

# NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Countywide dispatch communities name director, other key personnel

**SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO**—The Summit Area Regional Council of Government (SARCOG) Board is pleased to announce the hiring of David O’Neal as Director of the newly formed county-wide, consolidated dispatch operation. The SARCOG Board has also hired Leigh-Ann Slaughter, former Director of Administration – Communications for the Sheriff’s Office as Deputy Director of Operations and Ian Faieta, former CAD Administrator for the countywide computer-aided dispatch system, as Technical Support.

SARCOG community representatives from Cuyahoga Falls, Fairlawn, Stow, Tallmadge, the County Executive’s Office and the Sheriff’s Office serve on the Human Resources Subcommittee. The Subcommittee, with the assistance from MCM Consulting Group, developed postings for the three original staff positions. Several director candidates were identified through two rounds of jobs postings and interviews. While all candidates brought a wealth of experience in public safety, the Committee recommended Mr. O’Neal for the Director position. The SARCOG Dispatch Board approved this recommendation and hiring at the December 12 meeting. Mr. O’Neal spent the last 30 days getting up to speed on the project and officially assumed the Director position on January 16, 2023.

Mr. O’Neal comes from the Akron Fire Department with nearly 32 years of experience. He was a ranking officer in the department for over 26 years, holding numerous positions and was most recently District Chief over the Special Operations Division, as well as Chair of the Summit County Special Operations Response Team Executive Board. He worked with police and fire chiefs countywide to develop active shooter response training. He earned his BA in History from the University of Akron and master’s degree in Homeland Security Studies from the Naval Postgraduate School – Center for Homeland Defense and Security. Mr. O’Neal is a graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program and holds the Chief Officer Designation from the Center for Public Safety Excellence. He is an Adjunct Instructor for the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Services (TEEX) and serves on the Board of Directors for the International Public Safety Association (IPSA). He is a Leadership Akron Signature Class 37 graduate.

The dispatch center, located in Tallmadge, is under construction and scheduled to be completed by mid 2023. Technology will be installed in fall 2023 with the official transition to occur as early as the end of the year. Over the past year and through 2023, dispatchers, police chiefs and fire chiefs from the participating communities, including contract communities, are developing policies and cross training plans to prepare for the transition.

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