

**Responses provided by Sheriff Levorchick
10/28/2024**

Q. So to clarify, an illegal immigrant was found eating pears off someone's tree, was apprehended, not charged with any crime and released – was seen again, apprehended – again, not charged with any crime other than looking different, speaking a foreign language and scary tattoos. Is this being blown out of proportion?

Asked by Lori Brikmanis

A. By the looks of the crowd this question is already answered (we had approximately 600 people in attendance). This person did not have "scary tattoos". He had tattoos consistent with the Venezuelan gang "Tren De Aragua" according to Border Patrol. Major difference.

Q. Is there a school board official in house? If so, how many illegal children are in the school system in Ottawa County? Asked by C. Romero

A. None present.

Q. What were the details about the car fire about six weeks ago at Barry Bagels and was it an electric car? Asked by Bonnie Hetsler

A. It was not an electric car.

Q. Social media showed three Venezuelan gang members are in Erie County jail for very serious crimes. Were they committed in our area? Asked by Gerri Polo.

A. No. They were committed in Erie County. The Erie County Sheriff, Sandusky Police Department and Perkins Police Department chiefs were all invited to this event. None were present.

Q. Can we take suspicious characters trespassing on our property into our own hands? Or, do we have to just dial 911? If they are going to be released, we should be able to "handle" it. Asked by Pam Schraidt

A. Always call 911 if possible. Do not take the law into your own hands unless it is a last resort.

Q. In the future, do local departments intend to detain and charge “trespassers”?

Asked by Nancy Thomas

A. Local law enforcement enforces the Ohio Revised Code. We already do and will continue to.

Q. How/what do we do if someone approaches our homes and it’s dangerous? How do we defend ourselves if 911 is busy (self-defense)? Could you explain Ohio Constitution and Sheriff protection against Feds. Does the Sheriff have more authority? Asked by Victoria Peterson

A. The Sheriff’s Office has authority in State charges through the Ohio Revised Code. Federal agencies only have authority in federal cases.

Q. What rights do illegals have? What rights do we have if they trespass on your property? Asked by Lisa Henricks

A. The first question is a good one for the federal elected officials, none of whom came to the event. A representative from Marcy Kaptur’s office did answer this question though. IF someone trespasses on your property, call 911. They will either be told to leave or face arrest.

Q. What impact have illegal immigrants had on our community; Ottawa County? What additional cost has it had on our budget? Are our schools being affected?

Asked by Gary Kresge

A. Illegal immigrants have made no impact on our budget. The Sheriff’s Office has only had four interactions with illegal immigrants since May. All of those were traffic related.

Q. Whom do we call if we observe suspicious activity in the neighborhood? Asked by Tom Kubat

A. 911

Q. Curious as to how many incidents our community has had in the last 12 months. Asked by Carol Osborne.

A. The Sheriff’s Office has had four since May. All traffic related.

Q. If someone has committed a crime such as trespassing or any other crime, why are they not processed/jailed? Why do they have to be sent to Border Patrol/ICE? Can you describe the process, i.e. when someone is jailed or not?

Asked by Stephanie Kowal

A. Trespassing is a misdemeanor, often receiving a summons and sometimes jailed. If the suspect is warned and leaves, no criminal offense has occurred. If this suspect is thought to be an immigrant, Border Patrol is called and they have jurisdiction also.

Q. As an Ottawa County citizen, what will our law enforcement do if hundreds of immigrants get dropped off in our town by the government? Asked by Andie Prusik

A. We will continue to protect our community to the best of our ability.

Q. How is local law enforcement handling the U.S. Department of Homeland Security October 27, 2021 memorandum "Guidelines for Enforcement Actions in our near Protected Areas" memo? Asked by Flint Heidlebaugh

A. Local law enforcement does not take orders from the federal government. We do not enforce federal law.

Q. How many gang members are known to be in Ottawa County? Where are they concentrated? Asked by Steve Browning

A. We are aware of none.

Q. Gossip or truth? Bank robbery attempt? Window peaking? Two cars stolen off a car lot? Motorcycles stolen? Venezuelan tattoos on an individual? Asked by Vicki Phillips

A. Bank robbery attempt was in Erie County. Window peaking occurred in Danbury Township. Two cars were stolen from Baumann Auto. Motorcycles stolen in Danbury Township. Venezuelan tattoos were on the same person from the window peaking incident.

Q. What are the squatter's rights in vacant properties? What do we do if they are breaking in and we are at home? 911? Do they need to be wholly in to defend ourselves and home? Call 911 or local police department? Asked by Kim Mulholland

A. You would need to ask the prosecutor about squatter's rights. Regarding the balance of your questions, call 911 if you are able. If your life or that of your family's is in imminent danger you have the right to defend yourself and your family.

Q. Many homes in this area are vacant during the winter. Do you recommend neighborhood watches? Asked by D. Shaghiri

A. We have no solid number (of vacant homes). Neighborhood watches are great and I highly recommend them.

Q. Do we have problems with illegal immigrants within? With Border Patrol right here we should not. Asked by Larry Janes

A. This was an isolated incident, however we want to ensure we don't have a problem in the future. I agree (with your statement regarding Border Patrol located here).

Q. Why was the individual that was caught in this area, being the same person that attempted a bank robbery in Sandusky, not in jail. Was he released on a cash bond? How much was the cash bond? Asked by Steve Kolar

A. Great questions for Erie County law enforcement and the courts.

Q. How can we best support our local law enforcement in this matter? We are grateful for you. Asked by Barbie Moore

A. Being here tonight and continuing to be there for us is the best support. Thank you.

Q. We heard there was a robbery at the auto dealer (Baumann) and there were cars stolen. Were these illegals involved and were they caught? If so, where are they now? Asked by Linda

A. There was a break-in. The thieves are not believed to be illegal immigrants. Actually, the vehicles have been taken to Detroit.

Q. Why is this being brought up right before the election? Are we having any problems? Asked by Joshua Janes

A. Because this occurred before the election. If the incident happened after November 5, it wouldn't have been. We have been receiving calls and messages from the public wanting answers. This is the right thing to do.

Q. If a person violates Ohio Code, can you detain them? Was the Chief of Police of Bay View contacted? Asked by Jeanne Congdon

A. Yes, you can detain them. No, the Chief was not contacted.

Q. Is there an obligation to communicate for Border Patrol and the Sheriff's Office when arrests are made or threats are recognized by the Border Patrol, or is communication random and voluntary? Asked by Richard Lano

A. No. There is no obligation to communicate. We have no clue who they arrested, detained, deported or released. They are the federal government and do not answer to us. And vice versa. I invited Border Patrol, HSI and ICE to be here. They decided not to come.

Q. What are recommended home security measures? Yard lights on, etc.?

A. Outside lights on, trim shrubs, keep doors locked, keep garage door closed when not using it and be aware of your surroundings.

Q. Regarding private property trespass, what is the policy of the County on issuing trespass violations? Asked by Mike and Ellen Bohling

A. If the suspect receives a warning and leaves, a warning is issued. If they don't leave, or they return, an arrest occurs.