

News Release

Administrative Judge Kathryn Michael
Summit County Court of Common Pleas
General Division



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: September 6, 2023

Contact: Deniela T Williams
Public Information Officer & Community Relations Liaison
dwilliams@cpcourt.summitoh.net
330.643-7840

**SUMMIT COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS GENERAL DIVISION
IMPLEMENTS OFFICE OF BACKLOG REDUCTION &
HIRES RETIRED JUDGE RICHARD REINBOLD TO MANAGE IT**

Summit County, Ohio: The Summit County Court of Common Pleas General Division’s Office of Backlog Reduction (OBR) was established in early June 2023 for the purpose of helping to reduce the caseloads of the 10 Judges currently seated on the Common Pleas General Division bench.

In 2022, the Ohio Supreme Court Case Management Section reported data indicating that these Judges had nearly twice the criminal caseload (707) as the state average (354 per Judge). As a result, the 10 Judges reached a consensus to utilize grant funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to establish the OBR. Shortly after this, they quickly reached another consensus to hire Stark County’s Retired Judge Richard Reinbold to oversee it.

Reinbold retired in 2008 after having served on the Canton Municipal Court from 1991 through 1996 and Stark Common Pleas Court from 1997 to 2008. Following his retirement in 2008, Reinbold returned to private practice for several years and became Of Counsel at Schulman, Roth & Associates in 2018. Prior to this, he served as a visiting Judge for 10 counties from 2011 to 2018.

It was Reinbold’s extensive legal experience that made him an ideal candidate for managing the Court’s OBR, which he characterizes as “a work in progress.” When asked about the need for the program and its probability of success, Reinbold said “The

Summit County Court of Common Pleas General Division's bench has an incredible docket and this program will assist with reducing it. I give an enormous amount of credit to the bench for identifying the problem and coming up with such a sound resolution. The more we (Office of Backlog Reduction) move each respective Judge's civil docket, the more time they will have to deal with their criminal cases."

The program has two tracks. In *Track One*, the OBR attempts to move pending civil cases forward under the trial Judge's case management system, holds pre-trials, and rules on motions while enforcing the original trial date. All motions and hearings are heard by the Office Backlog Reduction. If the case cannot be resolved without going to trial, it will often be returned to the trial Judge. In *Track Two*, the OBR—during the pre-trial stage and with the trial Judge's approval—takes the lead in resolving the pending civil case via a mediation/settlement conference prior to the trial date. If the case is not resolved, it will often be returned to the trial Judge.

The program currently has approximately 40 cases, but is poised to receive additional cases in the coming weeks and months. These cases differ from, but dovetail nicely into, those the Court registered for its Settlement Week, which will be held October 30th to November 3rd. The aforementioned cases are officially assigned to the OBR, while those registered for Settlement Week primarily remain on the trial Judge's docket. Judge Reinbold and Magistrate William Rininger, who was recently hired specifically to assist Reinbold, will have an oversight role during the Court's Settlement Week.

For more information on the Office of Backlog Reduction, please contact Court Executive Officer Robert Gainer at rgainer@cpccourt.summitoh.net or 330-643-2190. You may also visit www.summitcpccourt.net/settlementweek/ for additional information on Settlement Week.

###