

Commissioners:
Harold R. Henson
Brian S. Stewart
Jay H. Wippel

Administrator:
April Dengler
Clerk:
Angela Karr




Pickaway County
Board of County Commissioners
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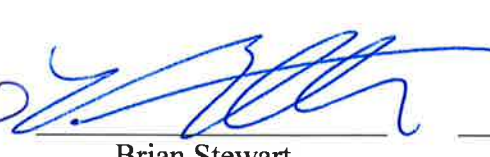
From January 2013 to 2020, the Pickaway County Board of Commissioners comprised of Commissioners Brian Stewart, Jay Wippel, and Harold “Champ” Henson has been one of the most productive Boards in the county’s history. The Stewart-Wippel-Henson Board’s accomplishments include:


- The Stewart-Wippel-Henson Board took office in January 2013 when the county’s cash reserves totaled \$2.2 million. After 8 years of balanced budgets enacted and strong fiscal management by the Commissioners, the county will finish 2020 with \$11.5 million in cash reserves.
- When the Stewart-Wippel-Henson Board took office in January 2013, the unemployment rate in Pickaway County was 9.3%. The Commissioners worked aggressively to attract new, good-paying jobs to Pickaway County, and successfully negotiated and adopted economic development deals that resulted in the creation of more than 2,700 new jobs in the county, including new facilities by Sofidel, Amazon, Goodyear, Fedex, BASF, American Showa, a plant expansion by DuPont, and many more. Altogether, more than \$1.53 billion of private investment has occurred in Pickaway County as a result of deals enacted by the Commissioners. Prior to COVID-19, the county’s unemployment rate had dropped to as low as 3.2%, well below both the state and national average.
- The Commissioners developed and implemented the Pickaway County Fairgrounds Revitalization Plan, resulting in the demolition of the 70-year-old former fairgrounds, and the construction of the new Pickaway County Agriculture and Event Center. The new \$15 million site features 7 new buildings, including new livestock facilities, an outdoor show arena, and a 19602 square foot indoor show arena. The Commissioners were recognized as the 2019 “Friends of 4H” by the Pickaway County OSU-Extension and the 2019 “Friends of the Fair” by the Pickaway County Agricultural Society.
- The Stewart-Wippel-Henson Board led efforts to transition Berger Health System from being a financially vulnerable government-owned hospital to a private, financially secure member of the thriving Ohio Health System. The Board helped negotiate a deal in which Ohio Health assumed all debts and liability of the public hospital, pledged millions for the construction of a new emergency room and other improvements, and required the expansion of medical services to include multiple additional medical providers. Within the first 6 months of the transition, all Berger employees received a raise to a least \$15/hr, affecting more than 200 local employees of the hospital.

- The county's credit rating was upgraded in 2019 to "Aa2," with Moody's Investor Service noting that "the County's financial position is very strong categorized by balanced operations extremely healthy recurrences and prudent fiscal management".
- The Commissioners implemented the use of the online auction website "GovDeals" for the sale of surplus and obsolete county property, resulting in 179 successful listings generating \$297,151.82 in new revenue for the county over prior, outdated forms of disposing of property.
- The Stewart-Wippel-Henson Board oversaw significant improvements in service at the Pickaway County Dog Shelter. The county set records for the number of adoptions in 2015, 2016, and 2017.
- The Commissioners oversaw more than \$6 million in capital budget projects over 8 years, including the purchase of 29 Sheriff's vehicles, the purchase of over 200 new radios, the purchase of a new 800mHz radio tower, renovations to virtually every county facility, the addition of public Wi-Fi access to the Courthouse and other county buildings, the restoration of Memorial Hall in Circleville, renovation of the Pickaway County Law Library, the creation of new magistrate courtrooms for the Pickaway County Common Pleas Court, the renovation of the Pickaway County Service Center to include new facilities for the Treasurer, Auditor, and Recorder, and much more.
- The Stewart-Wippel-Henson Board invested in the county's workforce – Sheriff's deputies, highway maintenance staff, prosecutors, dog wardens, court personnel, and office staff countywide – by approving reasonable annual pay raises each year. Wages for county staff have increased by 19% during the Board's tenure.
- The Commissioners created the county's first Emergency Operations Center (EOC) which can serve as a mobilization and planning resource for all countywide first responders in the event of emergencies, as well as a backup 911 dispatching center.
- The Commissioners worked with the Pickaway County Sheriff to create a new 911 Dispatching Center with state-of-the-art equipment, improved resources for dispatchers, enhanced monitoring capabilities, and text-to-911 "next Gen 911" capabilities.
- The Commissioners' Office led the expansion of the Pickaway County Health and Safety Committee, the development of a "Health and Wellness Week," and other initiatives to improve employee health. As a result, Pickaway County was awarded the Gold Healthy Worksite Award in 2017, 2018 and 2019 from the Healthy Business Council of Ohio.
- The Stewart-Wippel-Henson Board successfully negotiated a \$6 million upfront payment to the county's general fund in connection with the Atlanta Farms solar energy field project, in addition to \$1.75 million annually to be disbursed to county schools, townships, villages, and other community agencies.
- The Commissioners were the first county in Ohio to adopt a resolution calling for the county's finances to be made publicly available on the Ohio State Treasurer's "OhioCheckbook.com" website. The Commissioners also developed a comprehensive new website for county government, and have posted the county's budget, and other important documents, online since 2013.

- The Commissioners acquired and renovated the former Brooks Yates Building on S. Pickaway Street, as well as the former PDI, Inc. building on Lancaster Pike, adding more than 28,909 square feet to the county's available facility space, and providing new, enhanced office space for Jobs & Family Services (JFS) and the Pickaway County Maintenance Department.
- In 2013, the Stewart-Wippel-Henson Board balked at paying the costs of the autopsy for Ariel Castro following his death in the state's Orient prison facility. The work by the Commissioners to highlight this unfair, unfunded liability counties and advocate for corrective legislation resulted in an overhaul of state law which now shifts the burden of inmate autopsies to the state, as opposed to local counties.


Harold Henson


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