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Update on Multi-County Morgue Feasibility Study *Auditor Meacham Exploring Options with Other Counties*

Mahoning County – Mahoning County Auditor Ralph T. Meacham reports on the progress of a multi-county morgue study. In June, Auditor Ralph Meacham entered into discussions with County Auditors from Trumbull, Columbiana, Portage, Stark and Ashtabula counties regarding the feasibility of a regional morgue. As a first step, the Mahoning County Auditor’s office is gathering data on coroner operations from interested counties. According to Meacham, “County Auditors maintain good working relationships, and it is not unusual for us to cooperate and share information. To be clear, no commitments have been made. If we can work together to save taxpayer money, we certainly will investigate the feasibility.”

In September, Auditor Meacham met with Ohio State Auditor Dave Yost to discuss the possibility of the regional morgue initiative being included in the new feasibility study program available through House Bill 5. In his press release announcing the passage of HB 5, Auditor Yost states: “Uncertainty has kept too many of Ohio’s governments from reaping the cost-saving benefits of collaboration. This bill allows my office to provide clear answers to those looking to boost efficiency and save tax dollars through sharing.” House Bill 5 also establishes a grant program to cover the full cost of the studies funded by the Auditor of State’s Leverage for Efficiency, Accountability and Performance Fund (LEAP Fund).

Auditor Meacham states:

“Some counties have aging morgue facilities that are having difficulty responding to the demands place upon them by the drug epidemic. A regional morgue would possibly permit a single facility for: storage, autopsy rooms, organ and tissue harvesting operating rooms, forensic laboratory, forensic photography, IT systems for record keeping and evidence tracking, shared forensic pathologists and technicians, possible cooperation with NEOMED in Rootstown for training and staffing, and possible leasing of tissue donation facilities to not for profit organizations.”

Auditor Meacham will keep taxpayers informed as this initiative progresses.

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