

Collaboration and Consolidation

The Office of Summit County Executive Russell M. Pry

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Since becoming Executive in 2007, my administration and the other Summit County elected officials have collaborated with numerous government and community agencies to save tax dollars, eliminate governmental redundancies and enhance services for citizens. In part because of these collaborations and consolidations, the County has reduced its general fund spending from \$122.3 million in 2008 to \$100.6 million in 2012, and operates as the most financially efficient of Ohio's six largest counties.

Building Standards Merger

In 2009, the County and City of Akron entered into an agreement to consolidate Akron's building department into the County's Division of Building Standards. In 2011, the City of Cuyahoga Falls, City of Tallmadge and Village of Silver Lake followed suit. As a result, the County now performs building permit and inspection services in 25 of the County's 31 communities. Changes in state law in the mid-2000's that standardized building codes across the state, coupled with the cost of operating small municipal departments spurred the consolidations. The consolidated department has led to cost savings for contractors, uniform application and enforcement of the building code and substantial cost savings for both the County and municipalities. Through the first three quarters of 2011, the County has estimated its savings at \$1,162,461. At the same time, Akron, Cuyahoga Falls and Tallmadge have been able to save money by not funding separate operations.

(See savings in the chart at right.)

Health Department Merger

Prior to 2011, the County was served by three health departments or districts - the Akron Health Department, which served the City of Akron, the Barberton Health District, which served the cities of Barberton and Norton, and the Summit County Combined General Health District, which served the balance of the County. In 2009, Executive Pry began discussions with both public and private sector leaders on the benefits of a merger of the departments - elimination of duplicated services, improvements in efficiencies and reductions in spending of taxpayer dollars. For over a year, the parties worked through personnel, service, jurisdictional and legal issues. After reaching amicable arrangements on these issues,

County of Summit Division of Building Standards

| Year | Revenue | Expenditures | NetProfit/loss |
|--|----------------------|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 2007 | \$1,823,639 | \$1,879,644 | -\$56,005 |
| 2008 | \$1,305,327 | \$1,831,441 | -\$516,114 |
| 2009 (County Only/Non-Akron) ² | \$1,138,951 | \$1,860,000 ¹ | -\$721,049 |
| 2009 (Combined Dept.) | \$1,965,144 | \$2,288,981 | -\$323,837 |
| 2010 (County Only/Non-Akron) | \$1,256,514 | \$1,729,800 ³ | -\$473,286 |
| 2010 (Combined Dept.) | \$2,129,660 | \$2,214,811 | -\$85,151 |
| 2011 (1/1/11 to 9/30/11) (Combined Dept.) | \$1,996,207 | \$1,797,870 | +\$204,337 |
| 2011 (1/1/11 to 9/30/11) (County Only) ⁵ | \$1,124,573 | \$1,297,350 ⁴ | -\$172,777 |
| | 2009 Difference | | \$397,212 |
| | 2010 Difference | | \$388,135 |
| | 2011 YTD Difference | | \$377,114 |
| | Total Savings | | \$1,162,461 |

¹ Based on amount budgeted for Building Standards for 2009.

² All townships and municipalities other than City of Akron.

³ Assumes 7% reduction from 2009 budget, which would have been achieved through furlough days, layoffs, etc.

⁴ Assumes flat budget from 2010 to 2011; only includes first nine months of budget.

⁵ Effective 1/1/11 County consolidated Cuyahoga Falls and Silver Lake. Effective 4/1/11 County consolidated Tallmadge. Akron remains consolidated.

the agencies consolidated on January 1, 2011. Today, a single agency - Summit County Public Health - serves the entire County.

Jobs Preservation Agreement

Today, almost all municipal and township governments place a priority on economic development and job creation. However at times, these local governments take actions that lure a business from a neighboring community. The result is that resources are spent simply to move jobs

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from one place to another within a County or region, rather than creating or attracting new jobs. Additionally, the community that loses the business often suffers a loss of revenue. To reduce instances of such “job-poaching” and to provide a cushion to communities who lose a business to a neighbor, Executive Pry developed the Jobs Preservation and Sharing Agreement in 2008. Under the agreement, the first of its kind in Ohio, communities must share revenue in the event a community offers incentives to a business to relocate or in the event of a relocation of a large employer. In 2011 the following 21 communities in Summit County have signed the agreement - City of Hudson, Village of Peninsula, Bath Township, Springfield Township, Copley Township, Richfield Township, City of Barberton, City of Twinsburg, City of Fairlawn, City of New Franklin, City of Akron, City of Tallmadge, City of Cuyahoga Falls, City of Macedonia, Village of Mogadore, Village of Silver Lake, Village of Richfield, Village of Northfield, Village of Lakemore, Village of Reminderville and Sagamore Hills Township.

Regionalized Health Insurance and SCRIPTS Pharmacy

Under Executive Pry’s leadership, the County began offering political subdivisions within the County the ability to participate in a regionalized health care plan. Participating subdivisions undergo an initial underwriting and are provided with rates for the insurance. In 2010, the Village of Mogadore and Sagamore Hills Township joined the program at significant cost savings to each. Additionally, other communities have been able to leverage the County’s rates to negotiate lower renewals with their health insurance providers. In addition to health insurance, the County has offered employee assistance program administration at a cost savings to the City of Green, Copley Township and Metro Parks Serving Summit County in addition to Mogadore and Sagamore Hills. Also in 2010, the County opened SCRIPTS Pharmacy, which is operated by the County’s pharmacy benefits manager, ExpressMed Pharmacy. The pharmacy reduces the County’s costs for employee prescriptions, while generating revenue for the County in the form of lease payments and a share of net profits. The County is also implementing a drug reclamation program in conjunction with ExpressMed and Summit County Public Health.

Safety Forces Collaborations

The County has collaborated with the City of Akron on several public safety issues to reduce duplications in facilities and services. The County currently operates an 800 MHz radio system jointly with the City of Akron, which is utilized by many agencies within the County. The system is funded by user fees from the agencies that utilize the system. The County Sheriff also provides misdemeanor beds to the City of Akron at

the Summit County Jail and bills the City quarterly, rather than the City operating its own correctional facility. The County Sheriff and City of Akron also jointly operate a dispatch center in the County Safety Building. The City contracts with the County to utilize the County Sheriff’s indoor and outdoor firing range rather than operating its own range. The County Sheriff also contracts with numerous political subdivisions, such as the City of Green, to provide policing services.

Additional Collaborations with the City of Akron - Office Services, Weights & Measures and Vehicle Maintenance

In 2009, the County and the City of Akron merged their central office services operations (copy/print and mail processing) through a memorandum of understanding. The City and County share equally in the cost of equipment and personnel which is much cheaper than running two independent operations. The City of Akron also eliminated its weights & measures department and contracted with the County Fiscal Offices to provide that service. The City of Akron also provides maintenance and fuel for some County fleet vehicles pursuant to an agreement.

Leases with Public and Non-Profit Agencies

As declining revenues have driven reduction in the size of government and associated personnel, the County has sought to collaboratively repurpose unneeded County facility space through leases with numerous public and non-profit agencies. The County currently leases space to Congressman Tim Ryan, The Ohio State University Extension and the Summit Soil and Water Conservation District. It also leases a building to the Akron Area Arts Alliance for the operation of an arts incubator and Akron SCORE, which offers several services to small businesses operating in Summit County. The County has also contracted with Hattie Larlham and United Disability Services, non-profits that assist individuals with disabilities, to operate cafeterias at County facilities.

Summit for Kids and First Things First

In 2010, Executive Pry teamed up with Summit County Children Services Executive Director John Saros and Summit County Juvenile Court Judge Linda Tucci Teodosio along with a large group of corporate sponsors to host an annual community luncheon and the Summit for Kids Expo. The Second Annual Summit for Kids celebration was held on August 21, 2011, 14,000 people attended the event.

In March 2009, Executive Pry designated 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. Over 45 agencies are involved in First Things First.