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Prosecutor Walsh Declares September as Senior Safety Awareness Month

AKRON, Ohio (Friday, September 1, 2017) – Fighting for the safety of our seniors, Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh has declared September as Senior Safety Awareness Month. Since 2002, Prosecutor Walsh has set September as a month to focus even more attention on protecting Summit County seniors.

“Many times, seniors are targeted because of the impression that they are weak, frail, and trusting. My goal as prosecutor is to empower Summit County citizens with information to help them keep themselves and their family safe,” said Prosecutor Walsh. “That is why for the past 15 years, I have devoted an entire month to connecting with the community and providing people with the tools they need to protect themselves.”

Throughout the entire month of September, the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office will be involved in community events, educating as many senior citizens as possible about scams, criminal activity, and how to protect your home.

As part of this year’s events, the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office is launching a victim awareness campaign. On buses throughout Summit County, information will be posted in four different languages (English, Spanish, Arabic, and Nepali) with information about local services for victims of crime. The campaign is similar to one the Prosecutor’s Office conducted in April in conjunction with National Crime Victim Rights Week.

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Also, the Jewish Family Service of Akron is honoring Prosecutor Walsh for her distinguished service to seniors. The event is Thursday, September 7, 2017 from 4:30p-6:30p at the Fairlawn Country Club. Proceeds from the event benefit the specialized programs offered by JFS.

Many seniors grew up in a time when a business deal was sealed with a handshake and trust. According to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), older people are quicker to believe promises and may not take action when they've been scammed. Because of this, criminals will target seniors, whether it's through scams or a phone call demanding money for an unpaid bill.

Here are some tips to remember so you do not become a victim:

- Never send money or give out personal information such as credit card numbers, bank account numbers, dates of birth, or Social Security numbers to unfamiliar companies or unknown persons.
- Be aware of scams targeting the elderly. One is called the "Grandparent Scam". This is when a person receives a call from someone claiming to be their grandchild. The caller says they're in trouble – either they were arrested or in a car crash – and need cash quick. They will usually ask to have the money sent by purchasing gift cards. The caller also asks to not tell "mom and dad".
- Another scam is the IRS Scam. In this scam, a caller claims the person owes taxes and will be arrested if they don't pay immediately. Again, the caller will ask to make the payment by purchasing gift cards. The IRS never calls to demand an immediate payment.
- Scammers also target the elderly with something called the Jury Duty Scam. This is when someone calls saying you missed jury duty and will be arrested if you do not pay a fine. Sheriff's deputies will not arrest someone for not going to jury duty.
- Our advice is to not answer any call where you do not recognize the number. Remember, no agency will collect money through gift cards.
- Talk to family and friends or call your lawyer, accountant or banker and get their advice before you make any large purchase or investment over the phone with a stranger.
- Check out unfamiliar companies with your local consumer protection agency, Better Business Bureau, the National Fraud Information Center, or other watchdog groups.
- Don't forget the power to simply hang up the phone when a stranger calls trying to sell you something you don't want!

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Members of the Summit County Prosecutor's Office will be at the following events, providing safety information to the community:

- September 1, 2017 – Akron Zoo’s Senior Safari - 10a-2p
- September 6, 2017 – Senior Safety Speech – 1p – West Akron & Highland Square Seniors – Family Rec Center – 1730 Shatto Avenue, Akron
- September 7, 2017 – Senior Safety Fair – 11:00a – Cuyahoga Falls Natatorium
- September 7, 2017 – Jewish Family Service of Akron honors Prosecutor Walsh – 4:30p-6:30p – Fairlawn Country Club – 200 N. Wheaton Road
- September 12, 2017 – Senior Safety Speech - 1pm –Kenmore Community Place - 894 Kenmore Blvd., Kenmore
- September 12, 2017 - Stand Down for Homeless and Displaced Veterans – 9a-3p - Firestone Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3383, 690 W. Waterloo Road, Akron
- September 14, 2017 – Self-Defense Class – University of Akron – 6p-8p
- September 16, 2017 – 30th Annual Older Adult Mini Conference – 11a – Embassy Suites North Canton
- September 17, 2017 – PawFest - 10a-4p – Bow Wow Beach – Stow
- September 21, 2017 – Senior Safety Fair – 11a – Norton Community Center – 4060 Columbia Woods Drive, Norton
- September 22, 2017 – Responding to the Needs of Victims – a FREE One-Day Conference – 8a-5:30p – Quaker Station, 135 S. Broadway, Akron

Topics Include:

Impact of Trauma on Victims

Successful Investigation & Prosecution of Violent Acts

Sex Offender Behaviors & Motives

Understanding Impact of Sexual Assault

- September 25, 2017 – Safety Speech - Akron P.E.O. (Philanthropic Educational Organization)
- September 26, 2017 – Senior Self-Defense Class – 1p –Joy Park Community Center – 825 Fuller Street, Akron
- September 26, 2017 – Women’s Self-Defense Class – 6p-8p – Copley High School gymnasium – 3807 Ridgewood Road
- September 27, 2017 – Safety Speech – Dominion Energy Employees
- September 28, 2017 – Making Northeast Ohio Safer – The Word Church – 1700 Brittain Road - sponsored by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction