

STEELE COUNTY

PRESS RELEASE

Date: July 16, 2020

Contact: Steele County Administrator Scott Golberg

Phone: 507-444-7431

Steele County, Minnesota – The County declared a health emergency due to the COVID-19 virus pandemic on March 18, 2020. The emergency declaration allows County government to proceed with emergency measures needed to contain and control the spread of COVID-19.

With the Governor’s “Stay Safe Minnesota” in effect and the plan to safely reopen businesses, Steele County will **reopen some** more of its facilities to the public starting June 1st, 2020. Please be aware that **all services will not be “business as usual”**, as some departments will be requesting the public to make appointments for services. In addition, we want to deliver services in the safest manner possible, so we are asking the public to continue to utilize remote services where possible, such as online, email, phone, and drop box service.

The public will notice some changes inside the facilities that will be open. For the safety of the public and our staff and we kindly request all members of the public follow all CDC recommendations including the wearing of cloth masks when entering any County Facility, to follow all posted signs, and to maintain social distancing of at least six feet.

Updated changes to services and public access are described below.

Administration Center

Steele County Administration Center located at 630 Florence Ave in Owatonna will be open to the public on June 1st. We recommend appointments be made for services, where indicated, as this will assist in faster service with shorter wait times and/or reduce the number of people waiting in line.

The following offices and their services are located at this center. Please review this notice on a regular basis for updates and/or changes that may occur.

If there is a service required that is not listed, please call the appropriate department for assistance or call the Administration Center at 507-444-7400.

Assessor’s Office (507) 444-7435 Assessor@CO.STEELE.MN.US

- The appeal process has ended therefore, all 2020 assessments of real and personal property are final. No changes in values may be made after July 1 except as authorized by statute (M.S. 274.175).
- Property and assessment information will be handled by phone and/or email with limited access to the office counter. Most answers can be found at the County website by visiting: <https://steele.minnesotaassessors.com/index.php>
- Homestead and other applications can be returned via mail, email or by placing in drop box at the Steele County Administrative Center located along the east side of the building facing Florence Avenue.
- Appraisers in the process of physically inspecting 20% of the properties in Steele County. The appraisers will be taking photos and updating property characteristics to improve our records in preparation for compiling the 2021 assessment. At this point, we will only be viewing properties from the exterior. All appraisers are required to wear a fluorescent vest with Steele County printed on the back of the vests. Each appraiser will have identification badges prominently displayed and be driving Steele County vehicles.

Auditor (507) 444-7410 | auditor@co.steele.mn.us.

- Delinquent Tax Payments can be made in person, mailed in, call for an appointment or use the Steele County drop box. Taxpayers may want to call our office to verify the amount due.
- Annual licenses can be completed in person, mail in, use drop box or call for an appointment.
- Absentee voting for the August 11th Primary Election started Friday, June 26th and goes through Monday, August 10th. The Auditor's office will also be open on Saturday August 8th from 10am–3pm.
 - You can absentee/early vote in person, by mail, or using this link to fill out an application online: <https://www.sos.state.mn.us/elections-voting/other-ways-to-vote/>
 - If appearing in person, we ask that you follow social distancing guidelines and recommend wearing masks. You may call or email our office with any questions

Facilities and Maintenance Department (507) 444-7472

- Vendors are by appointment only. We can be reached by phone or email: Jacob.rysavj@co.steele.mn.us

Geographic Info Systems (507) 444-7489 | gisdept@co.steele.mn.us

- The Steele County GIS department is still providing services by appointment or electronically.

Human Resources Department (507) 444-7401 or (507) 444-7429

- Steele County current Employment Opportunities are available on the County's website through the following link; <https://www.co.steele.mn.us>
- For general questions or questions pertaining to open position(s); please email Human.resources@co.steele.mn.us or call.

Planning and Zoning (507) 444-7475

- Building permit applications can be found online under the Land Use and Records / Planning and Zoning Department tab or contact the department to have one sent to you. Completed small sized applications and payments can be placed in the drop box located in front of the Steele County Admin building. All other applications can be emailed to inspections@co.steele.mn.us or submitted via mail to:
Steele Co. Building Inspection
PO Box 890
Owatonna, MN 55060;
- Building Inspections will be done on a case by case bases and arranged by calling (507) 444-7475
- Zoning questions and applicants should call to discuss the process.
- Septic questions should call our office and permit applications can be submitted via email, mail or utilize the drop box.
- Feedlot questions should call our office. In case of emergency manure spills etc., call the State Duty Officer at 1- 800-422-0798
- Pesticide and Manure Application licensing testing is done by appointment only. Applicants should register and pay online at the MN Department of Agriculture website and call our office to arrange a time to take the test.

Recorder/Registrar of Titles (507) 444-7450

- Passport processing is by appointment only.
- Recording of real estate documents continues through e-recording, mail, Steele County drop box and by appointment.
- Marriage licenses by mail and appointment.
- Ceremonies by appointment only. Maximum of two (2) witnesses and all marriages are done in office thru the glass barrier at the counter.
- Vital records -birth/death records - continue to be processed electronically, mail and by appointment.
- Fingerprinting by appointment only
- Digital images of real estate documents, all documents are digitized, can be accessed thru our online Laredo/Tapestry program and by calling.

Treasurer/Finance (507) 444-7420

- Property Tax Payments:
 - The 1st half of the 2020 property taxes are due July 15th. Late penalties will be applied starting July 16th.
 - Payments can be mailed to Steele County Treasurer's Office or dropped off at the Steele County drop box. Tax payments can also be paid online with a credit card (2.5% convenience fee), Visa debit card (\$3.95 convenience fee) or an e-check (\$1.50 convenience fee up to \$10,000 payment). Cash is accepted at the counter.

Veterans Services (507) 444-7460

- Office visits by appointment only (veteran plus 1 escort, if required), Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. thru 5:00 p.m. No office walk-ins unless it is an emergency.
- No outreach is being conducted until further notice (at home, at care facilities, or at community facilities).
- No walk-ins allowed at the VA Medical Center-Must have an appointment to enter the facilities, and must always wear a face mask.
- Transportation to the VA Medical Center only for verified appointments and a face mask must always be worn. Limited seating, and with appropriate screening for all passengers.
- Limited transportation to the VA Community Based Clinics (CBOC), (Rochester, Mankato, Albert Lea) available by calling the DAV Transportation Coordinator at (507) 703-1139.
- Centralized Emergency Care for VA Health Care Enrolled Veterans (currently active in the health care system) is now available. (844) 724-7842 or by email at VHAEmergencyNotifications@VA.GOV

Other Steele County Facilities:

Community Corrections

- Building is open to the public.
- If needing to speak to your Probation Officer, please call main number below.
- Payments are now being accepted in lobby.
- No in person group activities, Cog Groups or weekly treatment facilitation.
- General questions please email; timothy.schammel@co.steele.mn.us. Or call 507-444-7720.

County Attorney (507) 444-7780

- All services are currently being provided. Contact the general office number to reach any County Attorney's Office staff.
- In-person meetings and delivery of documents will be by appointment only. Documents may be emailed to scao@co.steele.mn.us.

Extension Office (507) 444-4685; Email: mnext-steele@umn.edu

- Extension office is open by appointment only, door will remain locked.
- Educators are available to answer questions via phone, email, or by appointment.
- Extension activities such as 4-H meetings, agriculture educational sessions, etc. are offered virtually. Call or email for details.
- 4-H is offering summer programs for all youth in Steele County. Contact the office to learn more and join in the fun.
- All public scheduled meetings will be held by virtually. Please call or email for details.

Four Seasons Centre/Parks and Recreation (507) 451-1093

- Four Seasons Centre is available for ice rental beginning July 6th. Call to schedule.
- Parks remain open.

Landfill (507) 583-7766

- Landfill is open normal hours for Steele County Residents only:
 - Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
 - Saturdays 8:00-1:00 p.m.

Public Health (507) 444-7650

- Steele County Public Health will continue to provide essential services. This includes immunizations, TB services, and assurance of essential services for those placed in isolation or quarantine for an infectious disease by the Minnesota Department of Health. Please call to schedule appointments or for more information: 507-444-7650.
- WIC services will be provided by phone. Please call 507-444-7650.
- Essential Home Care Services will continue. Contact your nurse directly or call 507-444-7650 for questions.
- Other services will be provided via phone/video, as we are able.

Public Works / Highway Department (507) 444-7670

- Public Works Facility is open to the public, social distancing will be in effect.
- Services will continue to be provided as usual.
- Staff is also available by phone at the above phone number or via e-mail at hwy@co.steele.mn.us.

Steele County Courthouse

By order of Steele County Sheriff Lon Thiele, updated on May 27th, 2020 there will be restricted access to the courthouse until June 15th.

Only essential staff, officers of the courts and people with scheduled court hearings will be allowed into the Steele County Courthouse. This would include employees of Court Administration, Judges and staff, along with employees of the Steele County Sheriff's Office, Attorney's Office, Steele County Probation (CCA), Steele County Social Services, Public Health, attorneys, public defender and victim advocates. No other members of the public will be allowed into the courthouse until deemed safe to do so by the order of the Sheriff.

Effective June 15, 2020, the Steele County Courthouse public service counter will be open. We continue to encourage customers to utilizing online resources and to contact us by phone or email to minimize in person contact.

Staff in Court Administration can still assist you by phone – calling 507-444-7700 between 8:00 am and 4:30 pm.

Steele County Sheriff's Office (507) 444-3800

- Steele County Sheriff's Office lobby is open.
 - Please use the lobby phone if you need to speak with dispatch or an officer/deputy

Records Division:

Office: 507-444-3800

Fax: 507-444-0330

Email: Lecrecords@co.steele.mn.us

Civil Division:

Office: 507-444-3808

Fax: 507-444-3894

Email: Scsocivil@co.steele.mn.us

Steele County Detention Center (507) 446-7000 Fax: (507) 446-7050

- Lobby visitation is suspended.
 - Online visitation from home is available via inmatecanteen.com (all fees apply)
- Lobby access is closed to the public. It is open to all approved contractors and individuals with criminal justice related business (attorneys, bonds people).
- Public fingerprinting is suspended.
- PPE, sanitation and social distancing guidelines are in use and effect.