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JUSTICE WITH INTEGRITY

Presented by the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office
Lynn Maro, Prosecutor

Prosecutor Maro Launches Quarterly Newsletter: Justice With Integrity

Justice with Integrity. In her first six months in office Prosecutor Lynn Maro has focused on improving consistency and reliability of criminal prosecutions. This has included changes in how cases are presented to the grand jury and implementing procedures so that the resolution of a case is not dependant on which assistant prosecutor handles a cases, or which courtroom is assigned. There is closer coordination and communication with law enforcement, including reports to law enforcement when a cases is completed, and notifications regarding changes in the law. Prosecutor Maro has also placed a strong focus on securing convictions for high-level felony cases and reducing plea bargaining for the most serious and violent offenses. This approach reflects a commitment to holding violent and dangerous offenders accountable.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

PAGE 2

GUN SAFETY AIDING
COMMUNITY

PAGE 3

NEW
APPOINTMENTS

PAGES 4-6

CRIMINAL & CIVIL
NEWS

PAGES 7-10

COMMUNITY
OUTREACH

PAGE 11

REMEMBERING
JOE MAXIN

Gun Lock initiative to help gun safety

Prosecutor Maro helps promoting gun safety by providing community with gun locks

This quarter, The Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office launched a partnership with the Mahoning County Sheriff's Office and the Mahoning County Mental Health and Recovery Board, to launch a joint initiative to distribute free gun locks to residents. This collaborative effort is made possible through Project ChildSafe, a national firearm safety education program. The gun locks were awarded to the Sheriff's Office, which then partnered with the Prosecutor's Office and the Mental Health and Recovery Board to ensure broad distribution and community outreach.

This joint operation aims to reduce gun-related incidents by encouraging secure firearm storage in homes across the country. National data emphasizes the urgency of the initiative. Gun locks help reduce suicide. The time it takes to unlock the gun provides time to reflect and think, which can result in a crisis being diverted.

53% of youth homicides (ages 0–17) involve firearms, in 16% of unintentional firearm deaths involving children under 13, the gun was mistaken for a toy, in 2021, 25.2% of Ohio firearm owners reported keeping a gun loaded and unlocked in their home. Each gun lock kit includes a cable-style lock and a firearm safety guide. The locks are compatible with most firearms, including handguns, rifles, and shotguns.

The first distribution event has already taken place, and the Prosecutor's office has since given out over gun locks to various jurisdictions within Mahoning County.

Additional opportunities to obtain a lock will be available at community events throughout the year. Residents are encouraged to follow the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office Facebook page for updates on future distribution dates.



Mahoning County leaders speak on gun lock distribution and its importance



Prosecutor Maro is interviewed during gun lock distribution event



Gun locks come with key and instructional manual on how to apply the lock



Mahoning County residents pick up their gun locks during distribution event

New Appointments

New Employees starting this quarter

- Linda Long - Paralegal - Linda works as a paralegal in the county courts or misdemeanor division. Linda brings years of experience from working in the office of the Clerk of Courts.
- Jennifer Gorby – Assistant Prosecutor - Jennifer works in the Juvenile Division representing Mahoning County Children's Services.
- Michael Markulin – Intern - Michael will serve as an intern for our Juvenile Division.
- Kylie Carpenter – Intern - Kylie will serve as an intern for our Criminal Division and will handle some clerk responsibilities. Kylie is currently a student at Kent State University and will intern for her summer break.
- Sheri Noble – Paralegal - Sheri works as a paralegal within the felony division. Sheri has years of experience in various public sector jobs.
- Natalie Dascenzo – Paralegal - Natalie is starting as a paralegal working for the delinquent tax division. Natalie brings years of experience working in the office of the Clerk of Courts.
- Mackenzie Zubyk – Law Intern - Mackenzie will serve as a law intern for our Criminal Division. Mackenzie is currently studying at the University of Akron school of Law.



Civil Division

Prosecutor's Office helps secure funds for Boardman wellness center aimed at supporting first responders

Boardman Police Chief Todd Werth announced the construction of a wellness center to assist first responders with mental and physical health challenges brought on by their jobs. The 4-acre property on Raupp Avenue in Boardman Township was donated by the Clarence R. Smith Family.

The Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office is proud to have provided support for the development of the Clarence R. Smith Mahoning Valley First Responder Wellness Center. Construction of this center was possible because of funding received from Ohio's opioid settlement. As a result of the national opioid settlement, Mahoning County was allocated a share of those funds. The township received \$464,000 in opioid settlement dollars, in addition to \$253,000 in locally committed funds to begin construction and renovations. The monies are expected to support efforts to battle addiction, provide treatment, prevention and recovery. The Prosecutor's Office assisted Boardman Township allocation efforts to ensure settlement funds could be used for the initiative.

The center will provide a location for first responders across Mahoning County to access mental health services, peer support, wellness training and educational resources. The property is scheduled for its grand opening in time for National First Responders Day on October 24, 2025.

The Clarence R. Smith Wellness Center will serve all 58 responder agencies in Mahoning County. By focusing on proactive mental health care, the center will help strengthen the well-being of first responders and ensure they have the resources needed to serve the community effectively.



Criminal Division

Criminal cases from Quarter 2 2025

State v. Michael Alexander

Mahoning County Common Pleas Court Judge John Durkin sentenced Michael Alexander to 15 to 19 years in prison following his conviction for two counts of Rape. Assistant Prosecutor Caitlyn Andrews successfully prosecuted the case. This plea offer was made last October; the victim was pleased with the offer because he/she did not want the case to go to trial. Alexander was arrested and charged with Rape, Sexual Battery, and Gross Sexual Imposition. Alexander will be required to register as a tier III sex offender, the highest, most stringent registration, which requires Alexander to register every 90 days for the remainder of his life.

Beginning in 2017, Michael Alexander sexually assaulted a then 12-year-old at a home in Youngstown.

“This case reflects our office’s continued commitment to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community and working with victims to hold offenders accountable,” said Mahoning County Prosecutor Lynn Maro. Mahoning County Prosecutor Lynn Maro credits and thanks the Youngstown Police Department for its hard work with this case and helping convict Alexander of Rape.

State v. Andre Bailey

Andre Bailey, 40, was sentenced to life in prison with eligibility for parole after serving 39 years. In February, a jury found Bailey guilty of the murder of 24-year-old Reynaldo Hernandez. Bailey was found guilty of two counts of Aggravated Murder, one count of Murder, one count of Aggravated Robbery, one count of Tampering with Evidence, and one count of Having Weapons Under Disability. The Prosecutor’s Office rejected efforts to have the charges reduced in exchange for a guilty plea to Manslaughter. Chief of the Criminal Division, John Juhasz, successfully prosecuted the case along with Assistant Prosecutor Katherine Jones.

In October of 2024, Hernandez was shot and killed at Bailey’s home on Bott Street, located on Youngstown’s East Side. There were several people in the home at the time of the murder, but Bailey was seen on surveillance camera pointing a firearm at Hernandez. Some of the co-defendants assisted Hernandez into a vehicle after he had been shot and left him in the Mount Hope Cemetery. Police found Hernandez’s body early the following morning.

Criminal Division

Criminal cases from Quarter 2 2025

State v. Walter Bolt

Walter Bolt, 65, has pleaded guilty to a deadly drunk driving crash that claimed the lives of two individuals and seriously injured another. Bolt entered guilty pleas to two counts of Aggravated Vehicular Homicide, felonies of the second degree and one count of Aggravated Vehicular Assault a felony of the third degree, and one count of Operating a Vehicle Under the Influence of Alcohol, A Drug of Abuse or a Combination of them, a misdemeanor of the first degree. As part of his plea, Bolt will receive a mandatory lifetime driver's license suspension. At the time of sentencing, the State of Ohio will recommend a sentence of 19 to 23 years in a State penitentiary.

Assistant Prosecutor Stephen Maszczak successfully prosecuted this case.

On March 3rd, 2025, Bolt crashed into a vehicle on State Route 170 and Unity Road in Springfield Township. Bolt's vehicle swerved and struck a Honda Accord carrying three people. Two of them died from their injuries, and one is recovering. Bolt's blood alcohol content was .215, and there were cans of alcohol found in his vehicle at the time of the crash.

"We are committed to holding impaired drivers accountable and ensuring justice for victims," said Prosecutor Lynn Maro.

Prosecutor Maro would like to thank the Springfield Township Police Department and the Ohio State Highway Patrol for their diligent work on this case, which ultimately led to a successful prosecution.

State v. Damian Cessna

Damian Cessna, 28, was found guilty by a Mahoning County jury for the assault of a Boardman police officer. Cessna was found guilty of Felonious Assault, a Felony of the first degree, following a 3-day trial before Mahoning County Common Pleas Judge Maureen Sweeney. Assistant Prosecutors Patrick Fening and Robert Andrews successfully prosecuted the case. Cessna was sentenced to 4 years in prison.

During a traffic stop on Market Street in Boardman, Cessna wielded a knife and attempted to charge an officer before being subdued. Cessna was arrested and charged for the incident.

Mahoning County Prosecutor Lynn Maro thanks the Boardman Police Department and the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation for their work and investigation in this case, which led to the prosecution.

Criminal Division

County Court Case Quarter 2 2025

The Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office – County Courts Division handles misdemeanor criminal and traffic offenses that happen outside of city limits in Mahoning County. These are generally lower-level offenses that carry a potential jail sentence of six months or less. Misdemeanors are classified by degrees, with first-degree being the most serious and minor misdemeanors being the least.

Recently, David Heberling was found guilty of two counts of violating a Protection Order after a bench trial in Boardman Court, heard by Judge Joseph M. Houser. Heberling was sentenced to 60 days in the Mahoning County Justice Center and 2 years of probation.

Assistant Prosecutor Ralph Rivera led the prosecution in this case.

Appellate decisions Quarter 2 2025

Man convicted of 2022 murder denied by appellate court to reopen case

The Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office announces that the Seventh District Court of Appeals of Ohio denied the appeals of John Morgan. Morgan was convicted in 2024 of Felonious Assault, Murder, and Voluntary Manslaughter after he shot and killed a man outside a home. During his jury trial, Morgan maintained his innocence, claiming he acted in self-defense.

His appeal argued that the jury instructions were confusing and misleading. However, the Court found that "The jury instructions given (during this trial) were a correct statement of the law as they followed OJI (Ohio Jury Instructions) on self-defense." The Appellate Court found sufficient evidence that John Morgan did not act in self-defense. Morgan also alleged ineffective assistance of counsel, claiming his attorney failed to file a motion to suppress dash camera evidence. In response, the Court stated, "...The failure to file a motion to suppress the dash cam evidence does not amount to 'a reasonable probability' the result of the trial would have been otherwise had the motion been granted." The Court ultimately rejected Morgan's claims and denied his application to reopen the case. The 7th District Court of Appeals denied his request to reopen twice.

Assistant Prosecutor Kristie Weibling wrote the Prosecutor's Office's response to Morgan's appeal.



Community Outreach

Memorial Day remembrance



Prosecutor Maro speaks at the Annual Fallen Officers Memorial at Our Lady of Mount Carmel

Throughout May, the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office joined our community in honoring those who made the ultimate sacrifice in service to our nation and in protection of our communities. Staff members participated in several local events, including the flag-laying ceremony at Tod Cemetery with the Mahoning County Veterans Service Commission, and the Annual Mahoning County Bar Association (MCBA) Memorial Service, where Chief of the Civil Division Kathi Welsh offered a moving musical tribute to honor members of the legal community who have passed.

Our office was also honored to attend both the Poland Township Fallen Officer Memorial Service and the Annual Fallen Officers Memorial at Our Lady of Mount Carmel. These solemn ceremonies paid tribute to officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. Prosecutor Lynn Maro spoke at Mount Carmel, reflecting on the courage of fallen officers and reminding us of General Patton's words: "It is foolish and wrong to mourn the men who died. Rather, we should thank God that such men lived."



Members of our office contributing to the flag-laying ceremony at Todd Cemetery



Chief of the Civil Division, Kathi McNabb Welsh playing a touching tribute on the flute at the MCBA's Memorial Service

On Memorial Day, our team walked alongside the community in the Boardman parade, a powerful reminder of the bravery and selflessness of those who serve. The Prosecutor's Office remains committed to honoring their legacy and is deeply grateful to all who continue to protect and serve.



Members of our office participating in the Memorial Day Parade



Community Outreach

Community Events during Quarter 2 cont.

Pinwheels For Prevention

This quarter, the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office helped recognize those who speak out against child abuse. These brave advocates were recognized at the Pinwheels For Prevention event held annually in Boardman. This event helps raise awareness about child abuse and puts a spotlight on local organizations that are stepping up to make a difference. Prosecutor Maro was the keynote speaker at this year's event!



Canfield School's Career Day

This quarter, the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office took part in Career Day at Canfield Village Middle School. Prosecutor Lynn Maro, along with Assistant Prosecutors Anissa Modarelli and Dawn Durkin, spoke with 8th-grade students about the role of our office and how an interest in law can lead to a career in public service.



Molding the next generation

This quarter, the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office took part in Law Day. This day is filled with local high school students learning the ins and outs of local government, as well as the intricacies of a courtroom, and the multitude of jobs it takes to keep the wheels of justice churning. Prosecutor Maro and members of our office hosted Springfield High School Students at the Mahoning County Common Pleas Courthouse to provide a tour and hold a mock trial. Members of our office were also invited to the Youngstown Municipal courtroom, where Judge Carla Baldwin held a panel of different judges and attorneys to provide students with insight on what it takes to progress in a successful legal career.



Campbell Joint Town Hall

This quarter, the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office partnered with Campbell Police Chief Kevin Sferra to host a community forum on safety, scams, and fraud prevention. Dozens of residents attended, and as part of our Gun Safety Initiative, free gun locks and anti-fraud pens were distributed. We thank the City of Campbell and Chief Sferra for their collaboration.



Community Outreach

Community Events during Quarter 2 cont.



Canfield Civics Day

This quarter, Prosecutor Maro met with Rotary members and students from the Canfield Local School District to share her journey to public service. She spoke about why she ran for Prosecutor, emphasizing her deep commitment to justice. Prosecutor Maro also explained her dedication to public service and its vital role in strengthening our community.



Aunt Mimi's Lemonade Stand

This quarter, Mahoning County Prosecutor Lynn Maro was invited to a fundraiser at Penguin City to help secure safety vests for law enforcement K9s in Mahoning County. Aunt Mimi's Lemonade Stand is a fundraising event with the goal of protecting active duty Mahoning Valley K9s. Their goal is to raise enough money to purchase 13 vests. The Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office helped to achieve that goal by donating 1 vest for the cause.

MCBA awards and scholarships

Several members of the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office were recognized at the Mahoning County Bar Association's Annual Election Banquet, this quarter. Civil Division Assistant Prosecutor Don Duda received the Distinguished Service Award for his outstanding community and professional contributions. Prosecutor Lynn Maro was announced as the recipient of the 2025 Professionalism Award, joining Chiefs John Juhasz and Kathi McNabb Welsh in this honor. Law clerks John Beshera and Alyssa Weyand also received \$1,500 scholarships as they prepare to begin law school this fall.



Community Block Watch

Mahoning County Prosecutor Lynn Maro recently joined the Handel's Neighborhood Association for an important presentation on scams and frauds impacting our community. As part of our ongoing public safety outreach, Prosecutor Maro shared tips on how to recognize and avoid common scams, especially those targeting seniors and vulnerable residents. She also answered questions from the group, providing helpful insight and resources. Attendees also received free gun locks and anti-fraud pens provided by our office.



Remembering Joe Maxin

Saying goodbye is never easy, and this year, our office bids farewell to a beloved former colleague and friend, Joseph Maxin. Attorney Maxin served the Mahoning County Prosecutor's Office with dedication, compassion, and integrity from 1990 to 2007. During his tenure, he made a lasting impact in both our Criminal and Civil Divisions, including his work representing the County Engineer's Office.

Joe was more than a talented attorney, he was a kind, witty, and genuine person who left a lasting impression on everyone he met. A true Renaissance man, Joe exemplified what it means to serve the public with humility and heart. His commitment to justice, his quick humor, and his unmistakable warmth made him one of a kind.

Though he is no longer with us, Joe's memory continues to live on in the halls of our office and in the hearts of those privileged to know him. We are deeply saddened by his passing and forever grateful for the time we shared.

Thank you, Joe, for your service, your laughter, and the legacy you leave behind. You will be dearly missed.

