

# Lake County to join public works program

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Lake County commissioners have approved an agreement to participate in a countywide public works sharing and use program.

The initiative was spearheaded by Ohio Auditor Dave Yost's office and aims to enable communities to share capital equipment and other resources as a way to potentially save money.

Many communities in the county and around the state have equipment that isn't used frequently. Until a new law passed last year, sharing that equipment was prohibited.

The Lake County Mayors and City Managers passed a resolution of support of the program in October and many communities have signed on, including

Mentor, the county's largest city.

Commissioner Robert E. Aufuldish said one of the concerns communities had initially with sharing services and equipment were liability issues involving employees.

The formal agreement addresses issues such as workers compensation and provides tort immunity to communities and their employees when performing services outside their political subdivision.

"When an employee is rendering a service outside of their political subdivision ... that part of the concern is over," Aufuldish said.

The agreement also addresses issues such as reimbursement, reserved rights and other terms.

Commissioner Daniel P. Troy said the purpose of the agreement is to try to look at ways to be more efficient, have more collaboration and shared services.

"The basic premise is everybody has a lot of expensive equipment for road work and other services," Troy said. "A lot of that equipment is not being used 40 hours a week."

He added that the agreement would not involve snow-plowing equipment.

"In some of these communities, if snow removal is not up to par and the answer is because some of our equipment is in another community, there was some perception that would be a problem," Troy said.

Commissioner Raymond E. Sines said most of the political subdivision in the county have signed on to the agreement and can opt-out at just about any time.

"There isn't a lot of pressure on this idea," Sines said. "Going forward, the cost of this specialized equipment is expensive and this may save a few dollars in the future."