



**County of McHenry
County Administration**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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McHenry County Increases Transparency Efforts

WOODSTOCK, IL – Over the past year, McHenry County has increased its efforts in becoming more transparent through the utilization of technology. The County has taken a number of steps to engage the public in social media forums and providing improved accessibility through the internet.

“Transparency in McHenry County Government promotes accountability and provides easy access to information for citizens of McHenry County about what McHenry County Government is doing,” stated County Board member Ersel Schuster on McHenry County transparency.

The following projects demonstrate the ways in which the County’s has increased transparency in its functions:

Codification - The County has entered into a contract to codify all its ordinances and resolutions. This effort should be completed in the latter half of 2011. Once completed, County Ordinances will be available in both the traditional bound volumes and in a searchable electronic format available to everyone on-line.

Audio Streaming - McHenry County is continuing a thorough review of potential vendors to assist the County in its efforts to audio stream the County Board meetings online.

Usage of Social Media - The usage of social media through Twitter, Facebook, Youtube, and Nixle has allowed the County to expand its ability to distribute information to citizens.

- The McHenry County Sheriff’s Department utilizes Nixle to distribute text message alerts to citizens who sign up on its website.
- The McHenry County Department of Health heavily utilizes social media through Facebook and Twitter to distribute important public health messages.
- Youtube is a forum for videos County Departments may utilize to distribute information and link it back to their departmental website.
- Anytime the County distributes a press release, it is hyperlinked to its social media pages.

E-Newsletter - McHenry County now has over 1,200 subscribers to the McHenry County e-News. The development of the McHenry County e-News is the direct result of the County desiring to provide frequent communications to citizens about the activities of County Government.

Website Utilization - Many McHenry County Departments have increased their usage of their departmental website to provide information to the public.

- The McHenry County Department of Health posts the most current and available information to the public on its website, including timely information on beach closures, food recalls, illness outbreaks, etc.
- The McHenry County Purchasing Department posts information about how to do business with the County on the County website.
- The McHenry County Division of Transportation (MCDOT) maintains informational websites on current road projects, such as Walk-up, Randall, Fleming, and Alden Roads.
- Also, the new interactive map software allows for the MCDOT to display all the current County road projects occurring in McHenry County:
<http://gis.mchenrycountygis.org/constructionprojects/>.
- MCDOT also utilizes County Administration to distribute press releases, or the McHenry County e-News, whenever there are updates on road projects.
- MCDOT now uses their website to post all their consultant contracts online.
- The Geographic Information System (GIS) Department utilizes Athena, the public property search viewer that includes search capabilities for property boundaries information by a parcel number, address, or subdivision.

FOIA Requests - The McHenry County State's Attorney's Office and Information Technology Department developed a new on-line McHenry County Freedom of Information Request Portal that includes Departmental FOIA Officers, online and downloadable FOIA requests forms, and on-line links to frequently requested information.

Transparency Page - The McHenry County Transparency page or "Information Access Portal" has been active since the beginning of 2010 and can be found at:
<http://www.co.mchenry.il.us/departments/transparency/Pages/index.aspx>. The County began to utilize the "Information Access Portal" on its website that places frequently requested information in one easy to find location.

Disclosure Ordinance – The McHenry County Board will be considering the adoption of an ordinance that requires County officials and office seekers to list economic interest they have in the County and with other local governments in McHenry County.

For more information on McHenry County's transparency efforts, please contact Adam Lehmann at 815-334-0309.

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"McHenry County government is dedicated to providing the highest quality services for the health, safety, and welfare of the County's residents and communities. We foster representative and transparent government to ensure social, economic and environmental justice."