

McLEOD COUNTY

News and Information

FALL | 2020

CONTACT US

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COUNTY UPDATES



Check out this drone photograph of the County Road 11 Bridge. The CR11 Bridge is now open. Photo taken by McLeod County Public Works Department.

COUNTY CALENDAR

COUNTY OFFICE CLOSURES

November 11, 2020: Veterans Day

November 26-27, 2020: Thanksgiving

December 24*-25, 2020: Christmas Day

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

October 6th and 20th

November 3rd and 17th

December 1st**, 15th and 29th

*County Offices close at noon

**4:30 pm Board Meeting followed by 6:00 pm Truth in Taxation

RURAL RECYCLING: SILVER LAKE

McLeod County Environmental Services is pleased to announce that rural recycling has been partially restored to the northeast area of McLeod County. There is now a recycling container located at 19955 Falcon Avenue, Silver Lake, MN 55381. This location is the regional McLeod County Highway Department Facility serving this area of McLeod County. The container is located on the south side of the main entrance at the intersection of Highway 7 and Falcon Avenue (County Road 15). McLeod County encourages residents to use this facility for their recycling needs and asks that users respectfully follow the directions placed on the container in regard to the acceptable material. McLeod County tax payers do not benefit when illegal material is placed in the bin. Refuse (garbage) costs McLeod County for disposal. Thank you for your patience while service was being restored to this area and stay tuned as more local options are sought.



A MESSAGE FROM THE AUDITOR-TREASURER

General Election Day is Nov 3, 2020. Polls are open 7:00 am to 8:00 pm

The following will hold IN PERSON ELECTIONS AT THEIR PRECINCT: Acoma Township, Penn Township, Brownton City, Glencoe City, Hutchinson City, Lester Prairie City, Silver Lake City, Stewart City and Winsted City.

The following are MAIL BALLOT precincts (previous city/township polling location WILL NOT BE OPEN): Bergen Township, Collins Township, Glencoe Township, Hale Township, Hassan Valley Township, Helen Township, Hutchinson Township, Lynn Township, Rich Valley Township, Round Grove Township, Sumter Township, Winsted Township, Biscay City and Plato City. **All voters registered by October 13th will be mailed a ballot.** This designation may be a recent change. If so, the approval was by Township Supervisor vote.

MAIL BALLOTS OF REGISTERED VOTERS HAVE RECENTLY BEEN MAILED; watch your mailbox! See the links below to verify your registration status or register to vote online.

MAIL BALLOT VOTERS may mail their completed ballot or deliver their completed ballot to the Office of the Auditor-Treasurer. All instructions are included in the ballot packet. Office hours are Monday - Friday 8:00 am - 4:30 pm Extended hours are Saturday, October 31st 10:00 am - 3:00 pm and Monday, November 2nd 8:00 am - 5:00 pm If mailing, ballots must be postmarked on or before Election Day and received within the next seven days in order to be counted. ALL MAIL BALLOTS are counted at the Office of the Auditor-Treasurer.

To verify your voter registration status: <https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterStatus.aspx>

To register to vote online: <https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterRegistration/VoterRegistrationMain.aspx>

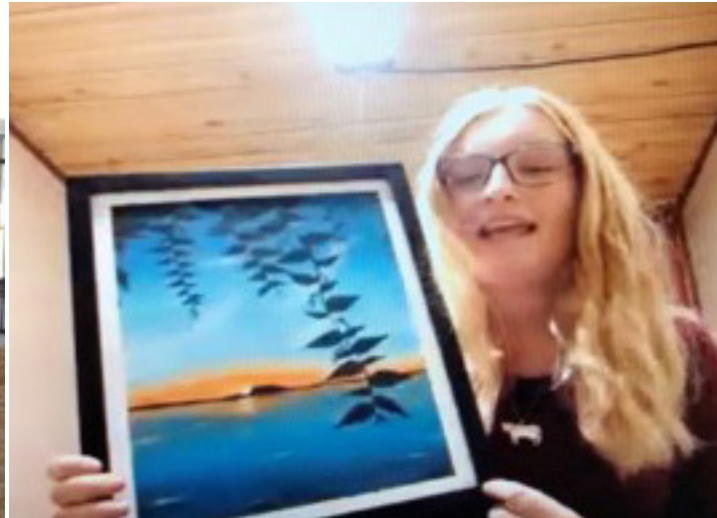
To register to vote on paper: <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/register-to-vote/register-on-paper/>

To track your ballot: <https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/AbsenteeBallotStatus.aspx>

To request an absentee ballot: <https://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/ABRegistration/ABRegistrationStep1.aspx>

The Office of the Auditor-Treasurer works diligently to ensure that every vote is properly cast, counted and reported. We respect that Minnesota has consistently been a national leader in voter turnout with our paper ballot integrity. Please call us with your election questions at 320-864-1203.

IN THE COMMUNITY: 4-H



Livestock: Sam Becker (L) - In August 4-H held in-person animal shows that carefully followed COVID-19 protocol designed to keep everyone safe. 4-H'ers were also given the opportunity to participate virtually by submitting videos of themselves and their animals. **Static Judging:** McKenna Wright (R) - 4-H'ers were given two different options to showcase their projects that would normally be on display in the 4-H Building. These two options were to either participate in virtual calls with a judge or to have their projects judged based on pictures and written information submitted about their projects.

A MESSAGE FROM THE ASSESSOR'S OFFICE

THE APPEAL PROCESS

An assessor plays an important role in the property tax process. It is very important that they make sure all property is valued at its market value and classified according to its use in order for the property tax levy to be divided correctly among all taxable properties. The assessor, however, does not determine your property taxes nor do they raise revenue by increasing market values.

January 2nd is the annual assessment date for all property in Minnesota. The assessor must establish an estimated market value for each property in their county. They determine this by sales that are recorded from October to September of the previous years. For example, sales that occur between October 2018 through September 2019 are used to determine values for the January 2, 2020 assessment period. These values are used to determine 2021 taxes to be paid.

Beginning in March and April, property owners receive a valuation notice from the Assessor's Office. This notice states the value of the property, the classification of the property and also the appeal dates if one disagrees with the estimated market value or classification of their property.

The first step to appealing your assessment is to contact the Assessor's Office to verify information and have the assessor explain the changes. The Assessor's Office will then schedule an appointment for an assessor to view your property. If an agreement cannot be reached after these steps, the owner may appeal to the local taxing district for that property. Local taxing district meetings are held in April. The taxing district may hear your appeal and make changes to value or classification if warranted.

If the local taxing district does not see necessary changes, the property owner may appeal the decision to the County Board of Equalization. This evening meeting is held in June each year. The County Board can make changes to value or classification if they feel it is warranted. If an agreement is still not reached after the June County Board of Equalization meeting, the property owner can take the appeal to Minnesota Tax Court. The property owner has until April 30th of the following year to file the appeal in tax court. Property owners can skip the first two steps and go straight to tax court if they choose.

Once the County Board of Equalization meeting is completed in June, the assessed values are set for the year. The local appeal process is complete and the only remaining recourse property owners who wish to dispute their assessment have is tax court.

Tax court has two divisions: Small Claims and Regular Claims. Small Claims is less formal and many people choose to represent themselves. To qualify for small claims, the property's estimated market value must be less than \$300,000.00, the property must be classified as residential or agricultural, or the property owners are appealing the current year homestead to the property. These decisions are final. Regular tax court hears all appeals. Most people who appeal to the regular division hire an attorney, as the hearing is conducted according to the Minnesota Rules of Civil Procedure. These decisions are appealable to a higher court.

McLeod COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

A big move in 2021

Construction teams anticipate the Government Center renovation to be completed early January 2021. Several McLeod County departments, currently in three separate Glencoe buildings, will be consolidated into a new "one-stop shop" from which residents will be able to access County services. Departments that will be relocated into the new facility include: County Administration and Finance, Information Technology, Health and Human Services, Veteran Services, Auditor-Treasurer, Recorder, Assessor and Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

One feature of the new building that we're excited to provide to customers and visitors is the new QLess check-in system. This system will allow you to check-in or schedule appointments from your phone, a dedicated kiosk at the government center, or even from home; and it also allows you to wait in your vehicle or at home until your appointment time. This confidential check-in system is a great option for those who wish to avoid crowds, lines or long wait times. If you prefer to still check-in in person, not a problem! We will have a staffed front desk to assist you with navigating the layout of the building.

COVID-19

McLeod County Public Health Workers are here for the community.

Your local public health department, McLeod County Health and Human Services, has been busy doing its best to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in our area. Working with the state health department, MDH, one of the most important things local public health agencies do during a pandemic is to push out accurate and up-to-the-minute information through various media channels. Check out the McLeod County Public Health Facebook page for loads of reliable and up-to-date information.

Besides informing the community, we've been very busy in other ways, too. On August 20, we worked with the state and the City of Glencoe to provide a COVID-19 testing event at the Glencoe City Center that tested 791 residents in just 7 hours! We gained a lot of information from the event about how widespread the virus is in our community. We continue to climb in our number of positive cases at a pretty steady rate. The more we know about how many people are experiencing COVID-19 infection, the better job we can do keeping it under control.

Whether it was from the local testing event, or through a health care provider, receiving a positive COVID-19 test is not welcome news. At the same time, if it happens to you, you can feel confident that McLeod County's resources are here to support you. After you receive a positive result, a highly-trained Public Health Nurse from right here in McLeod County will be calling to check on you. They will help you monitor your symptoms, answer any questions you have, and help you decide if you should seek additional medical care. They will also help you identify others you may have exposed. If you need items such as groceries, medicine, or cleaning produces while in isolation, McLeod County will arrange to have these delivered to you.

The same advice we have been giving from the beginning of the pandemic still holds true now: maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from other people, wear a mask when out in public, work from home if you can, don't host or attend any large gatherings and wash your hands often. One final piece of advice we'd add, now that fall is on its way, is to get a flu shot as soon as you can. The more people we can get vaccinated now for "regular" influenza, the more prepared we will be when we have a COVID-19 vaccine. We hope to have a COVID-19 vaccine in the next 6 months or so. Once it arrives, you can count on your local public health department to make sure it will be safely and rapidly available for our residents.

THE NEXT GENERATION OF 911

A Statewide Effort:

There is a statewide effort for counties to create consistent and accurate 911 address point data in a GIS format. Once the counties have standardized their data, they will be able to merge it into a statewide dataset which will be used by emergency services, mail delivery, realtors, and more.

For 2020, we took advantage of a grant to reimburse the County for address verification and updates to our 911 data. We had our summer GIS intern, Brandon Fronk, verify all rural addresses in McLeod County. During this review process, we found there were many addresses which were no longer in use because the structure was no longer there. Brandon also kept track of the damaged 911 signs which needed replacement and made those repairs.

Of the 4415 rural addresses, 273 of them were no longer in use or needed sign repair. Of the 4415 signs, we have 3780 that are 10+ years old and beyond their warranty; many of which are starting to delaminate (the protective film is beginning to peel off). During a nighttime review, we did observe these delaminating signs still reflect well and are very legible. We will be monitoring these for reflectivity to ensure they continue to perform, but the County hopes they will last at least 2 more years before they needing replacement.

To ensure we maintain an accurate 911 address point dataset, we are asking employees or residents who know of a structure that was removed, therefore the address is no longer needed, to let the GIS Division of McLeod County Public Works know. Also, if there are damaged signs or posts, please let us know that as well.

Our goal is to maintain an accurate 911 address point database as well as provide good signage for timely emergency response.

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