

News Release



Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro Delivers State of the County Address

On August 30, 2018, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro delivered the annual State of the County Address to a sold-out crowd of nearly 900 attendees at the John S. Knight Center. The event, sponsored by the Akron Press Club, benefited a scholarship fund for journalism students. Throughout her speech, Executive Shapiro highlighted various accomplishments and new initiatives, including economic development, county jail restructuring, and a female veteran housing development.

Using the theme of Summit County as a community connector, Executive Shapiro presented a robust outlook for the future. She provided an update on the Firestone Business Park project, announcing a \$250,000 grant from the Ohio Department of Transportation through the Summit County Transportation Improvement District. Executive Shapiro shared that in 2018 alone, the Transportation Improvement District obtained almost \$850,000 for local projects, including reconstruction of Romig Road in Akron, improving infrastructure of the Ghent Road/Cleveland Massillon Road intersection in Bath, and repaving of Chamberlain Road in Twinsburg. Executive Shapiro highlighted additional development projects underway throughout the county and she commended the collaboration between county and city officials, and a number of community partners, including Akron Public Schools, United Way of Summit County, SummaCare, and others who have worked diligently to enhance downtown Akron through exciting development projects.

Executive Shapiro outlined the importance of the successful education of the county's youth and workforce to accompany economic development projects. She characterized the opening of Stark State College's Akron campus as a transformative moment in Summit County that will facilitate the training and education of county residents, providing a pipeline of skilled talent for county businesses. She also highlighted the development of the College and Career Academies at Akron Public Schools that will put students on a path to in-demand careers. Citing recent announcements from the University of Akron, Executive Shapiro declared renewed support for Interim President Green and the University.

Pivoting to public safety, Executive Shapiro explained that no county entity has felt the effect of lost revenue and limited resources over the past decade more than the Summit County Jail. At the urging of Councilman David Hamilton, Summit County Council took action and created the Summit County Jail Operations Advisory Commission. Chaired by Councilman Hamilton, the Commission met on a regular basis to examine jail policies and procedures. Executive Shapiro announced that the Commission presented recommendations to Council on August 27th. She described two primary recommendations: increased staffing and restored inmate services. To address the Commission's recommendations, Executive Shapiro announced joint legislation that will be introduced to install a new camera system in the Summit County Jail for the protection of both inmates and jail staff. She also announced legislation that will re-designate Glenwood Jail as a Community Alternative Sentencing

Center run exclusively by Oriana House. If adopted by Council, 16 deputies will be relocated to the Summit County Jail. Executive Shapiro explained this will alleviate the number of individuals housed at the Jail, directing more people to rehabilitative programming instead of incarceration. She announced the Sheriff's Office will reorganize to 12-hour shifts, a policy that will provide additional deputy coverage and reduce overtime costs. Executive Shapiro shared the Sheriff's Office will also hire additional full-time inmate service workers to re-open the gymnasium and library and to restore AA and NA services, as well as religious services.

Addressing the needs of a growing veteran population, Executive Shapiro announced an innovative partnership with Family and Community Services, the City of Akron and the Summit County Land Bank to create Summit County's first housing facility for homeless female veterans and their children. She explained that despite the successful construction and operation of Valor Home, a housing facility for homeless male veterans, a gap remained for homeless female veterans. To fill this gap, Executive Shapiro said an apartment building recently acquired by the Land Bank will be opened exclusively for female veterans in the coming months. The facility will be named the Summit Liberty House. Executive Shapiro urged event attendees to support the first fundraiser for the Summit Liberty House to be held at the Akron Civic Theater on September 27th at 5:00 p.m. This announcement was made in conjunction with the Executive's continued commitment to the Laura Williams Dunlop Stand Down for Homeless and Displaced Veterans. Over the last three years, the County has partnered with FirstEnergy Foundation to contribute \$60,000 to the event. This year's Stand Down takes place on September 11th at VFW #3383 on Waterloo Road. Additionally, Executive Shapiro announced the November 9th unveiling of a new World War II Memorial at the Summit County Courthouse.

Executive Shapiro concluded her remarks by stating Summit County is the best place to live, work, and raise a family in Ohio because of the dedicated people who give back to their community every day. She ended with the declaration, "The State of Summit County is stronger than ever."



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