

COUNTY GOVERNMENT

TRUE OR FALSE

8

Mark T for True and F for False.

- _____ 1. All meetings of county government must be open to the public.
- _____ 2. The county commissioners may set their own salaries.
- _____ 3. County government has become an important level of government in every state of the Union.
- _____ 4. Pembina was the first county organized in North Dakota.
- _____ 5. The North Dakota Constitution authorizes “home rule” for counties.
- _____ 6. County officials serve four-year terms.
- _____ 7. County officials are elected as Republicans and Democrats.
- _____ 8. The voters of a county could vote to have an optional form of government which would allow the county commissioners to appoint a county manager.
- _____ 9. North Dakota counties rely heavily on the property tax for money to operate.
- _____ 10. Unless specifically protected by state law, all county records must be open to the public during normal business hours of county offices.
- _____ 11. Less than 1,000 counties exist in the United States today.
- _____ 12. In terms of population, North Dakota has the smallest county in the United States.
- _____ 13. Salaries of elected county officials are set primarily by the legislature.
- _____ 14. County commissioners appoint some of the other county officials.
- _____ 15. North Dakota has 57 counties.
- _____ 16. Counties get substantial amounts of money from the state government.

Answer the following questions as directed.

- _____ 1. County in which I live
- _____ 2. County seat of the county in which I live
- _____ 3. Year in which my county was created
- _____ 4. My county was named for
- _____ 5. The county with the largest number of square miles
- _____ 6a. List the four counties that have county seats with the same name as their counties.
- _____ 6b.
- _____ 6c.
- _____ 6d.
- _____ 7a. Two counties named for presidents
- _____ 7b.
- _____ 8. County named to indicate that it had been separated from another county
- _____ 9. County named for a berry
- _____ 10. County named for an American Indian tribe

Below are a number of items among which are functions or duties of county governments. Place an "X" next to each function performed by counties and leave the rest blank.

- _____ 1. Plays a key role in the administration of the property taxes for all governments in the county
- _____ 2. Supervises state district court judges
- _____ 3. Builds and maintains a highway system
- _____ 4. Maintains property records of property owners
- _____ 5. Administers social services for the less fortunate
- _____ 6. Determines the form of city government for cities within the county
- _____ 7. Controls all details of running the public schools within the county
- _____ 8. Administers and pays for elections
- _____ 9. Levies and collects property taxes for all governments in the county
- _____ 10. Determines the gasoline tax that will be charged per gallon of gas in the county
- _____ 11. Determines how long members of the legislature may serve
- _____ 12. Protects citizens by enforcing the state criminal code in the county
- _____ 13. Determines what rights citizens within the county may have
- _____ 14. Appoints all municipal judges within the county
- _____ 15. Appoints township officials
- _____ 16. Makes sanitary inspections where public health is involved
- _____ 17. Engages in weed control
- _____ 18. Issues licenses for all retailers in the county
- _____ 19. Participates in water management activities
- _____ 20. Sets the budgets for school districts, townships, and cities in the county

Listed below are groups of duties for eight county officials. In the space provided, write the title of the official who performs the duties.

1. Official: _____
 - a. Gives advice to a grand jury
 - b. Gives legal opinions to township officers
 - c. Starts prosecutions when a crime has been committed
 - d. Defends all legal cases in which county or state may be a party

2. Official: _____
 - a. Custodian of all papers filed with his/her office
 - b. Records titles to all real estate
 - c. Records bills of sale
 - d. Records deeds

3. Official: _____
 - a. Visits schools once a year
 - b. Advises and directs teachers
 - c. Meets with school officers as necessary
 - d. Assists at teacher institutes

4. Official: _____
 - a. Appointed on recommendation of state extension division of NDSU
 - b. County pays one-half of salary
 - c. Provides advice to farmers
 - d. Supervises weed control

5. Official: _____
 - a. Takes care of county prisoners
 - b. Attends district court to carry out orders of judge
 - c. Keeps law and order in the county
 - d. Serves civil and criminal papers for the court

6. Official: _____
 - a. Holds inquests
 - b. Acts as sheriff when the sheriff is disqualified
 - c. Calls coroner's jury

7. Official: _____
 - a. Not full-time employees of the county
 - b. 3 or 5 per county, meet as a board
 - c. Reviews all accounts and authorizes payment
 - d. Establishes voting precincts

8. Official: _____
 - a. Makes up property list for assessors
 - b. Serves as chief election officer at the county level
 - c. Ex-officio secretary of the board of county commissioners
 - d. Keeps financial accounts for every county office
 - e. Has scores of other duties

VOCABULARY BUILDING

Scan Chapter 8 and write down 10 words that are new to you or that you do not fully understand. Then look them up in the dictionary and explain what they mean as used in this chapter.

TERM	DICTIONARY DEFINITION	WHY USED IN CHAPTER 8?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Use the following agenda to interview a county commissioner.

1. Would you first give us a little biographical background on yourself?
2. Are you elected to represent the whole county or a part of the county?
3. What do you think people expect to see in the qualifications of a candidate for county commissioner?
4. Explain how you go about campaigning for county commissioner?
5. Do you put together an organization for the campaign? If so, who is in it and what do they do?
6. Are county commissioner campaigns decided on issues or individual qualifications?
7. Do political parties get involved in elections for county offices?
8. How is the county commission organized to do its work?
9. Where and how often does the county commission meet?
10. What are the usual topics at commission meetings?
11. What does the county auditor do as the secretary of the commission?
12. What are some of the duties of commissioners between meetings?
13. What are the major sources of money to finance county government?
14. What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of having some county officials elected separate from the county commission?
15. What are the three major problems confronting county government today?
16. What do you like most about serving as commissioner? What do you like least?