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PROGRESS REPORT:**



Lori Kokoski Matt Lundy Sharon Sweda

LORAIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

PROGRESS REPORT

FALL | 2020

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KEEPING THE COUNTY SAFE

They operate largely behind the scenes, but the Lorain County Sheriff's Office is responsible for everything from transporting prisoners to diffusing bombs.

"We are so fortunate to have dedicated law enforcement officers in Lorain County," says Lorain County Commissioner Lori Kokoski. "We have and always will support a strong budget for law enforcement. We believe their funding is important for the safety of our families and our deputies."

A few statistics: The sheriff's office operates the only jail in the county, which holds 422 inmates. They track 400 sex offenders. They are the primary law enforcement for the 60,000 people living in 18 townships. They execute 3,000 warrants a year.

To do all that, the office has a full-time staff of 229 employees, a fleet of 91 vehicles (including court vans, the crime scene van and the SWAT team vehicles) and a budget of about \$23 million (just over half of that is funded by the Lorain County Commissioners.)

From operating Lorain County Drug Task Force to providing mutual aid in the county, it's all vital work.

"We're 495 square-miles, so we're pretty busy," says Sheriff Phil Stammitti. "The Commissioners have been good to us through the years. Our budget has grown through the years just because of the cost of doing business."

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Contact the Lorain County Board of Commissioners
P: (440) 329-5111
226 Middle Avenue,
Fourth Floor
Elyria, OH 44035

- Loraincounty.us
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JOBS, JOBS, JOBS

Proving that working together can land hundreds of new jobs, Lorain County Commissioners recently announced a big economic development deal. It took more than a year to facilitate the agreement between Elyria Township, Elyria, Lorain, the state and the county for the development of the former Spiegelberg Orchard property.

"Working together is what we stress every day," says Commissioner Lori Kokoski. "There were a lot of moving parts about water and sewer services that had to come together to get the deal done."

The new business is Carvana, which allows customers to shop for vehicles on Carvana.com, finance, purchase, then select as-soon-as-next-day touchless home delivery or Car Vending Machine pickup. Carvana will invest an estimated \$23 million dollars into the new Lorain County site. The company is poised to create hundreds of jobs, ranging from automotive technicians to car haulers who return home each day.

"During these economic times, it's a challenge to land a deal bringing 400 new jobs and \$13 million payroll investment to the area," says Commissioner Sharon Sweda. "We are thankful the company stayed committed to the deal." "Companies want to do business where leaders in government work well together. We are stronger when we work together," emphasizes Commissioner Matt Lundy.



IMAGES COURTESY OF CARVANA



COLLECTION CENTER WINS ACCOLADES

You may think of it as simply a convenient place to drop off hazardous materials or paint cans, but the Lorain County Collection Center has a growing reputation for excellence.

“It’s the best in the state of Ohio,” says Michael Greenberg, who serves as a consultant to the center, and as president of GT Environmental Inc. “It’s very easy for residents to come and drop off their materials. The Center manages lots of different household waste materials.”

Even better, the Collection Center has a number of vendors it ships materials to for recycling or reuse. It recently

won an award from the Solid Waste Association of North America for being one of the best-run centers in the country.

“We really appreciate residents bringing these materials to the center so they don’t end up in the landfill,” says County Commissioner Matt Lundy. “Just pack them in a box in your trunk and bring them over. We’ll take it from there.”

The Collection Center is located at 540 S. Abbe Road in Elyria. It is open Wednesday 12 to 6 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Lorain County also has two sites for tire collection. Visit LorainCounty.us for more information.

STAYING THE COURSE

There’s a silver lining to every cloud and, in Lorain County at least, that lining is a boost in economic development.

“There’s a lot going on right now, in spite of the virus,” says Economic Development Coordinator Jerry Good. “Money has never been cheaper. Companies that have had these projects on their drawing board are pulling them forward.”

Projects in various stages of development, include:

- Bendix’s new building on Chester Road in Avon represents an investment of about \$60 million and will bring about 40 new jobs to the county.
- In July, Hydro Tube Enterprises in Oberlin poured the footers for a 24,800-square-foot addition to their facility.

“THERE’S A LOT GOING ON RIGHT NOW, IN SPITE OF THE VIRUS...”

- Chalfant, a manufacturer of cable tray and management systems, bought a 100,000-square-foot building in Avon.

- Ford is making a \$900 million investment in a new product line at its Avon Lake plant that is predicted to bring some 1,800 new jobs.

But that’s not even the most exciting news, according to Lorain County Commissioner Sharon Sweda.

“We also have undisclosed projects in the pipeline that will create a continuum of development well into 2021,” Sweda says. “Jerry Good and his team, along with the Board of Commissioners spend a lot of time and energy working on job creation and development, so fortunately, as many sectors stagnated through the pandemic, we were able to advance at a solid pace.”

MAKE SURE YOU’RE COUNTED

The 2020 Census is well underway—and 74.5% of Lorain County has responded, making us a leader in the state.

“It’s important,” says Rick Soto, chair of the Census Committee for the city of Lorain. “Not only is it our duty, but it ensures we get the help we need from the federal government.”

If you haven’t responded yet, there are four ways you can:

- Visit 2020Census.Gov.
- Respond to a form you received in the mail.
- Call 844-330-2020 (English) or 844-468-2020 (Spanish) to respond.
- Wait until a census worker visits your house (they will be wearing a mask and following social-distancing guidelines) and submit your information that way.

Soto stressed that undocumented immigrants should complete the census without fear that the information could be used in court or by any government agency. “This cannot be used against you in any way,” he says. “This information cannot be shared.”

A bit of trivia: So far, Brighton Township leads the county with 84.8% of residents responding. North Ridgeville and Avon Lake are following close behind. The census will conclude on September 30. Please respond as soon as possible.

* as of 8/26/20



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CALLED TO SERVE

A job that’s interesting, offers stability and makes a difference can be hard to come by, but that’s exactly what work looks like for Jack Boutpon—and many other employees at the Lorain County 911 Call Center.

“Not all the calls we have are critical every time,” says Boutpon, a dispatcher who’s worked at the Call Center for almost 15 years. “But you can have a direct impact on a life.”

There’s many examples of that, of course, but Call Center Director Tracy Lopez cites giving CPR instructions, delivering babies and telling someone how to do the Heimlich maneuver as a few of the more dramatic things her dispatchers are called to do. “They make the job look very easy,” she says, “and it certainly is not.”

Speaking in a calm and measured voice that’s perfect for the job, Boutpon says being a dispatcher “kind of came naturally” to him, but there are times when adrenaline spikes. “Through experience, you deal with different types of calls and it becomes easier to remain calm,” he adds.

Between the stellar employees and all of the new technology at the Call Center, County Commissioner Lori Kokoski describes it as a real asset to the community. “Our 911 Center has new next-generation equipment to ensure help is on its way when someone calls for assistance,” she says. “Investing in this technology continues to improve the service for the health and safety of our residents.”