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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Hancock County Board Member Honored By Ohio Developmental Disabilities Agency**

COLUMBUS, Ohio – The Hancock County Board of Developmental Disabilities truly can say it has seen the worst and best of times. It was because of the hard fought and miraculous recovery that its Board President received the Distinguished Service Award at the at the *Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) 27TH ANNUAL CONVENTION* held at the *Easton Hilton* Dec. 1-3.

When Bill Heidlebaugh became a Board Member some seven years ago, little did he realize that he was walking onto a Board that was about to be turned upside down. Not only did the Hancock Board not receive accreditation, they received the lowest score ever registered in Ohio.

“As president, Bill took the brunt of all those issues,” said Larry Grove, a fellow Board Member. “Bill cares very passionately about people with developmental disabilities and the type and quality of services Hancock individuals receive.”

Through Heidlebaugh’s leadership, the Hancock County Board of Developmental Disabilities (also known as the Blanchard Valley Center) did a complete turn around, and recently was awarded a three-year accreditation from the Ohio Department of Developmental Disabilities. Just as importantly, the community has rallied around the once embattled agency. That fact is evidenced by the fact Hancock County Board of Developmental Disabilities recently passed their levy by a whopping 70-percent.

Grove said that Heidlebaugh led the Board into hiring Connie Ament as its superintendent. Through Ament’s knowledge and leadership, Hancock County has excelled.

“Most importantly, as a Board, we are asking the right questions, which is what good Board Members need to be doing,” Grove said as he introduced Heidlebaugh.

“It is the people around me that have won this award. It’s an honor I will always cherish,” Heidlebaugh said, acknowledging the support of his wife Bette and son Mark.

*The Distinguished Service Award* began in 2006. There are 616 *County Board of Developmental Disabilities* members in Ohio’s 88 counties. Board members are

nominated and chosen for their outstanding service and commitment to their local *County Board of Developmental Disabilities*.

“These volunteer Board members are the backbone of every agency across the state that helps individuals with developmental disabilities,” said Dan Ohler, *OACB* Executive Director. “Without their guidance, experience and wisdom, the 85,000 people we serve would not have their abilities and programs they enjoy today.”

The *OACB* is celebrating its 27th year of operation. Its mission is to “support *County Boards of Developmental Disabilities* in providing services and supports to individuals with disabilities.”

All 88 *County Boards of Developmental Disabilities* in Ohio are members of this organization whose purpose is to educate and advocate for the 85,000 individuals with developmental disabilities who reside in the Buckeye State.

**CUTLINE:**

**Bill Heidlebaugh received the Distinguished Service Award at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual OACB Convention. Pictured are Buzz Dyer (board member); Larry Grove (board member); Bill Heidlebaugh; Mark Heidlebaugh; Bette Heidlebaugh; Dan Ohler, OACB Executive Director; Mary Walsh (board member); Bill Wilson (board member), and Connie Ament, superintendent of the Hancock County Board of Developmental Disabilities.**

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