



CRAIG BROWN
COLUMBIANA COUNTY RECORDER

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Natural Gas Providing Fiscal Hope for Columbiana County

The rise in natural gas activity in Columbiana County may provide a much needed lift for Columbiana County government's economic situation. According to numbers obtained from Columbiana County recorder Craig Brown money from copy fees and leases filed by companies working in the natural gas economy is leading to a rise in the office's collection totals.

"There is little doubt in my mind that the rise in regional natural gas activity will have a positive impact on government funding throughout the region," stated County Recorder Craig Brown.

Last year the recorder's office collection totaled \$162,713.48 from January 1, 2010 to 12:15 PM on July 11, 2011. In the same period this year collections have increased by \$66,811.99 to a total of \$229,525.47.

The overwhelming majority of monies collected by the recorder's office goes to the Ohio Housing Trust Fund and the county's general fund. The increase in collection benefits the recorder's office by increasing to amount of money in the office's equipment fund.

Earlier in the week it was reported that Columbiana County Commissioners were preparing for a Local Government Fund (LGF) reduction of \$300,000.

"Obviously, the money collected by this office will not solve the budget shortfall, but it certainly will help ease the pain," stated Brown.

Brown expects the office's collection will continue to be higher than previous years. He speculated that at this pace the office may collect \$130,000 more than it did in 2010.

He admitted that office employees are concerned about what steps commissioners will take to address the LGF cuts. "Sure, the office is nervous, for the last seven years the budget in this office has been very tight," continued Brown, "right now we are busier than ever and all of us are concerned about the very negative impact any budget cut will have in this office."

Funding for the recorder's office has two parts. The equipment fund consists of a portion of fees the office receives from the filing of documents. The second is a general fund appropriation allotted by the county commissioners.

Ideally these funds would be used for their own specific purposes. The equipment fund would be used for equipment and the general fund would be used for employees. Columbiana County has traditionally been forced to use the recorder's equipment fund to address inadequate general budget funding.

This year will be no exception. Brown anticipates about \$10,000 will be needed from the equipment fund to pay employee costs this year.

"It is great news that collections are up, but it is important that people know the role this office is playing to help keep county government running," closed Brown.

For more information about the Columbiana County recorder's office please contact Craig Brown at (330) 424-9517 or visit www.columbianacountyrecorder.org.