound, the key element to FAST TRAC services, "I came into wraparound hesitant, wanting to participate and do everything I could to prevent my son from becoming more involved in Juvenile Court. Through the wraparound process, I was surrounded by a team of caring people. We talked and I felt more at ease and could actually share the real needs of my family. Now I try to let other families know about everything wraparound can do."

Karen Scherra, Executive Director
2337 Clermont Center Drive, Batavia
513-732-5400
www.ccmhrb.org

Protecting our land

Clermont County Park District

The Clermont County Park District drew more than 4,000 people to its naturalist programs in 2014. The Park District presents nature education programs at each of its locations to school groups, Scout groups, and the public each year. And 35,000 people attended events at one of our rental facilities in 2014.

The biggest event the Park District hosts each year is Pancakes in the Park. In 2014, over 400 people were treated to a pancake breakfast with pure maple syrup, and had the chance to take a tour of the working maple syrup operation that the park district operates.

The Park District partnered with the Soil and Water Conservation District, Office of Environmental Quality, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Harsha Lake to offer a canoeing program along the East Fork of the Little Miami River as part of the Great Outdoor Weekend.

If you've never visited Chilo Lock #34 Park, make sure to add it to your summer bucket list. The park, which was once a working lock and dam on the Ohio River, is now home to a visitor center and museum. The three-story museum shows visitors what life was like working and living on a lock and dam. Hands-on interactive exhibits make the museum fun for all ages. In 2014, more than 6,000 people walked through the doors of the visitor center and museum.

Chris Clingman, Director
2228 U.S. 50, Batavia
513-732-2977
www.clermontparks.org

Clermont Soil & Water Conservation District

The Clermont Soil & Water Conservation District continued its efforts to improve the quality of the county's lakes and streams in 2014. The harmful algal blooms in East Fork (Harsha) Lake were a top concern of ours. Funds from the U.S. Geological Survey supported an intern who conducted algae sampling at the lake's beaches. Farm Bill funding provided $200,000 to county farmers to apply practices to reduce runoff from fields. About 2,500 acres of cover crops were planted in 2014 under this program. We also completed construction of an innovative "vegetated bed" treatment system designed to remove pollutants from farm field runoff – a project that received national attention.

We worked with several partners to reduce the amount of pollutants washing into local streams through urban stormwater runoff. We worked with the Park District to help complete a wetland restoration and stormwater treatment project at Shor Park under a grant from Ohio EPA. We also helped Amelia Village obtain a similar grant to modify and improve the stormwater basin at Shank Park (look for construction to be completed in 2015).

The District continued its efforts to promote rain gardens as a means to manage stormwater runoff by hosting a public rain garden workshop and awarding seven residential rain garden grants. With the help of a Duke Energy grant, we created three new public rain gardens at Union Township's Veterans Park, Sycamore Park in Batavia, and the Thomas A. Wildey Center. And in schools, our educational specialist reached over 8,000 students with 324 conservation education programs designed to raise awareness about soil and water conservation and litter prevention.

John McManus, Administrator
1000 Locust St., Owensville
513-732-7075
www.clermontswcd.org

OSU Clermont Extension

In 2014, we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the creation of the national Cooperative Extension System – and focused on what impact we can have moving forward. No matter how Extension changes, much of our focus will always be on the youth in our community, and what we can do to help prepare them for adulthood and citizenship. We were thrilled to earn first place for our LOOK to Clermont program in the Education & Outreach division at the OSU Extension Annual Conference. Another highlight was our 100 Faces of Women in Ag interactive display at the Farm Science Review in London, Ohio.

Youth:

- 941 youth enrolled in 41 4-H clubs
- 2,848 projects at the 2014 Clermont County Junior Fair
- 86 youth attended 4-H Camp (photo left)
- 28 teens graduated from our leadership program, LOOK to Clermont

Agriculture and Natural Resources:

- 120 attended the 20th Annual Southwest Ohio Perennial School
- Clermont County Master Gardener volunteers contributed 540 hours with a value of $12,177 contributed to the county through volunteer education work
- 36 firefighters received certification training on grain bin rescues

Family and Consumer Sciences:

- Taught 179 nutrition education programs, reaching 1,740 residents
- Partnered with Clermont-based Pill Box pharmacy owner Robert Westbrook, a certified diabetes educator, to increase knowledge of the role of nutrition in managing diabetes and adopt better nutrition to manage diabetes

Margaret Jenkins, Director
1000 Locust St., Owensville
513-732-7070
www.clermont.osu.edu

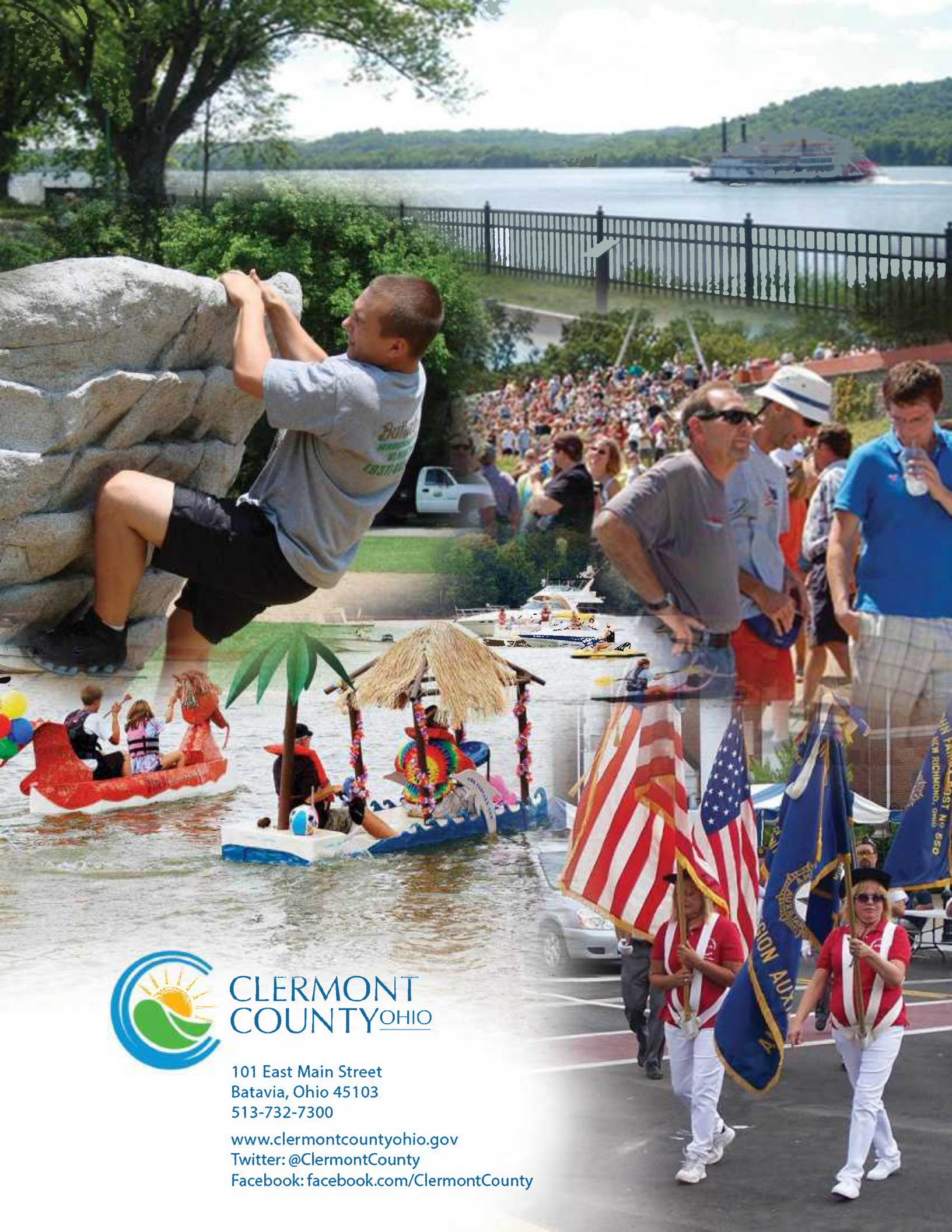
Clermont County Public Library

In 2014, new and unique programs brought more people into the branches and staff members went out into the community often to reach new patrons.

- The library is becoming known more and more as a 24/7 online resource. The use of downloadable materials increased by 18 percent in 2014. More than 100,000 books, movies, audiobooks, music and more were downloaded by patrons to their computers, tablets and smartphones.
- Volunteers worked nearly 10,000 hours assisting with everything from programs to book sales.
- The number of county residents who attended library programming increased by 31 percent. Nearly 94,000 people visited branch libraries or attended outreach events for programs ranging from the Symphony Orchestra's Poptet to children learning basic ballet dance steps to puppet shows. Children's book author Marc Brown of "Arthur" fame (photo) had an audience of more than 500 people at his Union Township branch appearance in October.

- The library offered 3,129 programs and outreach activities, ranging from gingerbread decorating classes at the branches to school visits throughout Clermont County.
- During 2014, 653,201 people visited the 10 branch libraries. Many of them used our services, and many came in to find their next best read.

Chris Wick, Director
326 Broadway Street, Batavia
513-732-2736
www.clermontlibrary.org



CLERMONT COUNTY OHIO

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