

Staying in Touch

A communication from the Washington County Board of Commissioners

County breaks ground on Central Service and License Center



Left to right: Woodbury Mayor Anne Burt, Washington County Commissioners Michelle Clasen, Stan Karwoski, and Karla Bigham, and Metropolitan Council Members Dr. Gail Cederberg and Susan Vento.

The Washington County Board of Commissioners broke ground on the new Central Service and License Center in Woodbury April 25.

The new facility, located at 1261 Woodlane Drive, will replace the current service center at 2150 Radio Drive. The location is at the eastern terminus of the Metro Transit Gold Line Bus Rapid Transit line, providing access to transportation and transit options.

Commissioner Stan Karwoski, District 2, spoke at the event, noting the county identified a need to replace the existing Woodbury Service Center in its 2018-2019 strategic facility plan.

“The key strategic facility plan takeaways were that we needed to provide expanded services and more accessibility for service center customers,” said Karwoski. “The

facility we’re building will meet the current and future needs of the residents in the area and the region.”

In addition to the license center and workforce development services offered at the current facility, the Central Service and License Center will offer a public health clinic, veteran services, elections, homelessness intervention program services, and Community Corrections.

Commissioner Michelle Clasen, District 5, also spoke at the event, stating the Central Service and License Center demonstrates the county’s continued commitment to energy efficiency and sustainability.

“I want to thank our county staff who worked with commissioners on the

vision of maximizing space, improving technology, and having the first-ever county building to have solar panels — reducing our carbon footprint and bringing more energy to the grid,” said Clasen. “Our energy efficiency plans also include infrastructure for installing EV charging stations.”

The facility will also incorporate sustainable elements in the building materials, stormwater runoff design, and indoor air and lighting systems.

Construction on the \$30.5 million project will begin this summer with a target completion in the summer of 2025. The project is being funded through county bonds and capital investment funds.

Learn more by visiting www.co.washington.mn.us/CSLC or contacting staff at publicworks@co.washington.mn.us or 651-430-4300.

County website, email addresses transitioning to .gov in 2024

Washington County is currently working on changing its website address and email address from co.washington.mn.us to washingtoncountymn.gov, which complies with Federal Homeland Security recommendations. The transition is planned to be complete by the fall of 2024.

When complete, the new website address will be www.washingtoncountymn.gov. The new county email addresses will follow this format: Jane.Doe@washingtoncountymn.gov.

Washington County Library's website address will not change. It remains www.washcolib.org.

Current addresses will remain available

If you have a bookmarked page from the county website or saved

a county email address in your contacts, the current address will still work — even after we change to washingtoncountymn.gov.

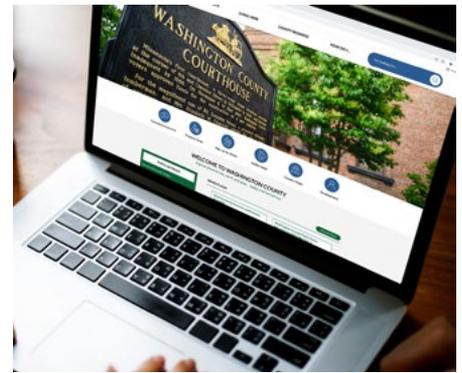
The current website address and county emails with the address co.washington.mn.us will automatically redirect you to the new washingtoncountymn.gov website and email addresses to ensure no communication is lost.

Three reasons for the move to .gov

Consistency

All .gov websites across the United States are official government websites.

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), a division of Homeland Security, ensures .gov domains are available solely to U.S.-based government organizations and publicly controlled entities.



Trust

Since .gov can only be used by government entities, you can trust the information from the washingtoncountymn.gov website and email addresses.

Security

CISA verifies that .gov websites are government entities. They also provide additional layers of security that other domains (such as .com, .org, .us) do not.

Summer road construction in the county gets underway

Road construction season will soon be fully underway. These are upcoming road improvement and rehabilitation projects occurring across the county this summer. Learn more and stay up-to-date on the various projects by visiting www.co.washington.mn.us/TransportationProjects.

County Road 65 (Oakgreen Ave.) reconstruction project

Work has started again on the two-year reconstruction project of County Road (CR) 65 in West Lakeland and Baytown Townships. The remaining work will consist of:

- The full reconstruction of CR 65.
- Improvement of sightlines.
- Removal of fixed objects adjacent to the roadway, such as trees and utility poles.

- Replacement of signs and pavement markings.
- Addition of guardrail where necessary.
- Construction of 8-foot-wide shoulders to help accommodate pedestrians.
- Grading of drainage ditches.
- Addition of curb and storm sewer where necessary to minimize private property impacts.

CR 65 was closed to southbound traffic starting in April. The southbound closure and northbound traffic will be maintained for the duration of the project, which is estimated to be completed in October.

County Highway 2 (Broadway Ave.) rehabilitation project

The county is planning a rehabilitation



County Highway 2 (Broadway Ave.)

project on County Highway 2 (Broadway Ave.) from the I-35 northbound ramps to Trunk Highway

Summer road construction continued

61 (Lake St.) in Forest Lake. The goal of this project is to perform pavement spot repairs along the project corridor, which was reconstructed in 2011.

Work consists of concrete pavement rehabilitation and new traffic signs and lane striping.

The work is planned to begin mid-August.

County Highway 13 (50th St. N.) improvement project

An improvement project is planned for County Highway 13 (50th St. N.) from the Hadley/Trunk Highway 36 Interchange to Olson Lake Trail. Work consists of the following:

- Pavement replacement and trail resurfacing.
- Curb and gutter repair and drainage structure replacement.
- Guardrail replacement.
- Traffic sign and lane stripe replacement.

This project will require a westbound County Highway 13 detour for the entire project duration. Construction is planned for June through August.

County Highway 12 (Stillwater Road/75th St. N.) improvement project

County Highway 12 (75th St. N.) will undergo improvements between East Ave./Hallam Ave. S. and Kimbro Ave. N. This project will improve existing roadway and trail pavement conditions, and construct a signal at East Ave./Hallam Ave.

Construction will take place from early April through October.

County Highway 33 (Everton Ave.) reconstruction project

County Highway 33 (Everton Ave.) will be reconstructed from County Highway 2 (Broadway Ave.) to 220th St. N. and County Highway 2



County Highway 33 (Everton Ave.)

(Broadway Ave.) will be rehabilitated from the Washington County line (Lyons St. / Elmcrest Ave.) to 19th St.

Construction will begin in April and is expected to wrap up in October. Road closures will be used in stages to complete the work. Access will be maintained during roadway construction. This project includes four different stages.

County Highway 5 (Stillwater Blvd. N.) improvement project

County Highway 5 (Stillwater Blvd. N.) between Trunk Highway 36 and Autumn Way, spanning 0.9 miles will be updated to improve the roadway and trail surfaces. Pedestrian curb ramps will be added along County Highway 5 that comply with ADA standards.

A detour and lane closures will be required during construction and traffic will be detoured for six days. Construction will begin in June and is anticipated to be completed at the end of July.

County Road 74 (65th St. S.) trail construction project

A new multi-use trail will be constructed this year on the south side of County Road 74 (65th St. S.) between Meadow Grass Ave. S. and Hadley Ave. S. in Cottage Grove near Cottage Grove Elementary School and Oltman Middle School. Other improvements include curb and gutter repairs, surface water management, and utility modifications.

Construction is anticipated to take place in June.



Curious about the progress at the North Environmental Center being built in Forest

Lake? Watch a video to learn about the project by visiting www.co.washington.mn.us/NEC or scanning the QR code.

Serve your community as an election judge

Voters have two more chances to visit their polling places in 2024: once for the August Statewide Primary and again for the November General Election. These opportunities are made possible by the dedication of hundreds of election judges who staff voting sites throughout Washington County. Polling places are operated effectively and accurately, in part, because of the integrity, training, and commitment of the Washington County residents who step up to serve their communities as election judges.

In anticipation of the two large 2024 statewide elections, including the Presidential Election on Nov. 5, Washington County is looking for individuals interested in serving as election judges. To be an election judge, you must be eligible to vote in Minnesota, at least 18 years old on election day, and be able to read, write, and speak English. Anyone 16 to 17 years old may serve as a trainee election judge.

Election judges are paid for their training and service. In addition, by law, employers are required to give employees time off from work to be an election judge without a reduction in pay. Employees need to notify their employer in writing at least 20 days in advance of Election Day.

Visit the county's website at www.co.washington.mn.us/ElectionJudge

to find an online Election Judge Application and to learn more information about serving, or contact Elections staff by calling 651-430-6790 or emailing elections@co.washington.mn.us.

After completing the online application, interested residents will be contacted by Washington County Elections.

Important 2024 Election Dates

Start Date	End Date	
March 6	July 23	Register to vote in advance by July 23 to save time on Primary Election Day.
June 28	August 12	Vote early (absentee) by mail or in-person for the Primary Election Day.
August 13	August 13	Primary Election Day.
August 14	October 15	Register to vote in advance by October 15 to save time on Election Day.
September 20	November 4	Vote early (absentee) by mail or in-person for the General Election.
November 5	November 5	General Election.

Tips for protecting yourself from ticks this summer

As you head outside to enjoy the great outdoors, remember to check for ticks often and remove them right away. Washington County continues to be a high-risk area for tick-related diseases.

Lyme disease is caused by bacteria called *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Blacklegged ticks, also called deer ticks, can carry these bacteria. In 2023, county staff collected blacklegged ticks as part of a University of Minnesota study investigating Lyme disease exposure risks among outdoor workers. From May to June, 438 ticks were collected at Lake Elmo Park Reserve and sent to the University of Minnesota lab for detection of *Borrelia burgdorferi*. Of the 438 ticks collected, 245 (55.9%) were found to be infected.

Protect yourself from tick bites



- Wear light-colored clothing, check for ticks often, and remove them right away.
- Use an EPA-approved tick repellent, such as one with 20-30% DEET.
- Treat clothing and gear with an EPA-approved tick repellent, such as permethrin.
- Check your pets daily for ticks. Talk to your veterinarian about tick control products.



For more information about ticks, visit www.co.washington.mn.us/ticks, contact staff at 651-430-6655 or PHE@co.washington.mn.us, or scan the QR code.

County, CDA collaborate on Bluestem affordable housing project



Rendering of Bluestem Apartments in Cottage Grove.

The need for affordable housing is growing across Washington County. In response, the Washington County Community Development Agency (CDA), Washington County, and the City of Cottage Grove partnered to help fund the new affordable Bluestem Apartments project.

Bluestem Apartments, located at Hemingway Ave. S. and 79th St. in Cottage Grove, will provide 52 new homes. The development will include studios and one-bedroom apartments prioritized for seniors and people with disabilities. More than half the apartments will offer federal rental assistance to residents with annual incomes of less than \$37,250. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development seldom initiates new rent assistance agreements due to complex budget allocations, making the launch of the Bluestem development noteworthy.

“Washington County and the CDA are working collaboratively to improve access to affordable housing in the county,” said Washington County Commissioner Fran Miron,

District 1, who also sits on the CDA Board of Commissioners. “While there is much more work to do to meet the demand for affordable housing, the Bluestem Apartments project demonstrates our commitment to addressing this growing need.”

The location is across the road from Park Grove Library, making it easy to access resources and attend community events. Additionally, nearby grocery and retail stores will help ensure that daily essentials and shopping needs are met without having to travel far. The accessibility of a nearby bus route also provides easy transportation options.

The milestones achieved to this point include the selection of Trellis Company, a nonprofit real estate developer dedicated to affordable housing through community-led initiatives, and the start of construction in March. The total development cost of \$16.3 million is financed with private activity bonds and equity in addition to funding from Washington County’s American Rescue Plan Act funds, local affordable housing aid, and the CDA GROW Fund. Construction is anticipated to take 14 months with move-in as soon as summer 2025.

If you or someone you know needs housing resources, visit www.washingtoncountycda.org, call 651-458-0936, or scan the QR code.



Parks events and programs happening all summer long

Summers in Minnesota pass in the blink of an eye, so make the most of yours by visiting Washington County Parks for a season filled with fun, engaging events and programs.

Programs



For a complete list of programs and events visit www.co.washington.mn.us/Programs or scan the QR code.



Sheriff's Office promoting employee mental health wellbeing



The Washington County Sheriff's Office is taking an innovative approach to providing its employees increased access to mental health resources in a destigmatized environment.

The Check-up from the Neck Up program provides employees one-on-one sessions with Ridgeway and Associates clinicians, who work exclusively with law enforcement. The 30-minute sessions are anonymous, and employees may request up to six additional sessions.

While not everyone's mental health needs are the same, all employees meet with clinicians to ensure no one is deterred by stigma from seeking help.

"Law enforcement and public safety roles can take a substantial mental and emotional toll on individuals," stated Commissioner Gary Kriesel, District 3. "It's crucial that we as a county provide resources to support our Sheriff's Office employees in managing the difficult and often dangerous work they do in serving the community."

The purpose of the program is to build strong, resilient

employees, from onboarding through the duration of the job by providing resiliency training, connecting them with resources, and supporting them throughout their careers.

"It's important to take care of those who take care of us," said Washington County Sheriff Dan Starry. "This program isn't just about providing support during times of crisis — it's about ensuring strong, resilient employees."

Starting May 1, a clinician was on-site to schedule the meetings and participate in ride-alongs with officers.

The Check-up from the Neck up program is just one aspect of the Sheriff's Office's commitment to employee wellness. Other efforts include a peer support program, a wellness steering committee, a wellness app, and therapy dog.

Programs like this aren't possible without support from Washington County residents like you.

Learn more about the Sheriff's Office by visiting www.wcso.info or calling the main office at 651-430-7600.

Get ready for summer learning at county libraries

Washington County Library's summer programs for kids, teens, and adults begin Saturday, June 1.

These programs and activities help encourage reading and counteract summer learning loss for kids and teens. They also encourage library users of all ages to become lifelong readers and learners.

To participate, complete activities on a game card and return it to the library to collect a reward. Each person who completes a game card is also entered in a drawing for the chance to win grand prizes at the end of the summer.

Summer events and performances at library branches

To kick off the summer with a bang, all library branches will host performers in early June. Stop by to enjoy great programs, and pick up your summer game cards.

Popular performers visiting library branches this summer include the Great Brodini, the Jolly Pops, Lalo's Lunchbox, Ticket to Brasil, and more. All programs are free and open to the public, although some require registration.

Branches will also host multiple STEM (science, technology,

engineering, and math) events for science-minded learners. These activities include visits from Snake Discovery, the Bakken Museum, the Science Wildlife Center, the Works Museum, and more.

R.H. Stafford Library open during Central Park construction

Central Park in Woodbury is closed while the city completes a multi-year renovation project.

R.H. Stafford Library will remain open throughout the project, but construction may impact library services. In addition to the gardens and other spaces outside the library, the east parking lot and drive-up book drop are also closed. Visitors can park and access R.H. Stafford Library on the west side of the building (nearest Radio Drive).



For additional information, including a complete schedule of summer events, visit a Washington County Library branch, or connect online at washcolib.org.

Washington County Board commissioners



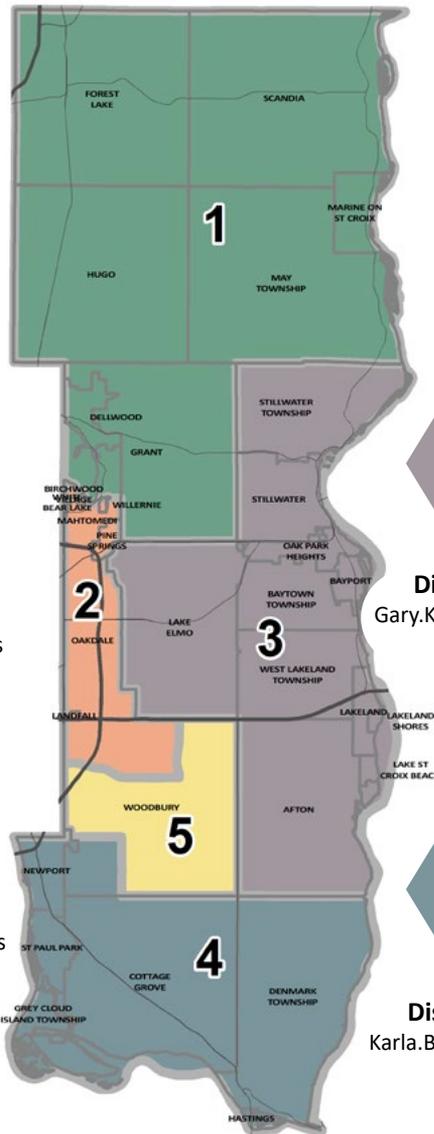
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*A great place to live,
 work and play...today and
 tomorrow*

Washington County Board of Commissioners

Washington County commissioners develop policy and make decisions that govern the county. For information, see www.co.washington.mn.us or call 651-430-6000 (TTY - 651-430-6246).

County Board Meetings

The County Board generally meets most Tuesdays at 9 a.m. in the Government Center, 14949 N. 62nd St., Stillwater. Meeting information is online, or call the Office of Administration at 651-430-6001.

Livestreaming and cablecasting

Board meetings are livestreamed, and are at www.co.washington.mn.us/Livestream, where they are also archived. Board meetings may also be cablecast in some areas.

Upcoming park events



Historic Courthouse Grand Reopening

June 8, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Washington County Historic Courthouse, 101 W. Pine St., Stillwater.

Join us for the grand reopening celebration

of the Historic Courthouse in Stillwater, which was temporarily closed for renovations.

National Get Outdoors Day

June 8, all day at county parks.

Celebrate National Get Outdoors Day by taking advantage of free entry to all county parks during hours of operation.

Ice Cream Social

July 18, 5-8 p.m., Washington County Historic Courthouse, 101 W. Pine St., Stillwater.

Celebrate the warm weather with a scoop of cold ice cream, friends, and neighbors on the lawn of the Historic Courthouse in Stillwater.

****ECRWSS**
Postal Customer



05/06/2024/119,186

Food Scraps Pickup Program available in five new communities



On April 1, the Food Scraps Pickup Program expanded to five new communities in Washington County. Residents of Cottage Grove, Grey Cloud Island Township, Landfall, Maplewood, Newport, North St. Paul, Oakdale, St. Paul Park, and Woodbury can get started today and order bags for free at FoodScrapsPickup.com or by calling 651-661-9393.

More than 40,000 households are included in this new program expansion, making the program available to over 55% of all Washington County households. The program is rolling out over multiple years and will eventually be available to all residents of Washington County.

Why should you participate

Food scraps make up about 20% of trash by weight. The Food Scraps Pickup Program turns collected food scraps back into soil, rather than waste.

“We’re excited to offer this free program to our residents and

look forward to expanding to new communities,” said Commissioner Karla Bigham, District 4. “Through Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy, we strive to enhance public health and the environment by creating value from waste. The Food Scraps Pickup Program does just that and is a significant step forward in the counties’ progress toward Minnesota’s recycling goal of 75% by 2030.”

Trash and food scrap bags from these communities are brought to the Ramsey/Washington Recycling and Energy Center (R&E Center) in Newport, where the food scrap bags are separated from the trash using robotic sorting technology. Once separated, the food scrap bags and their contents are sent to an industrial composting facility and turned into nutrient-rich soil called “compost.”

How It Works



Order your free supply of food scrap bags.



Collect your food scraps in the bags. Once a week or when the bag is full, tie a knot at the top to close the bag.



Place your bag inside your trash cart or dumpster for collection.



Done! The food scraps will be composted.



To learn more about the collection process, view this video by scanning the QR code or visit www.co.washington.mn.us/WatchFSPP

