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2008 ANNUAL REPORT

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The office of the **Portage County Prosecuting Attorney** represents the interests of the citizens of the State of Ohio, the residents of Portage County, and Portage County Government in many aspects of civil and criminal law. The Prosecutor's Office operates with four divisions: a Criminal Division, a Civil Division, an Appellate Division, and a Victim/Witness Assistance Division.

The **Criminal Division** represents the citizens of the State of Ohio and Portage County in prosecuting criminal cases in our County's three Municipal Courts, two Common Pleas Courts and the Juvenile Court. The Portage County Prosecutor is responsible for over 30,000 criminal and traffic cases filed each year in these Courts. This Division also renders legal advice and assistance to our County's seventeen different Police Departments. A Domestic Violence Unit, funded with Federal Grant dollars consists of an assistant prosecutor dedicated to domestic violence cases and an outreach advocate dedicated to assisting victims of domestic violence. A Special Victims Unit consisting of an assistant prosecutor and an investigator prosecutes crimes against children, the elderly, and the disabled. A criminal child support enforcement unit locates and prosecutes "deadbeat" parents with large child support arrearages. The criminal division is staffed by a total of ten attorneys, six investigators, and clerical support staff.

The **Civil Division** provides legal representation to all eighteen of our County elected officials and their respective offices. It also provides legal representation to all County Boards and Commissions, the County's eighteen Townships, their Trustees,

Clerks, and Zoning Boards. This Division represents all of these entities in matters of litigation in State and Federal Courts, contracts, personnel matters, collection of real estate and personal property taxes owed to the County. It represents the Department of Job and Family Services in matters of abused, neglected, and dependent children, and renders general legal advice to all of the County and Township officials. This Division is staffed by eight attorneys and clerical support staff.

The **Appellate Division** provides legal representation in all legal matters of the Criminal and Civil Divisions involving appeals from local court decisions to State and Federal Appellate Courts. This division is staffed by one attorney and a law clerk.

The **Victim/Witness Assistance Division** provides assistance and information to victims of crime and witnesses in criminal cases, together with referrals to other quality support services offered in Portage County. Advocates are available twenty-four hours a day to assist victims of crimes such as domestic violence, stalking, assault, sexual abuse, child abuse, drunk driving, etc. and to assist the families of homicide victims. These services are available to all residents of Portage County, or anyone who becomes the victim of a violent crime in Portage County. This division's trained advocates are available to lend immediate support to victims of violent crime, to accompany them to court appearances, provide information and guidance concerning the criminal justice system, make referrals to appropriate social service agencies and counselors, provide information concerning payment of medical bills from State funds, and to notify victims and witnesses concerning important hearing dates and the status or outcome of criminal cases in which they are involved. This division is staffed by four Victim Advocates along with a clerical assistant. This division is funded almost entirely by state and federal grant money.

YEAR 2008 STATISTICS OF INTEREST

- The Criminal Division was responsible for over 6,000 criminal misdemeanor cases, including 1,508 drunk driving cases and 434 domestic violence cases.
- The Criminal Division received 1,267 felony reports from the 17 police agencies operating in Portage County, including 26 felony drunk driving cases, 96 felonious assault cases, 75 felony domestic violence cases, 171 felony child abuse cases, 280 felony drug cases, 75 felony burglary cases, and 145 felony theft cases, 38 robbery cases, 78 receiving stolen property cases, and 60 felony child support cases.
- 769 new felony cases were filed in the Portage County Common Pleas Court in 2008, each representing one individual who was charged with one or more felony level crimes. This represents an 11% increase over the number in 2007.
- The Civil Division opened 119 new case files and 178 administrative files in 2008.

- The Appellate Division handled 58 new cases in the 11th District Court of Appeals in 2008. 13 cases were pending in the Ohio Supreme Court and one case in the United States Supreme Court. 95 percent of the Appellate cases arose from criminal matters.
- The Victim/Witness Assistance Division rendered assistance to a total of 2,042 victims of crime in 2008: 868 in the Municipal Courts, 905 in the Common Pleas Courts, and 269 in the Juvenile Court.

The Prosecutor's **SAFE-SCHOOLS HOTLINE (1-800-201-8357)** continues to operate to make Portage County schools safer. Rewards of \$250.00 are paid to individuals who report weapons which are confiscated on school premises or buses. All reports are confidential.

For more information please visit our website at: www.portageprosecutor.com



New Portage County Prosecutor's Office opened Nov. 2008