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Fugitives surrender by the dozens

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AKRON -- More than a hundred wanted fugitives have surrendered peacefully at an Akron church.

In the greatest first day success ever for the Fugitive Safe Surrender program, 136 wanted men and women gave themselves up to ministers at an Akron church.

"This tremendous first day success shows the idea works," said Peter J. Elliott, U.S. Marshal for the Northern District of Ohio, and originator of the Fugitive Safe Surrender concept.

"This is a four day window of opportunity," said Elliott, "and three days are left. Keep coming through those doors, and take advantage of this."

Among those surrendering Wednesday to Bishop F. Josephus Johnson II at The House of the Lord was former Akron area resident Robert Heim, wanted on an old DUI warrant.

Heim walked 150 miles to a bus station in Florida, rode to Akron and surrendered at the church on Wednesday. He says he actually wore the soles off his shoes he walked so far.

"A couple of days before I was getting out of a Florida prison, my mom sent me the ad and said you need to come and turn yourself in."

Heim did just that, and was on the way to having his old case resolved and getting a fresh start on life.

"This makes it a little easier. I didn't have to walk in with an officer and handcuffs on," Heim said of his Fugitive Safe Surrender experience.

Presiding Judge John Holcomb of the Akron Municipal Court, who moved his entire courtroom to The House of the Lord, was impressed with the first day success of Fugitive Safe Surrender.

"The response has been overwhelming," said Judge Holcomb. "The church has been tremendous in opening its doors, and the coordination among the various agencies, the courts, the Akron Police Department, the sheriff, and the U.S. Marshal has been tremendous."

"Considering the size of Akron, this is a great tribute to the U.S. Marshal and to The House of the Lord."

Fugitive Safe Surrender originated in Cleveland in 2005 and has been implemented in Phoenix and Indianapolis as well.

Akron's program runs each day from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at The House of the Lord on Diagonal Road. Anyone wanted on a non-violent warrant can safely and peacefully surrender to a minister, and have their case settled quickly, often on the spot, mostly without jail time.



Call 330-643-2245 for information and to make arrangements to surrender, or come to The House of the Lord.

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[Fugitive Safe Surrender website](#)

[Details on how to surrender](#)

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