

May 2020 Update

By Licking County Commissioner Tim Bubb

As citizens of a great County in the great state of Ohio and of our great nation – the spring of 2020 certainly has been a whirlwind of change and adaptation. The once in a century pandemic has affected everyone’s lives in countless small and large ways. We have seen misery as segments of the population have been made seriously ill from the Corona Virus, and in the cases of thousands who have not survived.



Spring is a time of renewal and beauty as the plant world comes alive. This has been an incredibly beautiful spring, though at times lost in the concerns over the virus and personal confinement. I thought the sunflower with the promise of a better summer would be a positive way to begin this Update.

As a County Commissioner, and with the support of the Board of Commissioners, the County’s other elected officials, and our key department heads and staffs – we have and will continue to do our best to sustain the thousands of services we provide in support of the County. We have been successful in segregating our staffs using ‘work at home’, shifts and other creative methods of spreading out the risk. We regret this pandemic has forced the loss of personal contact with the public as we transact business – however it is to

protect our people and the public. During May County Offices will gradually and safely begin to return to more normal operations, but with an eye to proper distancing and protections.

We support the work of Governor Mike DeWine and his planned phase-in for the Ohio economy in May, and the state and county public health officials as they continue their heroic work. It has been a difficult task shutting down segments of the economy, schools, group events and so much more.



At times it seems the predictable fabric of our lives has been ripped away. It is the price we pay to prevent massive community spread of the virus that would have resulted in much larger loss of life, serious illness and a crashing blow to the hospital and medical system. History will judge how well we have done in adjusting to the new normal and saving lives, while hopefully setting the stage for a slow return to the robust economy of pre-pandemic Central Ohio.

Since things seem to change daily and May is viewed as a continued period of confinement from large group settings – I am going to keep my Update big picture only. As far as your County Government is concerned we are continuing to function. The overall big change is in enforcing limited person to person contact, to protect the health of the public and our employees. All functions are operating and phasing back toward a more normal to serve the community. You can visit the Licking County Government website at www.lcounty.com for information as we slowly return to a more open operation, while remaining safe!

While it appears that many summer events and celebrations are being cancelled or postponed, it is nice that in a restricted format the farmer's markets in Newark, Pataskala and Granville are returning in May.



I understand the farmer's market at the Canal Market District pavilion in downtown Newark will return the late afternoon and early evening this Friday, May 1st from 4:00pm till 7:00pm. They will run their Friday market in May, and add the Tuesday market later.

Also, Granville's farmer's market is to return on Saturday morning May 2nd, at a location to be determined.

In Pataskala plans call for a return of their every Friday afternoon/evening (4:00pm-7:00pm) farmer's market starting Friday, May 29th and continuing through September 4th.

These markets will be practicing social distancing and will limit the number of shoppers interacting with vendors, the encouragement that one shopper per family would come to the market instead of groups. Sadly, the pandemic will limit or eliminate some of the social side of the markets. In others words in 2020 just come for the quality local foods and produce, and move on to allow others to shop.

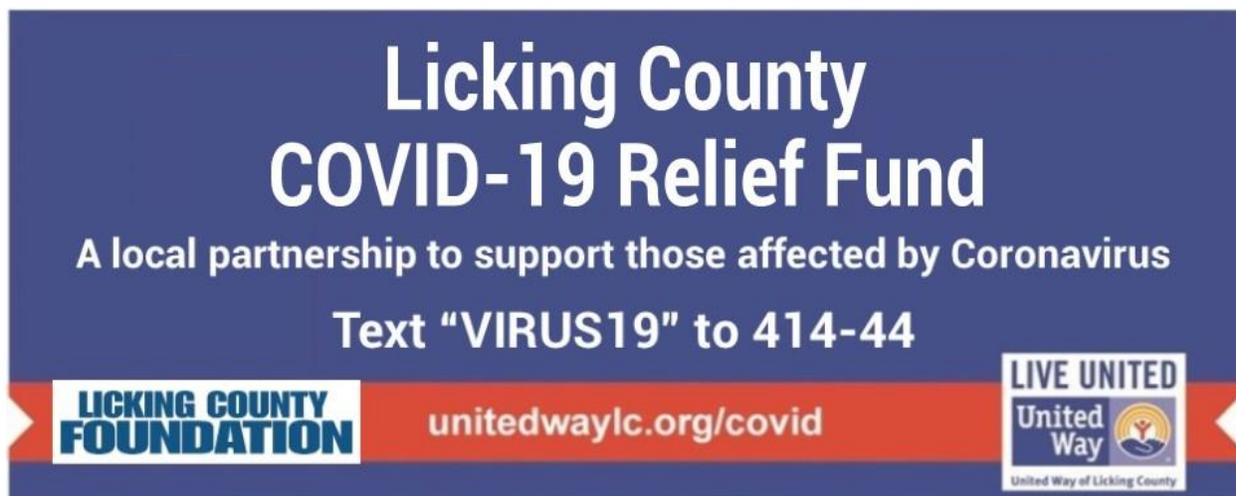
Licking County Pandemic Relief Fund

Local citizens continue to be generous in an on-going County COVID-19 Relief Fund.

United Way of Licking County, the Licking County Foundation and community partners have formed the Licking County COVID-19 Relief Fund. The mission of the Fund is to help meet the needs in Licking County that are directly related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Grants will be given to local organizations to help residents with their basic needs. Organizations that are meeting these needs and would like to apply for relief grants can go to [www.https://app.smarterselect.com/programs/65607-Licking-County-Foundation](https://app.smarterselect.com/programs/65607-Licking-County-Foundation)

They are encouraging the community, if you have the means, to please donate. There are three ways to donate: Text 'Virus19' to 414-44, go online to www.unitedwaylc.org/covid or mail a check to United Way of Licking County PO Box 4490 Newark, OH 43058-4490. Please put COVID-19 in the memo line.

Contact Deb Dingus at www.ddingus@unitedwaylc.org if you have any questions.



**Licking County
COVID-19 Relief Fund**

A local partnership to support those affected by Coronavirus

Text "VIRUS19" to 414-44

**LICKING COUNTY
FOUNDATION**

unitedwaylc.org/covid

LIVE UNITED
United Way
United Way of Licking County

The Lengthened Primary Election Has Been Completed

The March 17th Primary Election in Ohio, as we recall, was postponed in the effort to avoid community spread of Corona Virus and due to the reluctance of many older poll workers to staff the polling places during this uncertain and vulnerable period.

The Ohio Legislature allowed the public health postponement to stand and approved a conclusion to the election with no further in person voting. So for five weeks those who did not vote early by mail, applied for a mail-in ballot and then returning them by mail.

It had been expected that about fifty percent of the Licking County electorate would vote in the Primary



either early by mail or in-person at the polls. The tally on the final day of the now April Primary showed a lesser percentage of 25% casting their ballots. So with some mail in ballots still to arrive, the preliminary count shows 29,703 votes cast out of 118,746 registered voters in the County. Clearly the pandemic and delayed/mail-in only balloting did cause a decrease in participation.

So, we now move on in the process with some issues decided and Primary partisan winners moving on to the November 3rd General Election. Certainly discussions are underway at the State and County level as to how the General Election will be conducted.

Latest Statement from the Governor and ODH

Governor DeWine announced, on April 27th, the Responsible RestartOhio plan which aims to protect the health of employees and customers while supporting community efforts to control the spread of COVID-19, and responsibly getting back to work. A summary of the plan and reopening schedule is listed below.

May 1, 2020: Medically necessary procedures that do not require an overnight stay in a healthcare facility or do not require inpatient hospital admission and minimizes use of personal protective equipment may move forward. This includes regular doctor visits, well-care checks, well-baby visits, out-patient surgeries, imaging procedures, and diagnostic tests. Dental services and veterinary services may also proceed if a safe environment can be established.

May 4, 2020: Manufacturing, distribution, and construction businesses may reopen if these businesses can meet mandatory safety requirements for customers and employees. Additionally, general office environments may reopen if they can also meet mandatory safety requirements.

May 12, 2020: Consumer, retail and services, may reopen if these businesses can meet mandatory safety requirements for customers and employees.

*** During his press conference on April 28th, Gov. DeWine announced some changes from his initial reopening requirements. The mandatory face covering requirement has been changed to a recommended face covering in all categories. Face coverings and masks will not be mandated for retail customers, but the governor stated it is still considered best practice. The governor indicated that employers can require everyone to have face coverings in their business – it is an employer decision.**

Schools and daycares, dine-in restaurants, beauty businesses, older adult daycare and senior centers, adult day support or vocational rehabilitation services in group settings, entertainment, recreation, and gyms are all ordered to remain closed due to their increased risk of COVID-19 exposure.

Because the danger of COVID-19 still exists, Ohio's Stay at Home order will remain in effect to encourage Ohioans to continue making reasonable, rational decisions about leaving home. Large gatherings of more than 10 people are still prohibited.

We would like to thank the following associations and companies for supporting Governor DeWine's actions to begin reopening Ohio's economy: The Ohio Manufacturers' Association, Ohio Business Roundtable, National Federation of Independent Businesses-Ohio Chapter, Ohio Chamber of Commerce, Ohio Council of Retail Merchants, Ohio Farm Bureau Federation, Ohio Township Association, Ohio Municipal League, Ohio Mayors Alliance, County Commissioners Association of Ohio, Ohio Bankers League, Ohio Credit Union League, Ohio REALTORS, Ohio Apartment Association, The Columbus Partnership, Ohio Grocers Association, Ohio Conference of AAA Clubs, and Marathon Petroleum Corporation.

The 2020 Census Needs People Workers for Licking County

The U.S. Census Bureau is still in need of Census Workers. They continue to recruit in efforts to building their applicant pool in the midst of COVID-19. They expect to resume field activities June 1, 2020. In order to ensure our Licking County community has a complete and accurate they need to first ensure they have the appropriate staffing. Licking County is in need of 1,395 applicants and currently they have 974.

**Please contact Bianca M. Walsh,
Recruiting Assistant US Census
Bureau at (208) 867-9670 or
bianca.m.walsh@2020census.gov**

The Census Bureau temporarily suspended 2020 Census field data collection activities in March. Steps are already being taken to reactivate field offices beginning June 1st, 2020, in preparation for the resumption of field data collection operations as quickly as possible following June 1st.

In-person activities, including all interaction with the public, enumeration, office work and processing activities, will incorporate the most current guidance to promote the health and safety of staff and the public. This will include recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) and social distancing practices.

Once 2020 Census data collection is complete, the Census Bureau begins a lengthy, thorough and scientifically rigorous process to



produce the apportionment counts, redistricting information and other statistical data products that help guide hundreds of billions of dollars in public and private sector spending per year.

In order to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau is seeking statutory relief from Congress of 120 additional calendar days to deliver final apportionment counts.

Under this plan, the Census Bureau would extend the window for field data collection and self-response to October 31, 2020, which will allow for apportionment counts to be delivered to the President by April 30, 2021, and redistricting data to be delivered to the states no later than July 31, 2021.

Construction Projects Continuing Countywide

It is important to note that while the economy; especially restaurant, tavern, hotel, travel and entertainment segments; have taken a major hit during the pandemic shutdown; local construction projects have been pushing forward.

It is important that we also focus on continuing positive news, while at the same time slowly restarting other parts of the community's economy. I would like to share some updates as local projects progress in this unusual year.

An unexpected project is the one million dollar road repair and culvert replacement on State Route 79 (Hebron Road) in south Heath, caused by a washout during the flashflood of March 20th. The City of Heath and ODOT are splitting the cost of this emergency project to reopen this major north-south artery near James Parkway.



A contractor has been on site since the washout and the repair is now slated for completion by May 15th. As you can see in the photo (above right) this was a major excavation project with a new large concrete box culvert being installed. Continuing rains have slowed the work as the contractor, BUDS, Incorporated of Nashport, continues backfilling, grading and preparing to add new pavement.

There are three new fire stations either under construction or about to be in Licking County.

In northwest Newark a new station serving that rapidly growing area is under construction just north of the round-a-bout on Sharon Valley Road. (photo right)



The new Granville Township Fire Station on Main Street South in Granville is also taking shape. It replaces the antiquated Granville Township Station located in the heart of the downtown Village Business District.

In Johnstown the new station for the Johnstown-Monroe Township Fire Department has been designed and a contractor selected. Replacing the old station in the center of the Village, the new facility will be east on U.S. 62 between the downtown and the industrial park.

In downtown Newark construction at The Works is underway with a reshaping of their Canal Street entrance and the entrances to their facility. As a safety improvement Canal Street is now stubbed and not an eastbound through street, allowing student groups and the public to arrive safely.



A new traffic pattern with Market Street is being completed; along with an impressive new sign and entrance at South Second Street, and new entrances and add-ons at The Works itself. This work will be completed in 2020. In addition new sidewalks will facilitate pedestrian traffic at Second and Third Streets to the Canal Market District.



Growth continues at the Central Ohio Aerospace and Technology Center in Heath, usually just known as the Port Authority Site. It has become a major central Ohio industrial Park now with ten new industrial and warehouse buildings on the site adjacent to the Kaiser Plant and the former Newark Air Force Base.



Some of the new buildings are occupied including this facility (right above) that houses a manufacturer of plant based foods, Gathered Foods. Others are occupied and several 'spec' buildings are either complete or underway.

On the impressive Newark Campus of Ohio State University (OSU) and Central Ohio Technical College (COTC) construction continues on a new science and technology center.



The John and Mary Alford Center for Science and Technology is a \$32 million, three-story, 60,000 square foot facility will become the eleventh building on OSU and COTC's shared 200-acre Newark Campus. The anticipated completion date is spring 2021.

On Hopewell Drive in Heath work is progressing on the new regional headquarters for the American Electric Power's (AEP) Transmission and Service Division Center.



The new facility adjacent to the Windstream's Service Center and across the road from AEP's regional residential and commercial service center will be complete in 2020.

There are a variety of school projects underway in Licking County including two new high school complexes, and several major warehouse and logistics centers in western Licking County. We will update some of those projects next month.

Licking County Master Gardener Volunteers

By MG Coordinator Lori Swihart of OSU Extension

As the weather warms, many are ready to get into their own gardens and begin the planting season. Since the last newsletter, we have been mandated by Ohio State University to cancel all face-to-face programming and events through to July 6th. This mandate is to

protect our 3,000-plus volunteers throughout the state from Covid-19. This will include the sixty two Licking County Master Gardener Volunteers from working in their Learning Garden on East Main Street. Because of this, we will need to cancel the open house that was scheduled for Saturday, July 18. We regret that we will be unable to visit with our many friends and clients but look forward to seeing everyone in future events.

I would like to share that our State Master Gardener Volunteer website is providing webinars for anyone with an interest in gardening. Interested individuals must register for upcoming classes (check weekly) and can even view recordings of past programs. Many topics to choose from, including



Pollinators, Gardening as We Age, Pest Control, Hydrangeas and more. Click this link to view: www.

<https://mastergardener.osu.edu/news/mgvs-horticulture-lunch-and-learn-and-happy-hour-information-and-registration>

We have been busy during our work from home updating and adding to our web page in the county website to deliver more educational gardening information.

I urge gardeners to check it out at: www.

<https://licking.osu.edu/program-areas/master-gardener-volunteers>

Happy Gardening!

Weathervane Cancels 2020 Summer Season

The Weathervane Playhouse Board of Directors announced the cancellation of its 2020 Summer Season due to the ramifications of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

They explain over 75 members of the cast and crew from 15 states across the country was to arrive at Weathervane in mid-May for the 2020 Summer Season. While the health and safety of our patrons, staff, volunteers, and artists are of the utmost importance to us, the various COVID-19 restrictions have caused the Board to reach this cancellation decision.

In particular, the unavailability of housing on the Newark Campus of The Ohio State University for cast and crew members until at least mid-July is a major reason for the decision, as well as the current mandate of social distancing among staff, actors, crew, and audience members – an unworkable expectation for a theatre production.

They add, as planning moves forward, it is anticipated that the fall and winter shows, 'Clue the Musical' and 'Forever Plaid: Plaid Tidings', will go on as scheduled.

In addition, Weathervane staff is working with the respective licensing agencies to acquire the rights to move the 2020 summer shows to the summer of 2021. Those engaged in our Weathervane Young Artists Repertory Theatre (WYART) will be updated as future programming for these youth is decided.

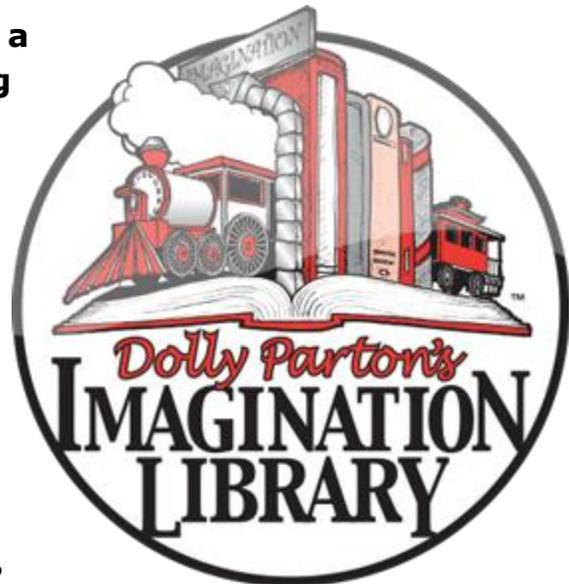


Weathervane Board President Susie Thom says, we will personally contact our advertisers and sponsors, as well as our 2020 Season Subscribers in the coming days to discuss ticket options, including: 1) a request that their 2020 Season Subscription be rolled over to the 2021 Season, 2) a request that their ticket purchase be considered a financial donation to Weathervane Playhouse, and 3) in lieu of a transfer to the 2021 season, or a financial donation, a request of a refund for tickets purchased.

What is Dolly Parton's Imagination Library?

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a program that offers any child in Licking County a free book via U.S. mail every month from birth through their 5th birthday.

Can anyone in Licking County register, even if they're not a Licking County Library card holder? Yes. All public libraries in Licking County are participating: Alexandria, Granville, Homer and Pataskala.



What ages are permitted to register? Children receive books from birth to 5-years-old. However, due processing time, we ask that the age cutoff for registration is 4 years, 8 months.

How do I register? You can register online or with any library in Licking County. Online registration is found here. Forms can be found at any public service desk as the libraries reopen.

Can books be sent to PO Boxes? Yes.

Can a grandparent, legal guardian, etc. register a child, or must it be their parent? Yes, grandparents, aunts, uncles, caregivers, etc. may register a child. They may also have the books sent to their address rather than the child's address if requested.

How long will it take for my child to receive their first book?

It may take up to 6 to 9 weeks for the delivery of your child's first book.

Is there a program like this for older kids?

No, there is no equivalent program for older children.

Who do I contact for questions regarding this program?

Please contact LCL's Youth Services Department at (e-mail) youthservices@lickingcountylibrary.org 740.349.5550.

Who sponsors the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library? Locally, this program is sponsored by Friends of the Licking County Library.

How do I help support this incredible program? We encourage monetary donations to help sustain the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library in Licking County. Please contact LCL Director Babette Wofter at bwofter@lickingcountylibrary.org.

I am involved in a preschool/daycare/non-profit group and would like to promote this program to my group. How do I go about that?

Licking County Library is happy to speak to your organization about the Dolly Parton's Imagination Library.

Watch the video below about this incredible program and philanthropist! [www.https://youtu.be/3K00KXGvZ2k](https://youtu.be/3K00KXGvZ2k)

Dreaming of Wildflowers at infirmary Mound Park

Our Licking Park District is partnering with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on a 32-acre Prairie Habitat Improvement Project at Infirmary Mound Park south of Granville.

According to the Park District's Director Richard Waugh, visitors to Infirmary Mound Park (IMP) may wonder why the fields east of Route 37 have been cleared. These areas will be the location of a prairie habitat improvement project resulting from a partnership between the Licking Park District (LPD) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (USFWS-PFW).



The roughly 32 acres of new grassland will provide critical habitat for pollinators, migratory grassland nesting birds, and other local wildlife species. Additionally it will provide accessible learning opportunities for park programming and a beautiful landscape to relax in for the many visitors who use the trails.

The key to establishing successful prairies is to remove all existing vegetation before planting. Visitors should expect to see bare fields through 2020. The project will occur in two phases. Phase 1 involves 15 acres east and south of Paws 2 Play Dog Park. Vegetation was removed from the area through the responsible application of herbicide in September of 2019. A second herbicide application will occur in spring 2020. Using a no-till seed drill, the area will be planted with the seeds of 34 Ohio native wildflower species and seven Ohio native warm season grasses.

New growth will be apparent through the 2020 growing season. Phase 2 involves 17 acres along Rt. 37 that lie north of the IMP office and west of Mirror Lake. Woody vegetation was mechanically removed in February 2020. The area will be kept bare throughout the summer by brush hogging and then in late summer will be tilled. The ground will be frost seeded in the winter of 2020 with the same mix of wildflower and native warm season grasses. Utilizing two different methods of planting, drill and frost seeding, will provide a useful learning tool for comparing results.

Early successional habitats in Ohio include prairies, pastures, meadows, and shrubby old fields. They are one of the habitats that show the greatest amount of habitat loss in Ohio. The project target areas at IMP are old farm fields that had matured to shrub land. While many may perceive this habitat as messy or unkempt, this type of habitat is in decline yet extremely valuable for a wide range of species. The IMP fields have been inundated with a variety of invasive species and that, along with other considerations, made prairie restoration the appropriate management choice. The LPD will be maintaining 25 acres of early successional shrub habitat in the fields on the Canyon Rd. side of IMP.

Prairie plantings take 2–3 years to mature. Each year the native grass and wildflower composition will change as plants mature and

naturally re-seed. Initially prairie plant growth will be underground. Small plants can easily be shaded out if weed growth is not controlled. Weed management will be done by brush hogging and/or controlled burns. Prairie plants are resistant to burning and will not be killed. In future years burning or mowing will be done every 2-3 years. Once mature, prairies require less intensive management and are less expensive to maintain.

This project gives LPD an opportunity to monitor the changes in wildlife that occur. Citizen scientist volunteers began butterfly monitoring in 2019. This monitoring will continue annually, allowing us to determine if habitat changes have helped attract new species. Future monitoring projects will include bird, dragonfly, and iNaturalist inventories. The Licking Park District, Welcome to "Your 1,600 acre backyard!"

Some Notes from Licking County Soil & Water

* We are considered an essential office as a Division of the Ohio Department of Agriculture. The office is closed to the public but we are scheduling appointments and continue to work in the field as necessary. The majority of our staff is working remotely but we maintain 1-2 staff members in the office to continue to provide timely customer service.



* Technical Assistance requests continue to stream in due to the extreme weather events and recent flooding. We are helping many landowners across the county with drainage concerns, stream-bank erosion, and debris in the waterways. We have provided assistance to a landowner in the area of the washout on Hebron Road and

helping coordinate removal of debris that ended up in his stream and field.

*** We are moving forward with a "modified" tree sale this spring. Instead of canceling the entire sale, we are focusing on the larger orders of hardwoods and pines used to fulfill woodland management plans for CAUV purposes. So instead of 250 customers, we will only have about 75 customers. The pick-up will be set up as a "drive-thru," being mindful of social distancing measures.**

Licking County Transit Information

The Licking County Transit Board (LCTB) buses are still providing essential transportation services to residents. LCTB considers essential services as transportation to routine medical appointments; dialysis, urgent care, the grocery store, and prescription pick up and work. LCTB is taking every precaution possible to ensure the safety of the riders, drivers and all staff. All buses are being disinfected and sanitized before use.



For our drivers' safety, they are wearing gloves and using hand sanitizer frequently. In alignment with the 6-foot social distancing rule, LCTB will only allow a certain number of riders per bus to maintain this space. Additionally, LCTB asks riders to please follow the CDC's current guidelines, such as staying home when sick, and to please only schedule transport if it is a necessity. If you exhibit any of the following signs of respiratory illness, such as fever, cough and/ or difficulty breathing, please refrain from public transit for the safety of our drivers and fellow passengers. Should a rider exhibit

any of the above signs during transport, the driver will ask them to wear a mask. The public still needs to play their part in keeping themselves and others healthy.

LCTB offices are currently not open to the public. Ticket purchases and any other necessary business will be pre-scheduled. You may call: (740) 670-5185 to schedule these appointments. LCTB Transit Center: 745 East Main Street, Newark, Ohio 43055 and LCTB Maintenance Facility: 763 East Main Street, Newark, Ohio.

Feel free to forward this e-mail in any direction you would like, and let me know the e-mail address of anyone who would like to be included on my Update Newsletter list.

* I would also invite you to check Facebook and visit Licking County Commissioners, Elect Commissioner Tim Bubb and Commissioner Tim Bubb.

I can be e-mailed at tbubb@lcounty.com, and my desk phone number at the Commissioner's Office is 740-670-5118.

Best Regards! Commissioner Tim Bubb



