



FROM THE OFFICE OF  
SUMMIT COUNTY PROSECUTOR  
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THE **SENIOR NEWS**



## Holiday Shopping Precautions



It's that time of the year when you have all your lists finalized, your shopping route is all planned out and you're ready for the grind of gift shopping. But remember that there are criminals who spend their season planning on getting your hard earned purchases for free. But we're here to remind you of some holiday precautions so that you can avoid any issues.

When shopping always try to go out during daylight hours. If you must go out at night, park under or near a light and bring a family member or friend along with you. Don't carry big purses. Keep wallets in front pockets and purses with you and held tight under your arm or inside your coat.

Never carry more than you can handle, and make sure to know where you're going to avoid mishaps. Beware of strangers approaching you for any reason; con-artists try various methods of distracting you with intentions of taking your money or belongings.

If you are going to multiple stores, secure purchases in your trunk or out of sight. Double check that all car windows are up and all the doors are locked. When returning to your car, have your keys in hand and be aware of what others are doing around you.

Even though you are rushed and thinking about a thousand things, stay alert of your surroundings. Always remember that awareness and smart thinking are your greatest defenses this holiday season.



## 12 Safety Tips for the Holidays

1. Beware of phony charities.
2. Do not confirm your identity in emails.
3. Leave lights on when you are not home.
4. Keep your garage door closed at all times.
5. Get estimates and referrals for home repairs.
6. Take a friend or family member when shopping.
7. Don't talk on the phone while walking to the car!
8. Go through a licensed company for health care aids.
9. Check your finances regularly for fraudulent activity.
10. Do not give out personal information on the phone.
11. Get security to escort you to your car if you feel uneasy.
12. Don't answer the door if you are not expecting someone.

## Avoid Charity Scams!

The holiday season is the season of giving, but you need to practice a level of caution when it comes to what charities you are donating to. Here are some tips.

- 1) Go to [www.GuideStar.org](http://www.GuideStar.org) for a list of 990 returns. Most charities, other than churches, are required to submit a 990 return to the IRS.
- 2) Develop a charitable giving plan – determine which groups you want to support and stick to that plan.
- 3) Be aware some phony charities have realistic-sounding names—in 2010 an organization called U.S. Navy Veterans Association was fraudulent. Do a basic internet search on the charity.
- 4) Do some background research on the individual or project before supporting a crowdfunding campaign, on sites such as: [KickStarter.com](http://KickStarter.com) or [GoFundMe.com](http://GoFundMe.com)



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Watch our website for upcoming self-defense classes in 2016!  
Photo taken at the Laurel Lake Retirement Community.

**FRAUD  
ALERT**

## Local Fraud!

It is the time of the year when criminals disguise themselves as salesmen to get your hard earned money or worse, your identity. Last April an elderly man lost over one thousand dollars when a woman, posing as a door-to-door AT&T worker, came to his home. The victim filled out fake paper work and the criminal got his credit card number. Always remember to ask for proper credentials and call the company if you are unsure. Never let anyone inside your house unless you have set up a meeting.



Senior Safety Fair at Stow  
Roses Run in July

Safety Speech at Laurel Lake  
Senior Home in October



WAKR Senior Luncheon St. Gregory Church in August



This past fall Prosecutor Walsh, along with other city officials, spoke at a press conference at Akron General Medical Center which has launched a "SANE" — Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner — program. Sexual abuse, elder abuse, and domestic violence victims in and around Summit County once again have a special medical unit to turn to for help. Nurses trained on the specific needs of assault victims will be on duty around the clock.

## What is Phishing? And why you should be aware of it.



In 2015, the most common type of Facebook scam is called 'Phishing'. You could get links from people informing you to click to get prizes or cash. These are received either by chat or posting on your Facebook page. This needs to be reported to Facebook once these types of messages are received. An example of a 'phishing' email, disguised as an official email from a (fictional) bank:



Dear Valued Customer of TrustedBank,

**We have recieved notice that you have recently attempted to withdraw the following amount from your checking account while in another country: \$135.25.**

**If this information is not correct, someone unknown may have access to your account. As a safety measure, please visit our website via the link below to verify your personal information.:**

<http://www.trustedbank.com/general/trustverifyinfo.asp>

**Once you have done this, our fraud department will work to resolve this discrepancy. We are happy you have chosen us to do business with.**

**Thank You,  
TrustedBank**

The sender is attempting to trick the recipient into revealing confidential information by "confirming" it at the 'phisher's' website. Note the misspelling of the words received and discrepancy. Also note that although the bank's web-address appears to be legitimate, the link would actually lead to the 'phisher's' webpage.