

# News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 11, 2020

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## **County, Fairlawn and Akron Collaborate on Fiber Network Expansion for use in Courts and Jail**

**SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO**—On August 10, 2020, Fairlawn City Council passed three pieces of legislation to accept federal CARES Act funding from Summit County to expand the City’s existing fiber network for use by the County’s criminal justice and public safety agencies. The County will introduce similar legislation on August 17 to send \$6.5 million to Fairlawn to fund the expansion.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the restrictions it places on gatherings and face-to-face interaction, Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro’s Division of Public Safety began investigating the feasibility of holding hearings, assessments, and all other court proceedings allowed by law, virtually. Following consultation with subject matter experts, it was determined the Criminal Justice Integrated Technology Project would require a secure and dedicated high-speed fiber network.

Through a partnership with City of Fairlawn and the City of Akron, the County CARES funding will be used to expand FairlawnGig to County and Akron municipal buildings that hold criminal justice proceedings or house inmates. The expansion will facilitate virtual court proceedings to increase the safety and security of law enforcement, court employees, inmates and the general public.

“COVID-19 has forced us to rethink how government operates and delivers services. As we begin to adjust to life with the virus, we have to consider how to safely and efficiently meet the needs of our community,” said Executive Shapiro. “This project prioritizes both safety and efficiency, and perfectly aligns with the CARES Act regulations. We appreciate the cities of Fairlawn and Akron working with us to keep everyone involved in the criminal justice system safe.”

Fairlawn Mayor William Roth Jr. announced, “Summit County has found a great need to eliminate

personal contact involved in court appearances with the idea of going to video court hearings. Summit County has asked Fairlawn, in particular FairlawnGig, to help solve this problem and create a network that will allow for this type of remote appearance. We are honored that Summit County realizes the value that FairlawnGig will bring to a project like the Criminal Justice Technology Project.” He also said, “FairlawnGig was started as a fiber optic network to bring greater good to the City of Fairlawn, and in times like these, it can provide greater good to Summit County and the City of Akron.”

Mayor Dan Horrigan celebrated the partnership adding, “the COVID-19 pandemic has revealed the need for government to advance its technological capabilities to ensure essential services continue, safely and transparently. This project will allow us to significantly improve our ability to operate during this emergency and anything we may face in the future.”

The project, if approved by Summit County Council, is expected to be completed by December 2020.

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