



# COUNTY DIVISIONS

Presque Isle County

PI County  
[clerk@presqueislecounty.org](mailto:clerk@presqueislecounty.org)

Ownership:	Publicly-owned
Owner:	Presque Isle County 151 E. Huron Ave. Rogers City, MI 49779 Phone <a href="tel:989.734.7037">989.734.7037</a>
Manager:	Alan Stiller 151 E. Huron Ave. PO Box 110 Rogers City, MI 49779 Phone <a href="tel:906.430.7718">906.430.7718</a>

## General Utility Airport

The airport has fuel (100LL – full service), terminal building with a phone, restroom, WIFI, WSI weather terminal, and AWOS weather, courtesy car. Runway 9/27 is paved 4,106' x 75'. Contact airport manager for hangar availability (rental or transient aircraft). Tie-downs for 11 airplanes. Camping and cooking allowed at the airport for pilots. Additional information can be found on the [Air Nav](#) website.

Payment methods: Cash – Check – Credit cards (MC, VISA, Discover)

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## Car Rentals

Contact Airport Manager: 906.430.7718

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## **Other Surrounding Airports**

[Alpena County Regional Airport](#)

[Cheboygan County Airport](#)

[Drummond Island Airport](#)

[Gaylord Regional Airport](#)

[Harbor Springs Airport](#)

[Mackinac Island Airport](#)

[Pellston Regional Airport](#)

## Board of Commissioners

County commissioners are elected officials who oversee county activities and work to ensure that citizen concerns are met, federal and state requirements are fulfilled, and county operations run smoothly. County commissioners spend a lot of time working with and representing people. They attend regular meetings of the county board as well as meetings of board sub-committees and county-related boards and commissions. They represent county concerns before local, state and national boards and commissions, including school boards, city councils, township boards, and state and federal offices.

County commissioners work with constituents and respond to citizens' concerns. While no minimum education or prior experience is required for becoming a county commissioner, individual backgrounds and personalities can enhance the effectiveness of county commissioners. Useful experiences include having operated a business; service in a township, school board or in city council; involvement in community activities; and management experience. Personal traits that can benefit county commissioners include a sense of humor, an open mind, a vision of where county government should head, an ability to compromise, and an ability to delegate. Effective communication and negotiation skills are also important.

Newly elected commissioners take office on January 1st following the year in which they were elected. The chairman and vice chairman are elected at the organizational meeting of the Board of Commissioners, which is called and chaired by the County Clerk until a chairman is elected by fellow board members.

The following is a partial list of these duties and responsibilities:

### County Management Administration

- Establish policies and procedures for central administration and county departments to meet county goals.
- Coordinate activities of the county board, central administration and county departments with those of the independently elected officers, including treasurer, attorney and sheriff.
- Oversee the county personnel system: authorize the number of county employees, establish salaries and conditions of employment, approve county benefit schedule,

negotiate and approve labor agreements, supervise appointed county department heads, participate in and approve the recruitment and employment of key county employees, and oversee the implementation of the county pay equity plan and the county affirmative action/equal opportunity plan.

- Review liability issues and take appropriate measures to protect county employees and entities.
- Adopt and oversee the process for purchase of equipment and supplies for use by the county.
- Establish a plan for the review and evaluation of county services and programs.

### **Taxation/Finance**

- Review, adjust and adopt the annual county budget for county departments
- Authorize the levy and collection of county-wide property taxes.
- Authorize the application for and/or receipt of funds from federal and state governments and their use within the county budget.
- Adopt and participate in the implementation of fiscal management policies for the county in areas such as investments, reserve policy, short-term borrowing, use of bonds and risk management/insurance.
- Monitor the overall fiscal health of the county through regular reports of the auditor, treasurer and finance departments.
- Establish a process for approving the payment of expenses incurred by the county.
- Develop and adopt a capital improvement program/budget covering major county expenditures over a series of years.
- Represent county issues to state and/or federal legislative bodies.
- Adopt appropriate ordinances for the enforcement of county-wide actions.
- Ratify, modify or deny the actions of commissions and boards which are advisory to the county board.
- Approve county participation in joint powers agreements with other governmental units.
- Represent the county on administrative/advisory boards and commissions which provide direct and indirect county or county related services. These include airports, libraries,

community corrections, local public health boards, community action agencies, mental health centers, extension services, regional development commissions, social services, joint solid waste commissions, and planning commissions.

- Make decisions regarding participation in optional federal or state programs.
- Communicate county actions and concerns to the public through school groups, business groups, civic organizations, the press and other public forums.
- Participate in both district and statewide meetings of the Michigan Association of Counties including the annual meeting and the legislative conference.
- Attend conferences, meetings, training and other educational programs, as approved by the board, which relate to county activities.

## Building and Zoning

Under the general supervision of the County Commissioners, the building and zoning official directs the activities of the Construction Code department in the enforcement of state building codes and ordinances and the issuance of related permits to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the public.

Zoning and Building Official conducts onsite inspections at locations throughout the County to determine conformity to state building codes. Also, initiates compliance actions when violations are found and prepares inspection reports.

- Performs construction site plans and blueprint reviews and site inspections to determine building methods, checking for compliance to codes and ordinances.
- Coordinates inspection activities with other departments, as necessary and cooperates with other agencies in the enforcement of applicable regulations.
- Responsible for ensuring that new development and on-going land occupancy conforms to applicable County regulations regarding land use and zoning, drainage and stormwater management.
- Responsible for administration and enforcement of all building codes and zoning ordinances.
- Recommend suggestions for amendments or modifications to the building code.
- Attend County Board and Planning and Zoning Commission meetings and prepare verbal or written reports as directed by the Board of Commissioners.
- Receive applications for building permits and administer the issuance of building permits. In connection therewith, examine blueprints and other documents for compliance with the building and zoning ordinances.
- Inspect all new construction, and renovations to existing structures, for compliance with the building code and municipal code.
- Conduct field examinations of new construction and renovation projects as pertains to, but not limited to, footings, foundations, electrical, plumbing, and structural requirements. Field examinations will be done to determine compliance with building code and municipal code requirements. Deviations are to be noted corrective actions will be recommended, and final inspections will be conducted prior to the issuance of occupancy permits.
- Conduct related permit administration activities.

- Respond to inquiries from the general public, developers, and construction individuals regarding the building code and other applicable ordinances.
- Administer the enforcement of all building and zoning ordinances, including the inspection of a building determined to be in violation of the building code and other ordinances; investigate complaints and maintain supporting documentation for all ordinance violations.
- Interpret, administer and enforce all regulations regarding materials and workmanship in construction, repairs and maintenance of buildings, structures and premises.
- Assist other officers in the coordination of the development process for new subdivisions, annexations, zoning reclassification, variations, conditional uses, and other development activities.



## Circuit Court

Presque Isle County files all county felony cases, divorce cases, juvenile neglect and delinquency cases, civil cases, petitions for a name change and adoption proceedings. The County Clerk's office also fulfills the function of "Clerk of the Court" and maintains a court journal of all proceedings. They also collect payment for court costs, fines, restitution, state's share of certain payments and other payment ordered by the Court.

The state is divided into judicial circuits along county lines. The number of judges within a circuit is established by the legislature to accommodate required judicial activity. In multi-county circuits, judges travel from one county to another to hold court sessions. The 53rd Judicial Circuit is made up of Presque Isle and Cheboygan counties.

The circuit court is the trial court of general jurisdiction for the 53rd Judicial Circuit. Circuit court has jurisdiction over all actions except those given by state statute to another court. Generally speaking, the circuit court has original jurisdiction in all civil cases involving claims of more than \$25,000.00, in all criminal cases where the offense involves a felony or high court misdemeanor, petitions for personal protection orders and in cases related to family matters, including divorce, paternity actions, juvenile delinquency, abuse and neglect of minors, adoptions, emancipation of minors and legal name changes.

The circuit court also hears cases appealed from the probate and district courts and from some administrative agencies of state government. In addition, the circuit court has superintending control over other courts within the judicial circuit, subject to final superintending control of the Supreme Court.

Circuit judges are elected to terms of six years and appear on the ballot as a nonpartisan office. A candidate must be a qualified elector, resident of the judicial circuit, a lawyer who has been licensed to practice law for at least five years and must be under 70 years of age. Salaries for circuit judges are set by the legislature.

There are three divisions of the Circuit Court: Family Division, Juvenile Division and Friend of the Court.

## **Circuit Court Family Division**

The Family Division, a division of the Circuit Court, has jurisdiction over all family matters such as divorce, custody, parenting time, support, paternity, adoptions, name changes, juvenile proceedings, neglect/abuse proceedings, emancipation of minors, parental consent and personal protection proceedings.

In more of a defined term, family court is a separate court, or more likely a separate division of the regular state trial court, that considers only cases involving divorce (dissolution of marriage), child custody and support, guardianship, adoption, and other cases having to do with family-related issues, including the issuance of restraining orders in domestic violence cases.

**Some of the terms used in family court is as follows:**

### **State Court**

A court that decides cases involving state law or the state constitution. State courts have jurisdiction to consider disputes involving individual defendants who reside in that state or have minimum contacts with the state, such as using its highways, owning real property in the state and so forth.

### **Restraining order**

An order from a court directing one person not to do something, such as make contact with another person, enter the family home or remove a child from the state. Restraining orders are typically issued in cases in which spousal abuse or stalking is feared, or has occurred

### **Probate court**

A specialized court or division of a state trial court that considers only specified cases.

### **Jurisdictional amount**

The monetary amount that determines whether or not a particular court can hear a case. For example, under the law of a particular state, the jurisdictional amount of a justice, municipal or city court might be limited to cases involving less than \$25,000.

### **Court calendar**

A list of the cases and hearings that will be held by a court on a particular day, week or month.

**Child support**

The entitlement of all children to be supported by their parents until the children reach the age of majority or become emancipated -- usually by marriage, by entry into the armed forces or by living independently.

**Divorce agreement**

An agreement made by a divorcing couple regarding the division of property, custody and visitation of the children, alimony or child support. The agreement must be put in writing, signed by the parties and accepted by the court. It becomes part of the divorce decree.

## County Clerk

The County Clerk is responsible for the administrative work of the county in which they serve. Many of their duties are set by state statute and they include the following:

- Filing vital record documents such as birth certificates and death certificates
- Issuing Marriage Licenses
- Performing Marriage Ceremonies
- Filing Business Assumed Name and Dissolution
- Receiving Concealed Weapons License applications
- Filing Veterans Discharge forms
- Filing Notary Public bonds and commissions
- Maintaining Voter Registration File for all townships and cities in the county
- Election Coordinator for the county
- Clerk of the Circuit Court and Family Division
- Filing Circuit Court cases and Family Court cases which include felony criminal charges, civil cases over \$25000.00, divorce proceedings, personal protection orders, juvenile delinquent petitions, adoptions, name changes, admission to the state bar, appeals and writ of garnishment petitions.
- The County clerk has been authorized to perform marriages since September 29, 2006. They can also perform marriages in other counties with the written authorization of that county clerk.

The Clerk's office oversees the filing of vital records and issuing certified copies of documents on file. As Clerk of the Circuit Court, prepares the docket of scheduled cases, administers the oath to jurors and witnesses, documents court actions in all cases heard and prepares orders for the Judge's signature.

The County Clerk serves as Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, Jury Commission, Concealed Weapons Licensing Board, Plat Board and Board of Canvassers. This involves attending meetings, taking minutes and filing resolutions and contracts entered into by the Board of Commissioners in accordance with legal requirements.

This position is also responsible for preparation and maintenance functions required in the daily operations of the expense portion of the County Budget. This involves financial strategic

planning, budgeting and forecasting expenditures of various departments and providing timely adjustments to budgets as directed by the Board of Commissioners.

The clerk is also the Chief Election Official for the county which involves filing candidate petitions, programming memory cards for voting machines, sending ballot information to the printer, proofreading ballots after printing, ordering election supplies for the townships and cities and training election inspectors on Election Day procedures. The Clerk's office also files all campaign finance documents for candidates and ballot question committees.

The County Clerk provides comprehensive customer service which includes accurate, prompt and courteous assistance to members of the public and to internal offices when requested.

## District Court

The District Court is divided into three divisions: criminal, civil and traffic. The criminal division of District Court handles a wide range of criminal proceedings including misdemeanor offenses for which the maximum possible penalty is one year or less. The Court arraigns Defendants, sets and accepts bond, conducts trials and sentences Defendants. In addition to issuing misdemeanor complaints, the District Court also issues all felony complaints, sets bond and conducts preliminary hearings in the felony cases.

The criminal division of the court is also responsible for issuing search warrants, scheduling all hearings and trials for misdemeanors, receipting and maintaining all criminal bonds, keeping records of all criminal matters, reporting information to state agencies, including Secretary of State for motor vehicle violations and notifying the Michigan State Police of criminal convictions. District Court staff is also responsible for collecting fines, costs and restitution on misdemeanor criminal cases, as well as monitoring people placed on probation.

The traffic division of the Court processes all civil infractions, which include minor traffic matters, some Department of Natural Resource matters and certain misdemeanor cases. Many of the responsibilities listed in the criminal division are the same for the traffic division.

The civil division of the Court handles civil matters where the amount in controversy is less than \$25,000.00, small claims, and landlord tenant matters, Staff is responsible for accepting and filing new cases, collecting filing fees, scheduling matters, record keeping of files, and processing post judgment matters such as garnishments and discovery exams.

In addition to the above statement, the staff is responsible for providing access to all public records of the District Court.

## Drain Commissioner

### Mission

To provide for the health, safety and welfare of Presque Isle County citizens and the protection of surface water and the environment and to promote the long term environmental and economic sustainability of Presque Isle County.

### Drain Commissioner's Responsibilities and Services

A. Under Michigan's Drain Code, the Drain Commissioner is responsible for the operation and maintenance of county drains in Presque Isle County. These systems can be designed to provide storm water management, drainage, flood prevention, and stream protection for urban and agricultural lands. The Drain Commissioner also develops standards and design criteria for management of storm water runoff in new developments, with a goal of protecting private property and natural resources. These standards and criteria are called the "Storm Water Management Rules of the Drain Commissioner".

B. The Drain Commissioner is responsible for review and approval of storm water management systems in private developments under the **Michigan Land Division Act, Mobile Home Act, and Site Condominium Act**. A storm water management plan with rules and design standards has been adopted by the County Board of Commissioners and is available from the Drain Commissioners Office.

C. Under the [Inland Lake Level Act \(Part 307 of P.A. 59 of 1995\)](#) the Drain Commissioner can be designated by the County Board to maintain a Court ordered lake level. Recently, the Drain Commissioner was delegated authority and administrative duties for the Lake Emma Dam repair project. These duties included construction, operation, and maintenance of facilities necessary to maintain the lake level and to develop an assessment district, apportion the costs, and assess for these activities. The Court ordered level for Lake Emma is 800.7 feet above mean sea level (msl). Lake Esau Grand Lake and Black Lake also have lake levels set by Court order. Lake Esau is 597 msl and is maintained by contract between Presque Isle County and the Presque Isle Corporation. Grand Lake has a Court set level of 594 msl, and is maintained by the Presque Isle

County Road Commission. The Court-set level for Black Lake is 612.2 msl and is maintained collaboratively by Cheboygan County and the operators of the Alverno Hydropower Dam.

**D.** To advance **water resource protection**, the Drain Commissioner is involved in implementing a wide range of watershed planning and water quality programs by working with businesses, citizens, local government officials, Presque Isle Conservation District, and local schools to make stream, lake, and waterway protection an integral part of the land use decisions and land management activities. Stream and watershed protection projects have been implemented or are underway in many parts of the County including the Ocqueoc River Watershed, Lake Nettie, Swan River, and the Rainy River Watershed. The Drain commissioner is a permanent exofficio member of the Ocqueoc River Watershed Commission appointed by the County Board of Commissioners. A newly formed partnership with the Rogers City Schools will provide students an opportunity to conduct water quality studies and watershed mapping of the Trout River system. This partnership will not only promote increased awareness about watersheds but also will introduce scientific methodology and promote a value system toward good stewardship of the wetland ecosystem.



## **Activities and Projects**

The farthest you can get from a stream, lake, river or pond in Michigan is six miles. Water is the fundamental defining characteristic of our state. The Great Lakes alone represent the largest system of fresh surface water on Earth, containing roughly 18% of the world's supply. Michigan citizens have an obligation to manage this resource with the utmost care.

Originally designed to speed settlement in Michigan, Michigan drain laws tailored in the late 1800s and early 1900s gave county drain commissioners broad taxing and spending authority to provide wholesale swamp drainage primarily for agricultural practices. As a settlement and development statute, the Drain Code has succeeded. Michigan develops land at a pace that exceeds population growth by eight times. Fifty percent of the state's wetlands have been lost- including 70% of our coastal wetlands. New drains today are more likely to accommodate sprawling development than agriculture.

Times have changed dramatically since even the last update of Michigan's drainage laws in 1956. Our understanding of the importance of our water resources, including wetlands, has deepened significantly, and we now have broad public consensus on the need to manage water on a regional or watershed basis. We know now that land development results in water table, sewage, and storm-water impacts that burden our already insufficient public infrastructure. We know that "green infrastructure" is a proven alternative to constructed drains and water treatment facilities. We know that our state's economy depends as much on a strong tourist industry as housing starts and that a failing environment hurts us all.

The role of the locally elected county drain commissioner has evolved to also be a water resource manager and to promote the protection and wise use of our counties precious water resources.

## Election and Voting

### PI County Clerk's Responsibilities

The qualified voter file is maintained by the County Clerk's office. It consists of a record for each registered voter in each jurisdiction in Presque Isle County. We also have access to a Statewide Voter Registration File. Interested parties can request a list of registered voters from a certain precinct and mailing labels for all voters within that precinct.

This information can be received on a CD/DVD. The County Clerk is the Election Coordinator for all elections in the county including federal, state, county, township, village, school districts, intermediate school districts, community college districts, and referendum and millage questions.

### Michigan Voter Rights and Responsibilities

- Be treated with courtesy and respect by the election workers
- Vote in private free from interference or intimidation
- Review a sample ballot before voting
- Review a summary of the state and federal laws which govern voting.
- Ask for and receive help from the election workers if you are unsure about anything related to casting a ballot
- Obtain a replacement ballot if you make a mistake when voting
- Obtain an absentee ballot if you are qualified to vote absentee.
- Vote a provisional ballot if your name does not appear on the registration list and you assert, under oath that 1. You are registered to vote by the registration deadline and 2. You are a resident of the city or township where you are offering to vote.
- Have your minor child (under age 18) accompany you in the voting station while you vote.
- Obtain a ballot if in line when the polls close at 8 pm
- Report illegal or fraudulent activity to the local clerk or the Michigan Department of State's Bureau of Elections.

**As a Michigan Voter, you have a responsibility to:**

- Treat the election workers and other voters with courtesy and respect
- Respect the privacy and voting rights of other voters
- Request instructions or assistance as needed if you do not know how to use the voting equipment or have other questions about casting a ballot.
- Be informed about the candidates and proposals on the ballot.
- Check your ballot to ensure that it accurately reflects your choices.
- Read and follow all voting instructions.
- Register at least 30 days before the election.
- Keep your voter registration information up to date with your current address.
- Follow all federal and state voting laws.
- Vote in person if 1. Registered by mail and 2. Have never previously voted in Michigan. (does not apply to voters who are age 60 and older, disabled or overseas)
- You must vote in person if you registered by mail or have never previously voted in Michigan. To satisfy Michigan's identification requirements, you must provide identification before voting. Acceptable ID includes current and valid photo ID such as driver's license or Michigan Identification Card. You must satisfy a federal identification requirement by providing a photo ID, a paycheck stub, utility bill, bank statement or government document that lists your name and address. Requirement does not apply to voters who are disabled or overseas.

## Emergency Management

The Office of Emergency Management is charged with the development and continuous maintenance of a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to serve the people and property of Presque Isle County. Our primary missions include prevention, preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.

### **Presque Isle County Emergency Management works in conjunction with:**

- Area Law Enforcement Agencies
- Fire Departments
- Emergency Medical Services
- Community Emergency Response Team (C.E.R.T.)
- Local and Statewide Search and Rescue Teams
- R.A.C.E.S. / Amateur Radio
- American Red Cross
- National Weather Service
- United States Coast Guard
- District #4 Health Department
- County Road Commission
- Department of Human Services
- Additional Federal Agencies
- Salvation Army
- Region 7 Homeland Security Planning Board

## Equalization

The main function of the Equalization Department is to assure that all the local units of government in the county are assessed fairly and equitably.

The fundamental principle of property taxation is to see that all property is assessed equitably according to market value. Equalization; therefore, does appraisal and sales studies to develop ratios for each class of property in each township and city. These ratios are converted into factors which put township at the constitutional uniform assessment not to exceed 50 percent. Besides these studies, the department furnishes assistance to the tax units and assessing officers.

The department maintains property descriptions, assessments, homesteads, property maps, 911 house numbering, data processing, and ownership changes for all 14 townships, 2 cities and 2 villages. The equalization department is currently working on digital maps and aerals.

## **Friend of the Court**

The Friend of the Court has the powers and duties prescribed by statute, including those duties in the Friend of the Court Act, MCL 552.501 et seq., and the Support and Parenting Time Enforcement Act, MCL 552.601 et seq.

The Friend of the Court is responsible for initiating proceedings to enforce an order or judgment for support, visitation or custody. We provide walk in service, in pro per motion packets and the SMILE (start making it livable for everyone) booklet. We monitor all child support accounts, provide enforcement, answer phone calls, contact other agencies, conduct child support reviews, offer mediation services, register cases in other states and enforce orders other states register here. We accept and process direct child support payments and assist Circuit Court with other domestic relations matters.

## **Michigan Friend of the Court System**

The Michigan Constitution established "one court of justice" for the entire state. This one court of justice is comprised of trial courts (circuit, probate and district) and appellate courts (the Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court). The friend of the court is part of the family division of the circuit court.

## **Role of Friend of the Court**

As part of the family division of the circuit court, the friend of the court serves as the "amicus curiae" (acts as the "eyes and ears") of the circuit court family division judge. The office is to provide assistance to the court in matters that the court cannot exercise personal supervision over, and to furnish the court with recommendations related to domestic relations matters such as custody, parenting time, and support. The person who makes the ultimate decision in any domestic relations action is the family division judge to whom the case is assigned.

## **Services of the Friend of the Court**

The office of the friend of the court has the responsibility for providing specific services to the public which it assists. Just as the role and function of the court has changed during the 20th century, the office of the friend of the court has evolved considerably during its history; based upon changes in statute, court rule, and public policy.

## **Enforcement**

As a division of the circuit court that focuses upon enforcement of child support in domestic relations cases on behalf of minor children who "may become public charges," the friend of the court office developed into an agency responsible for enforcing the orders of the family division of the circuit court and delivering services related to divorce, paternity actions, family support actions and interstate actions.

## **Investigation (sometimes called evaluation)**

In addition to providing assistance related to the collection, enforcement, and modification of child support, the friend of the court office is the investigative and enforcement entity of the family division of the circuit court with respect to child custody, parenting time (visitation), and child support.

## **Dispute Resolution**

The friend of the court office is also required to provide directly or through contract, alternative dispute resolution both formally and informally through mediation programs.

## **Child Support Enforcement Agency**

The friend of the court office, as a social agency, is the only entity that provides ongoing case-management in domestic relations actions and assists parties to those actions in receiving access to the justice system. Since 1974, the federal government under Title IV-D of the Social Security Administration Act, has required states to have a child support enforcement agency (IV-D agency). In Michigan, that agency is the Office of Child Support (OCS) which is a division of the Department of Human Services (DHS). The OCS contracts with the counties and courts to have the prosecuting attorney and the friend of the court office provide child support enforcement activities, known as IV-D activities.

## Jury Duty

### Some Things to Know About Jury Duty

#### Who gets called?

U.S. citizens at least 18 years old and residents of the court district for which they are summoned. The jury pool for each court comes from a list of licensed drivers and state ID cardholders in its district. No felons. You can be called for duty more than once, but you cannot serve on a jury more than once in an 12-month period. If you are over 70, you can ask for an age exemption from jury service.

#### What's required?

Jurors must "be able to communicate in the English language," and "be physically and mentally able to carry out the functions of a juror."

#### What does it pay?

Under Michigan law, jurors receive not less than \$25 per day and \$ 12.50 per half-day for the first day of service. For each day after that, jurors receive not less than \$40 per day and \$20 per half day. Jurors also get 50 cents a mile for their trips to and from the court. If you appear for the jury but do not get on a jury, you are paid for the day or half-day.

#### What if you don't show up?

You can be held in contempt of court, fined or even jailed. What about work? By law, an employer cannot fire or discipline or threaten such action against an employee who is summoned for jury duty or picked for a jury, even if it is a long trial. Nor can employers force a worker to go beyond normal hours to make up for time lost for jury service. These are potential misdemeanors that could place the employer in contempt of court.

#### What's an acceptable reason to be excused?

That's up to the court, but there are a number of grounds on which an excuse or postponement may be granted. "Hardship" is one, and that could include lack of transportation, excessive travel, extreme financial burden, the undue risk to physical property, being over 70 if your absence from your normal routine would affect the care of another. A request for a job-related exemption requires a letter from the employer. A request for a medical-related exemption requires a letter from a doctor. Full-time students who believe that jury service will conflict with their classes must submit a copy of their schedule.



### **Can you talk about a case afterward?**

Once the judge discharges you from service, there are no restrictions. You don't have to talk, but attorneys often want to know what went on in a high-profile case, the media will, too.

*Compiled with the help of Marcia McBrien, public information officer, Michigan Supreme Court*

## MSU

Michigan State University Extension has focused on bringing knowledge based educational programs to the people of the state to improve their lives and communities. County-based staff members, in concert with on-campus faculty members, serve every county with programming focused on agriculture and natural resources; children, youth and families; and community and economic development. Today's problems are very complex. Solutions require the expertise of numerous disciplines and the collaboration of many partners. Operating together with the Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station and other Michigan State University units, MSU Extension extends the University's knowledge resources to all Michigan citizens and assists them in meeting their learning needs through a variety of educational strategies, technologies and collaborative arrangements.

MSU Extension extends the resources of Michigan State University to the people of Michigan through educational programs in the broad areas of agriculture and natural resources, children, youth and families and community and economic development.

Presque Isle County MSU Extension provides information and education that helps people identify problems and find solutions to improve their homes, families, farms, businesses or communities. Extension's goal is to provide practical, timely, research-based information and educational programs to help residents meet local needs in Agriculture and Natural Resources, Children, Youth and Families, 4-H Youth Development, and Community and Economic Development.

Extension programs are guided by experienced faculty and staff members in Presque Isle County and on the MSU campus. MSU Extension extends the resources of Michigan State University to the people of Michigan through educational programs in the broad areas of agriculture and natural resources, children, youth and families and community and economic development.

## Probate Court

The Constitution of Michigan provides that "The jurisdiction, powers and duties of the Probate Court and the Judges thereof shall be provided by law." The legislature, through the enactment of various statutes, has defined the specific work of the Probate Court.

The Probate Court has jurisdiction over cases pertaining to admission of wills, administration of estates and trusts, treatment of mentally ill, guardianship and conservatorships for minors, adults, and adults who are developmentally disabled.

There are many other areas of Probate Court jurisdiction, which have been defined by the legislature through the enactment of statutes. In addition to the above roles, the Probate Judge also acts as a Family Court Judge dealing with Juvenile delinquency, child abuse and neglect cases, name changes, adoptions, emancipation proceedings, divorce, custody and paternity cases which overlap with the traditional juvenile caseload, to assure that one judge handles all family issues for one family.

### **Probate Court handles various types of cases, including:**

- Decedent's estates and supervision of trusts
- Small estates
- Guardianships and/or conservatorships of both children and adults
- Guardianships for developmentally disabled individuals
- Protective Orders
- Mental Health Proceedings
- Drain Appeals
- Secret marriages
- Order treatment for people with contagious diseases who refuse treatment.
- Delayed registrations of foreign birth
- Waiver of Parental Consent
- Applications to open safe deposit boxes
- Will deposit for decedent or deposit for safekeeping
- Registration of Trusts

In compliance with The Americans with Disabilities Act, the Presque Isle County Probate Court of the State of Michigan invites individuals with disabilities who require special accommodations to

participate in court hearings or other court business to contact the Presque Isle County Courthouse in order to request an accommodation.

### **What is probate?**

Probate is a legal process whereby a court oversees the distribution of assets left by a deceased person's will. Assets are anything a person owns with value, such as real and personal property and cash, for instance.

### **When is probate needed?**

Probate is not always necessary. If the deceased person owned bank accounts or property with another person, the surviving co-owner often will then own that property automatically. If a person dies leaving very few assets, such as personal belongings or household goods, these items can be distributed among the rightful beneficiaries without the supervision of the court.

Sometimes probate is needed to:

- Clear title to land, stocks and bonds, or large bank or savings and loan accounts that were held in the name of the deceased person only, and put the title to these assets in the names of the rightful beneficiaries.
- Collect debts owed to the deceased person.
- Settle a dispute between people who claim they are entitled to assets of the deceased person.
- Resolve any disputes about the validity of the deceased person's will.

### **What happens during the probate process?**

The will is "proved" and delivered to the court. The deceased person's will can be proved by an affidavit made under oath by the witnesses to the will. If such an affidavit is unavailable, the personal presence of the witnesses will be required in court to testify that at the time the will was signed, the deceased person was of sound mind and knew what he or she was doing.

A personal representative is selected. A personal representative is someone who handles the deceased person's affairs. A will generally names a personal representative who, if willing to serve and otherwise qualified, will be approved by the court. If a person dies without a will, the court will select the personal representative, usually the spouse, an adult child or another close

relative. If none of those people are available or willing to be the personal representative, the court may choose a bank, trust company or lawyer.

A notice to creditors is published in a local newspaper. This public notice to creditors tells the creditors that they have four months to bring any claim against the estate for debts the deceased person owes them. The personal representative also gives written notice to all known and possible creditors.

## Prosecuting Attorney

The Prosecuting Attorney's office reviews all requests for complaints and warrant matters involving violations of state law and/or county ordinances. The Prosecuting attorney is responsible for a wide array of legal functions for Presque Isle County. The following list is some of the duties to include:

- Chief Law Enforcement Official for Presque Isle County
- Reviews authorize and prosecute violations of felony and misdemeanor criminal laws of the state of Michigan
- Review petitions involving juvenile persons under 17 who engage in state law violations
- Reviews all drug and property forfeiture matters
- Advises the Department of Human Services on child abuse and neglect matters
- Attend contested mental health commitment hearings
- Files and prosecutes actions to establish paternity
- Files actions to establish family support matters

## Public Guardian

The Office of Public Guardian serves adults with mental and/or physical disabilities as their court-appointed legal guardian when they are incapable of managing some or all of their affairs.

The Office of Public Guardian was established to serve area adults with mental or physical disabilities which render them unable to manage their own affairs. Upon the filing of an appropriate petition\* a court determination will be made as to whether the subject of the petition may require the protection of court intervention. If so, then the Office of Public Guardian provides quality public assistance in the form of guardianship services to legally incapacitated vulnerable adults who have no family, friends, or resources to obtain a private guardian.

Through the provision of public guardianship services and under the direction of the court, the public guardian strives to:

- enhance quality of life,
- employ “substituted judgment,” acting as the person would have when making decisions in their best interests,
- protect against abuse, neglect and exploitation, and
- safeguard and exercise the fundamental civil rights of the people we serve

Guardianship is a serious step! Just because the person has a disability does not mean he or she needs a guardian. Guardianship is usually inappropriate if there are other alternatives such as a durable power of attorney, medical proxy, or public benefits representative. As a general rule, use of the public guardian is appropriate only in those instances when family or friends are unavailable or antagonistic.

You are always welcome to contact our staff for more information regarding making a referral or possible alternatives.

## Register of Deeds

We record all legible documents that are prepared accurately. Copies of recordings are available once the documents are certified and can be obtained after payment is processed via cash, credit card or mailed check. This is normally the next business day. Please contact our office for applicable fees.

Our office does not provide any blank documents for recording purposes. Forms are available through a title company or online if you are comfortable preparing them on your own.

Otherwise, please consult an attorney. We are not able to provide legal advice.

The land records date back to the early 1850s and can be viewed in our office during normal business hours. Our computerized records date back to January 1, 1986 and can be viewed in the office or online.

Documents can be submitted electronically for recording when using a verified submitter. The verified submitters that we are contracted with are CSC, Indecomm Global Services, EPN and Simplifile.

### Duties and Responsibilities

- Responsible for keeping books and records pertaining to land records.
- Recording such instruments required or authorized by law to be recorded and must provide reasonable facilities for inspection of these records.
- Record all transfers and sales of property in the county. Also records all county property mortgages, assignments or discharges regarding the same.
- Index into the system, deeds, mortgages and other transaction records.  
Record tax liens and fixture filings for the county.
- Store records of gas oil and mineral leases, assignments and releases.
- Review the information on the documents to make sure all documents submitted for recording meet the statutory requirements.
- Prepare all reports daily and retain financial records as required by law.
- Complete reports and deposit funds daily with the County Treasurer.
- Calculates and sends into the State Recommendation Report quarterly.
- Retain original copies of platted subdivision and condo site maps.



## Treasurer

The office of the County Treasurer was established by the Michigan State Constitution (Article VII, Section 4). The four-year term of office is filled by partisan election. The duties and powers of the County Treasurer are provided by state law and by authorization of the County Board of commissioners. The two main roles of the treasurer are as the custodian of all county funds and the collector of taxes. Additionally, the treasurer fulfills many other duties.

The county receives money from several sources. The principal source of revenue is an ad valorem property tax. Other income is received from state and federal grants, interest income and various service and license fees. Many of the county's departments collect money in the course of their business. This money is periodically deposited with the treasurer, who is in a sense, the county's banker. Besides revenue items, the treasurer is responsible for large amounts of money in various trust and agency funds.

The office is responsible for accounting of all revenue coming to the county for investments of idle funds, for the securities and monies held in financial institutions; collection of delinquent property taxes; reconveyance of property; certification of deeds and plat maps and other documents pertaining to tax histories and litigations; also conducts the annual land sale.

The functions of this office are dictated by state statutes, under the guidance of the Bureau of Local Government Services Audit Division and the State Treasury Department. The following examples of duties are intended to be illustrative only and are not intended to be all inclusive.

Collects, receipts and distributes property tax payments to the proper entities

Collects and receipts all other monies paid to the various County officials

Reports at various times to the State of Michigan any information required

Reports and remits taxes and other payments to each taxing entity monthly, or in some cases twice monthly

Prepares semi-annual reports of accounts for publication

Holds annual tax lien sale

Prepares Certificates of Taxes Due

Issues Redemption Certificates of property taxes

Issues Authentication of Taxes Paid

Works with the public, personally and by phone, when information from the office is requested

Supplies County officials with requested financial information

Bills title companies monthly for tax certificate

Prepares monthly audit list of bank and cd balances

Reconciles warrants daily on excel spreadsheet and prepares monthly warrant reports, and journal entries of same

Prints tax notices and supervises the annual mailing

Prepares delinquent tax notices, and newspaper publication of same

## Veterans

The Veterans Affairs office assists all veterans, widows and dependents that need information and/or assistance in filing the proper forms with the Veterans Administration to further be considered for any/all benefits they are entitled to. Some of the benefits include:

- Service-connected compensation
- Widows pension or DIC
- Burial benefits
- County Burial
- Headstones
- Education, Hospitalization and much more

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) operates programs to benefit veterans and members of their families. Benefits include compensation payments for disabilities or death related to military service, pensions, education, and rehabilitation. The VA also guarantees home loans, provides burial services for veterans, and operates a medical care program that includes nursing homes, clinics, and medical centers. Located in Washington, D.C., the VA in 2003 had 224,724 employees, a workforce second in size only to the [Defense Department](#). The department's projected budget for FY 2003 was 459.6 billion.

The Department of Veterans Affairs was established in 1989 as an executive department by the Department of Veterans Affairs Act (38 U.S.C.A. § 201 note). Its establishment came after more than 24 years of effort by members of Congress to elevate the department's predecessor, the Veterans Administration, to cabinet status. Proponents argued that promotion to cabinet level would increase the political accountability of the VA and improve the quality of its services. The Veterans Administration was established as an independent agency by presidential [Executive Order](#) No. 5398 of July 21, 1930, in accordance with the act of July 3, 1930 (46 Stat. 1016).

This act authorized the president to consolidate and coordinate the U.S. Veterans Bureau, the Bureau of Pensions, and the National Home for Volunteer Soldiers.

The Department of Veterans Affairs consists of three organizations that administer veterans' programs: The Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery System. Each organization has field facilities and a central office. Each central

office also includes separate offices that provide support to the organization's operations as well as to VA executives.

Central office managers, including the inspector general and general counsel, report to the highest level of department management, which consists of the secretary of veteran's affairs and the deputy secretary.