

Chair Representative Hillyer, Vice-Chair Mathews, Ranking Member Isaac Sohn and Members of the House Civil Justice Committee, thank you for the opportunity to address you today in support of House Bill 413. My name is Harold Specht and I presently serve as Judge of the Ashtabula County Court-Eastern Division which serves the Eastern half of Ashtabula County, with exclusion of the Conneaut Municipal Court and Ashtabula Municipal Court jurisdictions. See Exhibit "1".

House Bill 413 legislation would accomplish two goals. First, to combine the jurisdictions of the two Ashtabula County Courts, Eastern and Western Divisions. Second, the bill would expand the jurisdiction of the Conneaut Municipal Court to jurisdictions immediately adjacent to the court's existing jurisdictions.

With respect to the county courts, passage of this bill would transform two part-time courts to one full-time court and even more importantly eliminate the need for two judges to only one, thus reducing tax payer burden.

Additionally, the Ashtabula County Sheriff's Office and County Jail, located in a building adjacent to the Eastern Division County Court, would no longer have to transport prisoners some 20 miles away for court appearances at the Western Division County Court. This would save manpower and the collateral costs of prisoner transports.

This legislation is the culmination of work and planning by the sitting County Court Judges, the Conneaut Municipal Court Judge, the Ashtabula County Board of Commissioners and the Ohio Supreme Court.

As presiding Judge of the County Court I fully understand the need to pass this legislation consolidating the two courts into one court with one presiding judge. All the judges involved in this effort are in agreement and support House Bill 413. Just as important, the Ohio Supreme Court has performed a survey on this issue and highly recommends that we move forward with this effort.

Thank You,
Judge Harold E. Specht Jr.

- 1. ASHTABULA MUNICIPAL COURT
- 2. CONNEAUT MUNICIPAL COURT
- 3. EASTERN COUNTY COURT
- 4. WESTERN COUNTY COURT

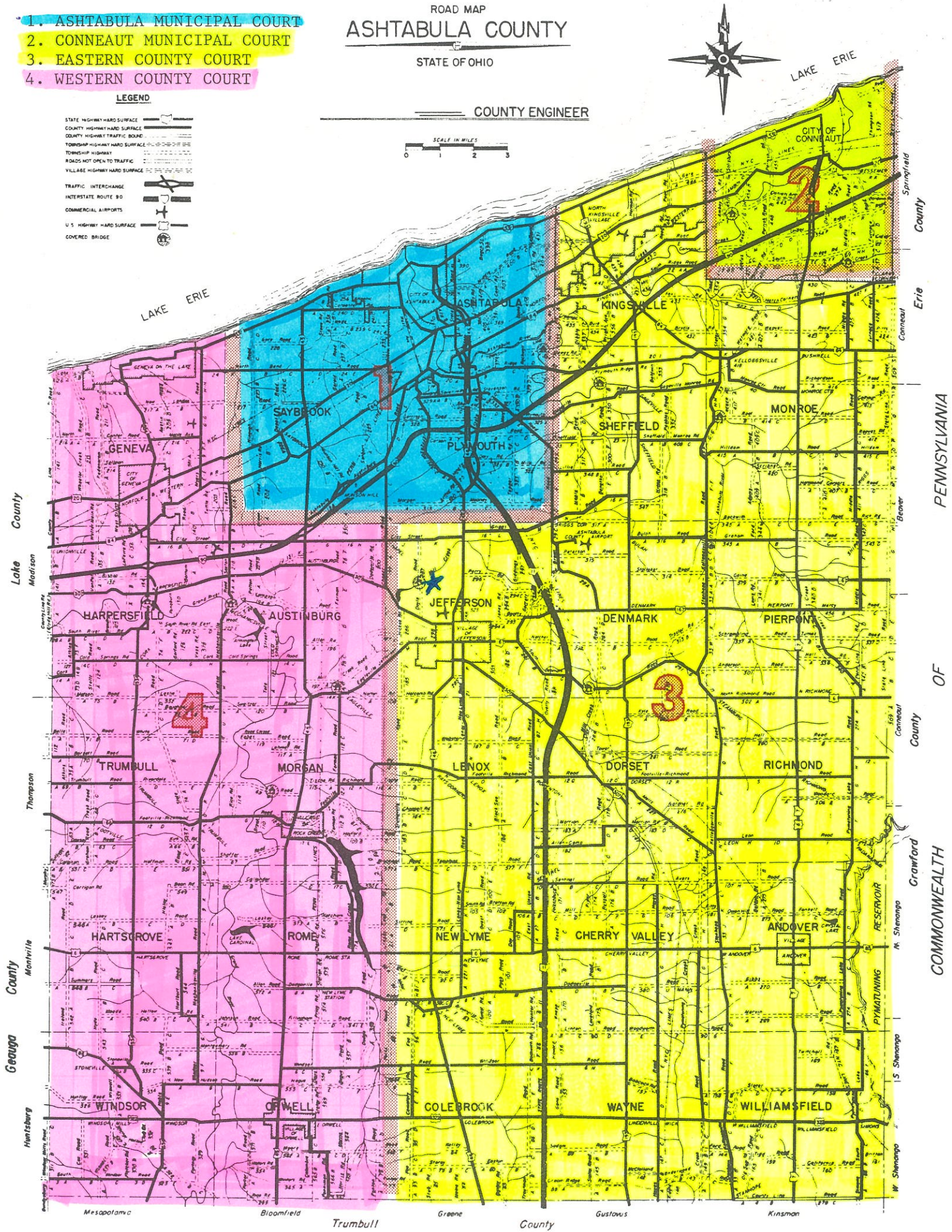
ROAD MAP
ASHTABULA COUNTY

STATE OF OHIO

COUNTY ENGINEER

LEGEND

STATE HIGHWAY HARD SURFACE	
COUNTY HIGHWAY HARD SURFACE	
COUNTY HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BOUND	
TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY HARD SURFACE	
TOWNSHIP HIGHWAY TRAFFIC BOUND	
ROADS NOT OPEN TO TRAFFIC	
VILLAGE HIGHWAY HARD SURFACE	
TRAFFIC INTERCHANGE	
INTERSTATE ROUTE 90	
COMMERCIAL AIRPORTS	
U S HIGHWAY HARD SURFACE	
COVERED BRIDGE	



Mesopotamic Bloomfield Trumbull Greene County Gustavus Kinsman

County of Erie
County of Cuyahoga
County of Lorain
County of Franklin
County of Hamilton
County of Adams
County of Warren
County of Stark
County of Licking
County of Boone
County of Hancock
County of Morgan
County of Lincoln
County of Wayne
County of Van Wert
County of Seneca
County of Shelby
County of Clark
County of Adams
County of Harrison
County of Boone
County of Hancock
County of Morgan
County of Lincoln
County of Wayne
County of Van Wert
County of Seneca
County of Shelby
County of Clark