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For immediate release

Recorder's Office warns residents not to use non-government sites to obtain passport applications

The Rice County Recorder's Office reminds residents that U.S. passport applications on the official Department of State website, www.travel.state.gov, are free to download, print out and bring to an Acceptance Facility to apply for a passport.

Rice County passport agents have noticed an increasing number of applicants who have obtained their passport application forms online from sources other than the national passport website.

Individuals searching with their web browser for general topics such as "get a US passport" or "get a passport fast" are often presented with advertised sites first, rather than the official U.S. passport site. When selecting one of these sites, applicants are being asked for personal information, and charged various fees to obtain and fill out their application and get a shipping label.



Acceptance Facilities, which include the Rice County Recorder's Office, send in the DS-11 applications for the benefit of each applicant and cannot use the shipping labels furnished by these other websites.

It's recommended that members of the public obtain FREE passport application forms using only the national website or the link on the county website (ricecountymn.gov), or by picking up the forms at the Recorder's Office.

"As always, be careful about sharing your sensitive personal information, including Social Security and driver's license numbers, especially online. Our end goal is to keep residents and their personal information safe," said Rice County Recorder Mike Fangman.

A list of passport acceptance facilities can be found at <https://iafdb.travel.state.gov>. The Rice County Recorder's Office requires appointments for passport services.

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