SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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SHERIFF
MARK EMPTING

TO: Area Media

FROM: Sheriff Mark Empting
Clay County Sheriff's Office

DATE: November 4th, 2026

RE: Public Comment Sought for Clay County's Hazard Mitigation Plan

Clay County has completed an updated draft of its Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) and is now seeking public feedback.

Like all Minnesota counties, Clay County is vulnerable to a variety of natural hazards such as tornadoes, windstorms, severe winter storms, flooding, drought, and extreme temperatures, which can threaten the loss of life and property in the county. Planning for natural disasters minimizes the impact of events that can cause vast economic loss and personal hardship.

All county residents, interested agencies or organizational stakeholders are encouraged to review and offer feedback on the draft plan and proposed local mitigation actions. The review and comment period is open for a period of 14 days through November 17, 2026. The public can access the plan using the following links:

Clay County HMP Website Homepage (feedback form at the bottom of page)

Clay County Mitigation Action Charts (feedback form at the bottom of page).

The Clay County HMP is a multi-jurisdictional plan that covers Clay County, including all cities and townships within the county. The Clay County HMP also incorporates the concerns and needs of other key stakeholders such as school districts and related agencies, organizations, or businesses participating in the planning process.

Update of the plan has been under direction of Clay County Emergency Management in cooperation with U-Spatial at the University of Minnesota Duluth and representatives from county departments, city and township governments and other participating stakeholders. Together, the planning team worked to identify cost-effective and sustainable actions to reduce or eliminate the long-term risk to human life or property from natural hazards. Examples include infrastructure projects for areas that experience repetitive flooding; construction of safe rooms in areas where residents and visitors are vulnerable to tornadoes and severe storm events; burying powerlines that may fail due to heavy snow, ice, or windstorms; ensuring timely emergency

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communication to the public through warning sirens and mass notification systems; and conducting outreach to increase public awareness of severe weather and personal preparedness.

Hazard mitigation planning helps Clay County and other jurisdictions protect their residents. Working with local communities through the process helps identify vulnerabilities and develop strategies to reduce or eliminate the effects of a potential hazard. In addition, increasing public awareness of natural disasters and encouraging personal preparedness helps to create a community that is resilient to disaster, and breaks the cycle of response and recovery. Updating the plan further allows Clay County and its jurisdictions to be eligible to apply for future FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance grant program funding for projects that help to reduce or eliminate the impacts of future natural hazard events.

Community feedback is vital to the success of the plan. Clay County invites public review and feedback of the draft plan prior to submitting it to the State of Minnesota and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) for review.

Comments, concerns, or questions regarding the draft plan or ideas for mitigation projects should be submitted either via the Hazard Mitigation Plan website online public feedback form or by contacting Clay County Emergency Management.

Contact
Nicole Reno
Clay County Emergency Management Director
Phone: 218-299-7357
Email: Nicole.Reno@claycountymn.gov

The following QR code may be used to directly access the Clay County Hazard Mitigation Plan interactive website:

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