

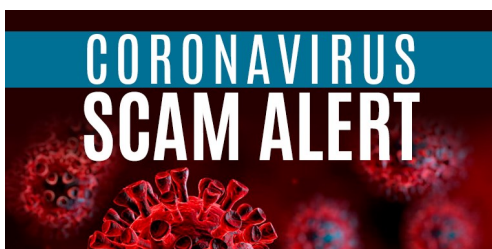


FROM THE OFFICE OF  
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR  
**SHERRI BEVAN WALSH**



## THE SENIOR NEWS

### Message from Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh



The challenge of working our way through the Coronavirus pandemic has taught us many lessons. As we navigate through this unknown and pray for normalcy again, my office has modified our procedures to be sure our citizens are receiving the same quality of assistance. Thanks to the digital world, most of my employees are able to work from home, thereby also ensuring their safety.

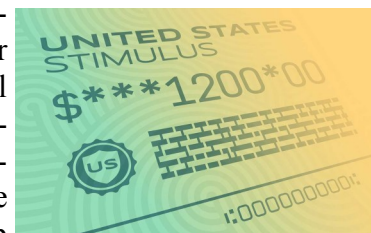
We are anxious and vulnerable as we go through this pandemic. In addition to worrying about our loved ones, we still have to protect ourselves from potential scammers. Since January 1 of this year, Homeland Security reports our country has already seen over \$4.77 million in fraud losses. Over 900 fake COVID sites are listed everyday. The CARES Act predicts we will see the largest number of fraudulent cases from this crisis. Agencies are doing what they can to shut down these scammers but all of the information you are receiving can be overwhelming. I have listed scams of which you should be aware.

If you think you are a victim of a scam or attempted fraud involving COVID-19, contact the National Center for Disaster Fraud Hotline at (866) 720-5721 or via email at [disaster@leo.gov](mailto:disaster@leo.gov).

Summit County residents can report scams to the Better Business Bureau of Akron at (330) 253-4590. You can also report and review known scams at <https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker>.

### Look out for these COVID-19 Scams!

- **“County” utility calls:** Summit County Emergency Management reports there have been calls from spoofed numbers related to utility payments. These calls are not actually Summit County numbers and should be ignored.
- **IRS Scam:** There have been multiple reports of IRS COVID-19 Stimulus Check scams. Remember, the IRS will never call and ask for personal or financial information. Imposters are also pretending to be from the bank wanting to help expedite your check. Do not accept these calls or emails. For additional information on possible IRS scams go to: <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/tax-scams-consumer-alerts>.
- **COVID-19 Cures & Supplies:** Only purchase products and supplies from reputable companies. Cybercriminals are pretending to be from the Centers for Disease Control selling unapproved products to “combat” the virus – teas, essential oils and colloidal silver. These products could cause serious health risks in some people. The Federal Trade Commission states there are no products at this time to treat or cure the virus. Do not click on or respond to any offers for a COVID-19 vaccine, cure, or treatment via emails, online ads, or unsolicited sales. Consumers purchasing products from fake companies are either not receiving their purchase after money has been paid or the products are counterfeit. The Food & Drug Administration website ([fda.gov](http://fda.gov)) has a list of products they have approved and are recommended by the Centers of Disease Control.



## SHERRI BEVAN WALSH

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This father and son found a way to spend time together. There is always a way to connect to your loved ones.

## More COVID-19 Scams

- **GoFundMe:** A large number of fake fundraisers are circulating to help those affected. Since the pandemic, there has been a dramatic increase in Go Fund Me pages. It is easy to hear a story and want to donate money to help. My suggestion would be to do your research. Make sure the story is real. You can also check legitimate charities through BBB Wise Giving Alliance, Charity Navigator, CharityWatch, and GuidesStar. Nasconet.org is also a good place to start; it is a state regulator where charities must register for donations.
- **Dominion Energy:** Scammers are going door to door posing as Dominion Energy representatives and threatening to disconnect service unless payment is collected. The utility will never call, text or email customers to request personal information. All company employees carry a photo ID card. Residents can call Dominion Energy at (800) 362-7557 to report a suspected scam.
- **Unemployment:** Scammers prey on those needing urgent financial assistance. Nationally, over 26 million individuals have filed for unemployment during this crisis and the numbers are expected to keep climbing. Watch out for these common scams:

(1) Fake emails from establishments offering to help - they try to get you to download malicious software to obtain your financial information. Emails are titled "Unemployment Assist to get your attention. (2) Offers to set up a debit card for funds. (3) Fake calls saying your unemployment has been suspended. They ask for your personal information to verify the account. (4) Imposters posing as potential employers. Fake Cotscos emails for job opportunities have been circulating. Call the company directly, not from the number the caller provides.



- **WHO:** Fake emails from the World Health Organization are allowing access to your personal information when you click the link. Do not open a link in an email. Once you click on the link, they can gain access to your personal information or download malware to corrupt your computer.
- **Testing Sites/Test Kits:** Fake testing sites are popping up everywhere and imposters are even going door-to-door claiming they can test you right away. Do not open your door even if the person is dressed as a healthcare professional, unless you have called them personally.



We are going through a very trying time, but if we stay informed and take all necessary precautions, we can get through this together.

Stay

*Sherril B. Walsh*

safe!