This policy is issued to provide direction on the purpose of The Official Government Website of the County of DeKalb, Illinois, links to external websites, acquiring domain names, privacy for website visitors, publishing process, application of federal and state open records and a disclaimer.

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1. DEFINITIONS

County: DeKalb County Government

Domain Name: Address typed into reach a Website. An address of a computer network connection that identifies the owner of the address by a series of letters, words or numbers separated by periods, such as www.dekalbcounty.org

Home Page: Any document on the World Wide Web that is a starting point for finding other information, typically the entry page of a website.

Internet: Computers on networks that are linked to each other throughout the world.

Link (Hyperlink): A part of a webpage (text or graphic) that causes a new webpage to be displayed when it is selected, usually by clicking on it. Expressed as a "link to" or "link from" a website or page.

World Wide Web (the Web, WWW, or W3): A full-color, multimedia database of information on the Internet that is comprised of electronic pages (webpages) that are connected together.

Website: A collection of electronic pages of information on a Web server that is displayed via the Internet.

Web Server: The hardware and software that is required to make Web pages available (for delivery to others) on networks.

Webmaster: Staff member responsible for information updates and technical operation of a website.

2. PURPOSE OF COUNTY'S WEBSITE

It is the County of DeKalb's intent to maintain and update its website, www.dekalbcounty.org to provide electronic access to general and specific information and to interact with residents, business owners/operators, visitors and others concerning county operations and services, policies, projects and safety. The Website is intended to provide electronic access to county services and information that furthers the goal of exemplary customer service that is both responsive and innovative.

In establishing and maintaining its official Website, the county does not intend in any manner to create a forum or other means by which public discourse, exchange of opinions, or discussion on issues of any nature may occur within the website. The sole and limited purpose of the county's website is to provide factual information about DeKalb County Government including various services and resources available within and around the county, or as may be available from other governmental agencies.

The county's website is to be used to facilitate dialogue, online transactions and provide essential information requested by residents, visitors and businesses.

It is the county's policy to encourage all county departments to use the website as an effective means to highlight services and to communicate with citizens and target groups, including community leaders and organizations, local and potential businesses, local and potential residents, visitors and county employees, and to educate the community about how government works.

The county's website may provide links to other electronic sites that serve and promote these interests site solely in conformance with this policy. Editorial judgment will be exercised in determining which links are relevant, fulfill the purpose of the county's website and conform to this policy.

The Administration Office manages the county's Website with technical assistance from the Information Management Office (IMO).

This website complies with all applicable federal, state and local laws.

The website is the exclusive property of DeKalb County Government

3. EXTERNAL WEB LINKS

Links from the county's website

Consistent with the foregoing policy, it is the county's policy to limit external links to the following kinds of entities and organizations. The following criteria will be used to decide whether to grant requests for county Website links. We reserve the right to not accepting external resources not maintained by the County. In some cases, our staff maintains a list of additional vetted resources. However, these resources are found and selected by staff.

The County's Website may provide links to:

- Governmental and educational institutions.
- Organizations with some relationship to the county (including but not limited to: organizations contracting with the county, organizations sponsoring county activities or programs, organizations in a county-owned or managed facility and organizations participating in county activities or programs).
- Organizations providing information about employment opportunities in the county's area.
- Non-profit or public agencies that have a business relationship with the county including but not limited to professional and trade organizations that can further the dissemination of information relative to programs, activities or projects sponsored by the DeKalb County Government.
- Organizations, websites or agencies that serve as a resource for county staff members in the performance of their official duties.
- Tourist information, arts, cultural and similar organizations or events of general interest to DeKalb County residents, business owners/operators, visitors and others, principally from the county's local resources.
- Business information from the Economic Development Council, https://dcedc.org/, that provides specific information about the community and its demographics to prospective corporations evaluating DeKalb County as a business site.
- Third-party contractual services purchased by the county.
- Organizations participating in co-sponsorship with the county.
- Other sites which are appropriate to the mission of DeKalb County Government

The creation of a link from the county's website to other sites does not constitute an endorsement of products or services of these sites by the DeKalb County Government. The county is not liable for the defamatory, offensive or illegal conduct of other users, links, or third parties.

Commercial sites offering information relating to tourism, education, governmental services or other community information may be provided a link at the county's discretion. Any links to sites of this nature will, if possible, be made directly to the information or feature that is deemed to be in the public interest – not to the main page of the commercial site. No commercial titles, icons or banners will be provided to any commercial site in exchange for links.

The county's website will not provide links to websites for:

- Personal campaign sites of political candidates running for local, state or federal appointed or elected offices.
- Campaign sites for political organizations or other organizations or individuals advocating a position on a local, state or federal issue.
- Sites that are associated with, sponsored by or serving a candidate for elected office, any political party or organization supporting or seeking to defeat any candidate for elective office or ballot proposal.
- Corporate or other for-profit organizations unless they fit any of the criteria stated previously.
- Links that involve or encourage illegal activities or are in violation of any of the county's adopted policies including, without limitation, policies on discrimination, sexual or other harassment or Internet usage.
- Links that involve adult business, adult entertainment, nudity, or specified sexual activities, as those terms are defined in Appendix A Zoning (Article 2) of the DeKalb County Municipal Code.

- Individual or personal home pages or Websites.

The DeKalb County Government reserves the right to:

1. Deny an external link application as to any person, business or organization when it is determined, following review of a complete application, that the entity or organization for which application is made does not meet the criteria set forth in this policy.
2. Deny an external link as to any person, business or organization, which fails to provide all required information or truthful information. Any denial by Web Administration staff members may be appealed to Gary H. Hanson, County Administrator, who shall hear and decide the matter within a reasonable amount of time of any such written appeal.

The county reserves the right to modify or delete any link from its site at its discretion without notice or recourse. Links may be removed if:

- The county determines that the link violates this policy.
- The link no longer points to the original information or resource that was intended.
- The information is inaccurate or not trustworthy.
- Access to the information has become difficult due to odd formatting, framing, lengthy download times, etc.
- The county determines that additional links that are more relevant to the mission of the Website should be added and the number of working links needs to be reduced to allow for those additions.

Links from external operations to the county's site. The DeKalb County Government encourages links from other websites, especially if it benefits the county's operations and customers including residents, visitors, business owners/operators and others. However, such links should not create any electronic framing of the county's website, or be displayed in such a manner as to imply that the county endorses or supports any product or service.

The linking site may not link to individual graphics or tables within the county's website, especially in an effort to place the downloading burden on the county's servers or visitors to the site. Any link shall pass the client browser to the county's site unencumbered or in a new window. The county reserves the right to limit the number of links and to include only carefully selected links since an excessive list of links may confuse visitors to the county's site.

Submission:

Anyone, including a county employee, can suggest an external link for placement on the county's website. The suggestion must be submitted to the DeKalb County Webmaster in a form that provides:

- The name of the organization.
- An explanation of that group's primary purpose and mission.
- How the page supports the purpose of the county's website services and intended visitors.

Review:

Personnel in the county's administration in consultation with the State's Attorney's Office will make final determination regarding placement of a link. Selection criteria will include, without being limited to:

- A determination of how well the proposed link fits within the county's mission and webdesign.

- The stability and trustworthiness of the site.
- The frequency of requests for adding such a link.

Monitoring:

Each Department Head or designee will have responsibility for monitoring a link or links placed on the Website at the request of the department in accordance with this policy. This monitoring shall occur on a regular basis and no less than monthly. The Webmaster will be notified if the link:

- Is not operating.
- Is in violation of any county policies.
- Has changed ownership.
- Has not been updated, therefore containing inaccurate or unhelpful information that can mislead or create confusion for visitors.

If any of the above conditions occurs, the Webmaster will remove the link.

Endorsement

To avoid any perception that the county endorses or provides favorable treatment to any private person or business enterprise, no corporate or commercial logos or direct links to vendor sites are allowed except as specifically noted herein.

The county is not responsible for and does not endorse the information on any linked Web site unless the county's website states otherwise.

4. EMAIL ADDRESSES

Email addresses posted on Website

Email addresses should be listed on the website only for services or functions that are likely to generate a significant amount of direct inquiries from the public. The site is focused on information that is most useful to the public and should not include email addresses that are not relevant to the public.

Email sent to the DeKalb County Government:

We value your feedback. If you send the county email with questions or comments about our programs or services, we do collect your email address and any other information that you volunteer. We do this to follow up on an issue, improve the content of our website, and occasionally, to customize its content for users. We occasionally will forward an email to other appropriate community or nonprofit organizations to assist with obtaining information for the sender or to share feedback.

5. DOMAIN NAMES

One domain name will be used for referring to and marketing of the website.

6. PUBLISHING PROCESS

The DeKalb County Government's Webmaster will maintain the information that appears on the county's website at www.dekalbcounty.org. This person will manage all information and data limited to the DeKalb County Government departments and services including information about specific programs sponsored by those departments as well as boards and commissions recognized by the DeKalb County Board.

County staff members of all departments may assist in the development of webpages for the county's site. These pages can be created and sent to the DeKalb County Webmaster for editing and publication. At the request of the Webmaster, members of the IMO Office may, at times, assist with development or editing of county webpages.

7. PRIVACY

Collection of personal information

On those pages where IES uses "cookies" to facilitate your use of our site, we do not collect personal information about you and the cookie is destroyed when you exit your browser. There is no information stored on your computer and no unauthorized files are written onto your disk drives. These cookies are called "session cookies." They help you use our website interactively and are destroyed when you close your browser.

These "session cookies" do not collect information about you, but only about your browser "session." The cookie makes it easier for you to use the dynamic features of these web pages, without having to provide the same information as you move from one page to another. You will find the use of these "session cookies" on several of our data access tools.

Cookies

What are cookies? A cookie is a small piece of information that is sent to your browser when you access a website. The use of cookies is an industry standard and they are found at most major websites. There are two kinds of cookies. A session cookie is a line of text that is stored temporarily in your computer's RAM. It is never written to a computer's drive and it is destroyed as soon as you close your browser. A persistent cookie is a more permanent line of text that gets saved by your browser to a file on your hard drive. Depending on your browser settings, you may receive notification that a site is requesting cookie information, possibly with an expiration date. Persistent cookies have a future expiration date. Session cookies have no date associated with them.

Third party Websites

The DeKalb County website may provide links to third-party websites for your convenience and information. If you access those links, you will leave the DeKalb County website. DeKalb County does not control those sites or their privacy practices, which may differ from DeKalb County's practices. We do not endorse or make any representations about third-party websites. The personal data you choose to provide to or that is collected by these third parties is not covered by the DeKalb County Privacy Statement. We encourage you to review the privacy policy of any company before submitting your personal information.

8. SECURITY

For security purposes and to make sure our website remains available to all users, we use special software programs for monitoring network traffic to identify unauthorized attempts to upload or change information, or otherwise to cause damage to this government computer system. These programs collect no information that would directly identify individuals, but they do collect information that could help us identify someone attempting to tamper with this website.

If you use our website, you should understand that all activities may be monitored and recorded. Anyone using this system expressly consents to such monitoring.

WARNING -- If such monitoring reveals possible evidence of criminal activity, monitoring records may be provided to law enforcement officials. Except for authorized law enforcement investigations, we make no other attempts to identify individual users or their usage habits. We only use raw monitoring data logs for determining trends in usage patterns and in diagnosing system problems.

To protect your privacy, be sure to close your browser completely after you have finished conducting business with any website that uses cookies. If you are concerned about the potential use of information gathered from your computer by cookies, you can set your browser to prompt you before it accepts a cookie. Most Internet browsers have settings that let you identify and/or reject cookies.

Information from e-mail you send to us:

If you decide to send us an e-mail message, the message will usually contain your return e-mail address. If you include personally-identifying information in your e-mail because you want us to address issues specific to your situation, we may use that information in responding to your request, but it will be destroyed when we complete our return correspondence.

Also, e-mail is not totally secure against interception. Please send only information necessary to help us process your request.

On some of our web pages we provide forms that let you voluntarily submit personal information (such as e-mail address or name). For example, this occurs when you are registering for various conferences or training sessions or when you sign up for our "Newsflash" subscription service. In those cases, all submitted information is used only for the expressed purposes for which it is intended and is not made available to any third party.

9. WEBSITE CALENDAR

All events on the county's website calendar are sponsored or co-sponsored by the DeKalb County Government. Dates and locations are subject to change.

10. USE OF COUNTY'S LOGO

The County Administrator must give written permission for the use, reproduction or allocation of the County's registered logo.

11. ACCESS TO OPEN RECORDS

Information, including the complete DeKalb County Open Records Act and a summary and explanation of the Act produced by the Illinois Attorney General, can be obtained at: http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=86&ChapterID=2

Questions regarding the Illinois Open Records Act should be directed to the County's Freedom of Information contact page.

12. DISCLAIMER

The information contained in the following pages was valid at the time of publication. The County of DeKalb, Illinois reserves the right to make changes at any time and without notice, and assumes no liability for damages incurred directly as a result of errors, omissions or discrepancies.

13. JURISDICTION

The materials presented on the Website are intended primarily for the residents of the County of DeKalb, Illinois and for those outside the county limits who are interested in learning more about the county. Any person who views and uses the information presented on this Website agrees to be subject to Illinois jurisdiction. Any dispute arising therefrom shall be decided under the laws and in the courts of DeKalb County, Illinois.

This statement applies only to this website and its supporting county servers under the www.dekalbcounty.org domain. The county reserves the right to add, modify, and delete these policies at any time without recourse due to the constantly evolving nature of technology or any other circumstances.