

# 2015 Building Services Annual Report

**Franklin County Economic Development & Planning**

## **Building Services Mission**

**To protect the lives and safety of residents and visitors of Franklin County, preserve quality of life, and contribute to economic development.**



Commissioners  
John O'Grady, President  
Paula Brooks  
Marilyn Brown

 **Franklin County**  
Where Government Works



# OVERVIEW

The Building Services Division of the Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department is responsible for the unincorporated townships of Franklin County and six contract jurisdictions.

The purpose of the Building Services Division is to ensure compliance with the Ohio Residential Building Code for 1-, 2-, and 3-family dwellings.

Our services include plan examinations, new construction building inspections, building permits, electrical permits, HVAC permits, building condemnations, court testimonies, preventative inspections, complaint-based inspections, technical assistance, and consultations.

The Building Services Annual Activity Report serves as a community update on the daily activities of this office as we work to ensure building safety.

This report uses specific measures to analyze and report on the work completed by the Building Services Division for 2015. The report also highlights the growth and change our department has experienced in terms of services offered, new staff members, and ongoing initiatives.

## Resources

### Building Services Section

Residential Building Permits  
Franklin County Building Services Division  
614-525-3166

### Community Services Section

The following services and programs are offered by the Community Development division of the Economic Development & Planning Department.

To be eligible for these services, recipients must reside in Franklin County, but outside Columbus city limits, and meet certain income eligibility guidelines.

#### Available services:

- Accessibility and Minor Home Repair Grants
- Urgent Repair Grants
- Home Buyer Down Payment Assistance
- Women’s Employment Services
- Nutritional Services
- Fair Housing Services
- Hearing Enhancement Services
- Employment Services for Developmentally Disabled Individuals
- Sewer Tap-In Assistance

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# Letter from the Director

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**Jim Schimmer, Director**  
**Franklin County Economic Development & Planning**

The Franklin County Economic Development and Planning Department is pleased to present its Annual Building Services Division Report for 2015.

This report is a clear illustration of the innovative and fine work being done by our staff as they serve you. In fact, in 2015, the Building Services Division carried out 38% more inspections than in 2014. Additionally, through the use of more technology, we are now hitting our stride with the implementation of our SmartGov electronic permitting process. This progress is demonstrated by the fact that 602 permits were submitted through our on-line permit center and 1,590 payments were received by credit card.

More inspections and permits are a clear signal that the economy has stabilized after the difficulties of the Great Recession.

In the course of an average day, Franklin County Building staff members can undertake several roles: as a visionary, a statistician, as a designer, or regulator and protector of public health, safety and welfare, to name a few. Within all their varied duties, staff understands the Department's major responsibility is to serve the public with cost-effective and courteous service, and to represent the public's interest by creating fair and equitable policies and recommendations. These ethical commitments are the foundation of Franklin County's Building Services Division.

As we head into a new building season, many of you will be undertaking projects. So, here are a few useful things to remember when having construction work done in or around your home. First, use accredited or certified professional trades' and design people so you can limit the number of changes you make. Did you know the number one reason people exceed their original budgets is because of change orders? Second, make certain you have obtained the proper permits needed to begin work – that even means you, Mr. Do-it Yourselfer! Third, get a minimum of 3 quotes **before** signing a contract. And finally, request references, licenses and insurance information for each contractor. Doing your research on the front end of a project can spare you heartache and difficulty on the back end. And if you have questions please feel free to call us at (614) 525-3166.

May you enjoy the fruits of your labor this year knowing your family is safe and sound due to the work of our men and women here at the Franklin County Building Services Division.

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## Building Services Team

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**Jenny Snapp, Assistant Director**

**Mike Kelleher, Chief Building Official**

**Rick Erbe, Building Inspector**

**Neil Fulton, Building Inspector**

**Bertram Walker, Building Clerk**

### Jurisdictions We Serve

In addition to the Townships we work with, six other jurisdictions contract with us to conduct building inspections and other essential duties.

#### Townships

Blendon Township  
Brown Township  
Clinton Township  
Franklin Township  
Hamilton Township  
Jackson Township  
Jefferson Township  
Madison Township  
Mifflin Township  
Norwich Township  
Perry Township  
Plain Township

Pleasant Township  
Prairie Township  
Sharon Township  
Truro Township  
Washington Township

#### Villages

Harrisburg  
Lockbourne  
Minerva Park  
Riverlea  
Urbancrest  
Valleyview

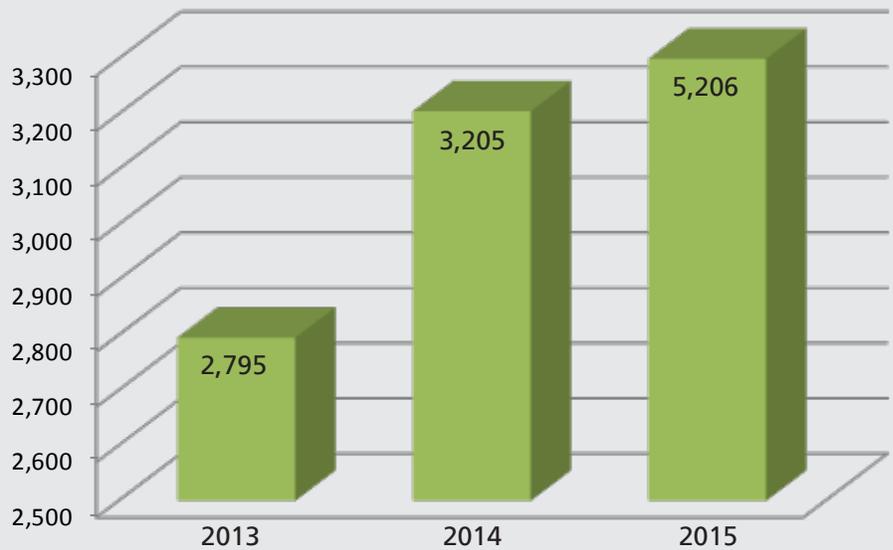
# Inspections Completed

The Building Services division has adopted the 2013 Residential Building Code of the State of Ohio. This statute requires that inspections be done to ensure an acceptable level of safety, property and equipment value, and energy efficiency.

Inspections include site, foundation, footers, structural, electrical, air conditioning, ventilation, heating, insulation, windows, and doors.

Inspections are carried out periodically throughout all construction phases until a certificate of occupancy is issued.

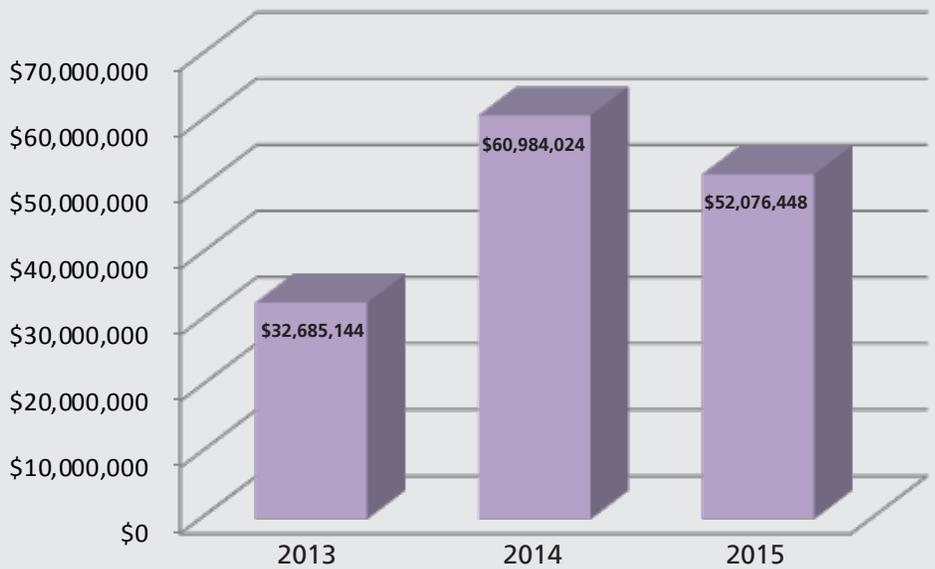
The number of inspections completed for 2015 was approximately 38% more than in 2014 and almost 50% higher than in 2013.



# Estimated Cost of Construction

The estimated cost of construction is the amount of money expected to go toward construction projects for which Franklin County has issued permits. This includes new builds, reconstruction, repairs, upgrades, additions, and alterations.

The estimated cost of construction for 2015 was approximately 17% less than in 2014 and over 50% higher than in 2013. Although there was a slight decrease, this still reflects a continued improvement in the economy over the last few years.

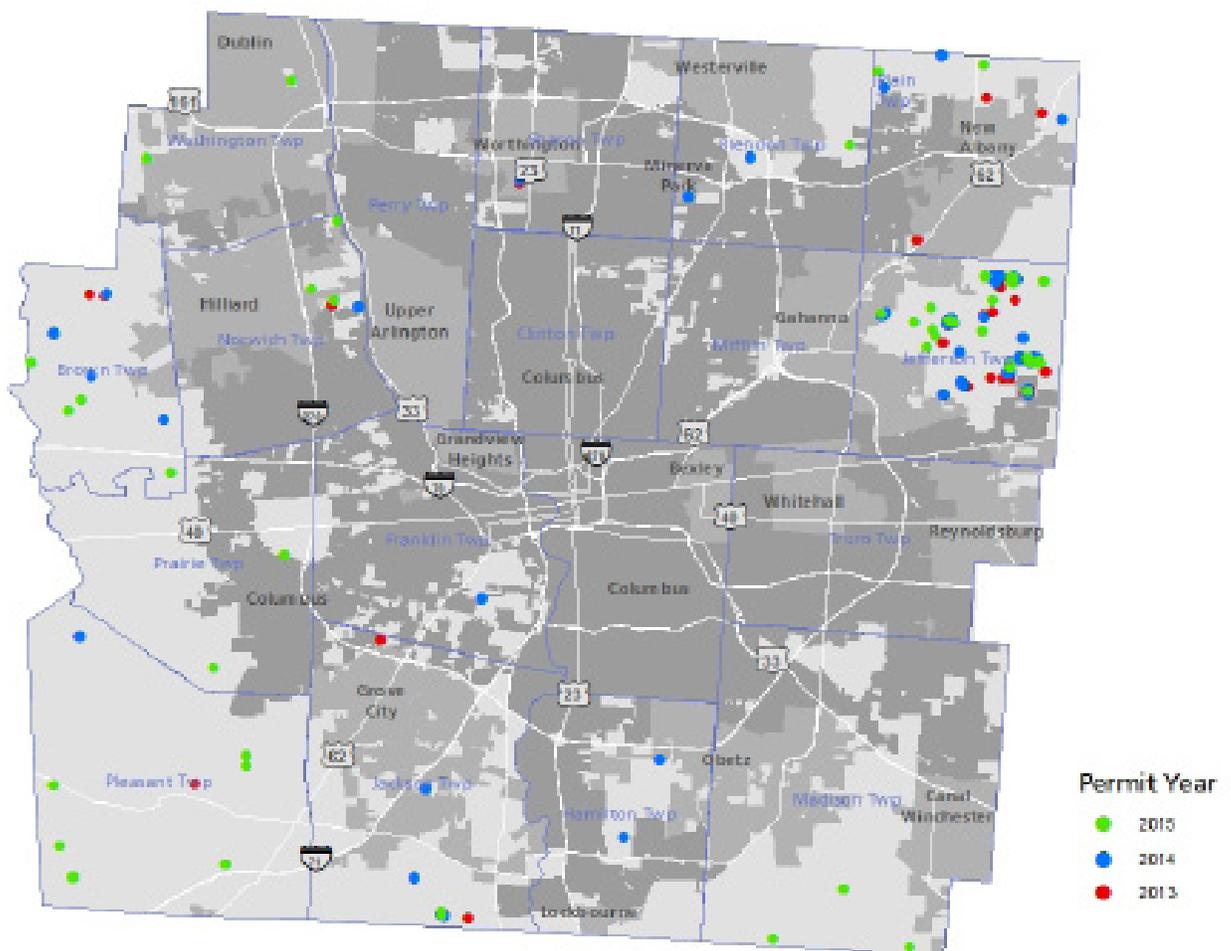
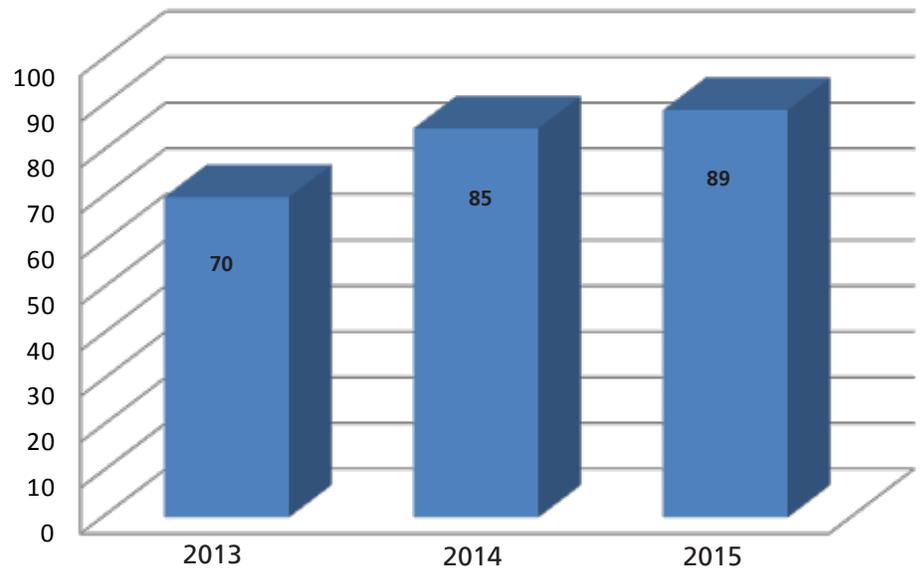


# Building Permits for New Homes

The Building Services section issues permits to developers seeking to construct new homes in Franklin County townships.

Building permits for new homes are a key indicator of economic growth and stability, and are reported nationally to gauge the health of the nation's economy.

The number of permits issued for new homes in Franklin County had remained relatively stable over the previous years.



# Franklin County Online Permitting Center

Franklin County Economic Development and Planning online permit center, SmartGov has been in place just over a year. SmartGov is a software as a service (SAS) or cloud based solution to permit tracking for the county's building, zoning code enforcement, and planning departments. The software is used to file HVAC, electrical, demolition and building permits, schedule inspections, keep track of contractor registrations, and track zoning code complaints and violations.

The Franklin County Online Permit Center is a feature of SmartGov that will allow customers to apply for permits, check their permit application status, pay permit fees by credit/debit card (VISA, Mastercard, Discover), view scheduled inspections, and review inspection activity and results online. In the future, the Franklin County Online Permit Center will provide homeowners and contractors the opportunity to file the Certificate of Zoning Compliance Application and pay application fees with a credit card. Additionally, Paladin Data Systems, the SmartGov vendor, is currently working on functionality to allow for contractors to renew registrations online, a feature the county hopes to offer by next year.

The application is a great improvement over the county's previous permit tracking software. It allows the county to collect more detailed information. The ability to access the application online from any computer makes it much more accessible and allows county inspectors to work from mobile devices in the field. The Online Permitting Center not only makes applying for and paying permit fees easier and more accessible, but it also provides a place for publishing data and reports to the public, providing better transparency.

In 2015, there were 602 permits submitted and 1,590 payments received by credit card through the Online Permit Center.

## SmartGov Manages

Residential Zoning Compliance

Commercial Zoning Compliance

Variances

Rezoning

Appeals

Conditional Use Cases

## Registered Applicants Can

Apply for a Building Permit

Check the Status of their  
Permit Application

View Scheduled Inspections

Review Inspection Activity and  
Results



### Related Links:

SmartGov website: <http://smartgovcommunity.com>

Franklin County Building Services:  
<http://development.franklincountyohio.gov/building/>



# Upcoming & Newsworthy

## Franklin County Staff Chaired the OCCD 50th Anniversary Gala

This year a historic passage took place: the Ohio Conference of Community Development (OCCD) turned 50! This passage represented a long journey of dedicated individuals working continuously to ensure that our communities are healthy, stable, safe and prosperous for everyone.

On July 29, 2015 individuals and elected officials from across the State gathered at the Ohio Statehouse to commemorate this passage. An evening gala and dinner celebrated our past and honored those who had been critical to the many successes realized.

OCCD recognized Senator George Voinovich and Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur for their contributions to community development at the gala. The Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing (OCCH) was the presenting sponsor for the gala.

For 2015, OCCD named Franklin County Economic Development & Planning Assistant Director Rollin Seward (pictured with President-Elect Kathy Werkmeister)



Community Development Professional of the Year. This award recognizes community development professionals whose work on a project/program has a major impact on their community.



## 2016 Ohio Building Officials Association Annual Conference

The 2016 Ohio Building Officials Association (OBOA) Conference will be held March 6-8 at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Dublin, OH. OBOA offers more than 25 different classes at the conference on a wide variety of topics pertaining to building standards. The Franklin County EDP Building Services staff will attend the conference to keep up-to-date on industry best practices.

## EDP Welcomes Guadalupe Alvarez as Planning Assistant



Guadalupe Alvarez accepted a Planning Assistant position at the beginning of August 2015. She graduated from Ohio University with a degree in Geography and is currently pursuing a Master's Degree in City and Regional Planning at The Ohio State University. On her free time she enjoys running, reading, and spending time with family and friends.

## Franklin County Allocated \$70,000 of HUD Entitlement Funds

On June 23, the community celebrated the ground breaking of Hawthorn Grove, a supportive housing development that will be located at 550 East Rich Street. The apartment complex will provide 39 one-bedroom units for those with mental illness and one for a resident manager.

Community Housing Network (CHN) will manage Hawthorn Grove and work with ADAMH to provide supportive services on site, including mental health, recovery and wellness services as well as employment-related programs. All 40 units at Hawthorn Grove will be rent-subsidized by the Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority. Rents for the 39 one-bedroom units will be subsidized and limited to 30% of the renter's income. The target population for the building is people disabled by mental illness. One unit will be reserved for a resident manager who will provide monitoring and support to residents.

The project is in line with the many apartment buildings and scattered-site housing that the nonprofit organization has developed throughout Columbus. Franklin County EDP and the Board of Commissioners are proud to partner with ADAMH of Franklin County as well as other collaborators on this project, including the Community Housing Network, The Arlington Bank, the City of Columbus, Columbus Metropolitan Housing Authority, Federal Home Loan Bank of Cincinnati, Huntington National Bank, Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing, Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services and Ohio Housing Finance Agency.

# Franklin County Board of Commissioners



Commissioner John O'Grady  
*President*



Commissioner Paula Brooks



Commissioner Marilyn Brown



Jim Schimmer, Director  
Rollin Seward, Assistant Director  
Jenny R. Snapp, Assistant Director  
Carla Williams-Scott, Assistant Director

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2015 Building Services Annual Activity Report



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