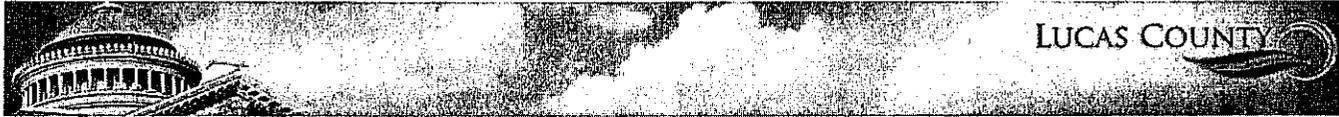


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The Role of County Government

County government was established in Ohio in 1788 as the administrative arm of the territorial government. Today, it serves the same purpose for the state, although the structure has changed and its range of responsibilities has increased.

There are certain state-mandated services that all counties must provide, such as: property tax assessment and collection, land records, election administration, public welfare and social services, and certain legal and judicial services that apply throughout the County.

State law also permits counties to perform certain functions for their residents if they so choose. Discretionary powers exercised by Lucas County include parks and recreation, drainage, and economic development.

Responsibility for County government is shared by the Ohio General Assembly, which has legislative power; the County courts, which have judicial power; and the three-member Board of County Commissioners and eight other elected officials, county Auditor, county Clerk of Courts, county Coroner, county Engineer, county Prosecutor, county Recorder, county Sheriff and county Treasurer, all of who hold administrative power.

The voters of Lucas County elect each of the County's eleven administrative officials for four-year terms. The terms of the three commissioners are staggered, but all are of equal rank, and they elect their own president. The eight other elected officials function as independent administrative heads of their respective offices. The salaries of for all county elected officials is set by the Ohio General Assembly and varies with the population of the county.

The County also has a number of semi-independent boards and commissions, which participate in County government. State law and the County Commissioners determine their powers and revenue sources.

A Brief History of Lucas County, Ohio

On August 20, 1794, near the present-day town of Maumee, American forces led by General Anthony Wayne won a decisive victory over Indian forces at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. The battle opened the entire Northwest Territory for white settlement.

The Ohio General Assembly passed an act on June 20, 1835 to create Lucas County, fearing its absorption into the Michigan territory. In this same year, the legislature of the Michigan territory appropriated funds and put out a call for volunteers to prevent the present day Toledo from being seized by Ohio. On the early morning of September 7, 1835, Colonel Van Fleet led a group of twenty Ohio volunteer militia from Miami (Maumee) to a wooden schoolhouse in Toledo; and at 3:00 am the first session of the Court of Common Pleas of Lucas County convened. At this time the judge named the first three County Commissioners, a sheriff, and a Clerk of Court and secured the territory for the State of Ohio. The "Toledo War", as this conflict became known, was finally settled by the U.S. Congress, which designated the disputed area to Ohio on June 15, 1836. As compensation for its loss, Congress gave Michigan 9,000 square miles of land now known as the Upper Peninsula.

Toledo was designated the county seat by the Ohio General Assembly in 1835. In 1840, the County seat was moved to Maumee, which was the commercial center of the County. There was a continuing rivalry between Maumee and Toledo over the site of the county seat that culminated when the Ohio General Assembly ordered a referendum of the citizens of Lucas County to determine which town would be the county seat. That vote resulted in Toledo being named the county seat and has remained so since that date.

By the 1880's, Toledo had established itself as the center of trade in the Midwest. Its position on the lake and terminus of the Erie Canal helped in its growth. With the growth of the railroads and the County's location as a crossroad between the major cities to the east and west and its close proximity to Detroit, Toledo continued to grow. In 1888, Edward Drummond Libbey signed a contract to bring his glass works to Toledo, being attracted to the area by abundant natural gas and access to southern Ohio coal fields made available by the growth of the railroads and lake shipping. The 1893 World's Fair in Chicago featured an exhibit of Libbey's products, which introduced thousands of people to its products and created a demand for Libbey's cut glass, establishing the glass industry in Toledo.

The Willys-Overland Company purchased the Pope Motor Car Company plant in 1909 and moved its operations to Toledo in 1911. By the 1920's, Willys-Overland employed over 15,000 people, and the automotive industry began to dominate the city's economy. As many as thirty automotive related plants produced parts for automobiles. However, by 1929, Willys-Overland, like other automobile makers, had overproduced, and it led to a layoff of thousands of workers even before the stock market crash in October 1929.

During World War II, Toledo converted its industry to supplying the war needs of our Country. The "Jeep", manufactured in Toledo at the Willys-Overland plant, became a symbol of the American military, making Toledo world-renowned. After the war, the manufacturing of automotive glass and automotive parts closely tied Toledo's economy to the automotive industry. Efforts have now been taken to diversify the County's economy and major industries, including food packaging and processing, plastics, metalworking and machinery/equipment building.

Source: Porter, Tana Mosier, *Toledo Profile: A Sesquicentennial History*, 1987.