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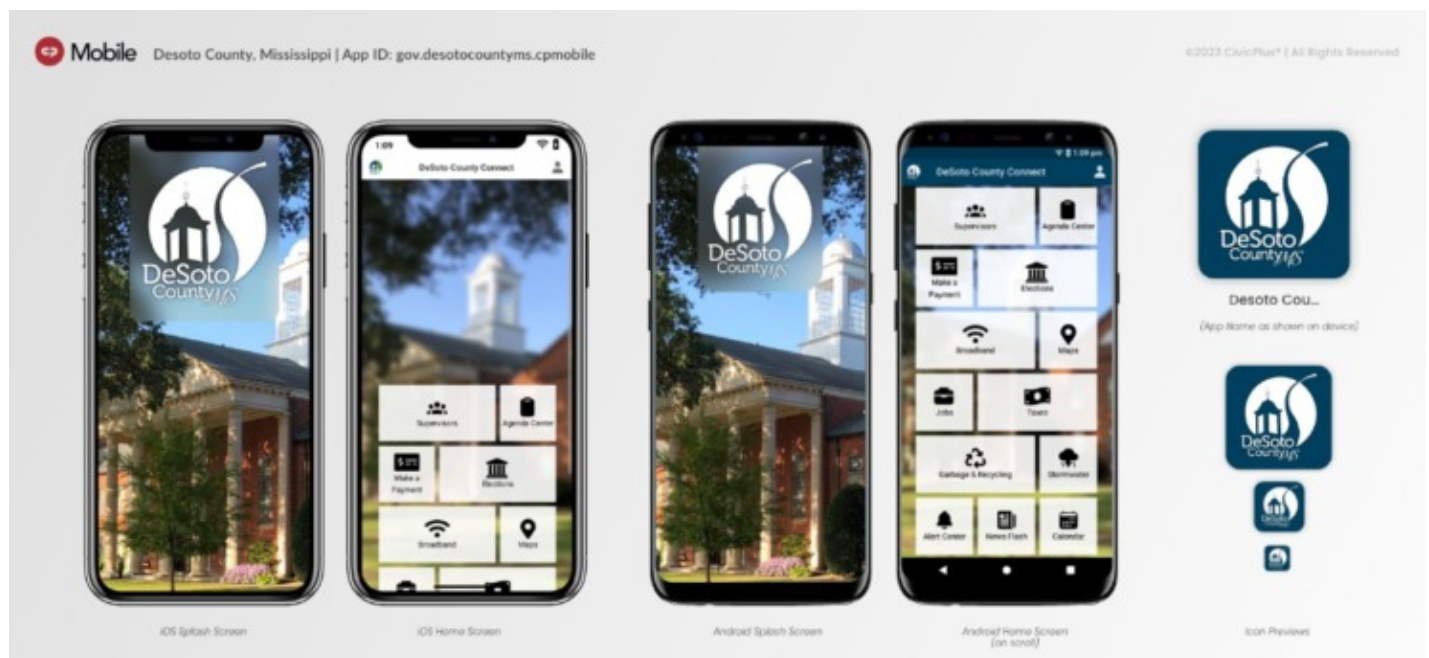
DeSoto County app to 'connect' residents with services

By [Beth Sullivan](#), Daily Memphian

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DeSoto County residents will soon have a new option for connecting with county services and resources in the palms of their hands, thanks to a mobile app expected to launch by the end of this month.

Dubbed DeSoto County Connect, the app will allow users to pay court fines and car tag renewals, view land records, and receive news alerts on their mobile devices, among other features, according to DeSoto County Community Resource Director Christie Barclay, who is spearheading the project.



The DeSoto County Connect app, expected to launch by the end of March, will be available for free download in the Apple Store for iPhone users and Google Play for Android devices. (Credit: Courtesy Christie Barclay)

These services and others are conducted through the county website, www.desotocountyms.gov, which also hosts the DeSoto County Sheriff's Department.

Resources for tax payments, county job postings and stormwater drainage reports are other important services conducted through the county website.

Olive Branch city meetings will be live on YouTube

Barclay noted that “more and more” people rely on cell phones in their daily lives. With county services available through a mobile app, “It’s just a much better service, I think, to the people this way,” Barclay said.

“The key thing is just to bring the information that people seek from the county, that it’s easier for them to reach it. It helps them do whatever tasks they need in a quick and efficient way, and to give people access to notifications.”

Barclay, who also oversees updating DeSoto County’s website, described the app as an “easy interfacing gateway” to the county website. “It (the app) is not its own standalone thing. So whenever I change something on the main website, the app will reflect it,” explained Barclay. “It’s not two different systems.”

The county is paying approximately \$4,270 for the app’s first-year contract.

The new app comes as other government entities in DeSoto County pursue tech upgrades in an effort to better connect with citizens. Recently, the City of Hernando announced the launch of its “modernized” website, while Olive Branch Mayor Ken Adams has voiced support for outfitting the city courthouse with live-streaming equipment.

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DeSoto County Connect users can opt in or out of push notifications. They can choose to receive alerts in one or more categories, including “news flash,” calendar events, “alert center,” and bid notices, Barclay said. Email and text alerts are already available by signing up through the county website.

The app will play a critical role in sharing emergency alerts, said Barclay, pointing to DeSoto County's Facebook page traffic during the Jan. 31 ice storm as a recent example.

"It reached over a million people over a couple of weeks, Barclay said. "But, you know, you have to go looking for that. This way, if you have the app and alerts on, you'll know this is happening."

Barclay said the app will be especially important during an election year, as users can look up voting precincts or register to become a poll manager.

The app, which was created by the county's website developer, CivicPlus, will be available to download for free from the Apple Store for iPhone users and Google Play for Android phones.

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