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NEWS
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**Summit CSEA Presented Best Practice Award for
Innovative “Using Billboards to Locate Felony Offenders” program**

(Akron) ... Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh’s Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA), a division of the prosecutor’s office, today received a **Best Practice Award** from the Ohio Child Support Director’s Association for its innovative program *Using Billboards to Locate Felony Child Support Offenders*.

Walsh said, “We are always looking for new ways to bring non-paying parents back into the system to pay their child support. One step at a time adds up quickly and the results speak for themselves. I am very proud of this award and the program. We will continue to work in innovative ways to improve our collection of child support.”

Walsh’s billboard campaign received national attention on ABC’s Good Morning America show for the only known use of posting fugitives wanted for child support on billboards. Among Ohio’s 88 counties, only 10 awards were given at the annual meeting in Dublin today. The association states that “Best Practice awards are given to those CSEA's which have demonstrated proactive and creative approaches to improving the child support program.”

Attached is the proposal in its entirety. The following is an excerpt:

***Description:** Beginning in August 2007, Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh embarked on an aggressive campaign to locate all absent parents who had outstanding criminal felony non-support warrants for failure to pay child support. Since 2001, Summit County has filed 2,564 felony criminal non-support indictments. More importantly, we have collected over \$15.1 million from all absent parents indicted since the program’s onset. With 125 warrants outstanding, Prosecutor Walsh, along with the CSEA’s specialized Criminal Non-Support Unit, made the decision to feature 39 felons on eight regular and digital roadside billboards throughout Summit County. Attached are images of the actual billboards.*

***Results:** Of the 39 featured individuals, fifteen (15) were either located and arrested through receipt of anonymous tips, surrendered upon seeing*

themselves on the billboards or sent in a payment on their case. Four (4) of these defendants were extradited from the State of Florida.

Relying on the success of the first wave of defendants displayed on the billboards, a new set of absent parents was selected for the billboard campaign. For the second round, 25 absent parents were featured on five regular and digital billboards throughout Summit County. As of this date, thirteen (13) of them have been located and arrested through anonymous tips, surrendered upon seeing themselves on the billboards or sent in a payment on their case. Three (3) of these defendants were extradited from the states of Florida, California, and Nevada.

A total of 28 of the 64 absent parents depicted, or 43.75%, have responded, whether voluntarily or involuntarily. Judicial sentences range from several years of probation to incarceration. The total support arrearages at the time of indictment for the absent parents displayed on billboards totaled \$1,200,171.69.

Of those displayed on the billboards, \$19,579.90 in child support has been collected as of this date.

Since 2001, Walsh's CSEA has been the recipient of 16 awards, ranging from state-wide Best Practice awards to a national award for the Most Improved Child Support Agency in the country.