



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 7, 2019

Contact: Marshanna Hester
(816) 881-1391
mhester@jacksongov.org

Jackson County Executive and Presiding Judge issue joint statement on Jackson County Courthouse

KANSAS CITY, Mo. – Jackson County Executive Frank White, Jr. and 16th Circuit Court Presiding Judge David M. Byrn announced today that the downtown Jackson County Courthouse, 415 E. 12th Street, will be closed until Tuesday, February 19.

This step is being taken as a proactive approach to safely and adequately address issues at the facility before it is re-opened.

"This decision will allow our team to continue work without any interruption. Addressing these problems takes time and it's critical we do it the right way for the safety of our associates and citizens," said Jackson County Executive Frank White, Jr. "By announcing the closure now, the Court and others can make alternative plans and communicate with the public to reduce their inconvenience. I want to specifically thank Presiding Judge David Byrn for his partnership and leadership as we have collectively dealt with these issues."

"The Court is pleased that the County is pro-actively working on other areas of the downtown courthouse building while it is closed," said Presiding Judge David M. Byrn. "Although it is inconvenient in the short term, we believe it is the best solution for the Court and our citizens in the long run."

One week ago, a large, underground water line outside of the downtown courthouse burst. The water from this line quickly filled the courthouse basement with approximately 10+ feet of water and thousands of pounds of mud and debris. The flooding caused damage to components of almost all major operating systems and in many cases, destroyed those components. County staff, local agencies and county contractors worked around the clock to identify the issues, fix them and restore courthouse operations.

When the courthouse was brought back online, additional water leaks occurred throughout the facility. Most notably, a large water line broke near the sixth floor of the courthouse causing damage to multiple floors on the east side of the building. Repair operations are ongoing following this incident. At this time, the water has been removed, crews are drying out the affected areas and County staff are beginning the restoration process.

Work that is underway includes repairing or replacing water-damaged ceilings, walls, carpets and furniture. In addition, an architect has been brought on board to ensure we are doing all that we can to preserve the integrity of the historic building.

“Our community has entrusted us to take care of this building and I want them to know that we are all committed to doing so,” said Jackson County Legislative Chair Theresa Galvin, who represents the 6th District. “In addition, we are thankful for the work of all the county associates who have worked tirelessly to address the significant damage that our courthouse has sustained.”

Despite the downtown courthouse closure, Jackson County continues to fully operate. Thanks in large part to the County’s multiple locations, White said county staff has largely been shifted to alternate locations, such as the Historic Truman Courthouse, the Public Works’ tech center and various Parks + Rec facilities.

Additionally, the 16th Circuit Court has continued to operate and provide all court services at its other courthouses and facilities. Byrn said the goal has been to cancel as few hearings as possible and in fact, the Court has moved hundreds of hearings to different locations.

We would like to thank the local media for assisting the County in informing the public that the Historic Truman Courthouse, 112 W. Lexington Avenue in Independence, remains open for business. Regardless of where you live in the County, the County’s Collection, Assessment and Recorder of Deeds departments can assist citizens Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Additionally, the offices of the Clerk of the County Legislature and Legislative Auditor have relocated its staff to 201 W. Lexington Avenue, Suite 201, in Independence.

Citizens who have questions regarding court hearings and locations can get the latest information each afternoon on the Court’s website, www.16thcircuit.org, in the “public and legal notices” area of the home page. They can also call the following numbers:

- Civil Records – (816) 881-4474
- Criminal Records – (816) 881-4501 or (816) 881-3141
- Probate Records – (816) 881-4552

We will continue to provide the community with updates throughout this process on the Jackson County website, www.jacksongov.org, and our social media platforms Facebook and Twitter @JacksonCountyMO.

###