



Lori Kokoski Matt Lundy Sharon Sweda

LORAIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

PROGRESS REPORT

SPRING | 2020

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

CORONAVIRUS IN LORAIN COUNTY | PREPARING FOR THE CENSUS | DELINQUENT TAXES AND SCHOOLS | CELEBRATING LORAIN COUNTY | GETTING TO KNOW COMMISSIONER LUNDY | RECOGNIZING COMMUNITY LEADERS



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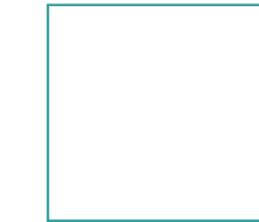
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United States
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LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

From schools to road construction, the U.S. Census affects every single one of us.

That's why Lorain County Commissioners have formed a Complete Count Committee—to work with community leaders and mayors to ensure that Lorain County is correctly counted, represented and funded.

"Billions of dollars of federal funding are at stake," says Commissioner Sharon Sweda. "We only have one chance to get this right."

So what can you do? Respond! By now, you've most likely received an invitation in the mail to respond to the census online,

which can be done at 2020Census.Gov. If you don't respond, you'll receive a series of reminder letters and postcards, as well as a paper questionnaire. Eventually, you'll be visited in person by a census field representative.

Keep in mind that the Census Bureau is bound by law to protect your answers and keep them strictly confidential. The law ensures that your private information is never published and that your answers cannot be used against you by any government agency or court. **Still have questions? Call 1-800-354-7271 for more information.**

THE CORONAVIRUS IN LORAIN COUNTY

This is an unprecedented time in our nation. Here, in Lorain County, we can work together to keep our community strong, protect the most vulnerable among us and look forward to resuming normal life as soon as possible.

"It's so important that we remain calm," says Commissioner Matt Lundy. "Although the situation is changing hourly, we can look to state, federal and health leaders for the latest guidelines—and follow them. We'll get through this together."

At the top of the list, is social distancing. That means avoiding gathering in groups of more than 10 people and keeping at least six feet between you and others if you're at the grocery store, on a walk or out of the house for any reason. If you feel even a little sick, stay home. If your illness is worsening (especially difficulty breathing), seek medical attention.

"This is the time to be a good neighbor," adds Commissioner Lori Kokoski. "One way to do that is by calling to check on the older people in your life to see what they might need." **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 >**



PHOTO BY KELLY SIKEMA ON UNSPLASH

Like all of us, Commissioner Sharon Sweda is concerned about our local small businesses. “If you’re in a position to do so, consider buying a gift card now to use later,” she says. “These businesses are a vital part of our community and we need to do our best to help them survive.”

As a County, we’re following all the guidelines put forth by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, our county health department and the state of Ohio.

What can you do to stay healthy? Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly (at least 20 seconds) or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer; avoid touching your mouth, hands and eyes when in public; stay home if you’re sick; avoid crowds; and cover your cough or sneeze with your sleeve or a tissue.

LEARN MORE AT :

www.loraincountyhealth.com/coronavirus.

DELINQUENT TAXES AND OUR SCHOOLS

The Lorain County Prosecutor’s Office collected nearly \$5.8 million in delinquent property taxes last year, bringing the total collected to \$26 million since 2015.

The majority of that money goes to Lorain County schools, which means that every dollar collected helps our schools and our students. “Our local school districts receive 50 to 70 percent of each tax delinquency payment,” says Lorain County Prosecutor Dennis P. Will. “The schools have received millions of dollars from delinquent tax collections since 2015.”

Getting squared up with taxes may be easier than anticipated. What many residents don’t realize, says Assistant County Prosecutor Chris Pyanowski, is that there is an alternative to either paying all your taxes upfront or facing foreclosure. “You can get on a payment plan,” he says. “We have had pretty good success with that.”

Here’s how it works: Delinquent taxes are divided into five payments, which are then added to the amount of current property taxes paid in February and July. As long as you keep your payments current, penalties and interest no longer accrue on your balance. ♦



PROSECUTOR DENNIS WILL



CELEBRATING LORAIN COUNTY

From Mardi Gras in Lorain County to the Cupcake Crawl, you may have noticed all of the unique celebrations happening throughout the year. Sponsored by the Lorain County Commissioners and Visit Lorain County, these events highlight all that our County has to offer, both to residents and to those who live outside Lorain County.

Here are a few photos from the hottest party of the year. The Final Fete of Mardi Gras in Lorain County was February 29 at Lorain County Community College. The evening included an amazing sampling of Creole and Cajun foods, prizes and live performances by Northeast Ohio’s own Cats on Holiday and Grammy Award-winning artist Terrance Simien, straight from New Orleans. ♦

GETTING TO KNOW: LORAIN COUNTY COMMISSIONER MATT LUNDY

Lorain County Commissioner Matt Lundy’s political career was launched before he even had his driver’s license.



“It really goes back to when I was in high school,” says Lundy, who was born in Pennsylvania, but moved to Avon Lake in 1972. “I would hop on my 10-speed bike and go to council meetings.”

Lundy, who was working at Convenient Food Mart as a stock boy, was disappointed in a policy that you couldn’t play tennis on city courts after 6 p.m. if you were under 18 years old. “The city was taking taxes out of my paycheck,” he says. “So I went to city council and said that, as a taxpayer, how could they restrict me from using a public facility because of my age?”

Avon Lake City Council changed the policy after that, giving Lundy both access to the courts and a confidence in his own voice. “That gave me a taste of—wow—if you speak up you actually can bring about change.”

Lundy would go on to use that voice in an award-winning career that took him across the country and included anchoring the news and working as an investigative reporter. If there was something a government entity was trying

to hide, he relished in discovering it. “I’m a big believer in transparency,” he says. “The public has a right to know.”

Given that background, getting into politics was a natural transition for him. Lundy’s first position was serving on Avon Lake City Council from 1994 to 1995. “It’s very rewarding when you get a chance to make decisions in your own hometown,” he says. “That was a goal and a dream come true.”

From there, Lundy went on to serve as assistant safety/service director in Elyria. He was elected to the Ohio House of Representatives where he served from 2007 to 2014. He has served as a Lorain County Commissioner since 2015.

“Our first responsibility is the people we serve,” he says. In Lorain County, that means economic growth, developing the lakefront, using money wisely, fighting the opioid crisis—and more.

And none of that can be accomplished unless everyone works together. “It’s important to look for what is the greater good for the County,” he says. “It’s important that we work together, to improve the lives of our families.”

On a personal note, Lundy lives in Avon Lake with his wife, Marva. He enjoys exercising, watching the Lake Erie Crushers play and spending time at the lake. ♦



RECOGNIZING COMMUNITY LEADERS

What makes Lorain County what it is? You could argue it’s the lake, our industrial heritage, our history or our workforce—and that’s all true. But it’s the men and women who tirelessly serve, in a variety of different ways, who act as the glue to hold it all together.

“We’re blessed to have a lot of strong community leaders who are very dedicated to making the community better,” says Commissioner Lori Kokoski. Lorain County Commissioners have officially recognized the following individuals.

- **JUNE YOST** recently retired as the executive director of North Ridgeville Community Care, which she founded in 1989 to connect needy families with local donors.

- **FATHER FRANK KOSEM** served as pastor at St. Jude Church in Elyria from 1985 to 2019 and still celebrates Mass at various churches when needed.

- **DAVID ROOT** is retiring as the state commander of the VFW. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1966 to 1970, for which he received numerous medals, and is leading the charge to bring a Gold Star Family Memorial to Lorain County

- **VIETNAM WAR VETERAN SAM FULTON** was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame last October. He served as a private first class in the United States Marine Corps, was awarded the Navy Cross for valor in combat and continues to advocate for veterans in the community.

“We are very proud of the veterans who served our country and continue to serve our country and our community,” Commissioner Lori Kokoski says. “It’s a great honor for Lorain County to be able to recognize these veterans.”

Commissioner Matt Lundy also praised Yost and Kossem for “working tirelessly to help those who need a helping hand in our community.” ♦