

NEWS AND INFORMATION

McLeod County Newsletter



Inside This Issue



HAPPY HOLIDAYS

County recognizes veterans with festive new tradition
Page 3

PROPERTY VALUATIONS

What property owners should expect for 2024 assessments
Page 4

BIG ASSESSOR CHANGES

McLeod County is moving to True County Assessing in 2025
Page 5

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD

It's a big election year in 2024, be sure you're ready to vote
Page 6

WELCOME HOME VET

When veterans return home, this organization wants to help
Page 7

MAKING PARKS MORE APPEALING

New County Parks Plan integrates improvements for all six parks



The first McLeod County Parks Plan was adopted by the Board of Commissioners at their meeting on December 19, 2023. The plan will be used for short-term and long-term planning, and for future development of the County's six parks: Lake Marion Regional Park, Piepenburg Regional Park, Stahl's Lake Park, Swan Lake Park, Buffalo Creek Park, and William May Park.

The plan identifies numerous opportunities for improvement at each park, including updated signage, installation of playground equipment, campground upgrades, programming, and the installation of a disc golf course.

A list of "First Focus Areas" was developed to kickoff the

Improvements to County Parks such as Lake Marion Park (top) and Piepenburg Park (bottom) are all part of the new McLeod County Parks Plan. The plan focuses on long- and short-term goals for the six County Parks.

See PARKS PLAN Page 2

Safety, maintenance are focus points

PARK PLAN from Page 1

implementation of the plan.

Safety for parkgoers is important to McLeod County. Projects that present an opportunity to improve safety or areas where safety concerns have been identified will be prioritized.

Maintenance at all parks will be addressed. Structures that need repair will be attended to or removed if deemed no longer usable. Opportunities for decreasing maintenance will also be prioritized so that resources can be allocated efficiently.

Restrooms that are sanitary and updated are a necessity in several parks. Vault-style



To see the complete McLeod County Parks Plan visit <http://tinyurl.com/mw3ukjZh> or scan the QR code.

restrooms may be converted to a structure with running water and septic or replaced with portable restrooms.

Drinking water should be accessible in all parks. Wells with fixtures for drinking

water could be installed in parks where they are not currently available.

Signage throughout all parks should be updated and uniform. Parkgoers should recognize when they are in a McLeod County park upon entering. Park rules and expectations should be easily identifiable, and there may be areas for wayfinding or informational signage.

Relevant McLeod County staff will reference the plan and its contents regularly to ensure that decisions being made to improve the quality of each park work with the plan's recommendations. The goal is to create a better experience for all parkgoers.

McLeod County News and Information

Issue 16

McLeod County News and Information is published quarterly. Visit www.tinyurl.com/3mrui54a to see past McLeod County newsletters or subscribe to have the newsletter delivered to your residence or business. The next issue of the newsletter is tentatively scheduled to be published on March 29, 2024.

McLeod County was established in 1856.

Serving the cities of Biscay, Brownston, Glencoe, Hutchinson, Lester Prairie, Plato, Silver Lake, Stewart and Winsted; the townships of Acoma, Bergen, Collins, Glencoe, Hale, Hassan Valley, Helen, Hutchinson, Lynn, Penn, Rich Valley, Round Grove, Sumter and Winsted; and independent school districts #423 (Hutchinson), #424 (Lester Prairie), #465 (Litchfield), #2159 (Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart), #2365 (Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop), #2687 (Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted) and #2859 (Glencoe-Silver Lake).



Contact Information

Government Center

520 Chandler Ave. N. | Glencoe • MN 55336
p. 320-864-1328 | f. 320-864-1809
mcleod.administration@mcleodcountymn.gov

Fairgrounds/Parks and Recreation

840 Century Ave. S.W. | Hutchinson • MN 55350
p. 320-484-4334 | f. 320-864-1811
mcleod.parksandrecreation@mcleodcountymn.gov

Court Administration

830 11th St. E. | Glencoe • MN 55336
p. 320-864-1281 | f. 320-864-5905

Environmental Services

1065 Fifth Ave. S.E. | Hutchinson • MN 55350
p. 320-484-4300 | f. 320-484-4315
mcleod.solidwaste@mcleodcountymn.gov

Law Enforcement Center

801 10th St. E. | Glencoe • MN 55336
p. 320-864-3134 | f. 320-864-5920

Public Works/Highway

1400 Adams St. | Hutchinson • MN 55350
p. 320-484-4321 | f. 320-234-6971

Save time scheduling appointments with QLess

Planning a visit to the McLeod County Government Center? Save time with QLess • the County's virtual waiting line and appointment scheduler. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/b5yey8ds> or scan the QR code to schedule your appointment or check for same-day availability. Call 320-864-1426 for assistance.

Use QLess for your License Center, Assessor, Auditor-Treasurer, Recorder and Veterans Services needs. Once you've scheduled an appointment, QLess will send you live updates on your place in line. Appointments scheduled with QLess are prioritized over walk-in appointments.



Administrator's Message

Happy New Year!

ADMINISTRATOR

Sheila Murphy



As we move past festivities and winter has finally arrived in Minnesota, we hope you had a wonderful holiday and happy New Year celebrating with friends and family.

Here at the McLeod County Government Center, visitors in December and January may have noticed that we celebrated the holiday season with a new tradition - our Veterans Memorial Holiday Tree. This brightly lit tree stood in the main lobby and was filled with ornaments bearing the names of veterans identified by County employees and people passing by. It's another small way for us to remember and thank those who have given so much.

The following veterans were recognized this year: Wayne Rosenfeld • Sandy Johnson • Larry Panning • Sean P. Whittaker • Charles E. Whittaker • Steve Eggert • Thomas Hedin • Joseph K. Harold • Doug Krueger • Byron De Fries • Steven F. Smock • Delvin Groehler • Dennis McCutchen • David Vacek • Brittin Posusta • Dallas Yurek • Eric Harpel • Glenn Weibel • Gene Ebnet • Brian Carlson • Trent Elder • Dave Geier • Gene Gruett • Norbert Ebnet • Eugene Ebnet • Mark Sanders • Virgil Freitag • Darren Carrigan • Fred Haffley • Jim Lauer • Shawn Kiasstner • Roger Brenhaug • Jerome Jenneke • Cassandra Carrigan • Thomas Lauer • Brianna Lauer • Cassondra Mathews • Virg Kurtzweg • John Salisbury • Daryl Luthens • Patsy Waytashek • Douglas Oestreich • Andrew Cellini Ryan Berger • Grant Christensen • August Meyer • Daryl Sather • Kenneth Healy • David Lade • Jerry Traver • Kenny Dose • Gilbert Stifter • Marvin Ogitzak • Al Wraspir • Joey Barrett • Matt Kehn • Harold Bohanon • Francis Kleindl • David Plath • Theodore Schugg • Edward Schugg • Hunter Lilleskov • Ted Lesch • Dennis Karnik • Oather Martin • Federico Llamas • David Nelson • Alvin "Bud" Baune • Dustin R. Baune • Russell Rickeman • Leonard Jahnke • Jacob Carlson • Brian Thunstrom • Nathan Thunstrom • Russell Victorian • Robert Hofmann • Luke Ness • Skyler Steinberg • Brady Perschau • Joe Diethelm • Trista Frauendienst • Ray Christensen Sr. • Ray "Bill" Christensen Jr. • Rod Christensen • Mike Christensen • George Christensen • Spike Dolan • Paul Murphy • Danielle Christensen • Tanner Chmielewski • Frank Baughn Sr. • Tom Penney • Fred Hofmann • Allen Robeck • Mitchell Brenhaug • Matthew Dietel • Eric Jennek • Jeff Brenhaug • Glenn Gruenhagen • Jeff Hoernemann • James Entinger • Donald Christensen • Roger Lepel • Zac Mullenburg • Eugene Irons • Wendell Schuler • Sean Philippi.

Thank you Veterans.



McLeod County Commissioner Doug Krueger, a U.S. military veteran, hangs the first star ornament on the new McLeod County Veterans Memorial Tree, which includes ornaments with the names of veterans.

What to expect for 2024 property valuations

Ag property in McLeod County sees 30% increase in average sale price

ASSESSOR

Sue Schulz



A new assessment year begins Tuesday, January 2, 2024. Part of the statutory responsibilities for the Assessor's Office is to adjust its values based on the ratio of property sales.

A Sales Ratio Study is done on a yearly basis. In this study we look at properties that have sold and compare that average sale price to the assessed value. Assessed values are required to be between 90% to 105% of that average sale price.

The Sales Ratio Study runs from October to September. For the 2024 assessment, sales that occurred from October 2022 to September 2023 are considered. These sales must be qualified, which means sales that are between relatives, are satisfying a contract for deed, or any sales under duress are not included. Each sale is verified to make sure it is a qualified sale.

Once staff processes the information, the ratio is determined by taking the assessed value and dividing it by the average sale price. This is done by taxing district and by classification. Each township and city is done on its own, and each type of classification is done on its own. If the ratio in the taxing districts falls below 90%, we are required to increase the assessed value. If the ratio is above 105%, we are required to decrease the assessed value.

This year, with rising interest rates, we are not seeing as big of an increase in values as we have seen in the past couple of years. One exception, however, is with agricultural properties.

The greatest increase for residential properties is 10%, while many areas have held steady with little or no change from last year. Apartment, Commercial and Industrial properties are also holding steady with little or no change. Agricultural properties in our area will see significant change as values increased 30% on average. McLeod County's average sale price per acre is \$9,800.00 compared to \$7,700.00 last year. That is up from \$6,400.00 the year before.

Once values have been updated • valuation notices are sent out to property owners for each parcel. This notice is mailed with the tax statement in the middle of March. There is an appeal process • which starts in April. The date • time and location of these appeals meetings are noted on the valuation notice • along with contact information for the Assessor's Office.

Follow the path to meaningful work

Like the weather, life also changes seasons. If you or someone you know is looking for a new career, McLeod County has a variety of opportunities for people to grow with a role in public service.

Scan the QR code or visit www.mcleodcountymn.org.



Changes ahead for property assessing



County Assessor's Office will handle all McLeod property assessing in 2025

Following a split Board vote, McLeod County will join 34 other Minnesota counties in establishing a "true county assessor" system.

The McLeod County Board of Commissioners voted 3-2 at their December 19 meeting to adopt a resolution to make the shift to a true county assessor system. The resolution passed with support from Commissioners Doug Krueger, Paul Wright and Joe Nagel. Commissioners Daryl Luthens and Nathan Schmalz opposed the resolution.

Under this new system, the practice of local assessing will end in McLeod and the County Assessor's Office will be responsible for all property assessments throughout the County. As required by state statute, this change will not take effect until the 2025 assessment period, so there are no changes for the upcoming 2024 assessment period.

During months of deliberation and listening to constituents, the Board of Commissioners considered several factors, such as the impact this change would have on taxing districts that use local assessors, as well as those that do not.

What will change

- The practice of local assessing will be discontinued, and the McLeod County Assessor's Office will be responsible for all County property assessments
- Annual contracts between the Assessor's Office and taxing districts will no longer be required
- Assessing and maintenance fees will be removed from the fee schedule

What won't change

- Taxing districts will maintain authority over their local Boards of Review or Boards of Appeal and Equalization
- The Open Book review processes will continue to be maintained by local taxing districts
- There will be no changes to Minnesota Department of Revenue responsibilities and oversight

Out of the County's 23 municipalities (14 townships and nine cities), nine currently use local assessing through three local assessors. Those districts are Collins Township, Hassan Valley Township, Hutchinson Township, Penn Township, Rich Valley Township, Round Grove Township, Sumter Township, and the cities of Silver Lake and Stewart. This means that just 22.9% (4,826 parcels) of the County's parcels are viewed by private assessors, while the County Assessor's Office views the other 77.1% (16,210 parcels).

The County levy currently covers a majority of the costs for property assessments. The expense per parcel is \$27.96, and the County charges a \$3.00 per parcel maintenance fee and a \$7.50 per parcel assessment fee. Those fees cover about 37.5% of assessment costs. Removing those fees would be a reduction of approximately \$177,882.00, or 0.32% of annual budgeted revenue.

The County must also add support to the Assessor's Office to assist with the added workload. This may be an estimated \$89,000.00 cost including wages and benefits, an increase of about 0.15% of annual budgeted expenditures.

Are you ready to vote in 2024 elections?

Save time and be prepared for another busy election season this year

It's a busy election year in 2024. Here is information to help voters before elections. If you are unclear about election processes, call our office at 320-864-1203. We are here to help you, and we demand accurate public information. Minnesota is known as a past national leader in ballot integrity, election reform and voter turnout. I thank you for your participation in any of these areas and look forward to serving McLeod County voter needs.

What is the Presidential Nomination Primary (PNP)?

Beginning in 2020, the Legislature authorized a nomination primary for President of the United States. The PNP supplements the party caucus model that had been used in Minnesota for many years. It does not replace the precinct caucuses, which are an important part of each party's process for endorsing candidates and are required by law.

The PNP is required to be administered similarly to the state partisan primary, with certain exceptions. Separate ballots are printed for each participating political party • and voters are required to affirm the party of the ballot they wish to cast. The voter's political party choice will be recorded and disclosed to the state Chair of that major political party.

Only Presidential candidates chosen by each participating major party appear on the PNP ballot.

For more information on the PNP, visit <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/how-elections-work/presidential-primary/?searchTerm=presidential%20nomination%20primary> or visit <https://www.house.mn.gov/hrd/pubs/mnpresprim.pdf> to see the Executive Summary.

How can I prepare to vote in 2024?

If you are not registered to vote, you should register in advance to save yourself time at the polls on Election Day. If your name or address have changed • you will need to update your registration.

To register to vote online or update your registration, visit <https://mnvotes.sos.mn.gov/VoterRegistration/index>

To verify your registration status, visit <https://mnvotes.sos.mn.gov/voterstatuscheck/index>

To review the Office of the Secretary of State's website for elections and voting information, including information on Election Day voting, ballots, election results, secure and fair elections, data integrity, how elections work and how to get involved, visit <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/>

Auditor-Treasurer

Connie M. Kurtzweg



2024 Election Dates

- Precinct Caucuses - February 27
- Presidential Nomination Primary - March 5
- Township Day - March 12
- State Primary - August 13
- State General - November 5

Who can vote?

To vote • you must be:

- A U.S. Citizen
- At least 18 years old on Election Day
- A resident of Minnesota for at least 20 days
- Not currently incarcerated for a felony conviction
- Not under a court order that revokes your right to vote



McLeod County Announcements

Upcoming office closures

McLeod County offices will be closed for:

President's Day on Monday,
February 19, 2024

Normal hours of operation will resume the following business day.

2024 Dental Clinics

Oral health is an important and often overlooked aspect of a person's overall health. For some, however, there are financial barriers. That's why McLeod County partners with Children's Dental Services (CDS) to provide people of all ages with services such as exams, cleanings and restorative work.

In 2023, 31 people were seen through the dental clinics. Clinics are 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on the third Friday of every other month, at the McLeod County Government Center, 520 Chandler Avenue North, Glencoe. Dates for the 2024 clinics are January 19, March 15, May 17, July 19, September 20, and November 15.

For questions or to make an appointment call McLeod County Health & Human Services at 320-864-3185. You can also call CDS at 612-746-1530, or toll free at 1-866-543-6009.

2024 Board Calendar

The complete 2024 County Board Meeting Calendar was adopted and is available online at www.mcleodcountymn.gov.

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Giving veterans a helping hand

Welcome Home Vet prepares veterans for life outside military

Transitioning out of enlisted life can be a challenge for veterans when the military is all you've known in adulthood. Fortunately for local veterans and their families, Welcome Home Vet wants to help.

Tim Burley, a veteran from Hutchinson, founded Welcome Home Vet about seven years ago. The goal was to provide a network of resources, education and support to help veterans reintegrating into their communities.

"I was taking suicide and crisis calls from veterans, and they were all stringing together the same reasons (for being in crisis) - finances, family, divorce, issues they weren't able to cope with," Burley said.

The military provides structure for enlisted men and women that they become reliant on, Burley explained. When they leave the military, they no longer have that structure and must learn to provide those needs on their own.

Veterans have needs for education, counseling, employment, health care, life skills, spirituality and

more. Welcome Home Vet is there to help.

"We are a community of military and civilian people who have formed an alliance with one specific purpose - to take care of our returning vets," according to the group's website, welcomehome.vet. "We do this by our initial actions and involvement in the lives of our veterans and how we work to organize the cities and communities we live in towards being veteran ready and veteran friendly."

Helping veterans get on their feet isn't just a benefit to them. As Burley points out, veterans can be an economic boon to others.

"In the military currently there are about 495 different job skills, from plumbers to HVAC to cooks, you name it," Burley said.

Veterans are loyal, highly trained people who contribute 11 percent of the gross domestic product of the United States. They can bring the skills they learned in the military and apply them to work in civilian life.

A rising tide lifts all boats, and Welcome Home Vet is dedicated to providing veterans with the assistance they need to become outstanding members of our communities.

McLEOD COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

McLeod County Government Center, 520 Chandler Ave N, Glencoe, MN 55336

Nathan Schmalz

nathan.schmalz@mcleodcountymn.gov
320-282-9647 — Lester Prairie, MN



DISTRICT ONE

City of Lester Prairie
City of Silver Lake
City of Winsted
Bergen Township
Hale Township
Winsted Township

Paul Wright

paul.wright@mcleodcountymn.gov
320-587-7332 — Hutchinson, MN



DISTRICT THREE

City of Hutchinson (SW)
City of Stewart
Collins Township
Lynn Township
Penn Township
Round Grove Township

Joe Nagel

joseph.nagel@mcleodcountymn.gov
320-296-1739 — Hutchinson, MN



DISTRICT FIVE

City of Hutchinson (NW)
Acoma Township
Hutchinson Township

Doug Krueger

doug.krueger@mcleodcountymn.gov
612-756-2855 — Glencoe, MN



DISTRICT TWO

City of Glencoe
City of Plato
Glencoe Township
Helen Township

Daryl Luthens

daryl.luthens@mcleodcountymn.gov
612-281-4840 — Hutchinson, MN

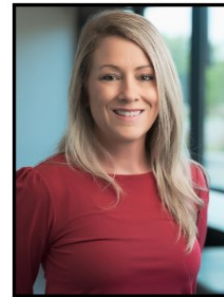


DISTRICT FOUR

City of Biscay
City of Brownton
City of Hutchinson (NE)
City of Hutchinson (SE)
Hassan Valley Township
Rich Valley Township
Sumter Township

Sheila Murphy

sheila.murphy@mcleodcountymn.gov
320-864-1320



COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

McLeod County
Government Center
520 Chandler Ave N
Glencoe, MN 55336

UPCOMING MEETING DATES

COUNTY BOARD WORKSHOP | 10:00 A.M. JANUARY 30, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. FEBRUARY 6, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. FEBRUARY 20, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. MARCH 5, 2024

McLeod County Government Center

COUNTY BOARD MEETING | 9:00 A.M. MARCH 19, 2024

McLeod County Government Center



MCLEOD COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER

520 CHANDLER AVENUE NORTH
GLENCOE, MINNESOTA 55336