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Contact: Tyler Lowry, Commissioners, 614/525-6630

Hanna M. Greer, Commissioners, 614/525-5848

COUNTY MAKING GOVERNMENT INTERACTIONS EASY FOR RESIDENTS

Last week, the Franklin County Department of Economic Development and Planning unveiled a new feature of its website aimed at speeding up and making permitting as easy as possible for builders, developers, and residents. The new SMARTgov Portal allows Franklin County residents to apply for permits online for the first time ever. Users can also check the status of a pending permit, pay permitting fees, access an inspection schedule, review inspection reports, and more, speeding up interactions and making information available to builders and developers faster than ever before and accessible 24/7.

The Economic Development and Planning Department is an agency of the Franklin County Commissioners, and promotes and coordinates development, building, and zoning in unincorporated parts of the county. It also oversees permitting for everything from building demolition and contractor registration, to the raising of chickens or rabbits on residential properties in the county.

“Economic Development and Planning is one of the places that many Franklin County residents interact with their county government,” said Board of Commissioners President, Marilyn Brown. “We want those interactions to be as easy, and efficient as possible, and SMARTgov and the Online Permit Center help us do that.”

Economic Development and Planning’s new SMARTgov Portal allows employees to track HVAC, electrical, demolition, and building permits, schedule appointments, track zoning code violations, and more. In the future, the Franklin County Online Permit Center will also allow customers to file even more documents electronically, such as Certificates of Zoning Compliance, and to renew registrations, such as those required of building contractors.

“The Online Permit Center makes life easier for our customers, the builders and residents of Franklin County,” said Economic Development and Planning Director, James Schimmer. “And it makes our operations faster and more efficient, which is also good for residents; we work for them and always try to give them the best value for their dollar.”

The improvements extend beyond what Franklin County residents will be able to see online to new tools for Economic Development and Planning employees. The more robust software will allow inspectors to file reports from the field, and provide more detailed

information and analytics than have ever been available before.

“Our motto is ‘Franklin County...where government works,’” said Commissioner Paula Brooks. “Putting that phrase into practice means helping customers with faster, easier, and less costly tech solutions for their business needs. Online permits meet that need and, hopefully will help our small and large businesses continue to grow in Franklin County.”

The updated system also links with the county’s mapping and financial systems so that all aspects of a particular project, permit, or user can be tracked together or searched using cross-referenced data. Further improvements to the system are expected over the next two years. Users can find the new Franklin County Online Permit Center at development.franklincountyohio.gov or <https://co-franklin-oh.smartgovcommunity.com/portal/>.

“Any time we can make our operations more efficient while also increasing transparency and accessibility for our Franklin County residents is a win,” said Commissioner John O’Grady. “This sort of online accessibility is something we’ll keep working to bring it to all parts of county government.”

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