

News Release

Russell M. Pry – Summit County Executive



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Summit County Executive Russell M. Pry to Seek Reelection

On Wednesday, October 26, 2011, Russell M. Pry announced his bid for reelection for Summit County Executive, an office he has held since 2007.

"I am honored to serve the citizens of Summit County and look forward to serving another term," Executive Pry said. "I believe the partnerships and collaborations we have developed have successfully moved our county forward in creating jobs while saving tax dollars and reducing the county budget."

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND JOB CREATION

Russell M. Pry was sworn in as the Summit County Executive on July 13, 2007, bringing a wealth of experience and community involvement to the position. As County Executive, Pry has focused a significant amount of effort on improving local economic development, while at the same time guiding the county through the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. To date, Pry's attention to this issue has resulted in numerous achievements. The most noteworthy being:

- ❑ Assisting in retaining the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company Global and North American Headquarters and Innovation Center in Summit County. As a result of this deal, the conglomerate will continue to employ 2,900 local citizens and purchase over \$370 million in goods/services from over 400 Summit County vendors each year.
- ❑ Partnering with city, county and state officials to keep Bridgestone Americas Tire Operations in Summit County. As a result of a development agreement, Bridgestone is in the process of constructing its new \$70 million, state-of-the-art Technical Center in the City of Akron. The retention project will keep over 1,000 high-paying, technical jobs in Summit County.
- ❑ Collaborating with First Energy, the Summit County Port Authority, Akron Children's Hospital, Summa Health System, Akron General Health System, NEOMED, The University of Akron and the State of Ohio to convert a

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county owned building into a new, state-of-the-art headquarter facility for The Austen BioInnovation Institute in Akron (ABIA). Over the next ten years, the ABIA intends to create 2,400 jobs and attract millions of dollars in research, investment and commercialization to the community.

- ❑ Creating the Job Preservation and Revenue Sharing Agreement to prevent job poaching between neighboring communities and financially assisting communities who lose an employer to another signatory community. In 2011, 20 communities signed the agreement.

IMPROVEMENT OF COUNTY FACILITIES

Under Pry's leadership, the Summit County Executive's Office has successfully completed the following major capital improvement projects:

- ❑ Constructing a new \$2.2 million, 16,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art County of Summit Veterans Service Commission (VSC) Center in 2009. The facility, located on East Waterloo Road in Akron, is now fully handicap accessible and equipped with twenty-five administrative office spaces, a multipurpose room, a Veterans Learning Center and a 90 space parking lot.
- ❑ Building a new \$2.96 million County of Summit Division of Animal Control facility in 2010. The facility, located at 250 Opportunity Parkway in Akron, now offers administrative office space, an adoption zone, an intake area, outdoor visiting space, quarantine quarters, staff locker rooms and a veterinary clinic. The need for this facility was identified by national organizations to improve the care and well-being of animals in Summit County.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONSOLIDATIONS AND COLLABORATIONS

Throughout the past four-and-a-half years, Pry has collaborated with numerous government offices and community organizations in an effort to save tax dollars, eliminate governmental redundancies and enhance services for citizens. Examples of Pry's collaborative efforts include:

- ❑ Merging the City of Akron, City of Cuyahoga Falls, Village of Silver Lake and City of Tallmadge building permit and inspection functions into the County of Summit Division of Building Standards, located at 1030 East Tallmadge Avenue in Akron. The County now provides Building Standards services to 26 of the 31 communities in Summit County, thereby eliminating unnecessary and costly duplication of services.
- ❑ Pry joined with several public and private sector leaders to plan the consolidation of the major public health departments in the County. As of January 1, 2011, the Akron Health Department, the Barberton Health

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District and the Summit County Health District joined together and became one health department, pursuing new opportunities to improve and expand public health services to our citizens, saving valuable tax dollars and providing advantages to grant and programming applications.

- ❑ Collaborating with the Summit County Family and Children First Council to establish First Things First, an early childhood care and education system enhancement plan that strives to address system gaps, reduce the duplication of services and identify the need for local service improvements.
- ❑ Under Pry's leadership, the County has advanced initiatives to assist the developmentally disabled in Summit County. The County provided a \$100,000 Community Development Block Grant to Hattie Larlham to help fund the opening of the Doggie Daycare and Boarding Facility in Twinsburg, Ohio. This venture will assist developmentally disabled individuals in learning valuable employment skills. The County also assisted Hattie Larlham with the relocation of its corporate offices from Portage County to Twinsburg and has also contracted with Hattie's for it to operate the Summit County courthouse cafeteria.
- ❑ Entering into an office space lease agreement with Akron SCORE, a non-profit association dedicated to entrepreneur education and the formation, growth and success of area small businesses. The organization is now leasing 1,250 square-feet of office space, located on the second floor of the Ohio Building, 175 S. Main Street in downtown Akron, for a nominal fee.
- ❑ Serving as a source facility for the PetSmart Charities Rescue Waggin' vehicle: a transportation program that takes dogs and puppies from areas of high pet populations to shelters in regions where adoptable dogs are more in demand. To date, the Division of Animal Control has boarded over 300 dogs onto the Rescue Waggin'. The partnership has also led the County of Summit to secure two PetSmart Charities grants totaling \$17,734.

STRONG AND PRUDENT FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Shortly after Pry became County Executive, the global and U.S. economies took a severe downturn, leading to a substantial loss of revenue to the County. As a result, Executive Pry has spent a considerable amount of time and effort to manage the County's budget while still maintaining high quality service for the citizens of Summit County.

The County has reduced general fund spending by \$21.7 million annually, from \$122.3 million in 2008 to a proposed 2012 budget of \$100.6 million. During that same time, the County has reduced its total budget from \$576.6 million in 2008 to \$490 million in 2012. These reductions were achieved through employee buyouts, furlough programs, a hiring freeze, permanent reductions in staffing levels and reductions in contract and

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discretionary spending. Since 2008, personnel has been reduced by 512 employees from 3603 to 3091. As a result of these measures, the County has managed to weather the economic storm with a fully-intact rainy-day fund of \$25 million.

Pry's leadership in managing the County's financial situation has been consistently recognized by national ratings agencies. In 2010, Moody's Investors Services affirmed the County's Aa2 rating and stable outlook, citing "strong managerial oversight," while Standard and Poor's affirmed the County's AA rating and noted the County's "strong" financial management practices. Recently, Fitch Ratings upgraded the County's outlook from negative to stable, again citing the County's "strong and conservative financial management." Fitch had previously adjusted the outlook downward at the onset of the financial crisis. The exterior validation of the County's sound financial practices is a testament to Pry's strong leadership.

Despite the loss of revenue as a result of the economic downturn, Pry's financial leadership and cost-cutting initiatives have enabled the County to effectively and prudently use taxpayer dollars. Summit County is currently 85th lowest of 88 counties in the rate of sales tax charged for County operations. The County also operates on the lowest per capita and total general fund of the six largest counties in Ohio.

OTHER INITIATIVES AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Pry has also been a strong leader in promoting environmentally-friendly measures in the County. In 2011, he declared the County of Summit as an Alternative Energy Zone (AEZ), assisted in the development of Season's Greene Eco-industrial Park in Hudson, Ohio and completed numerous internal energy efficiency projects that are expected to save the County more than \$200,000 a year in energy costs. The County is also seeking LEED Certification for the new Animal Control facility.

To date, County of Summit Executive Russell M. Pry has been honored by: the Akron Boards of Trade Council, Greater Akron Chamber of Commerce, the Northeast Ohio Joint Office of Economic Development (JOED) and Team NEO, Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, East Akron Community House (EACH), Goodwill Industries of Akron, Habitat for Humanity, Hospice of Visiting Nurse Services, International Institute of Akron, Summit County Children Services, United Way of Summit County to name a few.

Pry, a lifelong resident of Summit County, has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political Science from Kent State University and obtained a Juris Doctorate from The University of Akron, School of Law in 1984. He currently resides in Akron, Ohio.

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