Nicollet County’s North Mankato satellite office at 2070 West Howard Drive reopened to staff and members of the public on September 20, 2022! The North Mankato site was temporarily closed from March until September for facility updates. Some of the updates include added safety and security features, an improved lobby design, and more family-friendly supervised visitation spaces. Additional spaces for community outreach meetings and events have also been added.

The North Mankato building holds staff from both Health and Human Services and Nicollet County Community Corrections (Probation). Members of the public can make payments and bring documentation to the North Mankato office during the day. Electronic submissions will continue to be accepted. A drop box is available for use after hours. As a reminder, documents should no longer be dropped off at Blue Earth County Human Services. For questions, please call our main line at (507) 934-8559.

We look forward to serving you again at our North Mankato location!
Let's Talk Elections!

from the desk of

Jaci Kopet
Property and Public Services Director & Nicollet County Election Official

I am proud to have administered elections for the State of Minnesota over the past 24 years. I have been Nicollet County’s head Election Official since 2014, and it is my strong belief that elections are the foundation of democracy in our country. I have made it a priority to foster strong partnerships with the Minnesota Secretary of State’s office, as well as local city and township governments, to ensure that the voting experience is safe and secure for all voters within Nicollet County. I am pleased to say that in 2022, the state of Minnesota continues to be a leader in voter turnout across the United States!

In Minnesota, we believe that the paper ballot is the cornerstone of ballot security. Minnesota does not have electronic voting, and the paper ballot is the basis for the outcome of all our elections. In Nicollet County, our ballot tabulating machines aren’t connected to the internet, and this prohibits cyber interference. Paper ballots are tabulated and votes totaled before their review by city, county, and state election officials. Ballots and election results are then reviewed several more times before an election is certified by the state canvassing board.

Redistricting & New Polling Locations
Every ten years the state, county and cities are required to review the total population of all precincts to ensure the total number of eligible voters are equally represented in all districts. This process is called redistricting. In early 2022, the state of Minnesota, Nicollet County, and the cities of North Mankato and St. Peter adopted new precinct and district lines. Depending on where you live, you may now be in a different Commissioner district. You may also be required to go to a different polling location than in years past. You can check where you vote before heading to the polls on Election Day by visiting pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us

2022 General Election & Election Resources
November 8th is the general election in the state of Minnesota. This year is considered a “mid-term” election, meaning it is not a presidential election year. With that said, there are many important offices up for election, including: Federal, State, County and local races. I welcome you to view a sample of your ballot before you vote by visiting myballotmn.sos.state.mn.us

Mail Ballot Precincts
In Minnesota, cities outside the Twin Cities metro area with fewer than 400 registered voters, or townships of any size, can choose to vote exclusively by mail per resolution of their city council or township board. Minnesota has had mail ballot precincts for over 50 years; the legislation authorizing this type of voting for residents of small, non-metro jurisdictions became law in 1987. Many thousands of Minnesotans have been voting in mail ballot precincts in every state election cycle since that time. In Nicollet County, we have ten precincts that vote by mail ballot.

As a friendly reminder: Use the ballots and voting materials mailed to you.

Please do not throw these materials away. If you prefer to come into the

ELECTION FACT

#1: Ballot-counting machines are tested, verified for accuracy, and certified before every election.*

ELECTION FACT

#2: It takes around 30,000 election workers to hold an election in Minnesota.*

*Election Fact Source: mnvotes.org
Nicollet County Government Center to vote in-person before Election Day, please remember to bring the entire ballot packet with you. Using the ballot packet that was mailed to you saves you time when visiting the Government Center. It also saves Nicollet County the money spent mailing the packet materials.

**Vote by Absentee Ballot**
In Minnesota, you can vote early with an absentee ballot starting 46 days before Election Day. You can request an absentee ballot online, by mail, or in person. The Nicollet County Government Center is the designated location to vote absentee. Please visit [mnvotes.org](http://mnvotes.org) under "Other Ways to Vote" for more information.

**Absentee Voting Applications**
You may receive an absentee voter application in the mail. These applications are sent out by third-party organizations that are un-affiliated with Nicollet County. These organizations are able to request voter mailing lists from the Minnesota Secretary of State’s office, which they use to mail out absentee voter applications. Remember: These absentee voter applications are not ballots.

**What’s Happening in Nicollet County**
2022 has already been a busy election year for Nicollet County. We are now switching our focus in preparation for the upcoming general election which will be held Tuesday, November 8th! Nicollet County has already held several special elections in 2022. These elections were for Congressional District 1 & Commissioner District 3 vacancies. Nicollet County also completed the statewide primary election on August 9, which appointed party delegates for this general election’s ballot.

The amount of preparation that goes into an election starts well before Election Day. My department and I spend long hours training election officials, proofing ballots, testing election equipment, assisting absentee voters, as well as processing, checking and re-checking all the mail-in precinct ballots. We make certain that the Nicollet County Government Center and all our in-person city and township polling locations are ready for voters to hit the polls each election day.

With that said, I would like to express my gratitude for the citizens who volunteer as election judges throughout our County each election day. Their dedication and civic pride is apparent during my polling location site visits. It is my sincere hope that you take a moment to express your appreciation and thank these hard working individuals when you next visit your designated polling place.

**Final Thoughts**
Nicollet County strives for transparency in all that we do on behalf of the residents within our County. I hope this election article answered some common questions we typically receive from voters each election. My hope is that highlighting useful election resources will provide you a clearer understanding of our election process within the County. If you have questions regarding Nicollet County’s election process, please don’t hesitate to contact Nicollet County Public Services at (507) 934-7806.

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**SIDE-BY-SIDE USE**

Due to the increased use of Class 2 all-terrain (side-by-side) vehicles within Nicollet County, the Sherriff’s Office would like to remind drivers to be aware of the regulations for their use on public roads. Complete regulations can be found in Minn. Stat. § 84.92 through 84.928.

Class 2 all-terrain vehicles may be used within the public road right-of-way of a county state-aid or county highway, on the right shoulder or extreme right-hand side of the road. Left turns may be made from any part of the road, if it is safe to do so, under the prevailing conditions. Class 2 all-terrain vehicles shall not be operated at any time within the right-of-way of an interstate, state highway, or freeway.

In addition, to operate a Class 2 all-terrain vehicle on the roadway, the driver must have a valid driver’s license and the machine must be insured. Additionally, all traffic regulations apply to the operation of Class 2 all-terrain vehicles on public roads.

Questions on Class 2 vehicle use within Nicollet County? (507) 931-1570

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Reminder!

from the Nicollet County Sheriff’s Office

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CONSTRUCTION UPDATES
NICOLLET COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

COUNTY ROAD 15
Reconstruction and Surfacing from TH III to CR 51

Mathiowetz Construction recently started work on the project, beginning with tree and brush removal, utility relocation, and field tile exploration. Work in 2023 will involve the total reconstruction of a majority of the roadway, with a gravel surface in place before winter. In 2024, workers will complete concrete paving, signage, and final turf establishment. County Road (CR) 15 will remain open to traffic until mid-April of 2023. A traffic detour will be put in place in April and remain in effect until the project is completed by September of 2024.

COUNTY ROAD 21
Ravine and Slope Stabilization

Temporary embankment stabilization work was completed in the Fall of 2020. Permanent repairs will include the construction of a reinforced soil slope, placement of quarry rock, and road realignment to meet current State Aid Standards. The repairs also include guardrails, curb and gutters, and turf establishment. Nicollet County reached an agreement with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for the permanent repairs with the help of consulting engineering firms SRF and Gale-Tec Engineering.

A recent mussel survey confirmed that Wartyback mussels exist in the area. The Wartyback and Monkeyface mussels are two particular threatened and endangered (T&E) species of concern in the Minnesota River area. Because federal funds are being used for this project, Nicollet County must work with MnDNR to mitigate any impacts to T&E species and relocate the mussels if necessary.

The project is anticipated to begin in 2023, depending on the river levels. Construction of this project will require a detour that would run on CR 14, CR 5, and TH 15.

WINTER IS COMING...
Reminder: it is illegal to dump, plow, blow or shovel snow onto any roadway (MN Statute 169.42). Let’s all do our part to keep our roadways safe!
THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS
Nicollet County Community Corrections

WHAT IS OUR ROLE?

Promoting public safety is Nicollet County Community Corrections’ primary goal. The Department does this by assisting offenders in following the Court’s order so they can work toward making positive changes. They also ensure accountability during their probationary period. Minnesota has roughly 90,000 individuals under community supervision [MN DOC 2020]. Probation supervision allows these individuals to remain in the community as they obtain employment, receive services, and pay their financial obligations.

WHO DO WE WORK WITH?

Probation Officers work with several community partners. These partners include attorneys, school staff and employers, along with mental and chemical health providers. The Department also has a program called Project Nighthawk. This program pairs a probation officer with a law enforcement officer to assist with random testing at the offender’s residence to ensure abstinence if ordered by the Court.

WHAT DO WE DO?

- Monitor the collection of restitution payments
- Provide information and recommendations to the Court
- Report compliance/noncompliance
- Conduct appropriate risk assessments
- Complete referrals, including community service, mental health or chemical health assessments/treatment
- Randomly test offenders for alcohol and/or chemicals
- Attend supervision visits with the offender at home and/or in the community

Probation Officers take on many responsibilities to serve the community in the corrections process. If you have questions, please contact the Nicollet County Community Corrections Department at (507) 934-7882.

HOW DO WE OPERATE?

The Nicollet County Community Corrections Department is comprised of a Director, two Community Service Work Crew Leaders, two Administrative Assistants, four Juvenile Probation Officers, and eight Adult Probation Officers.

• Pre-Trial
• Sex Offender-Specific
• Gender Responsive
• Treatment Court
• Group Supervision
• Traditional

• Truancy
• Traditional
GUIDELINES FOR LEAVING KIDS HOME ALONE

Is your child old enough to stay home alone? As they get older, you may wonder about the safety of leaving them unsupervised. Your child’s needs and maturity should always be considered first. Nicollet County Health and Human Services also uses these guidelines for safe supervision:

- **7 and under**
  - Should never be left alone for any period of time

- **8-10 years**
  - May be left alone for up to 3 hours
  - Cannot babysit or provide childcare

- **11-13 years**
  - May be left alone for less than 12 hours
  - May babysit for the same length of time

- **14-15 years**
  - May be left alone for less than 24 hours
  - May babysit for the same length of time

- **16-17 years**
  - May be left alone for over 24 hours
  - Must have an emergency plan in place and adequate adult backup while watching other children

Parents may choose to leave their children unsupervised for a variety of reasons. If you have concerns about the supervision of children, contact (507) 934-8559 to make a child protection report.

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FLU VACCINE CLINICS

**OCTOBER 19, 2022**

Nicollet Catholic Church: 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM
Courtland Fire Hall: 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Lafayette Community Center: 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

- No appointment or pre-registration needed
- Only standard doses of the vaccine will be available; check with your provider or local pharmacy for high-dose vaccines
- Flu vaccines will be offered free of charge and no insurance information is needed

Questions? Call (507) 934-8594

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Struggling With School Absences?

For some families, the stress of having to get kids up and moving in the morning can be too much. They may decide it’s not worth the fight and let their child stay home or go to school late. Unexcused absences can quickly add up, however. It’s important to understand the potential consequences:

- **Children in kindergarten through age eleven (11):**
  - Seven (7) or more unexcused absences can result in a child protection report due to educational neglect

- **Children ages twelve (12) and up:**
  - Seven (7) or more unexcused absences can result in establishing a truancy case with a probation officer

If your family is struggling, help is available. Nicollet County Health and Human Services offers a variety of voluntary supports and resources, such as our parent support outreach program (PSOP), child welfare services, children’s mental health case management and more. Call our Social Services Intake at (507) 934-8559 to learn more. You are not alone. Reach out before the number gets to seven!
SCAMMERS THRIVED DURING PANDEMIC
Nicollet County Attorney's Office

While people and businesses struggled during the pandemic, scammers thrived. According to the Consumer Sentinel Network Database, the amount of money lost to fraud nearly doubled from 2020 to 2021.

Scammers continuously update their tactics. In the past, they would often request payment by wire transfers or credit card. Now, scammers often ask for payment by gift cards. Because gift cards are more difficult to trace, it is nearly impossible for victims to get their money back.

Scammers do not discriminate who they target; they are happy to take money from anyone. Most people think they are too smart to fall victim to fraud. However, scammers are experts at taking advantage of weaknesses. It only takes one moment of weakness to become a victim.

The goal of the Nicollet County Attorney’s Office is to educate community members and prevent fraud before it happens. Together with local law enforcement (Nicollet County Sheriff’s Office, St. Peter Police Department, and North Mankato Police Department), the Attorney’s Office has prepared presentations on what to look for to avoid becoming a fraud victim. If you are interested in holding a fraud presentation for your community or service group, please contact Bonnie Petersen, Nicollet County Victim/Witness Coordinator, at (507) 934-7184, or by email at bonnie.petersen@co.nicollet.mn.us.
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OUR MISSION:
Providing efficient services with innovation and accountability.

OUR VALUES: