

## NEWS RELEASE

**Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive**



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Date: October 4, 2024**

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### **County Executive and Council recognize North American First People’s Day**

**SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO**—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and County Council passed legislation recognizing North American First People’s Day on October 7, 2024. First People’s Day was first recognized by County Council in 2019 after students at The Lippman School of Akron proposed the day to honor the first people of this land as part of their longstanding relationship with the Northern Cheyenne Nation of Montana. First People’s Day is an opportunity for remembrance, mourning, and healing for all residents as we reckon with the history of indigenous people and culture in Summit County.

“In our efforts to build a better future, we cannot forget to acknowledge our history,” said Executive Shapiro, “I hope that residents will participate in events held to celebrate and honor the rich history and culture of our indigenous peoples.”

Northeast Ohio was originally inhabited by many native peoples and cultures. At the time of European colonization, it was primarily a hunting ground for the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) but later became home to Seneca-Cayuga and Lenape (Delaware) fleeing their ancestral lands. As more Europeans settled in Ohio, indigenous people were pushed further west until the Indian Removal Act of 1830 forced the remaining natives to either assimilate or migrate to what is now Kansas and Oklahoma. The Seneca-Cayuga and Lenape were but two examples of the many First Nations subjected to genocide, forced migration, and forced assimilation. To truly celebrate North American First People’s Day, we must remember the realities of their treatment and work to renew trust and goodwill for a brighter future.

Several local events will take place this year in honor of First People’s Day, including the annual Portage Path Walk on October 6<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m. Members of the Northern Cheyenne Nation will lead the walk. More details and a list of additional events is available here: <https://walkportagepath.com/walk-2024>.

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