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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

From: Eric M. Hoffman, Prosecuting Attorney
Date: August 5, 2020 8:30 am

Temporary Closure of the Prosecutor's Office

Muncie Indiana – Effective immediately and until further notice the Criminal Division of the Prosecutor's Office is closed due to several employees testing positive for COVID-19. Due to multiple precautions that have already been in place for months, there is little to no risk of exposure by members of the public and little to no risk of exposure by county staff outside of our office. Any individuals identified as possible close-contacts requiring action be taken have already been or will be notified individually by Indiana State Department of Health contact tracers who will provide further instruction. I have been in communication with the Delaware County Health Department. Currently, all employees are working from home and all employees are in the process of being tested for the virus.

This closure means the following:

- 1) The Prosecutor's Office will be closed and the doors to the offices will remain secured. A copy of this notice will be affixed to the exterior of the office doors.
- 2) Although the Prosecuting Attorney and his staff are essential law enforcement personnel, all Prosecutor's Office employees will be working from home so as to avoid becoming infected or infecting someone from the public. We are able to receive police reports digitally, review them from home, and then electronically file the appropriate charges with the court system.
- 3) The local judges are convening court to hear essential and emergency criminal matters. We do not appear in court in person. Rather, we call the court and represent the State at these hearings over the phone or through video conferencing.
- 4) Any and all appointments or meetings that are currently scheduled to take place in the Prosecutor's Office are hereby CANCELLED. A representative from the Office will contact you to either reschedule or simply conduct business over the phone.

- 5) Any depositions that are currently scheduled to take place in the Prosecutor's Office from are hereby CANCELLED. The parties will reschedule.
- 6) If you have a question or concern or need to contact us please send an email to prosecutor@co.delaware.in.us Please include the following in your email:
 - Your name
 - Your phone number
 - The name of the prosecutor's office employee that you wish to speak to, if you know.
 - The case you are calling about – the Defendant's name or a cause number
 - The nature of your question.

A member of our staff will get back with you as soon as possible.

Rest assured, the Delaware County Prosecutor's Office is continuing to prosecute crime, holding people accountable for their actions, and keeping people safe. The only difference is that we will be doing it from home for a short time period. Our staff is able to work from their homes. They can log into a secure site and access entire case files. We receive police reports electronically and have the ability to electronically file criminal charges, motions and pleadings with the court system.

I apologize for any inconvenience these precautionary measures may cause. Based on the information and guidance from the experts in the field, I believe these are responsible, proactive steps that our office can take to help curb the spread of COVID-19, protect our staff, our family, and the public, and ensure the continued functioning of our Office. The criminal justice system would come to a dangerous grinding halt if the prosecutors were to become infected. Moreover, we certainly do not want to take the chance of infecting any member of the public.

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