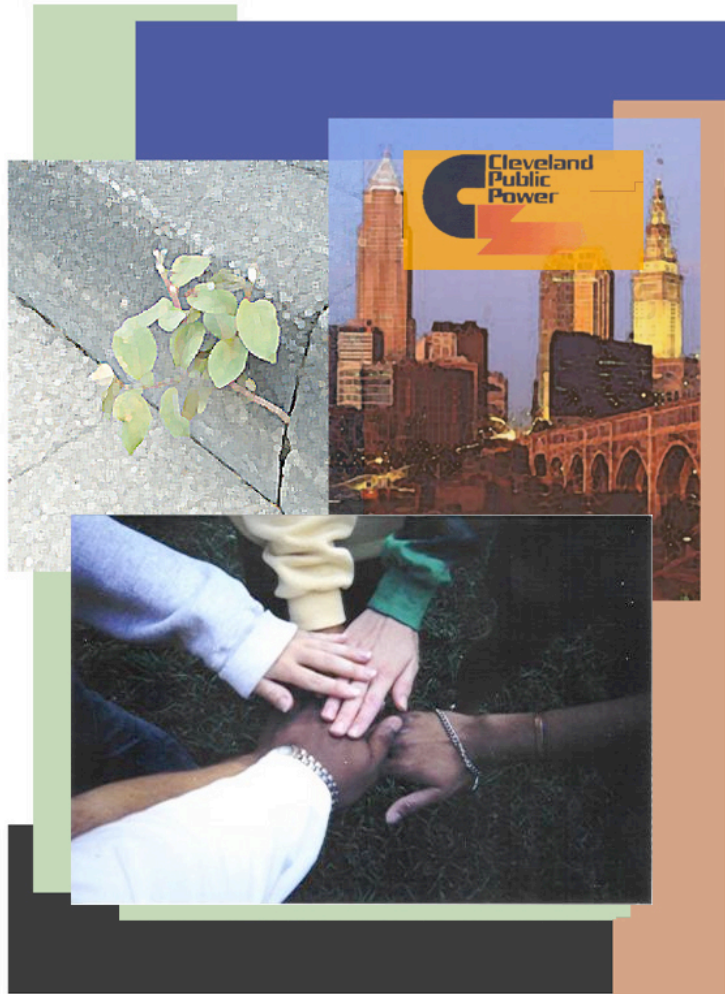


THIS IS WHAT DEMOCRACY IN OHIO LOOKS LIKE!

OHIO'S DEMOCRATIC/SELF-DETERMINATION "INFRASTRUCTURE"



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From the local to the global, the ability of people to govern themselves is under assault. Some of the major sources of this attack are:

- Business corporations looking to make huge profits by converting what once had been “public” to “private” (“privatization,” though a more descriptive term would be “corporatization”), including traditional public assets like water and sewer systems, roads, police and fire protection, and now even schools.
- Individuals looking to increase their power, status, and/or privileges by concentrating decision-making from many hands (We the People and government) to few (their own).
- A culture that reinforces notions that public policies are too complicated for ordinary people to understand (thus leaving policy making to experts); that distracts public attention away from self-determination toward the trivial and inane; that worships “the market” as the route to financial and economic salvation which is not to be regulated or controlled; that define certain arenas (economic in particular) as outside the scope of public input; that continues to erase memory of any/all historical examples of citizen control and definition of their lives; that equates anything that is “public” as being inefficient, wasteful, decrepit, and dangerous and anything “private” as efficient, modern and safe; and that keeps people separated to learn from one another and organize to (re)assert meaningful changes.
- Continual legal and constitutional definitions that further “enclose” and redefine “public” arenas as other “Ps”: “private,” “property,” “proprietary,” “privileged”—and thus beyond the reach of public planning, public shaping, and public evaluation.
- A national government that under the guise of “terrorism” has given itself permission to stifle dissent, intimidate dissenters and interrupt effort of self-determination.

But there is another side to this – a democratic/self-determination culture or “infrastructure.” In our communities and across the state exist alternatives to corporations, corporate governance and elite control.

Scores of documents, policies, institutions, structures and groups reflecting inclusiveness are in place – examples where those who are affected by decisions and policies have a legitimate role in the shaping and making of those decisions... or could if we made the effort. They are where *We the People* have a voice ... or could have a real voice if we merely flexed our self-determination muscles.

Many of these documents, policies, institutions, structures and groups are built on the notion of *the commons*, broadly understood historically as any sets of resources (i.e. land, water, air) that a community recognizes as being accessible to any member of that community. Implied is that every member of the community with equal access to *the commons* has a voice in managing or maintaining them.

Not all of these are “governmental,” some are grassroots created and maintained alternative initiatives bypassing corporate and/or top down government versions of the same function. In the midst of dysfunctional, nonfunctional, undemocratic and/or corrupt state or corporate structures, these alternative grassroots initiatives represent “parallel” institutions that currently coexist with state or corporate power but could over time assume greater legitimacy, if not substitution, if they are more effective in fulfilling the needs of people and communities.

All together, this is what democracy in Ohio looks like!

Some of these are unique to Ohio, most are not. They are meant to inform and/or remind us what we may too often take for granted – that documents, policies, institutions structures and groups exist that are, once were, or for the very first time can become democratic/self-determining. When we fail to use them or be involved in them, they will wither and die. By our not being aware of them, they surely will

be manipulated, eliminated or replaced by shells or shams controlled by corporations, top down government or the power elite.

The examples listed below are in no way equally “inclusive” or “democratic”—some, in fact, might quite rightly be argued to be at the moment not very inclusive or democratic at all. There are varying degrees of self-determination here, some more so on paper than in practice, some more so depending on the place, condition, and people involved. But all have democratic “openings” or possibilities. Where social change energies should be placed is a separate strategic question. They also reflect a basic human reality – institutions or structures, no matter how democratically constructed or configured, never alone ensure democratic outcomes. The commitment to and will of people in creating and nurturing authentic self-determination may be most important of all – the force needed to drive a wide and deep wedge into even the narrowest organizational democratic crack.

This directory is not meant to be useful primarily from a “consumer” perspective (i.e. in answering the questions, "Where's the nearest food coop?" or "Is there a public radio station in my town?") but rather from a democracy/self-determination perspective. That is, it seeks to help readers value the democratic / self-determination openings which still exist or could exist with investment of activist energies. It also strives to reinforce the simultaneous need in working for social change to create or nurture alternatives while working to democratize existing laws, constitutions, policies, practices, and organizations. Finally, the goal of this directory is to stimulate awareness of and actions addressing the multiple threats to what are deemed “public” and available for common use by the constant and cancerous corporate and top-down governmental encroachment in the name of “privatization” or “corporatization.”

Democracy/self-determination is not just aims but processes, not just ends but also means. Listed are examples of both – documents, policies, institutions, structures or groups actually reflecting democratic/self-determining values and principles and/or calling for them, even if the callers are not themselves the perfect practitioners.

This directory in many ways reflects and speaks to the need for what is called a “Solidarity Economy” – the growing global movement of people and organizations seeking a new framework for social and economic development based on the principles of social solidarity, cooperation, egalitarianism, sustainability and economic democracy that puts people and the planet before private profits and power. A national organization working in this direction that we plan to support is the US Solidarity Economic Network, <http://www.usсен.org>

There is no presumption that this list is exhaustive. Huge gaps exist beyond our limited awareness. It’s an ongoing work in progress, meant and, in fact, expected to be amended by readers. Please send additions, feedback, challenges and critiques to GColeridge@afsc.org. Updates will occur regularly.

This is what democracy in Ohio looks like!

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COMMUNITY

Block Clubs

Neighborhood-based organization of residents who work jointly for social, economic and political improvements. Block clubs often operate in a democratic model with program decisions determined by a majority vote of its residents and leaders determined through elections.

Block clubs exist across Ohio.

Community Land Trusts

A community land trust (CLT) is a democratically controlled nonprofit organization that owns real estate in order to provide benefits to its local community - and in particular to make land and housing available to residents who cannot otherwise afford them.

CLTs have been established in different kinds of communities, with different kinds of projects meeting different community needs, but they share some important features, including a distinctive approach to the ownership of real estate and a distinctive approach to community-based governance.

Examples:

Community Housing Option Involving Cooperative Efforts (CHOICE), Youngstown
330-783-3007

Community Land Cooperative of Cincinnati
<http://www.communitylandcooperativeofcincinnati.org/> landco-op@fuse.net
513-721-2522

Cuyahoga Community Land Trust, Cleveland
<http://www.ccLandTrust.org>
216-334-1620

Yellow Springs Home, Inc., Yellow Springs
<http://www.yshome.org/> marianne@yshome.org
937-767-2790

Copwatch

Copwatches are all-volunteer groups focusing on monitoring police actions and non-violently asserting people's rights. They are based on the idea that watching the police is a crucial initial step in the process of organizing. Copwatches don't interfere in police activity or to physically resist police misconduct. The hope of many is that mass awareness of police violence will lead to fundamental change in community policing. Copwatches exist in Cleveland and Columbus.

Free Clinics

A free clinic is a medical facility providing a range of free or low-cost health care services to low income persons with no health insurance. Services may include primary care, including prevention, chronic care, dental and pharmacies.

Free clinics are non-profit, independent entities with local Board of Directors. Staffing are professionals who volunteer their services.

In Ohio, the Ohio Association of Free Clinics [61

Jefferson Avenue, Columbus, Ohio 43215, Phone- (614) 221-6494 <http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org>] has 36 members serving 40 counties in Ohio, providing nearly 115,000 visits to the uninsured and underinsured in 2005.

For a list of the 29 members, go to <http://www.ohiofreeclinics.org/CurrentMembers.htm>

Free Spaces

A free space is an arena where people meet for public talk and actively contribute to addressing public problems. Several components define a free space: a comfortable physical, social, and cultural place, a participatory and inclusive environment, a forum where debate and dialogue occurs, a setting possessing a feeling of community and a place possessing the potential for forming larger public networks and vision. In free spaces, citizens can learn group identity, self-respect, public skills, and the value of cooperation.

Examples:

The Wire: A Community Resource Collective
21 Kern St, Athens Phone: 740-589-5111

C-Space: A Cleveland Place for Interaction, Social Programs & Political Action
4323 Clark Ave., Cleveland
Phone: 216-373-0084 <http://www.clevelandspace.org/>

Public Hospitals

Public hospitals are owned by a government, either state or county, which receives government funding to provide medical coverage in general and medical care free of charge to the poor and uninsured. Public hospitals are closing due to bankruptcy at a much faster rate than private hospitals, due in part to the increasing number of uninsured patients.

There are 22 public hospitals in Ohio. They are listed at http://www.ohanet.org/about_oha/public.htm

The hospitals are:

Berger Health System Circleville, OH 740.474.2126

Brown County General Hospital Georgetown, OH 937-378-6121

Clinton Memorial Hospital Wilmington, OH 937.382.6611

Community Memorial Hospital Hicksville, OH 419.542.6694

Edwin Shaw Hospital for Rehabilitation Akron, OH 330-784-1271

Fayette County Memorial Hospital Washington C.H., OH 740.335.1210

Highland District Hospital Hillsboro, OH 937.393.6100

Hocking Valley Community Hospital Logan, OH 740.380.8000

James Cancer Hospital and Solove Research Institute Columbus, OH 614.293.3300

Memorial Hospital of Union County Marysville,
OH 937.644.6115

Mercer County Joint Township Community Hospital
District (Mercer Health) Coldwater, OH 419.678.4843

The MetroHealth System Cleveland, OH 216.778.7800

Morrow County Hospital Mount Gilead, OH 419.946.5015

The Ohio State University Hospitals East Columbus,
OH 614.257.3700

The Ohio State University Medical Center Columbus,
OH 614.293.8000

Paulding County Hospital Paulding, OH 419.399.4080

Pomerene Hospital Millersburg, OH 330.674.1015

Robinson Memorial Hospital Ravenna, OH 330.297.0811
University of Toledo University Medical Center Toledo,
OH 419.383.4000

Wooster Community Hospital Wooster, OH 330.263.8100

Wyandot Memorial Hospital Upper Sandusky,
OH 419.294.4991

Public Libraries

Public libraries are physical spaces containing collections of books, periodicals, DVDs/videotapes, artwork, audiotapes/CDs, microfilm/microfiche and access to computer databases and the internet.

These collections are often used by people who can't afford or choose not to purchase such materials themselves, ensuring equal access to information regardless of income, race, nationality, religion, or physical ability. Meeting spaces are also available for free or at a nominal charge to the public and to local groups. Public libraries are funded and maintained often by a city, county or other public institution with open meetings. Funding comes through government and public levies in addition to service fees.

Public libraries exist across Ohio.

COOPERATIVES

A cooperative is a unique form of business known as user-owned, user benefiting and user-controlled. Benefits from the cooperative are returned to the members/patrons based on their use of the cooperative during the year. A cooperative is democratically controlled by their members/patrons through a one-member/one-vote policy. Members/patrons own the cooperative through their financial investment in the business.

Bicycle Coops

There are four bicycle cooperatives in Ohio. Members of each coop to differing degrees decide policies and programs as well as benefit from them. Programs include bike repair and maintenance classes and cycling safety information,

Examples

Ohio City Bike Coop	www.ohiocitycycles.org 216-830-2667
Oberlin Bike Coop	www.oberlin.edu/stuorg/bikecoop 440-779-5351
Columbus Bike Coop	www.thirdhand.org/ 614-783-6968
Athens Bike Coop	bike@ohio.edu

Electric

There are 24 electric distribution cooperatives based in Ohio and another, Midwest Energy Cooperative, based in Cassopolis, MI, serves a small group of consumers in the Fulton County area. The 25 co-ops combined serve more than 380,000 homes and businesses in 77 of Ohio's 88 counties. This combined service territory covers about 40 percent of Ohio's land area, including a majority of the state's rural sections. Unlike investor-owned utilities that must balance the interest of the consumer with that of Wall Street, electric cooperatives provide services solely in the interest of the member. Examples:

Adams Rural Electric Cooperative Inc
4800 SR 125 P.O. Box 247 West Union, OH 45693-
0247 937-544-2305 <http://www.adamsrec.com>
bills@adamsrec.com

Buckeye Rural Electric Cooperative Inc
4848 State Route 325 S P.O. Box 200 Rio Grande, OH
45674 740-379-2025 <http://www.buckeyerec.com>
info@buckeyerec.com

Butler Rural Electric Cooperative Inc
3888 Stillwell Beckett Rd, Oxford, OH 45056
513-867-4400 <http://www.brecnet.com>
butler@butlerrural.coop

Carroll Electric Cooperative Inc
350 Canton Rd. NW P.O. Box 67 Carrollton, OH 44615-
0067 330-627-2116 <http://www.carrollelectriccoop.com>

Consolidated Electric Cooperative Inc
5255 SR 95 P.O. Box 111 Mt. Gilead, OH 43338-0111
419-947-3055 <http://www.conelec.com/>

Darke Rural Electric Cooperative Inc
1120 Fort Jefferson Rd. P.O. Box 278 Greenville OH
45331-0278 937-548-4114 <http://www.darkerec.com>
office@darkerec.com

Firelands Electric Cooperative Inc
One Energy Place P.O. Box 32 New London, OH 44851-
0032 419-929-1571 <http://www.firelandsec.com>
members@firelandsec.com

The Frontier Power Company
770 South 2nd St P.O. Box 280 Coshocton, OH 43812-
0280 740-826-7661 <http://www.frontier-power.com/>
fpc@frontier-power.com

Guernsey-Muskingum Electric Cooperative Inc
17 S. Liberty St. New Concord, OH 43762-1299
740-826-7661 <http://www.gmenergy.com>
mailbox@gmenergy.com

Hancock-Wood Electric Cooperative Inc
2451 Grant Rd. P.O. Box 190 North Baltimore, OH
45872-0190
419-257-3241 <http://www.hwelectric.com>
info@hwelectric.com

Harrison Rural Electrification Association Inc
RR6, P.O. Box 502 Clarksburg, WV 26301
304-624-6365 <http://www.harrisonrea.com>
hrea@harrisonrea.com

Holmes-Wayne Electric Cooperative Inc
6060 SR 83 P.O. Box 112 Millersburg, OH 44654-0112
330-674-1055 <http://www.hwecoop.com>
gmiller@hwecoop.com

Licking Rural Electrification, Inc D/B/A
The Energy Cooperative 1500 Granville Rd
P.O. Box 4970 Newark, OH 43055 (Street Zip) 43058-
4970 (PO Box Zip)
<http://www.theenergycoop.com>
feedback@theenergycoop.com

Logan County Cooperative Power & Light Association
Inc. 1587 Cr 32 N P.O. Box 279 Bellefontaine, OH
43311-0279 937-592-4781 <http://www.loganrec.com>

Lorain-Medina Rural Electric Cooperative Inc
22898 West Rd. P.O. Box 158 Wellington, OH 44090-
0158 440-647-2133 <http://www.lmre.org>
lmre@fesco-oh.org

Mid-Ohio Energy Cooperative Inc.
Kenton office: 555 W. Franklin St. Kenton, OH 43326
Marion office: 2859 Marion-Upper Sandusky Rd P.O.
Box 501 Marion, OH 43301-0501
740-382-1234 <http://www.midohioenergy.com>
info@midohioenergy.com

Midwest Electric Inc.
06029 Cr 33A P.O. Box 10 Sr. Marys, OH 45885-0010
419-394-4110 <http://www.midwestrec.com>
rgerdeman@midwestrec.com

Midwest Energy Cooperative
901 E. State St. P.O. Box 127 Cassopolis, MI 49031
800-492-5989 <http://www.teammidwest.com>
info@teammidwest.com

North Central Electric Cooperative
13978 E Cr 56 P.O. Box 475 Attica, OH 44807-0475
419-426-3072 <http://www.ncelec.org>
nce@fesco-oh.org

North Western Electric Cooperative
04125 SR 576 P.O. Box 391 Bryan, OH 43506-0391
419-636-5051 <http://www.nwec.com>
info@nwec.com

Paulding-Putnam Electric Cooperative Inc
11957 US 127 Paulding, OH 45879-9239
419-399-5015 <http://www.ppec.coop>
webmaster@ppec.coop

Pioneer Rural Electric Cooperative Inc
344 W. US 36 P.O. Box 604 Piqua, OH 45356-0604
937-773-2523 <http://www.pioneerec.com>
operations@pioneerec.com

South Central Power Company
2780 Coonpath Rd. NE P.O. Box 250 Lancaster, OH
43130-0250
740-653-4422 <http://www.scp.utilities.com>
feedback@scp.utilities.com

TriCountry Rural Electric Cooperative Inc
200 Rd. K-2 P.O. Box 100 Malinta, OH 43535-0100

419-256-7900

Union Rural Electric Cooperative Inc
15461 US 36 P.O. Box 393 Marysville, OH 43040-0393
937-642-1826 <http://www.ure.com>
services@ure.com

Washington Electric Cooperative Inc
406 Colegate Dr P.O. Box 664 Marietta, OH 45750-0064
740-373-2141 <http://www.weci.org>

The 25 electric distribution cooperatives serving members in Ohio get their electricity from Buckeye Power, Inc. (BPI, <http://www.buckeyepower.com>). It is a generation and transmission cooperative established by Ohio's rural electric co-ops to produce and transmit electric power for the member systems throughout the state. BPI owns two of the three coal-fired generating units in the Cardinal Station, located about seven miles south of Steubenville at Brilliant, Ohio.

Food Cooperatives

There are more than a dozen food coops in Ohio. They are owned and controlled by members, who also benefit financially, often based on the level of their involvement.

Examples:

Crumb's Bakery
94 Columbus Rd, Athens Ohio 45701- Phone: 740-592-
3803 crumbsbakery@hotmail.com

Twin Pines Natural Foods Grocery
1051 Northbend Road, Cincinnati Ohio 45224-
Phone: 513-681-3663 FAX: 513-681-3685
www.purefood.org/coops.htm
CathyYT@aol.com

Raisin Rack, 2545 Schrock Rd, Westerville, OH
614-882-5886 www.raisinrack.com

Raisin Rack, 4629 Cleveland Ave. NW, Canton
330-966-1515

Cleveland Food Co-op
11702 Euclid Avenue Cleveland Ohio 44106-
Phone: 216-791-3890 FAX: 216-791-9046
foodcom@apk.net

Clintonville Community Market/Calumet Nat. Foods
200 Crestview Road, Columbus Ohio 43202-
Phone: 614-261-3663 FAX: 614-261-0474
mike@lifeisart.org
<http://www.communitymarket.org/ccm>

Bexley Natural Food Co-op
508 North Cassady Avenue, Columbus Ohio 43209-
Phone: 614-252-3951
bnm@bexleynaturalmarket.com

New Life Food Club
Dayton Ohio
Phone: 937-275-6031
jlwalsh@glasscity.net

Kent Natural Foods Co-op
151 E Main Street, Kent Ohio 44240-
Phone: 330-673-2878 FAX: 330-673-2878
<http://kentnaturalfoods.org>

Good Food Co-op
Box 21, Wilder Hall, W College Street, Oberlin Ohio
44074-
Phone: 440-775-6533
kjlw@oberlin.net
<http://www.oberlin.edu/~gfc>

Nature's Pantry Cooperative
PO Box 131 Orangeville Ohio 44404
Phone: 330-772-1110
naturespantrycoop@hotmail.com

Phoenix Earth Food Co-op
1447 W Sylvania Avenue Toledo Ohio 43612-
Phone: 419-476-3211
info@phoenixcoop.com

Wooster Natural Foods
138 E. Liberty St. Wooster Ohio 44691-
Phone: 330-264-9797 FAX: 330-264-7430

Good Food Co-op
62 Pyatt Street Youngstown Ohio 44502-
Phone: 330-747-9368 FAX: 330-747-9561

Casa Nueva
Athens, Ohio
Phone: 740-592-2016 <http://www.casanueva.com>
An innovative, worker owned cooperative restaurant, store, and cantina dedicated to strengthening the environmental, economic and social health of the community by promoting wholesome products, democratic participation and responsible business practices.

Ohio Cooperative Development Center
Enhancing economic development in rural Ohio by establishing new cooperatives and strengthening existing cooperatives (various types of cooperatives listed, including food) 1864 Shyville Road, Piketon, OH 45661
Phone: (740) 289-2071 x 220 Fax: (740) 289-4591 1-800-297-2072 (Ohio Only) <http://ocdc.osu.edu/>

Health care

Health insurance purchasing cooperatives (HIPCs)

Health insurance purchasing cooperatives allow small businesses, typically operating within the boundaries of a particular state, and small municipalities to band together to negotiate for improved health insurance coverage for employees.

While some HIPCs have been successful, some studies indicate that they face substantial barriers to offering their members better prices on health insurance. This is attributed to a variety of factors: state regulation that sets standards for premiums limiting the cost savings that can be negotiated; disinterest in, or, in some cases hostility among health plan providers toward the cooperatives; ability to attract only the smallest employers; and inadequate economies of scale—the co-ops are too small to leverage sufficient negotiating power.

Example:

The Council on Smaller Enterprises, Cleveland, is a purchasing co-op for area businesses, provides its small business members with access to 25 different health plans and allows employers to offer five (5) to its employees.

The co-op estimates it saves small businesses some \$45 million annually in premium costs.

Appalachia coop

The idea for a health care coop has been raised for Appalachia, Ohio. For information, go to:
<http://64.233.179.104/search?q=cache:8fDWPamiHaQJ:ocdc.osu.edu/pdf/healthcare.pdf+health+care+coops+ohio&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=1&client=safari>

Housing

Cohousing

Cohousing is a type of collaborative housing where residents actively participate in the design and operation of their own neighborhoods.

Cohousing residents are consciously committed to living as a community. The physical design encourages both social contact and individual space. Private homes contain all the features of conventional homes, but residents also have access to common facilities such as open space, courtyards, a playground and a common house.

Examples:

Dayton Cohousing [in formation]
Thomas "TR" Ruddick
Phone: (937) 252 9088
truddick@earthlink.net
<http://home.earthlink.net/~daytoncohousing/>

Communes

A form of intentional community, communes are collective living arrangements where most resources are shared, there is little or no personal property (as opposed to communities that only share housing) and decisions are made either democratically or through consensus.

There are no current communes in Ohio but the state has a rich history where such "utopian" communities once existed. One good resource describing communes in Ohio is *Creating A Perfect World: Religious and Secular Utopias in Nineteenth-Century Ohio* by Catherine M. Rokicky, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2002. Ix + 181pp. Illustrations, bibliographical references, index. \$34.95 (cloth), ISBN 0-8214-1439-9. (review at <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.cgi?path=147141057267104>)

Student housing cooperatives

Rental housing where resident students collectively decide their living arrangement.

Examples:

Athens
Student Cooperative Organization
23 Elliot St. Athens, OH 45701 (740) 589-6979

Bowling Green
Peace & Web Houses
313 Thurstin St. Bowling Green, OH 43402

Cleveland
Cleveland Student Housing Association
11408 Bellflower, Cleveland, OH 44106 (216) 231-9525

Steiner 11408 Bellflower (216) 231-9525

Columbus
Stadium Scholarship Program at Scholars East & West
1698 Neil Ave. Columbus, OH 43210 (614) 292-6637.

Kent
Kent Cooperative Housing, Inc.
117 E Oak St. Kent, OH 44240 (330) 673-8216
College 202 East College
Dodge 245 Dodge (330) 678-8609
Franklin 609 Franklin Ave.

Kent State University Student Credit Union (CCUC member)
202 Kent Student Center Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242

Oberlin
Oberlin Student Cooperative Association
<http://osca.wilder.oberlin.edu/>
Oberlin College Wilder Box 86 Oberlin, OH 44074 (440) 775-8108
osca@oberlin.edu
Fairchild 93 Elm St. (440) 775-8733
Fuller 121 E. College St. (440) 775-5050
Harkness 113 W. College St. (440) 775-6500
Keep 154 N. Main (440) 776-6600
Kosher-Halal 2 S. Professor St. (440) 775-8003
Old Barrows 207 S. Professor (440) 775-6550
Pyle Inn 40 W. Lorrain (440) 775-8731
Tank 110 E. College St. (440) 775-8738
Third World 30 S. Professor (440) 775-6803

Oxford
First Miami University Student/Alumni Federal Credit Union (CCUC member)
117 Shriver Center
Oxford, OH 45056 (513) 529-1251
<http://www.muohio.edu/firstmiami/>

Tenant Unions

Organizations centered around places where people pay rent to live. If enough people belong to a union they can lobby landlords and apartment owners for improved housing conditions, maintenance and repair work, and possibly lower rents. They rely on the threat of "rent payment removal" in a way similar to how labor unions rely upon the threat of "labor removal."

Examples:

Cleveland Tenants Organization
3631 Perkins Avenue, Suite 3A4, Cleveland, Ohio 44114
phone: (216) 432-0617 fax: (216) 432-0620
email: tao@clevelandtenants.org web:
<http://www.clevelandtenants.org/>

Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio
175 S. High St., # 250, Columbus OH 43215
phone: (614) 280-1984 fax: (614) 463-1060
email: cohio@cohio.org web: www.cohio.org

DEMOCRATIC LEGACY

Ohio's democratic and self-determination history is part of its infrastructure. During Ohio's 200-plus years, people, organizations and movements have contributed a rich democratic tradition. Talks, written texts,

organizations, campaigns and social movements are part of Ohio's democratic legacy. The Abolitionists, Suffragettes, Locofocos, Populists, Knights of Labor, farmers, workers, immigrants, former slaves, indigenous peoples, organizers of Utopian communities, urban dwellers and many others struggled for an authentic voice in the shaping of public policies and/or created their own structures and institutions to address their own needs. They all serve today as inspirations and learning tools for crafting our own inclusive institutions, structures, documents and policies.

There are a great number of resources describing this vast yet often ignored democratic/self-determination history of Ohio One is *Citizens over Corporations, A Brief History of Democracy in Ohio and Challenges to Freedom in the Future* by the Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee, <http://www.AFSC.net>.

Health care No health care cooperatives exist in Ohio. However, the idea for one has been raised for Appalachia, Ohio. For information, go to: <http://64.233.179.104/search?q=cache:8fDWPamiHaQJ:cdc.osu.edu/pdf/healthcare.pdf+health+care+coops+ohio&hl=en&gl=us&ct=clnk&cd=1&client=safari>

ECONOMICS / MONEY

Bartering

A form of trade where goods or services are exchanged for a certain amount of other goods or services, i.e. there is no money involved in the transaction. It can be bilateral or multilateral as trade.

Informal bartering exists everywhere across Ohio.

A more formal current barter system exists at Craigslist.com, a website listing many products, housing, etc both for sale and for barter. The national site is organized by state. There is even a section for cities. Among the Ohio cities listed are Athens, Akron/Canton, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Mansfield, Toledo, and Youngstown.

Credit Unions

A credit union is a co-operative financial institution that is owned and controlled by its members, generally through the election of a Board of Directors. Only a member of a credit union may deposit money with the credit union or borrow money from it. The character of a borrower is often deemed to be the most important factor in deciding whether or not to make a loan. Credit unions can be connected to a workplace, place of worship, occupation, or to a specific geographic community.

Credit unions exist across Ohio. A complete list can be found at the website of the Ohio Credit Union System, <http://www.ohiocul.org/CHAPMAP.HTM>

Freecycle

The Freecycle Network is made up of many individual groups across the globe. It's a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving (& getting) stuff for free in their own towns.

EDUCATION

The Network provides individuals and non-profits an electronic forum to "recycle" unwanted items. One person's trash can truly be another's treasure!

The Freecycle Network is open to all communities and to all individuals who want to participate. Freecycle groups are moderated by local volunteers from across the globe who facilitate each local group - grassroots at its best!

Currently, 103 Ohio communities have Freecycle groups. For a list, go to <http://www.freecycle.org/display.php?region=US%20Central>

Local Currencies

A local currency is a currency not backed by a national government, and is intended to trade only in a small area. These currencies are also referred to as "community currency" or "complementary currencies".

During the 1930's, three dozen Ohio cities and counties, issued their own "depression scrip," locally printed money used for payment by government to individuals and businesses and honored by government. These communities included Ada, Akron, Berea, Bryan, Cincinnati, E. Cleveland, Cuyahoga County, Dayton, E. Liverpool, Fostoria, Geneva, Lakewood, Lewisburg, Lorain, Lucas County, Maple Heights, Martins Ferry, Newark, Portsmouth, Shaker Heights, Springfield, Steubenville, Summit County, Toledo, Van Wert and others. In some cities and counties, businesses also issued their own currencies.

More recently, community groups issued their own local currencies: in Akron (sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee), Cleveland, Columbus, and Kent. These systems were very participatory with members involved in the monitoring of the issuance and circulation of currency and the types of services and products offered.

In addition, many business districts seeking to ward off suburban "big box" stores have issued currencies accepted only by businesses within that downtown business district. City of Lakewood councilperson Denis Dunn is exploring the idea of local currencies for his community.

Time Dollars

Time Dollars are a time-based currency where one hour helping another earns one Time Dollar.

With Time Dollars, everyone who gives can earn, and everyone has something to give. I help you, you help another, and that person helps another. Soon there is a web of caring, a new network of support. For those who are well-off as much as those who are poor, Time Dollars bring a new quality of community to daily living.

Examples:

Community Care Exchange
Contact: Shahla Mehdizadeh
P.O. Box 291 Oxford, OH 45056
ask@communitycareexchange.org
www.communitycareexchange.org

Home schooling

An educational alternative where children are educated at home and in the community, as contrasted to compulsory education where students receive education in institutions, whether a public or privately run school.

Parents home school children across Ohio

Ohio Home Educators Network,
<http://www.ohiohomeeducators.net/>

Parent-Teacher Associations

Voluntary organizations of parents and teachers of students within a particular school who seek to improve the overall welfare of the school and students. Historically, advocacy and organizing by PTAs across the country led to creation or enforcement of kindergarten, child labor laws, immunization, the school lunch program and after school programs.

PTAs exist across Ohio.

Public schools

A public school is a school that is financed and run by government and does not charge **tuition** fees in which children attend.

Most public schools are overseen in Ohio by publicly-elected school boards, which initiate, oversee and evaluate policies (i.e. curricula, funding, teaching) governing public schools within each local school district. Due to serious funding crises in some communities over the years (exacerbated by loss of funding from corporate tax breaks), the power and authority of school boards have been taken over either by Mayors or the State of Ohio. The Ohio Board of Education is composed of members both elected and appointed (by the Governor).

There are 963 public school districts in Ohio.

Student organizations

Many student organizations at the high school and especially college/university level function democratically and have worked or are working for a greater voice of students in their academic settings and the world around them. Student organizations have been at the center of many recent national and international efforts to improve social, economic and political conditions – from ending wars, Apartheid in South Africa, corporate and sweatshops in the underdeveloped world, to expanding global justice, human rights, and environmental sustainability.

Student organizations of this kind are on many college and university campuses and in some high schools across Ohio.

EMPLOYMENT

Employee Ownership

Employee-owned firms are generally a model of ownership where the corporation is owned in part or whole by the employees who work for it. Employees are usually given a share of the corporation after a certain length of employment or they can buy shares at any time. A 100% employee-owned corporation is entirely owned by its employees and thus shares are not sold on public stock markets. Employee owned corporations often adopt profit sharing where the profits of the corporation are shared with the employees. These types of corporations also often have boards of directors elected directly by the employees. In the USA, employee-owned corporations are often created through Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs).

The Ohio Employee Owned Network is composed of 68 employee owned companies across the state. [<http://dept.kent.edu/oeoc/network/index.htm>]

Examples:

ACRT, Inc.
Appleton
Bardons and Oliver
Blue Ridge Paper Products
Bollin Label Systems
Brainard Rivet Company
Buckeye Corrugated
Burt Manufacturing, a Division of Thybar Corporation
Carbo Forge
CareStar Inc.
Cedar Bay Construction
The Chilcote Company
Columbia Chemical Company
ComDoc, Inc.
Contract Sweepers and Equipment
Cornwell Quality Tools Company
Dave Fox Remodeling
Delta System, Inc.
Die-Matic Corporation
Dimco-Gray Company
Ever-Roll Specialties
Falcon Foundry
Falcon Industries
Fastener Industries, Inc.
First Merit Bank NA
GBS Corporation
Gledhill Road Machinery Company
Goldsmith & Eggleton
Gutknecht Construction Co., Inc.
The Great Lakes Construction Co.
The HDH Group
Jet Rubber Co.
J.B. + Co. Roofing
J.R. Holcomb & Co.
Joseph Industries, Inc.
Kemner-Ioff Agency
Krispin's Contemporary Furnishings
Kraft Fluid Systems, Inc.
Libby, Perszyk, Kathman, Inc.
Mantualine
Marine Mechanical Corporation
Maryland Brush Company
McDonald Steel
The Mosser Group
New Product Innovations

Nova Engineering
Ohio Valley Supply Company
The Oswald Companies
The Paquin Company
Paul J. Ford and Company
Perry Corporation
Producers Service Corporation
Quincy Castings, Inc.
Rable Machine, Inc.
Reuther Mold & Manufacturing Company
Riesbeck Food Markets, Inc.
R.J. Martin Electrical Contracting
The Ruhlin Company
Sabin Robbins Paper Company
Scott Bader Company Limited
Select Machine
S.G. Morris
Sims-Lohman Cabinet Company
Star Leasing
Stow Glen Retirement Village
Technology Imaging Services
THT Presses
Voto Manufacturer's Sales
The Will-Burt Company
Xtek
YSI, Inc.

The Ohio Employee Ownership Center (OEOC) is a non-profit, university-based program established in 1987 to provide outreach, information, and preliminary technical assistance to Ohio employees and business owners interested in exploring employee ownership. The OEOC provides ownership training on a single and multi-company basis to existing employee-owned firms and is funded by grants from the Ohio Department of Development, private foundations, dues from firms belonging to Ohio's Employee-Owned Network, income from training contracts and donations. [<http://dept.kent.edu/oeoc/>]

Unions

Trade unions are associations of wage-earners who choose to come together for the purposes of negotiating with employers for better working conditions, wages and benefits; to strike and resist lockouts, and to engage in political activities. Trade unions in Ohio date back to as early as 1802. Working Ohioans have come together in unions to educate, advocate, organize, strike, and form political parties for better pay, benefits and working conditions, improve social conditions, reduce corporate power and rights, and increase the political influence of working people.

There are many unions across the state. The major statewide labor groups are:

Ohio AFL-CIO, <http://www.ohafclcio.org>
United Autoworkers Region 2B,
<http://www.uaw.org/about/where/region2b.html>
Service Employees International Union (SEIU) District 1199, <http://www.seiu1199.org/>

FOOD / AGRICULTURE

Buying Clubs

Members of buying-clubs purchase food and other organic products in bulk and then split the products and

savings. Decision-making is often collective.

Buying clubs exist all over the state.

Community Gardens

Collective use, often in urban areas, of either public or privately owned lots for gardening. Community gardens exist all over the state.

Community supported agriculture

Community supported agriculture (CSA) is where a group of individuals buy seasonal shares of a farmer's produce. In essence, they have a stake in the farm. The farmer's fresh fruits and vegetables are normally delivered each week to a location where each "buying group" then further divides the food into individual shares. CSA's support organic farming, permaculture and biodynamic farming methods for sustainable agriculture. Decision-making is often democratic by the CSA stakeholders or "share" owners. Go to <http://www.localharvest.org/csa/> for a list of 50 CSAs in Ohio.

Examples:

1920 Organics, Salem, 330-525-7134,
organicohio@netlink.net

Ashbrook Farm, Chagrin Falls, 440-543-8369

Basket of Life Farm, Columbia Station,
Eric@basketoflifefarm.com
<http://www.basketoflifefarm.com>

Bluebird Hills Farm, Springfield, 937-390-6127,
bluebirdhills@voyager.net, <http://www.bluebirdhills.com>

Boulder Belt CSA, New Paris, 937-273-3502,
goodows@infinet.com,
<http://www.angelfire.com/oh2/boulderbeltcsa/CSA.html>

Breychaks Farm, Columbia Station, 440-236-8876,
farm@breychak.com, <http://www.breychak.com>

CSA at Crown Point, Bath, 330-668-8992,
farm@crownpnt.org
<http://www.crownpnt.org>

Dragonfly Farm, Randolph, 330-947-1225,
dragnsly@cmh.net
<http://www.dragonflyfarm.org>

Garden Patch Produce, Alexandria, 740-924-4331
gardenpatchproduce@earthlink.net

Earth-Shares CSA, Loveland, 513-281-4855
wjho@fuse.net

Gravel Knolls Farm, West Chester, 513-779-1190,
jrosselot2@cinci.rr.com,
<http://www.gravelknollsfarm.com>

Hamper Homestead Farm, Jefferson, 440-576-4281,
mhamper@suite224.net

Hickory Hollow, Wellsville, 330-532-9625

Hidden Ridge Family Farm, West Union, 937-544-0778,
info@hiddenridgefarm.com,

<http://www.hiddenridgefarm.com>

Jumping Spider CSA, Ashley, 740-747-0389,
etheridgepaul@hotmail.com

Just This Farm, Galloway, 614-853-1036

Katona's Country Garden, Marshallville, 330-855-5811,
katona@bright.net

Meadow Rise Farm, Bellville, 419-886-4365,
joan_richmond@mac.com,
http://homepage.mac.com/joan_richmond

Mud Run Farm, Navarre, 330-837-4648,
acdrag@yahoo.com

Naomi's Garden, Ashley, 749-747-2490,
Therese@midohio.net

Free Food

Sharing of free food, most of which is donated. Decisions are made collectively.

Examples:

Food Not Bombs is a movement of autonomous collectives that make decisions based upon consensus. They collect and cook soon-to-be-discarded food and share it for free with whoever is hungry, as a statement against over-consumption and violence. The general contact point for FNB is: <http://www.foodnotbombs.net>

Akron Food Not Bombs 330-762-1032
akronfnb@yahoo.com
<http://gozips.uakron.edu/~dw2/fnb.html>

Cincinnati Food Not Bombs cincifnb@yahoo.com

Cleveland Food Not Bombs 216-402-4994 (c-space voicemail, feel free to leave a message)
veggies@clevelandfoodnotbombs.org
<http://www.clevelandfoodnotbombs.org/>

Columbus Food Not Bombs kythera1278@aol.com

Dayton Food Not Bombs K.J.Douglas 937-454-9752
interin@juno.com
<http://www.foodnotbombs.dayton.vegetariansociety.org/>

Kent State Food Not Bombs just_greg@riseup.net

Yellow Springs Food Not Bombs (Antioch)
795 Livermore Street, Yellow Springs, OH, 45387 513-285-0978

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

Many communities across Ohio directly control the operation of basic services used by citizens. Decisions regarding service features, costs, service area, equipment, improvements, response to complaints, etc. are decided by the public via municipal public hearings and/or decisions made by publicly elected officials (often councilpersons and mayors). Such services are increasingly in Ohio and across the country (which has been the case around the world under the guise of "Structural Adjustment Programs" or "SAPs") being "privatized"/"corporatized"

(meaning being sold off or contracted to for-profit business corporations) to supposedly increase efficiency, raise municipal revenues, increase services, reduce waste, diminish the size of government, among other reasons. The truth is that many corporate-contracted services have resulted in less service, greater cost, and more citizen complaints. Municipal services controlled publicly by municipalities are ultimately accountable and responsible to the public and elected officials. Corporations providing these same services are ultimately accountable to their stockholders/shareholders.

Examples of basic services provided/owned by municipalities in Ohio:

Transportation – Buses, rapid transit trains, roads, bike paths

Police (although some neighborhoods, business districts, and newer housing developments augment public security with private security services).

Fire – At one time, fire departments were private and only responded to calls from “paid members.”

Water – including sewer systems ... and often trash / recycling pickup

Energy – There are 86 public power communities in Ohio. American Municipal Power-Ohio is a nonprofit providing generation, transmission and distribution of electric power and energy to 81 of these member communities. The AMP-Ohio Board of Trustees consists of 16 communities; each designates its own representative to the board. Eight of these trustee communities are selected by their fellow public power communities in each of eight service areas of the organization. The other eight are elected at large. [Contact: American Municipal Power – Ohio, 2600 Airport Dr., Columbus, OH Tel: 614-337-6222 Toll Free: 1-800-875-2676 <http://www.amp-ohio.org/>]

Member communities of AMP-Ohio
<http://www.amp-ohio.org/members-list.html>

Amherst, OH
Arcadia, OH
Arcanum, OH
Beach City, OH
Blanchester, OH
Bloomdale, OH
Bowling Green, OH
Bradner, OH
Brewster, OH
Bryan, OH
Carey, OH
Celina, OH
Cleveland, OH
Clyde, OH
Columbiana, OH
Columbus, OH
Custar, OH
Cuyahoga Falls, OH
Cygnet, OH
Deshler, OH
Dover, OH
Dowagiac, OH
Edgerton, OH
Eldorado, OH
Elmore, OH
Galion, OH
Genoa, OH

Glouster, OH
Grafton, OH
Greenwich, OH
Hamilton, OH
Haskins, OH
Holiday City, OH
Hubbard, OH
Hudson, OH
Huron, OH
Jackson, OH
Jackson Center, OH
Lakeview, OH
Lebanon, OH
Lodi, OH
Lucas, OH
Marshallville, OH
Mendon, OH
Milan, OH
Minster, OH
Monroeville, OH
Montpelier, OH
Napoleon, OH
New Bremen, OH
New Knoxville, OH
Newton Falls, OH
Niles, OH
Oak Harbor, OH
Oberlin, OH
Ohio City, OH
Orrville, OH
Painesville, OH
Pemberville, OH
Pioneer, OH
Piqua, OH
Plymouth, OH
Prospect, OH
Republic, OH
Seville, OH
Shelby, OH
Shiloh, OH
South Vienna, OH
St. Clairsville, OH
St. Marys, OH
Summerhill, OH
Sycamore, OH
Tipp City, OH
Versailles, OH
Wadsworth, OH
Wapakoneta, OH
Waynesfield, OH
Wellington, OH
Westerville, OH
Wharton, OH
Woodsfield, OH
Woodville, OH
Yellow Springs, OH

Other Ohio communities that have public power systems:
Bethel, OH
Georgetown, OH
Hammersville, OH
Ripley, OH
Tontogany, OH

Hospitals – also ambulance services

Parks

Cable services – Wadsworth and Lebanon are the only 2

municipally owned systems in Ohio. After Wadsworth won its system, the corporate cable providers pressured the state legislature in 1999(?) to prohibit any further community-owned systems.

Fiber optic networks – Cleveland owns maybe the most extensive fiber optic network of any urban area in the nation.

NEWS / INFORMATION

Alternative Radio

Programs on commercial or public radio stations that are outside the “mainstream” of the corporate media and its biases, censorship and profit motives.

Examples:

- Guerrilla Radio News Tuesdays 6-7 pm WRUW-FM 91.1 Cleveland, News blog, <http://uptherebels.blogspot.com/>
- America’s Work Force, 8-9 am, WERE-AM, 1300 Cleveland www.labortools.com
- Voices and Choices, Cleveland
- Voices of the African Diaspora, Sat AM, WEREAM, 1300, Cleveland

Alternative TV

Programs on either commercial, public television, or cable public access television stations which is outside the “mainstream” of the corporate media and its biases, censorship and profit motives.

Examples:

- Liberation Brew, Cleveland
<http://www.liberationbrew.org>
- Freedom Journal TV, Akron
<http://freedomjournaltv.tripod.com>
- UnCommonSense TV, Dayton
<http://www.ustvmedia.org>

Newsletters / Magazines

Regularly printed publications produced by an organization or individual distributed to subscribers and/or to the general public.

There are hundreds of newsletters and magazines printed and distributed by groups and individuals across Ohio.

Public TV / Radio

Television and radio receiving funding from the public – both from individuals through donations and fees and from government (state and federal) funding. Licenses are issued to non-profit organizations, universities, or municipal or state governments. Public TV and radio produce some of their own programming; however, a major portion of programming derives from national sources. Citizens have direct input via communication connected to their memberships and indirectly via pressure on local public TV/radio boards or public officials approving funding and terms for programming and operations.

Examples of Public TV:

- WVIZ/PBS Channel 25 Cleveland, OH
- WOSU-TV 34 Channel 34 Columbus, OH
- ThinkTV16 / WPTD Channel 16 Dayton, OH
- PBS 45 & 49 Channel 45 Kent, OH
- CET Channel 48 Cincinnati, OH
- WGTE/Channel 30 Channel 30 Toledo, OH
- WBGU/ Channel 27 Bowling Green, OH
- WOUB/ Channel 20 & WOUC/ Channel. 44 Athens, OH

Examples of Public radio:

- WOUB-AM Athens 1340
- WOUB-FM Athens 91.3
- WOUC-FM Cambridge 89.1
- WOUH-FM Chillicothe 91.9
- WVXC-FM Chillicothe 89.3
- WGUC-FM Cincinnati 90.9
- WVXU-FM Cincinnati 91.7
- WCPN-FM Cleveland 90.3
- WOSU-AM Columbus 820
- WCBE-FM Columbus 90.5
- WOSE-FM Coshocton 91.1
- WDPR-FM Dayton 88.1
- WGDE-FM Defiance 91.9
- WOUL-FM Ironton 89.1
- WKSU-FM Kent 89.7
- WGLE-FM Lima 90.7
- WOSV-FM Mansfield 91.7
- WOSB-FM Marion 91.1
- WKRJ-FM New Philadelphia 91.5
- WMUB-FM Oxford 88.5
- WOSP-FM Portsmouth 91.5
- WSKV-FM Thompson 89.1
- WGTE-FM Toledo 91.3
- WVXM-FM West Union 89.5
- WCSU-FM Wilberforce 88.9
- WKRW-FM Wooster 89.3
- WYSO-FM Yellow Springs 91.3
- WYSU-FM Youngstown 88.5
- WOUZ-FM Zanesville 90.1

Web (Ohio specific)

General sites dealing with issues of democracy/self-determination:

- Northeast Ohio American Friends Service Committee, <http://www.afsc.net>
- Citizens Intent on Reforming Corporate Accountability (CIRCA), Web: <http://www.firstuucolumbus.org/corppers>

Independent Media Center (Indymedia)

Indymedia is a collective of independent media organizations and hundreds of journalists offering grassroots, non-corporate coverage. Indymedia is a democratic media outlet for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate telling of truth.

Examples:

- Columbus IndyMedia Center, <http://www.cbusiness.org>
- Cleveland IndyMedia Center, <http://www.indymedia.org>

Blogs

Websites where items are regularly posted and displayed in reverse chronological order. Blogs may comprise text, images, and links to other web sites, video, audio and files. Blogs are becoming increasingly important vehicles for direct citizen communication and for conveying information and analysis not contained in the corporate press.

Examples:

- OhioDemocracy, <http://www.ohiodemocracy.org>
Presents information about democracy, corporate power, impediments to self-determination and democratic local alternatives to corporate rule and elite control.
- Meet the Bloggers <http://www.meetthebloggers.net/>.
Meet the Bloggers is a project initiated by some Cleveland bloggers. It brings together bloggers from around Northeast Ohio to arrange and conduct interviews with politicians and other public figures. As the bloggers represent divergent points of view with different issues that they define as pressing, the interviews are really radically different than anything that you would see in the traditional press. They post both the sound files and the transcripts of the interviews at the above site. It is a fine example of the harnessing of cutting-edge technologies for the broadening of democracy (as opposed to the mere expansion of consumer choice)

Listerves

Electronic mailing list sponsored by an organization or individual that conveys information to and sometimes between participants.

Examples

Ohio Committee on Corporations, Law & Democracy
An email message service on the "relationship between democracy and corporations," with an emphasis on Ohio. No more than 2-3 messages are sent per week by the list manager -- thereby increasing the chance that the message will be read, reflected on and, if need be, acted on. To be added to the list, email AFSCole@aol.com.

POLITICAL / LEGAL

Committees, Boards. Commissions

Groupings of citizens that suggest, plan, monitor and/or evaluate governmental functions on housing, transportation, police, prisons, health and other issues at the municipal and state levels. These bodies are either appointed by elected representatives, courts or agency staff, or elected by voters. Sometimes, openings are filled by whomever wants to volunteer.

Elections

Voting is the mechanism used to directly elect/unelect candidates for Governor, Mayor, County Commissioners, State Senators and Representatives, City Councilpersons, Auditors, Law Directors, Judges, Attorney General, Sheriffs, Prosecutors, and many other positions as well as to pass/fail levies and other ballot issues. Individuals may

also run for office as the barriers to gain ballot status is in some cases relatively low.

Elections alone do not make a democracy. The election process today at the state and in many municipalities is fraught with numerous undemocratic and perverse characteristics. Usurpation of political and economic decisions by corporations, regulatory agencies, and unelected federal judges based on undemocratic provisions of the US Constitution and their bestowal of Bill of Rights and other protections to corporations weaken the power of individuals to even indirectly affect outcomes and, thus, reduce the meaningfulness of elections.

A more democratic alternative to elections is direct citizen involvement in decision-making. But elections are more democratic than appointments (advocated by some for Ohio Supreme Court justices) and individuals who come to their position by bloodline or status (royalty).

Juries

Judicial decision-making by citizens, compared to a single judge. Juries listen to evidence, deliberate and make decisions collectively. Under the guise of "tort reform," legislatures have weakening the power and authority of juries to make decisions regarding innocent and guilt, financial awards and punishment. A "jury of ones peers" is considered to be one of the benchmarks of a civil society.

Municipal Charters

Municipal charters are local "constitutions" spelling out the powers, rights and privileges of government and citizens within that municipality -- to the creation of municipal structures/departments, to the powers to pass ordinances, to the frequency and rules governing elections, etc. Specific charter provisions are shaped by the wills and wishes of public officials and citizens. Legislatively or executive-initiated charter changes can only enacted after a popular vote. Citizens can initiate charter changes (including additions and deletions) via "citizen initiatives" which requires a certain number of signatures to place proposed measures on the local ballot. Charter provisions must adhere to state and federal laws. Home rule provisions of the state constitution permit certain municipalities to adopt their own charters.

Courts

Citizens have certain rights under state law to intervene in lawsuits to assert citizen perspectives. Under state law, citizens may also initiate taxpayer lawsuits to check misuse of government funds and procedures.

State Constitution

Ohio's Constitution, first developed and approved in 1802 and amended in 1851, 1912 and 1951, contain many sections affirming the rights of people to govern themselves and the powers to control and define private (namely corporate) power.

1802 Ohio Constitution

Article VIII – Bill of Rights

Sec 1. That all men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and unalienable rights, amongst which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety; and, every free, republican government being founded on their sole authority, and organized for the great purpose of protecting their rights and liberties and securing their independence to effect these ends, they have at all times a complete power to alter, reform or abolish their government, whenever they may deem it necessary.

Sec 4. Private property ought and shall ever be held inviolate, but *always subservient to the public welfare*, provided a compensation in money be made to the owner.

Sec 19. That the people have a right to assemble together, in a peaceable manner, to consult for their common good, to instruct their Representatives, and to apply to the Legislature for a redress of grievances.

Sec 27. That every association of persons, when regularly formed within this state, and having given themselves a name, may, on application to the legislature, be entitled to receive letters of incorporation...

Sec 28. To guard against the transgression of the high powers which we have delegated, we declare, *that all powers, not hereby delegated, remain with the people.* (emphasis added)

1851 Ohio Constitution

The portions of the 1851 Constitution with the greatest impact upon corporations are contained in Article VIII and Article XIII. Section 4 of Article VIII deals primarily with prohibiting the state from colluding with corporations, while Section 6 places similar limits on local governments. Essentially, these sections prohibit the gift or loan of state credit “to, or in aid of, any individual, association or corporation whatever” and forbid the state to ever “become a joint owner, or stockholder, in any company or association in this state or elsewhere, formed for any purpose whatever.” Article XIII consists of seven sections placing general limits on the exercise of corporate power. Most significant are Sections 2 and 3 which reinforce the notion that corporate powers and identity exist only to the extent provided for by law; Section 4 states that “[t]he property of corporations...shall forever be subject to taxation, the same as the property of individuals,” and Section 7 precludes the state from “authorizing associations with banking powers” unless such a measure is passed by the people in a general election.

1912 Ohio Constitution

Several changes to strengthen democracy were agreed to and subsequently approved. Citizens to bypass the legislature in the direct creation or revocation of laws adopted the initiative and referendum as methods. Municipal home rule, permitting communities of 5000 or more in population to govern themselves, was also adopted. Public service corporations opposed home rule, seeing it as a device encouraging municipal ownership of utilities.

State and Local Government

State government is an administrative unit smaller than a federal, national or central governments allowing those who reside within that state the opportunity to administer the people, land and assets through the creation of a state constitution and passage of laws and rules. By being decentralized from a federal, national or central

government, state government is in theory more effective at addressing unique concerns to Ohioans. State elected representatives are also in general more accessible to the public than federal/national representatives.

Local governments are administrative units smaller than state government. They, too, often have the power, though less than the state government, to create constitutions (called charters) and pass certain laws addressing unique concerns of those localities. Local elected representatives are more accessible all things considered to the public than state elected representatives.

PUBLIC SPACES

Arenas where the public has access to meet, assemble, organize and/or exercise free speech.

Examples:

Public buildings – city halls, community centers, county buildings, libraries, federal building, sports facilities
Sidewalks
Parks
Waterways
Shorelines
Roads
Garages

Some of these spaces over the years have become “enclosed” (transformed from public to private) or public access has been effectively denied with the advent of shopping malls, private roads within gated communities, privatized shorelines, and exorbitant costs/terms to secure permits to rally in parks or march on public streets.

SOCIAL ACTION ORGANIZATIONS

Independent, non-profit organizations that educate, advocate and/or organize for changes in public policies at the local, state and/or federal levels. Members and/or boards determine external goals and strategies and internal administrative policies.

There are hundreds of local, regional and statewide groups that meet this definition. Some are stand-alone; others are local, regional or state affiliates of national groups.

A few examples:

Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now ohio.acorn.org

American Friends Service Committee
Northeast Ohio, 330-928-2301
<http://www.AFSC.net>
Dayton, 937-278-4225
<http://www.afsc.org/greatlakes/dayton/default.htm>

Buckeye Forest Council
www.buckeyeforestcouncil.org

Common Cause Ohio 614-224-2497
<http://www.commoncause.org/ohio>

League of Women Voters Ohio toll free 877-598-6446
<http://www.lwvohio.org>

Ohio Chapter of the Sierra Club 614-461-0734
<http://ohio.sierraclub.org>

Ohio Citizen Action 1-888-777-7135
<http://www.ohiocitizen.org>

Ohio Environmental Council 614-487-7506
<http://www.theoec.org>

Ohio Honest Elections Campaign
<http://www.ohiohonestelections.org>

Ohio Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG) 614-460-8732
<http://www.ohiopirg.org/>

Rural Action 740-767-4938 <http://www.ruralaction.org/>

Wake Up Ohio
<http://www.wake-upohio.com>

Womens International League for Peace & Freedom,
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