

APR - 8 2020

JAMES N. HATTEN, Clerk
By: *J. Motz* Deputy Clerk

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA**

IN RE:

**COVID-19: TEMPORARY CLOSURE
OF ROME AND GAINESVILLE CLERK'S
OFFICE PUBLIC COUNTERS**

GENERAL ORDER 20-07

ORDER

As detailed in its prior General Orders, the United States District Court for the Northern District of Georgia is closely monitoring the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. As the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the United States and in the State of Georgia increases at an increasingly rapid pace, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC") and governments at every level, national, state, and local, continue to emphasize the central role of social distancing as a means of limiting the eventual spread of the disease. Toward that end, state and local governments throughout the United States and local governments throughout the State of Georgia have imposed stringent travel restrictions and shelter in place orders.

While this Court has entered several General Orders imposing a variety of measures designed to diminish person-to-person contact in the conduct of Court operations, the Court has determined that further measures are required to further

protect the public health and the health of the Court's Rome and Gainesville Court staff.

Because of their configuration, the Court's Atlanta and Newnan Clerk's Office spaces allow adequate separation of intake counter staff from individuals submitting in-person filings. The configuration of the Clerk's Office spaces in the Rome and Gainesville Courthouses do not allow the same degree of separation. In order to further reduce person-to-person contact for individuals submitting in-person filings at its Rome and Gainesville Courthouses, the Court has installed drop boxes in those Courthouses. Such drop boxes allow litigants to date stamp their filings and securely submit them without entering the Clerk's Office. Printed instructions for use of the drop box as well as a telephone number for the Clerk's Office are available at the drop box at each Courthouse to assist filers using the drop box.

Therefore, it is hereby **ORDERED** that the Rome and Gainesville Clerk's Office intake counters that are typically available to the public shall be **CLOSED** effective Monday, April 6, 2020, until further notice. Members of the public will retain access to the drop boxes at or near the entrances of each of the specified Clerk's Offices to deposit filings during business hours. All counsel capable of submitting filings via CM/ECF should continue utilizing CM/ECF to avoid unnecessary Courthouse visits. Clerk's Office staff will continue working, in our

Courthouses and remotely, to process electronic and drop box filings and to answer calls made from inside and outside our Courthouses.

Any visitors to the Rome or Gainesville Courthouses planning to utilize the drop boxes are reminded that they must comply with the visitor restrictions set forth in Administrative Order 2020-01 and the Amendment to Administrative Order 2020-01, which are repeated in Public Notices posted outside each of our Courthouses and available on the Court's website. In addition, entry to the Rome Courthouse is further restricted by General Order 20-03, also available on the Court's website. Should any individual be unable to use the drop boxes due to the visitor restrictions, they are instructed to contact the appropriate Court division using the contact information provided in the posted Public Notices.

SO ORDERED, this 8 day of April 2020.



THOMAS W. THRASH, JR.
CHIEF UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE