

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Date: September 16, 2026

Contact: Greta Johnson
Director of Communications & Assistant Chief of Staff
Office of County Executive Shapiro
ExecutivePress@summitoh.net
330-643-2510

County Executive Shapiro delivers eighth State of the County Address

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro delivered her 2026 State of County Address, highlighting the County’s continued investments in public safety, economic development, infrastructure and social services while addressing the economic, technological and political challenges facing local communities. Executive Shapiro centered her remarks on the message that Summit County must continue to create its own future through collaboration, innovation and resilience.

“The future of Summit County will not be written for us. It will be written by us,” Executive Shapiro said. “People who invest in their communities, build businesses, mentor young students and step forward when challenges arise are the ones who will determine our future.”

Among the key accomplishments highlighted were the County’s \$45 million investment in the Summit Health and Safety Innovation Fund using opioid settlement funds, as well as the \$5 million Community Empowerment Fund supporting communities impacted by the opioid epidemic.

Executive Shapiro also highlighted the near completion of the 135-mile Summit Connects public safety fiber network, continued innovation at the Summit Emergency Communications Center, including its AI-assisted virtual assistant AVA, and ongoing improvements at the Summit County Jail.

Economic development remained a major focus, including the continued growth of the Polymer Industry Cluster and NEO-SMART, which secured a \$160 million National Science Foundation Regional Innovation Engine award. Executive Shapiro also highlighted investments in infrastructure, housing, brownfield redevelopment and business development throughout the County.

The address also recognized the challenges facing the County's social services system amid changes to SNAP and Medicaid, while highlighting successful workforce and social service programs operated by Summit County Job and Family Services.

Executive Shapiro closed by emphasizing that, despite uncertainty and rapid change, the strength of Summit County remains its people. "New technology may change how we live. But it will never replace the values that have always defined us: hard work, resilience, creativity, compassion and a commitment to one another," Executive Shapiro said. "Those are human qualities. Those are Summit County qualities."

The speech and an event recording are available at <https://co.summitoh.net/2026StateoftheCounty>.

###