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**At-Large Summit County Councilman Jon Poda
to Introduce Text Messaging Driving Ban Sept. 28**

Jon Poda, Summit County Councilman At-Large, will introduce legislation at the Sept. 28 regular Council meeting that will prohibit text messaging while individuals are operating motor vehicles. Similar legislation has already been enacted in several states, as well as in the City of Cleveland and many others throughout the nation. As more and more studies show that viewing or sending text messages while driving put motorists at an extremely increased risk for accidents, Poda said he feels the legislation could help curb these risks and make the county roadways safer.

“If passing a text messaging ban can assist in saving even one single life then this effort will have been a success,” Poda said. “Some states have already implemented legislation, but Ohio is still considering it. Instead of waiting to see if the state to acts, I want to make sure we do something now at a local level to make Summit County roads safer.”

A July 27, 2009 study released by the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute shows that drivers involved in the research project were more than 23 times more likely to crash when text messaging than drivers who were not. Additional research shows that drivers with a .08 blood alcohol level (the legal limit in Ohio) have about a four times greater risk of an accident than non-impaired drivers. The problem of text messaging while driving is particularly dangerous for younger drivers as studies show that 21 percent of fatal car crashes involving teenagers were the result of cell phone use. Additionally, a recent poll by the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute found that Ohio voters support banning the use of hand-held cell phones while driving by 75 percent. This data supports what Mr. Poda said he has been hearing from residents ever since he introduced the idea of banning text messaging while driving.

“I’ve received a lot of feedback from residents and law enforcement officials and the responses have been overwhelmingly positive,” he said.

The proposed law, which could be enforced by all law enforcement agencies in the county, calls for a citation in the amount of \$150 per offense.

“This issue is not and was never meant to be a money-making endeavor for the county,” Poda said. “We simply want to highlight awareness of the fact that people should refrain from texting while driving because it is incredibly dangerous and hopefully this will act as a deterrent.”

Summit County Council meetings take place at 5:30 p.m. on the 7th Floor of the Ohio Building, located at 175 S. Main St. in Akron, OH.

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