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Prosecutor Walsh Declares September as Senior Safety Awareness Month

AKRON, Ohio (Friday, August 31, 2018) – As part of her ongoing mission to protect our community, 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.

“Criminals many times target seniors, thinking they are vulnerable and easy victims. As Summit County Prosecutor, I want to empower seniors so they don’t become victims. Through safety speeches, self-defense classes, email alerts and social media notifications, my hope is to provide them the information needed to help keep them safe,” said Prosecutor Walsh. “That’s why since I was sworn in as Summit County Prosecutor in 2001 I have dedicated an entire month to senior safety.”

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 their home.

Seniors face specific threats and scams. 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.

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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.
- Do 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!

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

- September 1, 2018 – Alpha Phi Alpha Family Event – 2p-5p
- September 4, 2018 – Senior Safety Speech – 1p – Haven of Rest Women’s Auxiliary
- September 6, 2018 – Senior Safety Speech – 2p-3p – Wesley Towers
- September 7, 2018 – Akron Zoo’s Senior Safari - 10a-2p
- September 11, 2018 - Stand Down for Homeless and Displaced Veterans – 9a-3p - Firestone Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3383, 690 W. Waterloo Road, Akron
- September 12, 2018 – Senior Safety Speech – 1p - Nordonia Hills AARP
- September 18, 2018 – Senior Safety Speech – 7p-8p – St. Augustine Church Women’s Group
- September 20, 2018 – Anti-Bullying Presentation – 9:20a-2p – Bolich Middle School – Cuyahoga Falls

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- September 21, 2018 – Responding to the Needs of Victims – a One-Day Conference – 8a-4:30p – Hilton Akron/Fairlawn – 3180 West Market Street

Topics Include:

Impact of Trauma on Victims

Understanding Trauma in the Context of Domestic & Sexual Violence

Trauma & First Responders

Understanding Common Characteristics of a Domestic Violence Offender & Risk to Victims

The “Hidden Victim” – the impact of Domestic Violence on Children

- September 25, 2018 – Senior Safety Fair – 11a-1p – Hudson Library
- September 26, 2018 – Senior Safety Speech – 10a - Akron Blind Center