



SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR

For Immediate Release:
CONTACT: James Pollack
Phone: (330) 604-2739
pollack@prosecutor.summitoh.net
Twitter: @ProsecutorWalsh
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Fighting for Seniors

Prosecutor Walsh Declares September as Senior Safety Awareness Month

AKRON, Ohio (Friday, August 30, 2019) – 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.

“My job as Summit County Prosecutor is to keep the community safe and protect our citizens. Seniors are many times specifically targeted by criminals who think they’re an easy target. I work hard to empower seniors to minimize their chances of becoming a victim,” said Prosecutor Walsh. “That is why it is so important to set aside one month to focus more time to keeping seniors safe. 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.”

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.

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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.

Many times, seniors are reluctant to report they are a victim of a scam. Many are concerned about the embarrassment or might be afraid people will think they can't live on their own. We are here to say we can help. "Protect Our Seniors – See Abuse, Report It - Your Reaction Makes A Difference" is our new public awareness campaign. Through billboards placed around Summit County, we will provide the community with contact information if they suspect a senior they know is a victim.

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

- 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.
- 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.
- Many scams involve victims purchasing iTunes Apple gift cards. Utilities and companies will not accept payment with iTunes Apple gift cards. If someone calls demanding the purchase of iTunes Apple gift cards to pay a bill, it is a scam.
- 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 purchases 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 3, 2019 - Make-up date for National Night Out – 5:30p – Dave's Supermarket, 871 East Exchange Street, Akron
- September 6, 2019 – Akron Zoo's Senior Safari - 10a-2p
- September 8, 2019 – Make-up date for National Night Out – 5:30p – North Hill Community House, corner of North Howard & Tallmadge Avenue, Akron
- September 10, 2018 - Stand Down for Homeless and Displaced Veterans – 9a-3p - Firestone Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3383, 690 W. Waterloo Road, Akron
- September 12, 2019 – City of Green Senior EXPO – 10a-1p – Community Hall at Central Park
- September 12, 2018 – Senior Safety Speech – 6:30p-8:30p – First Apostolic Church, 790 Easter Avenue, Akron
- September 18, 2019 – Seniors & Caregiver EXPO – 1p-5p – MGM Northfield Park
- September 18, 2019 – Senior Safety Speech – Lakemore Senior Condo Association Meeting - 6:30p – Springfield High School – 1880 Canton Road, Akron
- Thursday, September 19, 2019 - FREE Women's Self-Defense – 6p-8p – Stow-Munroe Falls High School – 3227 Graham Road, Stow
- September 20, 2018 – Responding to the Needs of Victims – a One-Day Conference – 8a-4:30p – Hilton Akron/Fairlawn – 3180 West Market Street

Topics Include:

The role of alcohol and drugs on the question of consent

How to corroborate criminal intent on the part of the offender and take the blame off of victims

Learn strategies for successful investigations and prosecutions

- September 24, 2019 – Senior Safety Speech – 1:30p - AARP Green Chapter, Greensburg United Methodist Church, 2141 Greensburg Road, North Canton
- September 25, 2019 – Seniors & Caregivers EXPO – 10a-1:30p – East Akron Neighborhood Development Corporation, 550 South Arlington Street, Akron
- September 25, 2019 – Human Trafficking Awareness – 7p-9p – Knights of Columbus, 645 Moorfield Road, Fairlawn
- September 29, 2019 – Battered Women's Shelter Fall Festival, 974 East Market Street, Akron