

PRESS RELEASE, FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Circuit Judges of the 20th Judicial District are closely monitoring the COVID-19 health situation that is impacting all of our communities. Judge David Clark, the Administrative Judge for the 20th Judicial District, explained that “While we are committed to following appropriate guidelines and procedures to stay healthy, it is imperative that the administration of justice continue.”

Due to the serious concern for public safety, Faulkner County Judge Jim Baker has limited access to the Justice Building to necessary parties and witnesses in cases that still must be heard. Judge Baker has also relieved prospective jurors from attending court over the next three weeks. Judge Ed Clawson stated: “We are thankful for Judge Baker’s common sense approach in handling this situation. These are not easy decisions to make. However, we are committed to ensuring that criminal defendants and victims receive fair hearings within statutory time frames.”

Despite the serious health concerns, there are certain hearings and court functions that must continue. For instance, criminal defendants will still receive prompt hearings and emergency motions and orders will still be reviewed and heard. However, each court is taking steps to reschedule matters that can be heard at a later time.

Second Division Juvenile Court Judge, Troy Braswell announced: “all Teen Court meetings and proceedings have been suspended up to and through the March 30 court date. We will provide additional information at that time. Meanwhile, our staff will continue to meet with youth and families in smaller settings to ensure we continue to provide important services to the community.” Second Division Circuit Court will still hold necessary court hearings.

Judge Braswell added, “This is obviously a fluid situation. We are watching the news just like everyone else. We will be prepared for whatever guidelines are put in place. We are dedicated to fulfilling our duties and responsibilities. We are also thankful for the screening and security provided by Sheriff Tim Ryals and his entire staff. Their support and hard work is vital to the administration of justice.”

Finally, Judge Clark wants to remind parties and attorneys to contact their respective courts if they have any questions or concerns related to their upcoming hearings. “Each court is dedicated to communicating with litigants and the public. Please don’t forget that the county website has helpful contact information for each court.