2019 GENERAL POLICY COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Ron Moore, President  Private Sector, Morgan County
Lenny Eliason, Vice President  County Commissioner, Athens County
Joe Matthews, Treasurer  Mayor, City of Marietta, Washington County
Ben Carpenter  County Commissioner, Perry County
John Curtis  Private Sector, Monroe County
Carl Davis  County Commissioner, Monroe County
Brian Howard  Private Sector, Meigs County
Tim Ihle  County Commissioner, Meigs County
Bradley Peoples  County Commissioner, Noble County
Steve Patterson  Mayor, City of Athens, Athens County
Kevin Ritter  County Commissioner, Washington County
Adam Shriver  County Commissioner, Morgan County
Gary Waugh  County Commissioner, Hocking County

ATHENS COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Charlie Adkins  County Commissioner
Chris Chmiel  County Commissioner
Christine Knisely  City Council President
Ted Linscott  Trustee, Athens Township
John Simpson  Private Sector
Chris Cooper  Private Sector

HOCKING COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Greg Fraunfelter  Mayor, City of Logan
Larry Kienzle  Private Sector
Ken Wilson  County Auditor

MEIGS COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Randy Smith  County Commissioner

MONROE COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Mick Schumacher  County Commissioner

MORGAN COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Tim VanHorn  County Commissioner

NOBLE COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Gwynn Stewart  Private Sector

PERRY COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Jeff Dennis  Private Sector
Scott Owen  County Commissioner
Fred Redfern  Mayor, Village of Crooksville

WASHINGTON COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES

Gary Doan  Trustee, Muskingum Township
Ron Feathers  County Commissioner
Mike Lorentz  Mayor, City of Belpre
David White  County Commissioner

*General Policy Council members are apportioned based on population, as per Buckeye Hills Regional Council bylaws.*
MESSAGE FROM 
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 
PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Our mission to work cooperatively to improve our region comes to life through those who do the work. We are grateful to the Buckeye Hills Board of Directors and the Buckeye Hills staff for bringing that mission to life each and every day.

The end of the year found us giving careful thought to the future of our organization through a succession planning process led by the Southeast Regional Directors Institute. What we found was encouraging. The process confirmed that we have been moving in the right direction as a neutral convener for our region and as a go-to organization to address opportunities and challenges in the areas of community development, the needs of older southeast Ohioans, and assistance across our eight-county region. During our focus groups with members and partners throughout Southeast Ohio, our staff was praised for the support, expertise, and insight they provide.

Throughout 2019, we remained focused on serving our mission to improve the quality of life for our southeast Ohio communities and the individuals who call our region home. Little did we know that 2019 would be known as “the year before the pandemic.” Our mission resonates all the more clearly as Buckeye Hills Regional Council responds to the pandemic and works with our region’s communities toward recovery through 2020 and beyond.

Ron Moore  
Executive Committee President

Misty Crosby  
Executive Director
HIGHLIGHTS

BROADBAND STUDY FINDS DIGITAL DESERT PERSISTS

In 2019, Buckeye Hills Regional Council conducted an eight-county study funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission in collaboration with Ohio University Voinovich School and The Athens County Economic Development Council. Our findings present a stark picture of the areas left behind in a digital desert: Between 80% and 90% of households in the “rural expanse” have no access to broadband services. (“Rural Expanse” defined as areas with 20 or fewer households per square mile.) At least 75% of the study area lacks availability of broadband at the current FCC minimum of 25/3. Mobile data and voice services are also largely absent from the rural expanse. Degradation of basic telephone services due to beyond end-of-life copper cables is leaving affected areas without crucial life & safety communications, reverting to the 1930s, in terms of capabilities. These findings have provided a springboard for further advocacy and calls to action from our state and federal legislators and agency partners. In the same way that the Rural Electrification Act transformed Southeast Ohio communities in the 1930s and the Interstate Highway System reshaped our economy 30 years later, broadband access—or the lack thereof—will shape our region’s economic participation and outcomes for generations.

GIS TEAM DEVELOPS NEW TOOL FOR OUTREACH

With help from the Building Bridges to Careers Makerspace, Buckeye Hills Regional Council has a new tool for education and outreach that blends augmented reality technology with the fun of an old-fashioned sandbox. At the recent Family Career Awareness Day hosted by B2C, the AR sandbox drew as much interest and interaction from adults as it did from the students in attendance. The AR sandbox is a great tool for helping youth and local officials alike understand the importance of mapping. The AR sandbox allows users to create topography models by shaping real sand, which is then augmented in real-time by an elevation color map, topographic contour lines, and simulated water. The system teaches geographic, geologic, and hydrologic concepts such as how to read a topography map, the meaning of contour lines, watersheds, catchment areas, levees, etc. After its successful debut at Family Career Awareness Day, the Buckeye Hills GIS team is excited to share the AR sandbox at future education and outreach events throughout southeast Ohio.
AGING IN APPALACHIA: A SUMMIT FOR SOUTHEAST OHIO

Our very first Aging summit brought together community leaders, elected officials, practitioners, and more to explore the topic of aging in Appalachia. From healthcare to transportation to community building, this one-day event featured an overview of current challenges as well as innovative solutions highlighting real work being accomplished on the ground to improve the lives of seniors in southeast Ohio. Keynote speaker Dr. Gail Rymer discussed the State of Aging in Appalachia, while the day’s workshops included Access to Food & Nutrition for Seniors in Appalachia, Addressing Transportation Problems, Dental Care & Access for Seniors in Appalachia, and Multi-generational Relationships & Community Centers. Presenters came from provider agencies within the region, as well as Area Agencies on Aging 3 and the Ohio Department of Aging. Attendees gained deeper insight into what it means to age in Appalachia and the challenges seniors in rural Appalachian Ohio face in maintaining quality of life, health and wellness, and accessing resources. The success of the Aging summit was carried through the summer and fall with additional topic summits on development, regional collaboration, and policy and advocacy.

MEDICARE OPEN ENROLLMENT SUCCESS

Medicare Open Enrollment was a busy time for our Information & Assistance team. Between October 15 and December 7, the team fielded hundreds of Open Enrollment related phone calls and scores of over-the-phone and in-person Medicare Check-Ups at our office and senior centers throughout our region. During the month of November, the Information & Assistance team traveled to provide in-person consultations at six Medicare Check-Up events at senior centers in Athens, Monroe, Noble, and Perry counties. During these one-on-one consultations, the Information & Assistance team helped clients evaluate their coverage options and make sure they would receive the best coverage possible. On average, each appointment helped save Medicare enrollees $1,000–$2,000 for 2020. In one extraordinary case, a client with multiple chronic conditions uncovered $22,000 in savings in premium and prescription costs for next year. Our eight-county region saw 676 new Medicare Part D enrollees in 2019, in addition to 2,955 consumers who re-enrolled for the coming year, according to the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.
Buckeye Hills Regional Council facilitated investments of **$68.5 MILLION** in Southeast Ohio in 2019 with local communities and private businesses leveraging **$35 MILLION** against **$33.5 MILLION** in state and federal funding.
2019 SNAPSHOT
AGING & DISABILITY

$15 MILLION

257,100 MEALS SERVED

499,954 DIRECT SERVICE HOURS

5,359 SENIORS SERVED
2019 SNAPSHOT
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

$17.6 MILLION

47 PROJECTS

185 BUSINESSES IMPROVED

70 SITES INVENTORIED
$4,260
43 MAPS CREATED
4 DATA ANALYSES
110 ITEM REQUESTS
2019 SNAPSHOT
POPULATION HEALTH

$20,670

22 PROGRAMS

19 PARTNERS

237 PARTICIPANTS
Aging staff participated in several wellness events throughout the region, including the Perry County Senior Expo & Health Fair in New Lexington.

In March, we welcomed Ohio Department of Aging Director Ursel McElroy to Buckeye Hills. Director McElroy met with agency staff as well as service providers from our region to discuss the impact of our increasingly aging population and how we can strengthen our services to better reach residents, caregivers, and more.

In June, several Buckeye Hills Regional Council employees teamed up with Habitat for Humanity of the Mid-Ohio Valley and spent the day outside working on a house for the Curry Family in Vincent, Ohio.
The Hocking Makers Network celebrated the ribbon cutting of a new woodworking shop at Hocking College. The facility was made possible, in part, by a $1.2 million investment in the Innovation Gateway Network of Appalachian Ohio by the Appalachian Regional Commission’s POWER Initiative.

It wasn’t our first rodeo, but it was our first one like this. In October, we partnered with ODOT District 10 for a Roundabout Rodeo to give McConnelsville and Malta residents practice time before their new roundabouts opened.

Our final meeting of 2019 was also our last meeting with Marietta Mayor Joe Matthews. Mayor Matthews served on the Buckeye Hills Executive Committee for 20 years and as Treasurer for 19 of those years.
2019 OPERATIONS

REVENUE

- Federal Grants and Awards: $3,163,893
- State Grants and Awards: $1,846,682
- Local Funds: $48,402
- Contract Income: $195,795

**TOTAL: $5,254,772**

EXPENDITURES

- Personnel: $2,809,192
- Fringe Benefits: $1,112,995
- Operations & Other: $1,067,937

**TOTAL: $4,990,124**

**BALANCE: $264,648**

EMPLOYEES

In 2019, Buckeye Hills employed 60 staff members.

- Administration: 10 Staff
- Aging & Disability: 43 Staff
- Community Development: 7 Staff
BUCKEYE HILLS REGIONAL COUNCIL IS A COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS DEDICATED TO IMPROVING THE LIVES OF RESIDENTS IN SOUTHEAST OHIO. BY WORKING COLLABORATIVELY WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS ACROSS ATHENS, HOCKING, MEIGS, MONROE, MORGAN, NOBLE, PERRY, AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES WE GROW STRONG COMMUNITIES THROUGH OUR FIVE DIVISIONS: AGING & DISABILITY, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, MAPPING & DATA, POPULATION HEALTH, AND TRANSPORTATION PLANNING.
ABOUT BUCKEYE HILLS

Buckeye Hills serves as a forum through which local communities work cooperatively to improve our region. Founded in 1968, we work closely with government leaders, state and federal partners, and community partners to serve Ohio’s Appalachian region.

Our organization is a designated Area Agency on Aging, District Liaison for the Ohio Public Works Commission, Economic Development District, Local Development District, Regional Transportation Planning Organization, and the Southeast Ohio Aging & Disability Resource Network

Since our inception, Buckeye Hills has brought over $1.3 billion in programs and services to the Southeast Ohio region.