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A vacant courtroom in Carver County. The continuation of remote hearings post pandemic could improve access to the justice system.

REMOTE COURT MAY BE HERE TO STAY

But informality has its drawbacks

BY MICHAEL STRASBURG
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As Minnesota's COVID-19 restrictions were lifted over the summer months, discussions about retaining some innovations developed out of pandemic limitations began popping up in all sectors of life.

One discussion currently being held is centered on remote court hearings, which, over the course of the pandemic, have made it easier for many defendants, plaintiffs and litigators to have their day in court — sometimes at the cost of decorum and formality.

"I've more than once had to say to someone 'You need to put a shirt on, this is court,' 'You need to stop smoking,' 'You need to leave the grocery store,' 'You need to pull your



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CARVER COUNTY
Carver County Justice Center

car over and stop.' I've said all of those things out loud to people in court — that's a new area for me," said Judge Caroline Lennon, Scott County District Court, of remote hearings.

Despite the inconveniences, some court leaders are hoping to extend the use of remote hearings indefinitely.

The Other Side Workgroup was established in March 2020 to assist the Minnesota Judiciary Council in leading the judiciary's planning for district court case processing on the "other side" of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The OSW released a list of long-term recommendations earlier this summer, with the Judicial Council expected to act on them sometime soon.

TIME AND A PLACE

One of the OSW's leading recommendations is that in-custody defendants be able to continue attending hearings remotely; and that contested hearings (where evidence is being presented or testimony is taken on issues in dispute) be held in-person,

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PHOTO BY CHUCK RUPNOW

Evelyn and Marvin Grimm have been selected to serve as grand marshals for the Sept. 12 Steamboat Days parade in Carver.

'Pillars of our community'

Grimms honored as Steamboat Days grand marshals

BY CHUCK RUPNOW

Evelyn Grimm called it a "nice honor" for her and her husband Marvin to be selected as grand marshals for the upcoming Steamboat Days parade in Carver.

Those aware of the couple's continuous and dedicated service to the local Lions Club and multiple community events say they deserve the recognition.

"The Grimms have been and continue to be pillars of our community," said Kristy Mock, a city councilor and chair of Steamboat Days. "They have a combined 44 years of service as Lions Club members, and at any moment are willing to lend a hand, help out, organize the gathering, and put in the time to help others."

Mock said she appreciated the Grimms' knowledge and welcoming nature when she initially joined the Lions Club.

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