



[TOP](#)

Stoddard County Hazardous Mitigation Plan Approved

JANUARY 09TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Hazardous Mitigation Plan Approved

The Bootheel Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission, or BRPC, received word that the Stoddard County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan Update for 2023 has been approved.

Approval was designated by State Emergency Management Agency, or SEMA, as well as the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA. Updates are required every five years for participating communities to be eligible for certain types of FEMA funding. SEMA estimates that every dollar spent on mitigation planning saves \$8 in disaster recovery funds.

The planning process began with a kick-off planning meeting in February 2023. A series of three meetings was held in Bloomfield, Missouri, in the County Commissioners' Chambers. County commissioners, mayors, city clerks, emergency personnel, economic developers and the public were all invited to be part of the update process, voicing their opinions on what mitigation projects should be prioritized with limited resources. A public survey gathered opinions from others throughout the county.

Beau Bishop, Stoddard County Emergency Management Director commented on the importance of the plan.

“Hazard Mitigation planning reduces loss of life and property by minimizing the impact of disasters,” Bishop said. “All applicable stakeholders within a community should be represented during this process. BRPC provided a very thorough planning process which ensured that all hazards were considered and discussed, and that all voices were heard. In doing so, they took the lead in completing

a comprehensive Mitigation plan for the citizens of Stoddard County.”

Besides the content of the plan, the process of updating it created an opportunity for BRPC to meet with county and community leaders as well as stakeholders.

Jim Grebing serves as the executive director of BRPC.

“Hosting community meetings allowed members of our staff to meet with community members and hear their needs,” Grebing said of the process. “We look forward to assisting communities with projects they designated themselves to make their communities safer and more resilient to natural hazards.”

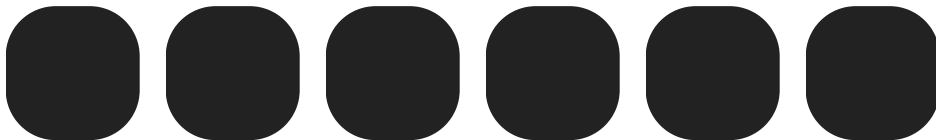
Stoddard is the first of six county plans that will be updated in the coming months in the Missouri Bootheel. The plan will serve as a resource to communities for years to come. To access a copy of the plan, go to <https://bootrpc.com>.

Bootheel Regional Planning and Economic Development Commission exists to promote and support the economic development of the region and to guide local units of government in a coordinated effort to develop the region in a way which would best promote public health, safety, general welfare and economic prosperity in accordance with existing and future needs. This is accomplished by providing technical assistance to cities, counties, businesses and other development organizations in the area, and by networking extensively with state and federal resource agencies. BRPC works with Dunklin, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Scott and Stoddard Counties.

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Mingo National Wildlife Refuge Planning Intermittent Closures for Feral Hog Control

JANUARY 08TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Mingo National Wildlife Refuge Planning Intermittent Closures for Feral Hog Control

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Inspection and Health Service (APHIS) will be conducting a multiple-day aerial operation to control feral hogs on Mingo National Wildlife Refuge between January 16 and 26, 2024. This management action will involve a helicopter flying over the refuge with APHIS personnel targeting and shooting feral hogs. For public safety, the entire refuge will be closed to public entry intermittently, with all roads entering the refuge closed. This closure includes all access to the refuge including vehicle, foot, bicycle, and horseback.

The refuge will be closed for periods over the ten days; however, because of numerous circumstances (weather conditions, etc.), the actual closure date(s) have not yet been determined. If planning to visit Mingo National Wildlife Refuge January 16-26, 2024, please check our website fws.gov/refuge/mingo for updates on this activity. You can also call the refuge office at 573-222-3589 to get an update on the timing of the closure(s).

This refuge management operation, paired with a larger eradication plan utilizing multiple tools, will substantially decrease the feral hog population on the refuge. Feral hogs are a non-native species that can proliferate quickly and negatively impact the native plants and animals of the refuge. Feral hogs are opportunistic feeders and will forage on the eggs of ground nesting birds and will even eat reptiles, amphibians, and small mammals. They also compete with native species like deer and turkey for important food sources such as acorns. Their rooting and

wallowing behavior heavily alter the native habitats of the refuge, thus impacting the refuge’s primary missions of protecting bottomland hardwood forest habitat and serving as an inviolate sanctuary for migratory waterfowl.

Mingo National Wildlife Refuge is located 1.5 mile north of Puxico, MO on State Highway 51. For more information, contact (573) 222-3589 or email the refuge at mingo@fws.gov. Check our website, fws.gov/refuge/mingo, for refuge updates and be sure to check our refuge events tabs for upcoming events and observances!

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The National Wildlife Refuge System, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is the world's premier system of public lands and waters set aside to conserve America's fish, wildlife, and plants. Since President Theodore Roosevelt designated Florida's Pelican Island as the first wildlife refuge in 1903, the System has grown to more than 150 million acres, 570 national wildlife refuges and other units of the Refuge System, plus 38 wetland management districts. Visit www.fws.gov

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2023 Annual Report Stoddard County Coroner's Office Brent Stidham - Coroner

JANUARY 08TH 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

2023 Annual Report Stoddard County Coroner's Office Brent Stidham - Coroner

2023 Annual report Stoddard County Coroner's Office Brent Stidham - Coroner

To continue keeping the public informed and provide transparency, I am releasing my annual Coroner's report to the residents of Stoddard County. The Stoddard County Coroner's office consists of myself and Deputy Coroner Ashley Robey. It is our mission to investigate every death in Stoddard County and provide accurate death information for death certificates and family members. Death investigations often include, ordering and attending autopsies, collecting toxicology testing, responding to scenes, interviewing witnesses, locating and notifying next of kin, speaking with primary care physicians, and obtaining medical records. I once again would like to thank our Stoddard County funeral homes, Mathis Funeral Home, Watkins Funeral Home, and Morgan Funeral Home, as well as all first responders for their professionalism and assistance in 2023.

2023 saw a spike in child fatalities. This is the worst situation imaginable for the families as well as the first responders and agencies who work

these cases. During these cases the county has a Child Fatality Review Panel that is responsible for contributing information to help determine the cause of death, identify and help implement services available to the family, and identify ways to prevent further child fatalities. All information from these meetings is confidential. Autopsies are required in children under 18, with the exception of medical situations when a State certified Child Pathologist deems it unnecessary. In addition the Missouri State Technical Assistance Team (STAT) will reimburse counties who have an active Child Fatality Review Panel that completes the necessary procedures. In the last three years Stoddard County has had a 100% reimbursement rate for child autopsies. This is due to conducting meetings and completing required data entry in a timely manner. The due diligence of this panel assured that all child fatalities were thoroughly investigated, while also saving Stoddard County taxpayers \$14,000 in 2023. The Stoddard County Child Fatality Review Panel consists of the following members.

Stoddard County Prosecuting Attorney Sawyer Smith Stoddard County Coroner Brent Stidham

Stoddard County Sheriff Carl Hefner, Chief Deputy Andrew Holden, Detective Garry Brady and Detective John Atkinson

Stoddard County Chief Juvenile Officer Tonya Causey (Chairman) Members of the investigating law enforcement agency (municipalities) Members of the Stoddard County Health Department Members of the Missouri State Highway Patrol

Stoddard County Children's Division Stoddard County Health Department Stoddard County Ambulance District

It should be noted, if a death occurs in the city limits of a town with a Police Department, members of that Department attend the review meetings. In 2023 Officers from the Dexter Police Department and Bernie Police Department attended meetings that concerned children from their

respective municipalities. I would like to thank all of these agencies for their work on this panel.

Another point in this year's report is that Stoddard County did not record a single overdose death. While in some cases drug use was a potential contributing factor, there were not any that were deemed an overdose. In overdoses an autopsy or toxicology testing is always performed. It is uncommon across the state to have a county without an overdose death, however, in Stoddard County there are several reasons we are successfully changing that trend. Those reasons include the public knowledge of properly administering Narcan, the increasing availability and success of inpatient and outpatient rehab facilities in the area, excellent effort by all Stoddard County law enforcement agencies, tough prosecution for repeat offenders, and zero tolerance for dangerous drug dealers. Together all of those things are helping Stoddard County fight fentanyl and the opioid epidemic.

Unfortunately 2023 saw an increase in suicide deaths and one homicide. Looking ahead, I hope to continue working with mental health agencies to eliminate suicide from our County and increase mental health awareness. I also plan to continue working with private entities, and local and state agencies to provide assistance and information that can keep Stoddard County a safe and positive place to live and work.

As Coroner I always strive to be professional, helpful and compassionate during what is a family's worst day. I will continue to speak for those who no longer have a voice to ensure that every death in Stoddard County is properly investigated. I will always ensure that the deceased and families are treated with dignity and respect. In addition, it is my duty to be mindful of taxpayers money. That makes me proud to say that after saving taxpayers over \$12,000 in 2023 our office has now saved taxpayers over \$35,000 in a three year period.

2023 budget information Total budgeted: \$60,978.99

Total actual: \$48,848.75

2023 case information

The following information is in regards to Coroner's Office cases only and does not include deaths occurring under the care of a physician such as hospice.

Total cases investigated and certified by the Coroner's office: 117 Scene responses: 88

Natural Causes: 94

Homicide: 1

Suicide: 8

Motor vehicle accident: 6 Accident (fire): 2 Accident (fall): 2 Accident (other): 2 Cases pending: 2

Age groups

0-18: 5

19-45: 18

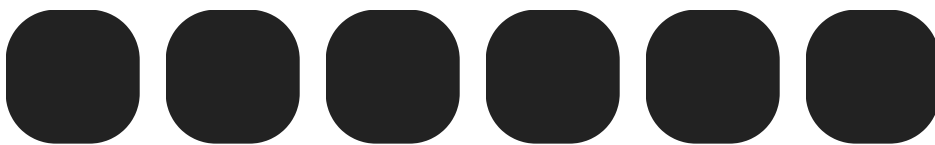
46-70: 47

70 and over: 47

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, December 11, 2023 From the Desk of Josh Speakman - Missouri Property Tax Credit

Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, December 11, 2023

From the Desk of Josh Speakman - Missouri Property Tax Credit

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Tuesday, January 2, 2024

JANUARY 02ND 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Tuesday, January 2, 2024

The Stoddard County Commission began their 2024 year with the Pledge of Allegiance and a prayer over the county officials, state officials, police and fire and all those serving in the military.

Alisha Trammel, Dexter Chamber of Commerce - Cal-Maine Foods, Inc. Update

“I just wanted to add or rather explain a couple of things that were in the press release,” commented Trammel.

1. Investment of \$13 million putting into the upgrades of the processing plant, mill and hatchery. That is their initial estimate of investment into the buildings and the process.
2. Employment numbers will be in phases. Phase one is 96 employees. That 96 comes from the Missouri Works Program and other state incentives. County wage island average of \$44,000 per person currently and they will have to pay 80% of their salaries and 50% of their insurance benefits. They must have 96 employees and if they do not they are the disqualified from the Missouri Works Program.

Tyson pursued Cal Maine Foods, Inc. to purchase the buildings.

"We are actively recruiting for more businesses," stated Trammell. "The hotel project is coming along. I am actually meeting this week to get some dates."

Motion to accept the meeting minutes from Friday, December 29, 2023 made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Important dates:

Martin Luther King Jr. day is Monday, January 15, 2024/ County offices are closed

January 10, 2024 is the last day to Register to Vote for February 6, 2024 Bond Election

Final Certification for the April 2, 2024 General Municipal Election is January 23, 2024.

Absentee Voting Begins for March 5, 2024 Charter Election is January 23, 2024

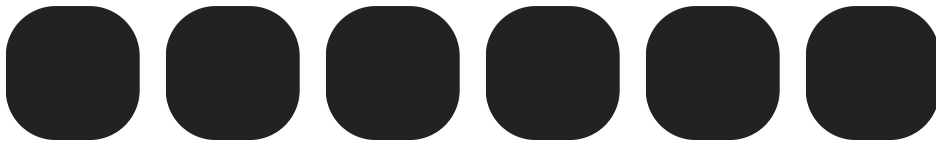
No Excuse Absentee Voting begins for February 6, 2024 Bond Election is January 23, 2024

Motion to enter into closed session made by Commissioner Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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Meeting - Monday, December 18,
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Stoddard County Commission
Meeting - Monday, December 11,
2023

From the Desk of Josh Speakman - Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Monday, November 27, 2023

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Meeting - Monday, November 27,
2023

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Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Friday, December 29, 2023

JANUARY 02ND 2024 BY DEE LOFLIN

Stoddard County Commission Meeting - Friday, December 29, 2023

The Stoddard County Commission met on the last day of the month on December 29, 2023.

Sawyer Smith, Stoddard County Prosecuting Attorney

He is representing Stoddard County as legal counsel and sent a letter to Michael G. Norris of Norris Keplinger Hicks & Welder, LLC who represent HMN Architects, Inc. as legal counsel.

He is seeking recovery of debt owed to Stoddard County regarding the jail generator and is requesting \$294,320.00 to satisfy the debt owed raiding replacement and any associated costs. Stoddard County has offered and agreed to pay \$100,000.00 of the total cost with the remainder to be paid by HMN Architects, Inc.

Motion to approve the regular meeting minutes from the December 18th made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

The Stoddard County Commission had budget amendments.

1. Road & Bridge (CART) - Expenditures of +\$418,052.57 - Reason was that there was a higher amount of expenditures.
2. General School Fund - Expenditures of +\$86,039.98 - Reason was higher amount of fines disbursed.
3. Combined Accumulated Int. Fund - Expenditures of +\$324,034.47 - Reason higher amount of expenditures - offset by revenue.
4. P.A. Training Fund - Expenditures +\$1,973.10 - Reason additional trainings for new Prosecuting Attorney's office for new employees being trained.
5. Commercial Property Surcharge - Expenditures +\$18,136.01 - Reason was surcharge distribution higher than anticipated - offset by revenue.
6. Crime Red -LE Restitution Fund - Expenditures +\$8,035.86 - Reason was higher amount of expenditures - offset by funds carried from prior year. Rance Butler was added to payroll.
7. County Employee Retirement - Expenditures +\$21,167.97 - Reason higher amount of expenditures - offset by revenue.
8. Victim Advocate Fund - Expenditures +\$6,256.35 - Reason was higher amount of expenditures - offset by funds carried from prior year, in addition to \$3,500.00 transferred from County Revenue Fund.
9. Jail Construction Fund - 1/2 Sales Tax - Expenditures +\$247,153.58 - Reason is higher amount of expenditures - offset by funds carried from prior year.
10. C.A.R.T. - Expenditures +\$10,653.78 - Reason was higher amount of expenditures - offset by revenue.
11. Election Security Grant - +\$31.65 - Reason was higher amount of expenditures - offset by interest revenue.

Motion to accept the 2023 budget amendments on December 29, 2023 made by Commissioner C.D. Stewart, seconded by Commissioner Carol Jarrell. All three voted yes and motion passed.

Motion to accept the regular minutes from December 18, 2023 made by Commissioner Carol Jarrell, seconded by Commissioner C.D. Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

The Commission discussed work session dates to go over budgets. They agreed to meet at 1 p.m. on Tuesday, January 2, 2024 and Wednesday at 1 p.m. then again on Thursday, January 4, 2024 at 9 a.m.

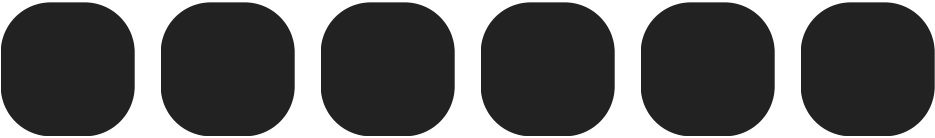
Once they have the budget updates the budget will be made available to the public and office holders for review. A budget hearing will be set and anyone who has questions may attend. It is open to the public.

Motion to adjourn made by Commissioner Jarrell and seconded by Commissioner Stewart. All three voted yes and motion passed.

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