



# Elliot Kolkovich

## Summit County Prosecutor



# PROPERTY FRAUD PROTECTION

Summit County Fiscal Officer Kristen Scalise has a warning for local residents—scammers have set their sites on property titles and deeds. According to Scalise, there has been a slight increase in title and deed theft and fraud.



Summit County Fiscal Officer Kristen Scalise

Here’s how it works. The scheme involves criminals filing a forged document to show a fake transfer of property ownership. Criminals then sell the home, take out a mortgage, or even try to rent it out. In some cases across the country, people have been charged with forging documents on dozens of homes at a time.

The impact can be devastating, with some people evicted from their home. Others have spent thousands of dollars for down payments or rental costs as they try to buy or rent a home which is not lawfully available.

Scalise’s office is now taking a pro-active approach in protecting Summit County citizens from this type of criminal activity. It’s a free Property Record Alert system. The alert system will notify property owners through email when any documents are filed using their personal information. The automated email is sent to the homeowner and has details of what was filed.

The homeowner can then use that information to see if any fraud has been committed or if the filings are valid.

“While it doesn’t happen often in Summit County, we have seen an uptick in title theft and deed fraud over the past couple of years,” said Fiscal Officer Scalise. “So as a proactive measure, I am proud to offer this free monitoring system to all Summit County property owners”.

According to the FBI’s 2023 Internet Crime Report, nearly 10,000 property owners and renters in the United States were victims of real estate fraud with losses totaling over 145-million dollars.

To sign up, property owners can visit the Fiscal Office’s Self Service Site at <https://summitcountyoh-web.tylerhost.net/web/user/disclaimer>, and click on Property Record Alert. Email alerts can be configured based on first and last names or business names.



Summit County residents who receive an alert that appears suspicious or fraudulent can contact the Summit County Fiscal Office Recorder Division by calling 330-643-2712 or emailing [summittreas@summitoh.net](mailto:summittreas@summitoh.net).

You can also check with your insurance company to see if they offer a specific “Homeowner’s Policy of Title” insurance to further protect you against this type of fraud. While this policy won’t prevent title or deed fraud, it could eliminate the expense and hassle for the homeowner as the insurance company tries to resolve the phony title claim in court.



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# IN THE COMMUNITY

The Summit County Prosecutor's Office spent October providing safety information throughout the community.

Prosecutor Kolkovich joined local police, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, Judge Lisa Coats of the Stow Municipal Court, and school administrators as they spoke with students at Cuyahoga Falls High School. Topics included a discussion about behavior and what happens if someone under 18 is caught making threats or bullying.



Representatives from the Summit County Prosecutor's Office took part in the Summit County Sheriff Kandy Fatheree's Faith & Blue event at Akron's Hardesty Park.

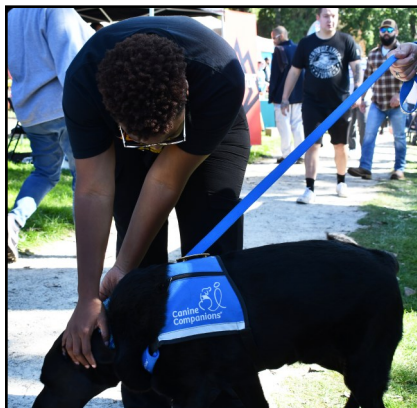
Hundreds of people attended Faith & Blue, which showcased nearly 80 houses of worship, law enforcement agencies, and community organizations!

According to Sheriff Fatheree, Faith & Blue strives to reinforce the connection between law enforcement, local faith based organizations, and the community. The event is held every October in Summit County.



Even our facility dog Adam joined in the fun and met lots of new people.

This was the fourth year of the Summit County Sheriff's Office Faith & Blue event. We hope to see you at next year's celebration.



## GUILTY VERDICTS October 2024

Congratulations to the following assistant prosecutors for obtaining convictions at trial.

- Kevin Mayer**
- Zachary Neumann**
- Charles Roman**

## TOUGH PROSECUTIONS

These defendants will be locked up for a lengthy period of time thanks to our dedicated Assistant Prosecutors:

**Martell King, 28**

Murder

**LIFE IN PRISON**

**Eric Mendoza, 41**

Murder

**LIFE IN PRISON**

**Mohamed Reeda, 25**

Rape  
Kidnapping

**20-24 Years in Prison**



# CHILD SUPPORT AGENCY EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office Child Support Agency continues to look for ways to improve its presence within the community. The Agency recently launched the Safe Access Program to assist survivors of domestic and intimate partner violence by providing safe access to child support services. One in four women and one in seven men have been victims of severe physical violence by a domestic partner.

The Safe Access Program is a victim-focused intervention program to help clients in the following areas:

- Provide information on victims’ rights.
- Help create a safety plan.
- Provide referrals for other services and or resources.
- Assist clients with filing protection orders
- Assist clients with the next steps.
- Emotional support for survivors and their families.

The Safe Access program works with Child Support staff to increase their knowledge about domestic violence.



The Safe Access unit was created to help put together a system of accountability within the agency to fully understand the sensitive nature of domestic violence.

Referrals from child support staff are based on the following:

- Previous history of domestic violence with ongoing fear.
- Any current criminal charges involving clients and or children.
- Threats of safety.
- Any current or expired orders of protection.

For more information about the program please contact Meka Purdie-Moore at 330-615-1310.

*The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office “Ambassadors for Equity & Social Justice” was formed to bring co-workers of different backgrounds and cultures together. Each month the Ambassadors share thoughts to make our community a better place to live.*

November is Native American Heritage Month, a time dedicated to recognizing and honoring the history, culture, and contributions of Indigenous peoples across the United States. From their agricultural innovations and artistic expressions to their contributions to science, medicine, and government, Native American influence is woven into the fabric of our everyday lives.



This year, Native American Heritage Month takes on added significance as President Joe Biden recently issued an historic apology for the federal government’s role in the Indian boarding school system. During his speech, President Biden formally apologized for the devastating impact of boarding schools that forcibly assimilated Native American children for over 150 years.

These schools, which aimed to strip away cultural identity, often subjected children to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and resulted in the deaths of more than 950 students. This apology marks a significant step in recognizing the harm inflicted by these policies and the enduring trauma they caused to Indigenous communities.

Hayden Gilbert, a member of the Ambassadors for Equity and Social Justice, was honored to help tell one of these stories by writing original music for a documentary called “Diligence.”

Created by Brooklyn Demme, this short film is about a Sandhill Band of Lenape & Cherokee Indian family historians, Norris Spotted War Turtle Branham and Carrie Ruffin Jones. It chronicles how they work diligently to honor, preserve, and restore their ancestral inheritance in “Scheyichbi” or “New Jersey.” Please take some time during Native American Heritage Month to watch this powerful film, “Diligence” - <https://vimeo.com/875030508/b66b84cb90?share=copy>.



Help Us Go Green!

Contact Tara Fought at [tfought@prosecutor.summitoh.net](mailto:tfought@prosecutor.summitoh.net) to receive this newsletter by e-mail



# EXPUNGEMENT FILING DAY

# ADAM IN FEDERAL COURT

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office, along with Summit County Clerk of Courts Tavia Galonski and the Summit Legal Defenders, held a first-ever one-stop expungement filing day to assist people looking to have their felony convictions sealed or expunged.

The event, held at the Summit County Courthouse’s Ceremonial Courtroom, brought in close to 170 people. Several arrived an hour before the event started. A number of people who attended had cases dating back over 30 years. Having a felony conviction can prevent a person from getting a job or even a driver’s license.

“These are people we have convicted who have done everything we and the court have asked them to do. They’ve earned the right for a second chance,” said Prosecutor Kolkovich.

“Our Prosecutor, Elliot Kolkovich, had a great idea and I am glad we ran with it,” said Clerk of Courts Tavia Galonski. “We offered education to our returning-home citizens, and they responded with hope in their eyes.”



“The first woman I helped had a low level theft conviction from 1997 and has had no other offenses since then. We did this clinic for people like her,” said Prosecutor Kolkovich. “It’s great to put together a program that gives a second chance to people who deserve it, like her.”

In addition to having their felony convictions reviewed, the Summit County Fiscal Office assisted any veterans who needed an ID. Representatives from Summit County Adult Probation, the Summit County Executive’s Office, and the Summit County Child Support Enforcement Agency were also at the event to help those who attended.



The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office works hard to build relationships with other government agencies to accomplish similar goals, like keeping the community safe.

The Office was honored to have facility dog Adam attend a recent sentencing at the Carl B. Stokes United States Court House in Cleveland. The U.S.



Attorney’s Office Northern District of Ohio requested Adam for a very difficult case involving child pornography.



Adam first met with staff from the U.S. Attorney’s Office then sat with the victim at sentencing. It was Adam’s first time at Federal Court and he did great!

The defendant was sentenced to 27 years in federal prison.

# FREE WOMEN’S SELF-DEFENSE CLASS

**November 19, 2024**  
**6 p.m. - 8 p.m.**

**Barberton Middle School**  
**477 4th St. NW**  
**Barberton, OH 44203**

**(Use door E15 off Newell Street to access gym)**

**Co-sponsored by**  
**Barberton Law Director**  
**Lisa Miller**



**\*\*No Registration Required\*\***

# TOP COPS

## HEALTH CARE FRAUD SPECIAL AGENTS BRIANA ELLIS & DEBORAH GEARHISER NOMINATED BY ASST. PROS. EMILY WILLIAMS

The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office handles a variety of criminal cases, including people who target the elderly.

Recently we prosecuted a defendant who was charged with patient abuse. The victim was an elderly patient at a local nursing home. The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office nominates Health Care Fraud Special Agents Deborah Gearhiser and Briana Ellis from the Ohio Attorney General’s Office.

Both Agent Gearhiser and Agent Ellis went above and beyond in their work on this case. Although based in Columbus, both would travel to Akron to knock on doors to try and track down witnesses.



**DAVE YOST**  
OHIO ATTORNEY GENERAL

They were also extremely helpful in contacting people to ensure they were going to show up for the trial. Some of the witnesses had moved out of the area and were difficult to track down.

In addition, this was the first time Agent Ellis testified at trial. She did a terrific job explaining to the jury what happened.

Although jurors reached a not guilty verdict, the work of both Agents Gearhiser and Ellis were phenomenal.

**Great job and congratulations!**

# ARRIVE ALIVE FOR THANKSGIVING!

It’s time to Arrive Alive for Thanksgiving! The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office and the Summit County Sheriff’s Office are once again teaming up to offer FREE or reduced fare rides home via LYFT within Summit County for the Thanksgiving holiday.

The Wednesday before Thanksgiving is known as “Blackout Wednesday” or “Drinksgiving” as people head out before the big holiday. Use Arrive Alive or have a designated driver if you plan on drinking alcohol.

The code SUMMITGIVING24 will get you a \$20 credit on LYFT which can be used between 6 p.m. Wednesday November 27 through noon on Saturday November 30.

For more information, head to <https://prosecutor.summitoh.net/pages/ArriveAlive.html>.

Have a happy Thanksgiving—the life you save might be your own!

**ARRIVE ALIVE**



Office of Summit County Prosecutor Elliot Kolkovich  
53 University Avenue  
Akron, Ohio 44308  
330-643-2800

# Elliot Kolkovich

**Summit County Prosecuting Attorney**

**53 University Avenue, 6th Floor**

**Akron, Oh 44308**

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