



# Elliot Kolkovich

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## Summit County Prosecutor

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## Summit County Prosecutor Declares September as Senior Safety Awareness Month

*Annual Commemoration Focuses Awareness on Keeping Seniors Safe*

AKRON, Ohio (Friday, September 6, 2024) – Summit County Prosecutor Elliot Kolkovich announced today the continuation of a public awareness campaign aimed at keeping Summit County’s seniors safe and declaring September as Senior Safety Awareness Month. This September marks the 23<sup>rd</sup> straight year the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office has refocused efforts to help protect our seniors.

For the first time, the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office is teaming up with Summit County Probate Court to hold four separate information sessions for seniors and their families in the community. At the events, Prosecutor Kolkovich will focus on providing information to avoid scams, tips on staying safe, and protecting your finances, while Probate Court Chief Magistrate Steve Elliott will provide information on wills, estate planning, and power of attorney.

“My mission is to keep Summit County Safe. As Summit County Prosecutor I will make sure my office works hard to protect our community,” said Prosecutor Kolkovich. “Scammers focus on our emotions and claim we did something wrong. When it comes to avoiding scams, I urge people to Get Information, not Give Information.”

“Keeping the community informed of the services Probate Court provides is a priority of the court,” added Chief Magistrate Elliott. “I am happy to join Prosecutor Kolkovich to share information and tools necessary to protect you, your heirs, assets, independence and choices.”

The FREE Senior Safety Events will be held at the following four locations and times:

### **Cuyahoga Falls**

September 11 – 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Cuyahoga Falls Library 2015 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, Cuyahoga Falls

### **Akron Kenmore Neighborhood**

September 18 – 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Kenmore Senior Center 880 Kenmore Blvd, Akron

### **Green**

September 23 – 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Green Central Park Center 1795 Steese Road, Green

### **Twinsburg**

September 25 – 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Twinsburg Public Library 10050 Ravenna Road, Twinsburg

To register, head to <https://prosecutor.summitoh.net/pages/Safety-Speeches.html>

As part of this year’s campaign, the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office is partnering with the Summit County Sheriff’s Office on billboards throughout Summit County. These ads provide information to help people minimize their chances of becoming a victim of a scam.

“With scams and fraud targeting seniors continuing to increase, our annual Senior Safety Awareness Month feels more important now for our community than ever before,” said Sheriff Fatheree. “I’m happy to be teaming up with Prosecutor Kolkovich on this effort.”

Recently, new scams have popped up, attempting to steal money and identities from unsuspecting victims. The more seniors and their families know, the better prepared they are to not become a victim.

### **COMMON SCAMS**

- **Ohio Department of Transportation E-ZPass scam.** You will get a text message claiming you owe money for driving on the Ohio Turnpike, with a link to pay. The link takes you to a fake site. Do not click on links in text messages.
- **Jury Duty scam.** The scam, which has been around for years, is once again targeting Summit County residents. The jury duty scam works like many other phone scams. The caller claims that there is a warrant out for your arrest because you missed jury duty. The caller says you can get rid of the warrant by paying a fine with a gift card. You cannot pay fines or outstanding bills with store gift cards. Scammers hope to catch unsuspecting victims off guard with the threat of an arrest.

- **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”.
- **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.

### HELPFUL TIPS

- 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 store gift cards. Utilities and companies will not accept payment with store gift cards. If someone calls demanding the purchase of a store gift card 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. Watch for letters or emails which have misspellings or a return address which does not match where the letter was mailed from.

Throughout the entire month of September, the Summit County Prosecutor's Office will also educate as many senior citizens as possible about scams, criminal activity, and how to protect their home. If you would like to have a prosecutor speak with your group about those topics, please contact Tara Fought at 330.643.2800 or [tfought@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:tfought@prosecutor.summitoh.net)

Summit County Prosecutor's Office employees will be at the following upcoming events, providing safety information and supporting the community:

- September 6 – Akron Zoo's Senior Safari – 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- September 8 – Community Celebration, Springfield Assembly of God – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- September 12 – Senior Safety Speech – Reminderville Seniors Group – 12 p.m.
- September 13 – 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Responding to the Needs of Victims Conference – Hilton Akron/Fairlawn – 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- September 17 – Senior Safety Speech – Henry A. Callis Tower – 2 p.m.
- September 17 – FREE Women's Self-Defense Class – Stow-Munroe Falls High School – 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.
- September 21 – NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) Walk – 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- September 22 – Barberton NAACP Freedom Fund Scholarship Event – First Presbyterian Church of Barberton – 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.
- September 25 – Senior Safety Speech – Macedonia Senior Group – Macedonia City Hall – 11 a.m.
- September 26 – Soap Box Derby Senior Day – Derby Downs – 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- September 29 – NAACP Freedom Fund Event – John S. Knight Center – 2 p.m. to 4 p.m.

The Prosecutor's Office popular Senior Safety Awareness Calendar is also back. The 2024 calendar has great safety information for anyone. If you would like a Senior Safety Awareness Calendar, please contact Tara Fought at [tfought@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:tfought@prosecutor.summitoh.net)