

**OUR MISSION IS Engaging our diverse communities to responsibly provide quality opportunities and services that matter.**

## Story County's COVID-19 Response and Guidelines

To protect the health and safety of Story County employees and the public, Story County offices are open on an appointment-only basis as part of a phased approach to reopening. In April, the Board of Supervisors outlined additional precautions to be implemented by Elected Officials and Department Heads to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 within Story County governmental operations. These precautions included policies and guidelines for personal protection and hygiene practices; treatments of surfaces and standard operating procedures for daily disinfection; installation of barriers and shields to provide protection when social distancing cannot be accomplished; reconfiguring public gathering and waiting areas; and use of electronic meetings as allowable by law.

The Board of Supervisors is committed to creating an environment safe for employees and the general public. To guide their discussions in regard to employees returning to the workplace and reopening buildings to the public, the Board of Supervisors adopted the following benchmarks that are reviewed weekly by the Board.

- Data reflects a 14-day downward trajectory of new COVID-19 positive cases;
- All precautions to help reduce the spread of COVID-19 within Story County government operations are in place; and
- No unanticipated events or trends have occurred which would suggest reconsideration of moving forward.

Many County services can be conducted online or remotely through email, mail, our drop boxes, or over the phone. Please contact departments and offices directly to learn how to make an appointment or to find out what services are available remotely, thereby saving you a trip. More information about Story County's commitment and phased approach is available on our website at [www.storycounty.gov](http://www.storycounty.gov). Story County will continue to monitor the evolving COVID-19 situation and adjust County operations and safety measures as needed.

For more information, please visit Story County's website at [www.storycountyiowa.gov](http://www.storycountyiowa.gov) or contact one of the Offices and Departments listed to the right.

### Story County Offices and Departments

- Animal Control & Shelter** (515) 382-3338
- Assessor & Property Values** (515) 382-7320
- Auditor & Elections** (515) 382-7210  
Real estate and property records, financial audits, voter registration and elections
- Board of Supervisors** (515) 382-7200  
Legislative body, budget and administration oversight
- Community Services** (515) 663-2930  
General Assistance, Mental Health and Disability Services
- Conservation & Parks** (515) 232-2516
- County Attorney** (515) 382-7255
- Emergency Management Agency** (515) 382-7316
- Engineer & Secondary Roads** (515) 382-7355
- Environmental Health** (515) 382-7240  
Septic systems, wells and water testing, nuisance complaints, pools, and tattoos
- Facilities Management** (515) 382-7400  
Geographic Information Services (515) 382-7327
- Human Resources** (515) 382-7204
- Planning & Development** (515) 382-7245  
Zoning Ordinances, building permits, subdivision applications, and land use/development inquires
- Public Health** (515) 239-6730 or (800) 529-4610
- Recorder & Vital Records** (515) 382-7230  
Repository for public records like land transactions and titles, marriage licenses and death certificates
- Sheriff's Office Administration** (515) 382-6566  
– Support Services (515) 382-7473 – Jail (515) 382-7464
- Treasurer** (515) 382-7340  
Motor vehicle transactions and property tax collection
- Veterans Affairs** (515) 956-2626

**STAY CONNECTED!**  
Sign up for **Notify Me** at [www.storycountyiowa.gov](http://www.storycountyiowa.gov)



- WEAR**  
A FACE COVERING
- DISTANCE**  
6 FEET (2M) APART
- WASH**  
YOUR HANDS OFTEN
- STAY HOME**  
IF YOU ARE ILL

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY. **CYCLONES CARE**

For more information on the Cyclones Care Campaign, please visit <https://www.care.iastate.edu/>

## Greetings from the Story County Treasurer's Office!

While we have not been able to meet you all face to face the last few months, we have been very busy providing all of the services of our office through phone and email. So busy, that in June, July, and August of 2020 we actually processed more motor vehicle titles than in 2019! We have worked closely with the Iowa DOT to ensure that we can offer every motor vehicle service possible even though the building is not open to the public – including exchanging your current plates for specialty plates like Blackouts, ISU, or DNR plates.

If you have Treasurer's Office business to conduct, we are working through phone, email, mail, internet, and dropbox. You can complete Registration Renewals and Property Tax payments online at [IowaTreasurers.Org](http://IowaTreasurers.Org), mail them to PO BOX 498, NEVADA, IA 50201, or drop them off in our Treasurer's dropbox at the Story County Administration Building – 900 6th Street, Nevada. For title transfers, plate exchanges, or other transactions, please call our office at 515-382-7340 or email [Treasurer@StoryCountyIowa.Gov](mailto:Treasurer@StoryCountyIowa.Gov). We have also added a new drop off slot to the east of the main entrance of the Story County Administration Building. This drops into a box inside our Treasurer's Office and is a more secure option for people to complete their transactions.

At this time we would highly encourage everyone to complete their property tax payments using one of the options listed above at their earliest convenience, as we do not anticipate the office being reopened before October. We will be happy to send you a receipt if you include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your payment.

We thank you for your patience during this time, and we remain committed to providing you excellent customer service even if the process in which we deliver it may be a bit different than you are used to. Call or email us with any questions.



*Fly Our Colors' plates will be coming to the Treasurer's Office in Fall 2020!*

## Housing Study Survey Open for Input

Story County, its communities, and RDG Planning & Design started a process in July to complete a housing study. We are wanting your input to help assess the perception of and market for owner-occupied and rental housing in Story County.

This survey is designed to gather information from a wide range of residents from seasoned real estate professionals to those with little background in real estate other than their own personal experiences in the housing market.

The survey is available online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StoryCountyHousing>

Spanish version at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/StoryCountyHousingSpanish>

## Passport Acceptance Modifications at the Recorder's Office

The Story County Recorder's Office will resume passport acceptance when the Story County Administration Building re-opens to the public. In an effort to limit the number of people in the office at any one time, passport applications will be accepted by appointment only. Please note that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States Passport Agency is advising that there will be significant delays in both the issuance of the passports as well as the return of citizenship documents.

The Passport Agency has currently entered Phase I of re-opening, which means:

*"Some of the employees will return to our agencies and centers, allowing the Passport Agency to resume limited processing of applications already received. Applications will be processed on a first in, first out basis, beginning with the oldest applications received. The Passport Agency will continue to prioritize services for customers with life-or-death emergencies by appointment only."* ([www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov))

For the latest information on turnaround times, please visit [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

**If you have further questions, please call the Recorder's Office at (515) 382-7230.**

## Yard Waste Storm Debris Drop-Off Site Now Open

Story County has a drop-off site for yard waste and vegetative storm debris from the August 10th storm event. The site is for organic storm debris only (trees-no root balls, brush, and vegetation) and limited to residents of unincorporated Story County (outside all city limits). Vegetative debris in yard waste bags will not be accepted. It is self-haul, drop-off only.

The site is located at 60016 160th Street (southeast of Roland), at the Southeast corner of the intersection of 600th Avenue and 160th Street (entrance to the site is from 160th Street).

The site is open Monday through Wednesday from 12:00 pm – 4:00 pm and again on Saturdays, from 8:00 am – 12:00 pm. During times of inclement weather, the site will be closed.

Upon entry to the site, identification or other proof of residence in unincorporated Story County must be shown, and loads will be photographed and logged. Face coverings are required when social distancing practices cannot be followed

Staff is not available to help unload debris, and residents are encouraged to tie down or cover loads to prevent debris from falling out during transport. Use caution around the heavy equipment at the drop-off sites. PPE Recommended: Safety Glasses, Hi Viz Shirt, Gloves, Long pants, Closed Toed Shoes.

The dumping of non-yard waste debris or any debris outside of the set hours by the public shall be considered illegal dumping and shall be punishable by law.

Please contact Story County Planning and Development at 515-382-7245 with any questions or visit Story County online at [www.storycountyiowa.gov](http://www.storycountyiowa.gov).





# Our Story

**OUR MISSION IS Engaging our diverse communities to responsibly provide quality opportunities and services that matter.**

## Water Monitoring Program Will Need Volunteers

Creeks run through many of Story County's public lands, our city parks, our rural areas, and our backyards. Depending on what happens on the land that drains to them - their watersheds - they can be full of fish or lifeless, clear or muddy and choked with algae, safe for kids to play in or full of germs. We'd like to understand the condition of more of our creeks and select watersheds to prioritize for new conservation initiatives.

Even the smallest creeks and drainage ditches can influence water quality and flooding in downstream waters. Bacteria that ends up in the South Skunk River can affect use of the newly dedicated water trail, while nitrogen and phosphorus that make its way to the Gulf of Mexico contribute to the dead zone.

Many farmers are trying conservation practices that can address these problems. We'd like to make sure it's working, celebrate the progress that's been made, and identify areas where new conservation practices can be most effective.

State agencies only have the resources to monitor the biggest rivers (like the South Skunk River) and the most heavily-used beaches (like Hickory Grove Lake). We know little about our backyard creeks except through the efforts of volunteers. The Squaw Creek Watershed Coalition in the Ames area has been monitoring Squaw Creek and its tributaries for over ten years. That data led to a watershed plan and a grant project by non-profit Prairie Rivers of Iowa and partners that helped farmers install a denitrifying bioreactor, over 3,532 acres of cover crops, and over 3,719 acres of no-till. Other creeks in the county, from Ballard Creek in Huxley, to West Indian Creek in Nevada, to Minerva Creek in Zearing, have rarely been tested, if ever. Initial findings suggest that many creeks in the county have elevated levels of nitrate and E. coli bacteria.

Since the DNR is no longer able to support a statewide volunteer monitoring program, Story County and Prairie Rivers of Iowa are organizing a county-wide monitoring effort. Other partners include the Cities of Ames, Nevada, Huxley, and Gilbert, Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Story County Community Foundation, and Izaak Walton League of America. We need your help! We will be looking for volunteers throughout the county to be a part of the water quality monitoring team. No experience is necessary; volunteers will be trained and supplied with the necessary equipment.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Jerry Keys, Environmental Education Coordinator, at 515-598-4765 or [JKeys@storycountyiowa.gov](mailto:JKeys@storycountyiowa.gov). Data collected by volunteers will be managed using the Izaak Walton League website, and used to follow trends in water quality.

**GOALS**

**Support quality of life in Story County by aligning water quality monitoring efforts with recreation, environmental education, and watershed improvement projects.**

**Provide Story County residents with the tools to understand water quality concerns and solutions in their local streams and lakes and to actively participate in citizen science.**

**citienserve®**  
**Online Permitting Now Available**  
 Story County Planning and Development is excited to announce our online permitting system called Citizenserve. Citizenserve allows the general public to easily apply, track and pay for zoning permits online. The automation will simplify the permit application, review, approval, issuance and inspection processes. Development case and other related applications will also be added in the near future. More information about the system and how to apply for permits and our regulations is available on our website at [www.storycountyiowa.gov/109/Planning-Development](http://www.storycountyiowa.gov/109/Planning-Development).

**Openings on Story County Boards and Commissions**  
 Applications are being accepted for the Boards and Commissions listed below. All persons interested in serving on Boards and Commissions must complete the application in this link at <https://www.storycountyiowa.gov/FormCenter/County-Outreach-9/Application-for-Appointment-73>  
 Deadline to apply is September 30, 2020 at 4:30 pm

**Analysis of Social Services Evaluation Team (ASSET)**  
 1 opening  
 Please note that ASSET policies require county volunteers to be residents of Story County.

**Board of Health - 2 openings**  
**Conservation Board - 1 opening**  
**Commission of Veteran Affairs - 2 openings**  
 Application should contain DD214 with personal information redacted.

The Board seeks gender balance on all Boards and Commissions and would like to encourage citizens who may be interested in serving on a Board or Commission to complete an application that can be kept on file. Completed applications may also be mailed or emailed to: Sandra King, Director of External Operations and County Services, Story County Administration Building, 900 6th Street, Nevada, Iowa 50201  
 Please direct questions to [sking@storycountyiowa.gov](mailto:sking@storycountyiowa.gov) or 515-382-7200.

## Hickory Grove Lake Restoration

You're likely familiar with the lake restoration efforts at Hickory Grove Park. After years of planning and correcting issues in the watershed, in-lake work began in 2018. Major project goals focused on improving water quality and recreational opportunities. The most notable amenity changes include a foot bridge to the island. Expanded truck and boat trailer parking was added at both boat ramps. Large fishing jetties, rock piles, reefs, structure, and lake-edge benches were added to improve angling opportunities.

Renovation of the fishery was an important piece of the puzzle, as the large population of common carp in the lake had become an issue. Common carp is an invasive fish species that negatively impacts water quality and sport fish populations in Iowa lakes. They uproot and destroy aquatic plants when they feed. Sediment and nutrients are also re-suspended into the water column during this process, which can lead to increased undesirable algae blooms.

After the lake was drained, post draw-down netting and sampling suggested the carp were successfully eliminated from the lake. Unfortunately, common carp were observed this spring as the lake was refilling. The lake was re-drained and will remain drained until fall of 2020. "The most effective method to eliminate the remaining fish population is to apply rotenone to the lake basin and tributaries," said Ben Dodd, DNR Fisheries Management Biologist. These steps were taken during the summer and the park is now re-opened. For more information about this lake

## Story County Secondary Roads Update

Story County maintains over 700 miles of gravel roadways as part of the Secondary Road system. Following a challenging spring in 2019 when weather conditions caused gravel roads throughout Iowa to be extremely soft, the Board of Supervisors increased the rock budget in order to restore as much rock as possible on the gravel road system. During Fiscal Year 2020, over \$1,300,000 was spent on new rock with plans to do the same this new fiscal year to help improve our gravel roadways.



With the COVID-19 pandemic impacting the amount of vehicular travel in Iowa, the Road Use Tax Fund, our main source of funding, could be negatively impacted. We are closely monitoring this funding situation, but it appears that our current Secondary Road Fund reserve balance will get us through this without a big impact on the level of service that we provide on our road system.

During this 2020 construction season, we have already replaced one bridge in Lincoln Township on 730th Ave. and plan to replace three more bridges. Also planned is a 4.2 mile asphalt overlay project around Hickory Grove Lake complimenting improvements to the lake that have been taking place over the past two years.

## New Laws Impact Review of Agriculture Practices and Remove Commission and Board Members

On June 1, 2020, the Governor signed HF2477 and HF2512 into law. The laws had an immediate impact on planning and zoning in Iowa counties as each county's authority to require review of agricultural exemptions and agritourism requests disappeared and in some counties, Story County being one, memberships of the county Planning and Zoning Commissions and Boards of Adjustment abruptly changed.

HF2477 eliminated counties' ability to require conditional use permits, special use permits, special exceptions, or variances for agricultural experiences on properties where the primary use is agricultural production. Agricultural experiences are secondary uses to agricultural production and are intended to promote or educate the public about agriculture, agricultural practices, agricultural activities, or agricultural products. This new law will require the striking of Story County's agritourism ordinance and Conditional Use Permit process from the Story County Land Development Regulations. With permit and variance approvals for agricultural experiences gone, so also go opportunities for neighbors and other members of the public to express their support or opposition for new or changing agricultural experience projects at a public hearing.

HF2512 states that "a county shall not require an application, an approval, or a fee in order for an ordinance to be deemed inapplicable to land or buildings that are primarily adapted for agricultural purposes," requiring Story County to change some of its processes.

The Planning and Development Department is now supporting a voluntary application submittal process for property owners claiming their land and/or building projects are agriculturally exempt from County zoning requirements. The Department's review will continue to include referral to Environmental Health when waste water is planned to be generated and a septic system permit is needed, review for impacts on the flood plain, referral to electric service providers regarding overhead electrical line separation standards, and review for potential impacts to easements.

Moreover, HF2512 requires all Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Adjustment members to reside within the County but outside the corporate limits of any city. Previously only a majority of the members needed to reside in the unincorporated areas. The new law caused three Story County Planning Zoning Commissioners and two Board of Adjustment members who did not reside in the unincorporated area of Story County to no longer be eligible to serve.

The Planning and Development Department will post additional information on the County's website about HF2477 and HF2512 and how these laws will affect property owners and the County's practices. Please send comments or questions regarding these laws to [pzweb@storycountyiowa.gov](mailto:pzweb@storycountyiowa.gov) or call 515-382-7245 for more information.

## Ceremonial Bugle Available for Military Funerals

Story County Veterans Affairs has a ceremonial "player bugle" available. This beautiful ceremonial bugle plays "Taps" on its own, making this touching tribute available even when a skilled bugle player is not. Additionally, the playing mechanism in the bugle can be removed, making it a traditional (and playable) bugle. Use of this ceremonial bugle is free to Veterans in Story County, available to check out for 72 hours. This extended checkout period is designed so that it can be checked out the day before a funeral and not returned until the day after. This gives the bugle "players" a chance to familiarize themselves with the bugle. To reserve this bugle, please contact Veterans Affairs at 515-956-2626 or 515-956-2625.

**Administration Building**  
Phone: 515-382-6581  
**Animal Shelter**  
Phone: 515-382-3338

**Engineer and Secondary Roads**  
Phone: 515-382-7355  
**Justice Center**  
**Attorney** Phone: 515-382-7255 **Sheriff** Phone: 515-382-6566

**Human Service Center**  
Phone: 515-663-2930  
**Conservation**  
Phone: 515-232-2516

## STORY COUNTY ELECTED OFFICIALS

- County Attorney Timothy Meals
- County Sheriff Paul Fitzgerald
- County Auditor Lucy Martin
- County Treasurer Ted Rasmusson
- County Recorder Stacie Herridge
- Supervisor Lauris Olson
- Supervisor Lisa Heddens
- Supervisor Linda Murken