



# County of Hamilton

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Following is a recent column from my colleague, Karl Keith, the Auditor in Montgomery County (Dayton), about the work of County Auditors' offices.

## **Auditors Sustain Our Communities**

By Karl Keith, Montgomery County Auditor

In a speech I delivered when I was sworn in at the beginning of my term as president of the County Auditors Association of Ohio last year, I shared with my fellow auditors some lines from a document I discovered while looking through my dad's old military records.

My father served as a mechanic in the Air Force during World War II. I found a certificate he received when he had completed his mechanic's training with another document attached. The other document probably would be best described as a kind of technician's creed. It was titled "I Sustain the Wings," and included the following lines:

**"I sustain the wings.**

**I am the Air Force Technician who makes it possible for flyers to be heroes and heroes to be flyers.**

**I am the mechanic, the machinist, the radio man, the weather observer, the instrument man. Without me, the plane would be a motionless machine.**

**The folks at home may never know how important I am. The public may never see my name in print. But that pilot there knows me.**

**I sustain the wings!"**

Reading these words caused me to think about the work performed by county auditors and the people who staff their offices throughout Ohio. Our role in local government is in many ways similar to that of the Air Force technician. As the county's chief fiscal officer and assessor, county auditors sustain our communities.

Auditors are the invisible third party, working behind the scenes, standing behind the delivery of so many important public services.

Without them, the snow plows would sit idle, our classrooms would be empty and abandoned, our parks would be overgrown with weeds, and our library shelves would be covered in dust.

Auditors are the bean-counters, the number-crunchers, the book-keepers, the bill-payers, the faithful stewards, the guardians of the public purse.

They make it possible for teachers to teach, for police officers and fire fighters to keep our neighborhoods safe, for human service agencies to provide aid and assistance to some of our most vulnerable citizens. County Auditors and the devoted people who work in their offices throughout Ohio sustain our communities.

We don't just sell dog tags; we make it possible for stray and abandoned animals to be treated humanely.

We don't just inspect gas pumps and scales; we take steps to instill confidence in the marketplace and boost the local economy.

We don't just transfer deeds and draw maps; we protect property boundaries and home ownership rights.

We don't just process vouchers and issue payments; we provide for the care of displaced children, meet the needs of both children and adults with significant disabilities, support the administration of justice, the paving of roads, the building of bridges and provide residents access to clean, safe drinking water.

The wide range of tasks performed by county auditors contributes in so many ways to the overall quality of life of the people who live, work and play in our cities, towns and neighborhoods. It is an incredible responsibility when you stop to think about it, an opportunity to use our skill and expertise to truly make a difference in the communities where we live. It demands our very best efforts every day.

County Auditors sustain our communities.