



## **PRESS RELEASE**

White County Government  
Office of Public Safety – Emergency Management Division  
1241 Helen Highway, Suite 100  
Cleveland, Georgia 30528

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
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Thurs., March 19, 2020@5PM

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### **White County Operations Update during COVID-19 (Updated Items in Red)**

White County is implementing its emergency response plans and working diligently to ensure the health and safety of county employees who deliver services to our citizens. The county has closed those functions that encourage social gathering such as the Senior Center, libraries and parks and recreation through the end of the March. The Emergency Operations Center is open and monitoring the pandemic and helping elected officials make informed decisions about limiting operations and potential closings. White County is providing COVID-19 information on its website, [www.whitecounty.net](http://www.whitecounty.net), and also on the Emergency Management Facebook page.

Effective Monday, March 23, 2020 and for at least two weeks (through Friday, April 3, 2020) – as a precaution and to limit exposure from person to person contact, White County Government will be restricting access to facilities. White County will continue to provide services via phone, email, internet and mail. Employees will be available by these methods on a daily basis during normal business hours.

Below is a list of White County operations and their current operating status. Please understand that the COVID-19 pandemic is a very fluid situation that may call for a change of operations at any time. White County will update this information on a daily basis.

#### **0 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in White County according to Georgia Department of Public Health.**

**White County Commissioner's Office** – The Board of Commissioners office remains open at this time. Citizens are encouraged to do as much business as possible electronically or on the phone. Contact 706-865-2235 for information.

- Office will be closed to public March 23 – April 3, 2020.

**White County Emergency Management Office** - The office is open. Contact 706-865-9500.

- Office will be closed to public March 23 – April 3, 2020.
- The EOC is open and monitoring the Pandemic. White County is currently at Level 3, normal operations.
- The Civilian Emergency Response Team is on standby but have conducted inventories of emergency equipment.
- White County Fire Services is operational but limiting access to fire station and EMS to protect first responders.
- White County EMS is operational and using enhanced precautions to protect first responders.
- Animal Control is open. Please call ahead if you wish to surrender a pet. Contact 706-219-2689.

**White County Courthouse** – Courthouse will be open normal business hours 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

- Clerk of Court's office will be available for public access as required by law.
- Other Courthouse offices will have limited public access.

**White County Clerk of Court** – The office is open. Social distancing guidelines are in place. Contact 706-865-2613.

- Under Georgia Supreme Court and Enotah Circuit Judicial orders, any non-essential hearings and court filing deadlines are suspended until expiration of said orders.
- Essential hearings are being held utilizing 4-6 feet of social distancing between parties.
- Online filings are available for civil matters, real estate and liens. All filers are encouraged to e-file or mail requests if possible.
- All judicial and non-judicial functions of the office are being conducted with no delays.

**White County Sheriff** – Office is open. Contact 706-865-5177.

- Jail – inmate contact has been suspended with greater isolation to prevent introduction of virus to jail population. Enhanced health screenings in place. Contingency plan in place in the event of needing to hold infected inmates.
- Personal protective equipment has been distributed and is being used by both patrol and jail personnel.
- Limited access to Sheriff's administrative and records offices.

**White County Probate Court** – Office is open. Contact 706-865-4141.

- Operating under Georgia Judicial Emergency Order – All non-essential hearings, trials, or services provided by the Probate Court have been temporarily suspended during the pendency of this emergency.
- For emergency situations and critical needs, please contact the Probate Court office via telephone at 706-865-4141 or by e-mail for guidance and process.

**White County Magistrate Court** – Office is open. Contact 706-865-6636.

- Operating under the Georgia Judicial Emergency Order – all deadlines and time schedules or filing requirements are suspended, tolled, or extended in all civil, criminal and administrative matters.
- Non-essential hearings, trials, or services provided by the Court are temporarily suspended.
- Filings from the public will be accepted, but everyone is encouraged to take advantage of on-line services at [www.whitecounty.net/courts/magistrate-court/magistrate-services](http://www.whitecounty.net/courts/magistrate-court/magistrate-services)
- If you have an emergency need – call 706-865 6636.
  - Emergency/critical needs would be as follows:
  - Pre-warrant applications for Domestic Violence or an immediate threat exists to the safety or wellbeing of the affiant or third-party.
  - Good Behavior applications where an immediate threat exists to the safety or wellbeing of the affiant or third party.
  - Garnishment traverses.
- All essential functions of Magistrate Court such as law enforcement arrest warrants, search warrants, fugitive warrants, 1<sup>st</sup> appearance hearings, fugitive hearings, and bond reviews will continue as usual and in compliance with the Georgia Judicial Emergency Order.
- Copies of documents from the Magistrate Court, or if a matter needs to be researched, please call the office and staff will work to fulfill the need through e-mail or mail at no additional cost.

**White County Senior Center** – Center is closed. Call 706-865-4097 to report concerns about seniors.

- Meals on Wheels and wellness checks are continuing.
- Staff is available by phone or e-mail.

**White County Parks and Recreation** – Recreation Center and gymnasium are closed. Contact 706-865-5275.

- All scheduled activities, including practices and games for volleyball, baseball and softball are cancelled through April 3.
- Yonah Preserve Trails and outdoor facilities are open. Social distancing is recommended.
- Staff is available by phone or e-mail.

**White County Libraries** – Libraries are closed to the public. Contact 706-865-5572.

- Book drops are available through March 20.
- Statewide courier book requests can be picked up curbside upon request. Call ahead to make arrangements.
- Staff is available by phone or e-mail.

**White County Community and Economic Development** – Office is open. Electronic and phone communication is encouraged. Contact 706-865-6768.

- Office will be closed to public March 23 – April 3, 2020.
- Building Inspections and Permits – Call 706-865-6496 to request inspections. Call prior to coming to office for permits.
- Planning and Zoning – Call 706-865-6768 to make appointments. Walk-ins are discouraged.
- Code Enforcement – Call 706-865-6496.
- GIS/Mapping – Call 706-865-6496.
- Transfer Station – Open normal hours. Call 706-865-3716.
- White County Convenience Center – open normal hours (Mon/Wed from 9-5 and Saturday from 8-4.) Call 706-865-7655.

**White County Public Works (Road Department)** – Office is open. Call 706-865-2510.

- Office will be closed to public March 23 – April 3, 2020.

**White County Tax Assessors** – Office is open. Contact 706-865-5328.

- Office will be closed to public March 23 – April 3, 2020.

**White County Tax Commissioner** – Office is open. Contact 706-865-2225.

- Effective Monday March 23 – April 3 2020 the Tax Commissioners office will be servicing customers through the drive through window only.
- Employees will be available by phone, email and the internet in order to provide customer service.

**White County Extension Office** – Office is open. Contact 706-865-2832.

**White County Voter Registration** – Office is open. Contact 706-865-7812.

- Office will be closed to public March 23 – April 3, 2020.
- Presidential Primary election has been postponed to May 19, 2020.
- Absentee ballots will be sent out beginning March 31 to those that request them.

**White County Coroner** – Office is open. Contact 706-8653101.

- Office will be closed to public March 23 – April 3, 2020.

**White County Water Authority** – Office is closed to public. Contact 706-865-0788.

- Bill payment can be completed by mail, over the phone, utilizing drop boxes at the office or at Gateway Plaza on 129 South, or online at [www.whitecountywater.org](http://www.whitecountywater.org) (you will need the web ID number off your bill.)
- Staff is available by phone or e-mail.
- Turner Creek Water Plant is closed to the public.

**White County Schools** – Schools are closed per Governor Kemp’s order.

- On-line learning is happening. Those without internet can pick up work packets on Mondays at your school. Teachers are responding by phone, e-mail and on-line learning venues.
- School nutrition is providing sack lunches and next-day breakfast at distribution location on the White County Schools website. Drive through meals can be picked up at White County Middle School from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. weekdays.

**Alpine Helen/White County Welcome Center** – Center is closed. Contact 706-878-3842.

- Tourist information is available outside the center. Staff is available by phone or e-mail.

**City of Cleveland** – City Hall is closed March 17-27. Call 706-865-2017.

- Staff is available by phone or e-mail.
- Fire station is on lockdown with no unauthorized entry.
- No special event permits are being issued.

**City of Helen** – Public access to Helen City Hall is closed from March 19 to April 1, 2020.

- City staff is available by phone 706-878-2733 or email [info@cityofhelen.org](mailto:info@cityofhelen.org).
- Payment can make utility, citation, tax and permit payments by phone, using the drop box at City Hall or on-line. The standard credit card fee will be waived during the time the City Hall lobby is closed.
- Alcohol Server Permits will not be issued while Helen City Hall is closed to the public. Anyone required to have an Alcohol Server Permit will be required to contact City Hall and provide their name, address and business name in order to serve alcohol during this time.
- The public restrooms located on Chattahoochee Strasse (behind the Arts Center) will be temporarily closed. Public restrooms on River Street and at the Welcome Center will remain open.
- Restaurants must follow Governor Brian Kemp’s mandate that restaurants follow the Georgia Restaurant Association’s recommendation of a 30-person maximum, including servers, inside closed quarter areas. A restaurant may accommodate up to 50 people if the tables are spaced approximately 12 feet apart. The exception is that all outside seating is exempt if the 6-foot spacing requirement can be adhered to. It is recommended to utilize takeout and delivery options as much as possible.
- There will be no special events approved at this time and will not be reconsidered until April 21, 2020.
- Information is available on the website [www.cityofhelen.org](http://www.cityofhelen.org)

This list will be updated daily.

**For more information concerning this press release contact the White County Emergency Management Agency at 706-865-9500.**

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