



PRESS RELEASE

White County Government
Office of Public Safety – Emergency Management Division
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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Wed., March 25, 2020@5PM

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, 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.

1 confirmed case of COVID-19 in White County according to Georgia Department of Public Health.

White County Commissioner's Office –

- The Board of Commissioners office is open for operations but closed to the public. Citizens are encouraged to do business 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 for operations but closed to the public. Contact 706-865-9500.

- Office will be closed to public March 23 – April 3, 2020.
- The EOC is operational 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 will be open for intakes from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Tuesday and Friday and open for adoptions on Friday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Please call ahead at 706-219-2689.

White County Courthouse – Courthouse will be open with limited access during 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 and new court notices will be mailed.
- Grand Jury scheduled for April 6, 2020 has been deferred until May 4, 2020.
- 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.
- The number of people in the record room will be limited to 4. Please call ahead for an appointment.
- Access to employee areas is restricted and all matters will be conducted at the office entrance, lobby area or covered front porch of the courthouse.
- Do not enter the clerk's office if you have flu type symptoms, have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and not been cleared by a doctor, have been exposed or believe you have been exposed to someone who has COVID-19.

White County Sheriff – Office is open with limited access. 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 to the public with limited access. 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 – 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
- 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, 1st 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 until April 3. Contact 706-865-5572.

- All use of library community room has been canceled.
- Book drops are closed. All overdue fines waived until we reopen. Patrons are asked to keep all books till we reopen.
- Statewide courier service and all book hold service suspended.
- Staff is available by phone or e-mail.

White County Community and Economic Development – Office is open for operations but closed to public. 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. Permits will be issued by e-mail.
- During building inspections, social distancing will be practiced. Contactors are encouraged to not be at the worksite during inspections or stay in their vehicles. Communication will be via phone or e-mail.
- Payments can be made with a credit card over the phone or call 706-865-6496 to receive payment instructions for cash or check.
- Planning and Zoning – Call 706-865-6768.
- 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. Please practice social distancing.

White County Public Works (Road Department) – Office is open for operations but closed to the public. Call 706-865-2510.

- Office will be closed to public March 23 – April 3, 2020.
- The department is open to respond by phone or e-mail to any Road Dept. related questions, work order requests for road problems, right of way or driveway permit preparation, vendor questions and to set up Invoices for payments.

White County Tax Assessors – Office is open for operations but closed to public. Contact 706-865-5328.

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

White County Tax Commissioner – Office is open via drive through only. Lobby is closed. 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.
- On-line options are available at the White County Tax Commissioner page located at www.whitecounty.net
- Vehicle registration renewals and property tax payments may be handled online.
- Postal service postmarks for mail payments are honored by the Tax Commissioner’s office.
- Questions concerning individual situations can be handled by call 706-865-2225 or by e-mail to wctc@whitecounty.net

White County Extension Office – Office is open for operations but closed to the public. Contact 706-865-2832.

- The White County Extension Office will remain operational Monday through Thursday and closed on Friday’s indefinitely.
- The Extension Service will accept water and soil samples at the side door via a drop box on Monday and Tuesday only.

White County Voter Registration – Office is open for operations but closed to the public. 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 for operations but closed to the public. Contact 706-8653101.

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

White County Water Authority – Office is open for operations but 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 (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. **Meals will be available the weeks of March 23-27 and March 30 – April 3, 2020.**
- **Spring Break will be observed April 6-10, 2020.**

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 to the public March 17 - April 6. Call 706-865-2017.

- **Staff is available by phone or e-mail** generalinfo@cityofclevelandga.org
- **Information is available on the website** www.cityofclevelandga.org.
- 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.
- 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

White County Family and Children Services –DFCS_Customer Contact Center

- Operations continue via teleworking.
- Lobby is closed to the public.
- Food stamp and Medicaid applications can be mailed in, completed on-line or via telephone.
- Child welfare and protection services continue to be operational.

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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