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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Belmont County Operations Director Honored For Statewide Work**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – A *Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities* administrator recently was honored at the *Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) of Developmental Disabilities* 26th annual CONVENTION at the *Easton Hilton* Dec. 2-4.

Willie Jones, Director of Operations, was honored by the statewide agency for his work. “This award is given to those people with work for *County Boards of Developmental Disabilities* that go above and beyond the call of duty,” said Dan Ohler, *OACB* Executive Director.

He described Mr. Jones as someone everyone could emulate because “his passion for helping people with developmental disabilities is surpassed by no one.”

“Willie Jones is a gentleman and a professional, and it is an honor to present him with this award,” Mr. Ohler said.

“It’s a gift exchange. We get so much more back than we ever give,” Mr. Jones told the hundreds of attendees.

“We all are so much better people for the gifts we get back from the people we work with. We get patience, understanding, and acceptance,” he said.

Ohler presented Mr. Jones with one of the three *Partners In Excellence* awards given at the 26th annual *OACB* CONVENTION. Melanie Stretchbery, a superintendent from the *Wood County Board of Developmental Disabilities*, and Mike Boaz, a business manager from the *Putnam* and *Van Wert County Boards of Developmental Disabilities* also were recognized.

Commissioned in 2006, this annual award is presented to a *County Board of Developmental Disabilities* staff member who demonstrates exemplary service in offering their expertise to a workgroup or specific project that benefits the *County Board of Developmental Disabilities* system as a whole, not just their specific county. The award is presented to a deserving individual as determined by the *OACB*. That person is recognized either at the annual convention, or at a local Board meeting of the recipient.

All 88 *County Boards of Developmental Disabilities* in Ohio are members of this organization whose purpose is to educate and advocate for the 80,000 individuals with developmental disabilities who reside in the Buckeye State.

**CUTLINE: Willie Jones, director of operations for the *Belmont County Board of Developmental Disabilities*, is pictured with John Martin, Director of the *Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities*, and Dan Ohler, *OACB* Executive Director.**

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