

# News Release



**Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive**  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **County Executive Ilene Shapiro Delivers State of the County Address and Announces New Initiatives**

On October 25, 2017, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro delivered her State of the County Address to a crowd of more than 700 people at the John S. Knight Center. Focusing on the topics of public safety, the opiate crisis, and jobs, Executive Shapiro introduced bold new initiatives and projects.

Set against the backdrop of State and Federal cuts to the County's budget as well as operating with the lowest sales tax in the State, Executive Shapiro announced Summit County's efforts to balance its budget and continue to "do more with less." Operating with a budget of \$62 million less and 860 employees less than in 2007, Summit County continues to function with the lowest operating budget of any large county in the State of Ohio.

As the financial strain continues to restrict budgets, Executive Shapiro continues to focus on innovative approaches to spur economic growth. Shapiro announced that her Economic Development Team engineered a data hub to better respond to the needs of existing businesses and to help attract new development to Summit County. With the tool, the County can target local small and medium-sized businesses within key industry clusters to ensure that their relocation, financing, regulatory relief and workforce needs are being met. One area that will benefit from this instrument is the newly announced Firestone Business Park. Located on approximately 18 acres of land just south of the Russell M. Pry Building, the new business park will be available to businesses looking to expand or relocate to Summit County. "This partnership with the City of Akron, the Venarge Family, and APV fulfills our vision of having the Pry Building serve as an anchor for new development in the Firestone Park neighborhood," said Executive Shapiro.

Turning to public safety and the opiate crisis, Shapiro made the announcement that she signed a proclamation earlier in the day, declaring a State of Emergency as it relates to opiates and

overdoses in Summit County. “This is not just a hollow battle cry,” said the Executive. “It is the product of careful consideration and planning with our County Incident Management Assistance Team.” The document outlines specific requests of the State and Federal Government should additional funds become available to help fight the epidemic. “I am confident that if and when funds are accessible, Summit County will move to the front of the line, not just because of our need, but due to our careful planning and preparedness.”

In addition to the declaration of emergency, Executive Shapiro announced that the County, as well as multiple cities within it, would be pursuing a lawsuit against the manufacturers and distributors of prescription opiates. Shapiro said, “The misleading nature of how these medications were marketed to Summit County residents has caused so much devastation and it is time to say, ‘no more in Summit County.’”

In an effort to further collaborate with the recovery community, Executive Shapiro also announced a new partnership to revitalize the County owned land where Edwin Shaw Hospital was formerly located. The County intends to donate 25 acres of the land to Restore and Hope United, both 501c3 organizations focused on addiction recovery. The footprint in Lakemore will include a treatment facility for in-patient counseling as well as a community center. “Restore and Hope United are continuing a long history of healing on that particular land. I know this partnership with them and with the Village of Lakemore will help save lives.”

Executive Shapiro discussed the strength of her staff and their efforts to give back to the community. She noted that Summit County is not defined by the buildings that are constructed or the revenue that is generated, but by the people the County serves, and concluded by declaring that “the State of Summit County is Strong.”

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