

**Contact:**

Beau Berentson
Director of Communications and Public Affairs
State Court Administration
Office: (651) 296-6043
Cell: (651) 303-4933
beau.berentson@courts.state.mn.us

Public invited to tour newly-renovated Dodge County Courthouse, Government Services Building on September 16

*Supreme Court justice will speak at rededication ceremony with county
commissioners, district court judge*

For immediate release

MANTORVILLE, Minn. (August 17, 2016) – On Friday, September 16, area residents will have an opportunity to take a behind-the-scenes tour of the newly-renovated Dodge County Courthouse and the Government Services Building in Mantorville. The tour will give visitors the opportunity to see firsthand the results of a major remodeling project that updated and modernized the oldest active courthouse in the state, transformed the former Kasson-Mantorville Intermediate School into a contemporary Government Services Building for county officials and staff, and made it easier for the public to access their local court and county services.

As part of the open house event, the public is also invited to attend a rededication ceremony for the remodeled courthouse, featuring Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice G. Barry Anderson, Dodge County District Court Judge Jodi L. Williamson, and the Dodge County Board of Commissioners.

The event, which will run from noon to 4:30 p.m. on September 16, is being held to help mark Constitution Day, a federal day of observance during which Americans reflect on the rights and freedoms granted to them through the signing of the United States Constitution. During the event, visitors will have the opportunity to learn more about their local justice system from judges, attorneys, and members of law enforcement. Residents will also be able to learn about legal resources and other services available to them in the community.

“For nearly 150 years, the Dodge County Courthouse has stood as a symbol of the rule of law in our community, and served as a place for residents to seek the fair resolution of their cases and disputes,” said Judge Williamson, the current Assistant Chief Judge of Minnesota’s Third Judicial District. “Through this incredible renovation project, the people of Dodge County have made an important investment that will ensure our courts and local government can continue to provide high-quality, efficient service to the public for decades more to come. As our nation pauses to celebrate Constitution Day, we felt this was a perfect opportunity to invite the community into these new buildings, and showcase the work of their local justice system and county services.”

Schedule of Events

A schedule for the September 16 event is provided below:

**Dodge County Courthouse and Government Services Building Open House
September 16, 2016
Noon to 4:30 p.m.**

12:30 p.m. - Rededication ceremony for the renovated Dodge County Courthouse

The rededication ceremony will be held in the courtroom located on the second floor of the Dodge County Courthouse. The event will feature remarks by Minnesota Supreme Court Associate Justice G. Barry Anderson, Dodge County District Court Judge Jodi L. Williamson, and members of the Dodge County Board of Commissioners. Justice Anderson will present the county with a commemorative plaque marking the historic renovation project, on behalf of the Minnesota Supreme Court.

The ceremony is open to the public and media.

Noon to 4:30 p.m. – Informational tours of the Dodge County Courthouse and Government Services Building

The public is invited take self-guided tours of the newly-renovated Dodge County Courthouse and the Government Services Building anytime between noon and 4:30 p.m. Building maps and informational brochures will be available at the entrances of both buildings.

Inside the courthouse, visitors will see the remodeled courtroom; the offices of the public defender, county attorney, and probation; court administration; the jury deliberation room; and the county law library. In addition, Dodge County Sheriff Scott Rose will give visitors a behind-the-scenes look at the Sheriff's office, including the administrative offices, the new dispatch center, weapons screening, and the holding and booking areas.

At the Government Services Building, visitors will tour the new county boardroom; learn what county services are available at the renovated building; and learn about services through the local University of Minnesota Extension office.

Throughout both buildings, guests will be able to learn about their justice system and county government by meeting with judges, attorneys, law enforcement, county officials, and staff.

Information about the event can be found at www.mncourts.gov/DodgeCountyOpenHouse2016.

Address and Parking

The Dodge County Courthouse is located at 22 6th Street East in Mantorville, MN. The Dodge County Government Services Building is located at 721 Main Street North in Mantorville, a short walking distance from the courthouse. Free public parking lots and street parking is available at both buildings.

Other information about the event

For the safety of all attendees, visitors will be required to pass through a security screening checkpoint before entering the courthouse.

Members of the media will be allowed to bring cameras and other recording devices into the Dodge County Courthouse and Government Services Building during the listed event times.