

The Council Ledger

Fall-Winter 2023-24

Council Welcomes New County Joint Emergency Dispatch Center

On October 6, Summit County Council Members, officials and mayors of several cities gathered to cut the ribbon and officially open the Summit Emergency Communications Center (SECC), a new, state-of-the-art 9-1-1 dispatching facility located in Tallmadge. The facility hosts the combined dispatch operations of the Summit County Sheriff and several communities, including Cuyahoga Falls, Fairlawn, Stow and Tallmadge. The City of Akron's dispatch operation, which will continue to function independently of the SECC, will also be located and operating in the building. Approximately 300,000 of County's 540,000 residents will receive dispatch services from the SECC.

The completion of SECC fulfills Summit County's longstanding vision of a consolidated dispatch center. The county owns the building, while a council of governments manages the dispatch operation. The partnership supports 10 police agencies and six fire departments across several communities in Summit County.

By eliminating the transfer of 9-1-1 calls between jurisdictions, the SECC will save valuable time and the need to initiate separate mutual aid requests. It will also allow the county and its partnering communities to leverage their collective purchasing power to provide training, quality assurance and supervision. The center will facilitate the transition to NextGen 9-1-1, which will enable the sending of video and texts of callers to dispatchers.

"The consolidated dispatch facility has been discussed and been a priority of the County for many years. Congratulations to Executive Ilene Shapiro and her team for finally making it a reality," said **Council Vice President Rita Darrow (District 1)** who attended the opening with fellow Councilmembers **Gloria Rodgers (District 3)** and **Christine Wiede Higham (District 6 whose district includes Tallmadge)**.

In addition to upgraded dispatching technology and equipment, the building also includes specific features like quiet rooms, a mother's room and a fitness area to prioritize the physical and mental wellness of the dispatch team. Other critical public safety operations including the county's public safety radio administration and the county's Emergency Operations Center are also in the building.



From Left: County Councilmembers Gloria Rodgers, Rita Darrow and Christine Wiede Higham with County Executive Ilene Shapiro (second from left) at Grand Opening of 9-1-1 Joint Emergency Dispatch Center in Tallmadge.

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Council Helps Christen New Summit Lake North Shore Bridge



Council President Veronica Sims (just right of the bridge pathway) joins local officials and Summit Lake Community members and partners in cutting the ribbon for the new Summit Lake Bridge.



Photos from left: Councilwomen Liz Walters and Veronica Sims; Councilwoman Bethany McKenney participates in a butterfly release and Councilwoman Sims poses on a bike on the new bridge.

On September 26, Summit County Council President **Veronica Sims (District 5)** along with **Councilmembers Liz Walters (At Large) and Bethany McKenney (District 7)** celebrated the completion of the Akron Civic Commons 2.0, Ohio & Erie Canal Summit Lake Trail with a ribbon-cutting and butterfly release at the new North Shore Bridge.

Currently spanning 90 miles long across four counties, the Towpath Trail is estimated to be 101 miles when complete. The trail follows closely, though not entirely, along the original route of the Ohio & Erie Canal and provides natural, cultural, historical, and recreational opportunities throughout.

Akron Civic Commons is part of the national initiative Reimagining the Civic Commons, which focuses on transforming shared civic assets to foster engagement, equity, environmental sustainability and economic development in cities across the country.

The ribbon-cutting for the Ohio & Erie Canal Summit Lake Trail was a major accomplishment for the resident-led Akron Civic Commons project. Neighborhood residents, the City of Akron, the Knight Foundation and numerous donors collaborated to develop an accessible, equitable and welcoming trail for everyone at Summit Lake. The new North Shore Bridge is part of the Summit Lake Vision Plan which includes a bicycling and walking trail around Summit Lake, a pavilion for family gatherings, shaded seating and swing, a canoe and kayak share, boat launch ramp and a concession stand to enjoy an ice cream cone, sandwich, or cup of coffee. The Summit Lake portion of the Towpath Trail is also home to the **Let's Move Summit County Bike & Hike**, a late spring free family-focused fitness event that the Council office has hosted for the past three years.

“The Ohio & Erie Canal Summit Lake trail is a good example of the importance of intentionality and building trust and genuine relationships with neighborhood residents to ensure that their voices are valued and part of the process. It is my hope to see this approach duplicated throughout Akron, Summit County and beyond. For truly we are so much better and stronger as a community when all citizens are actively engaged and participating,” said Sims.

Council Honors Goodyear on 125th Anniversary and EJ Thomas on 50th Anniversary

At its September 11 Council Meeting, Summit County Council honored The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company on its 125th Anniversary. One of the world's largest tire companies, employing nearly 72,000 people and manufacturing products at 57 factories in 23 nations around the globe, Goodyear continues to be a major employer in Akron with more than 2,500 workers.

Before Council's September 25 Council Meeting, members honored The E.J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall on its 50th Anniversary. Located on the corner of University Avenue and Hill Street on The University of Akron's campus in downtown Akron, the performing arts complex and cultural center is considered among the world's finest multi-purpose venues. The facility is named in honor of Edwin J. Thomas, the former Chairman and CEO of The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company, who later served on the University's board of trustees.

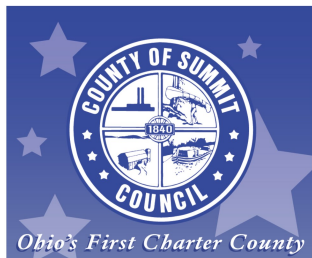


Councilman John Schmidt (District 2) presents Commendations to Goodyear Director of Community Affairs and Engagement, Joni Fitch (left) and E. J. Thomas Director, Margo Ohlson (right) honoring their institutions 125th and 50th Anniversaries.

Council Receives Visit From Global Ties Group



Following its September 25, Council Meeting, Summit County Council received visitors from Global Ties Akron, an international professional and educational exchange program that offers opportunities for individuals to engage with business, nonprofit, government, and academic leaders worldwide to share ideas and learn from one another. Global Ties also offers speaker engagements, and special events to promote citizen diplomacy and cross-cultural understanding. Pictured in the photo with the Global Ties delegation and executive director Michelle Wilson (far right) are Councilwomen **Gloria Rodgers (District 3)**, **Liz Walters (At-Large)** and **Council President Veronica Sims (District 5)**.



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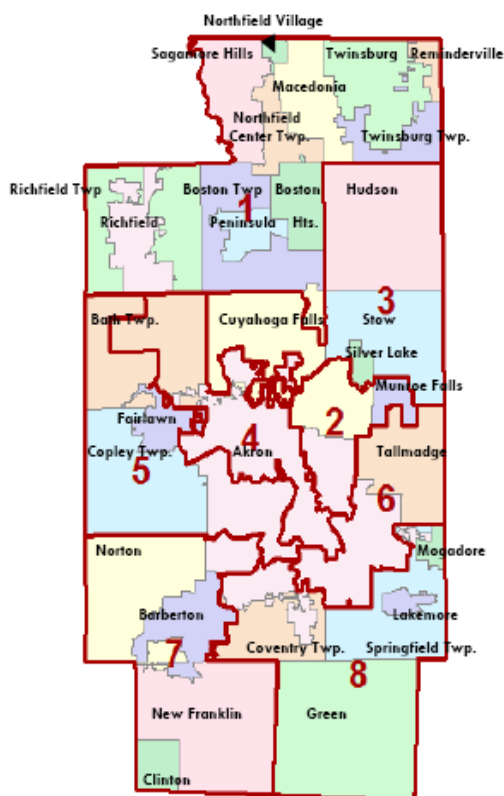
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2024 Council Meeting Calendar

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION	TIME
January 8	Council/Organizational Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
January 15	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR MLK DAY		
January 22	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
January 29	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
February 5	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
February 12	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
February 19	COUNCIL OFFICES CLOSED FOR PRESIDENTS DAY		
February 26	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 4	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 11	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 18	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
March 25	Council Committee Mtg.	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.
April 1	Council Meeting	Council Chambers	4:30 p.m.

2024 County Council Members

- *Veronica Sims**
President
District 5
- Rita Darrow**
Vice President
District 1
- John Schmidt**
District 2
- Gloria Rodgers**
District 3
- Jeff Wilhite**
District 4
- Christine Wiedie Higham**
District 6
- Bethany McKenney**
District 7
- Anthony DeVitis**
District 8
- John Donofrio**
At -Large
- Elizabeth Walters**
At -Large
- Erin Dickinson**
At -Large



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