

## For Immediate Release

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# First Emerald Ash Borer Discovery Confirmed in Steele County

## The MDA is placing the county under quarantine

**St. Paul, MN:** The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) has confirmed emerald ash borer (EAB) in Steele County in southern Minnesota.

A tree care professional contacted the MDA last week after they noticed several dying ash trees at a site in the city of Medford. MDA staff were able to find live EAB and collect a sample for federal identification. That confirmation came today from USDA.

“We rely on partners in our tree care, logging, and landscaping industries to help us monitor for emerald ash borer and other invasive pests,” said Mark Abrahamson, Director of MDA’s Plant Protection Division. “However, we also need every Minnesotan to be vigilant. Know and look for signs of invasive pests; don’t move firewood and other materials around that may transport these insects; and, report anything unusual to us at the MDA.”

Because this is the first time EAB has been identified in Steele County, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture will be enacting an emergency quarantine to limit the movement of firewood and ash material out of the county. This will reduce the risk of further spreading

the tree-killing insect. A total of 20 Minnesota counties, including Steele County, are now under a full or partial quarantine to prevent the spread of this highly destructive tree pest.

Residents of Steele County are also invited to an open house on Tuesday, October 1, 2019, regarding the discovery of emerald ash borer in the county. Those attending the open house will have an opportunity to learn more about EAB and local options to deal with the insect and hear how residents can limit the spread of the bug. Experts will be available to answer questions.

### **Emerald Ash Borer Open House**

Tuesday, October 1, 2019

6 – 8 p.m.

Steele County Administration Building, Board Room

Owatonna, MN 55060

The public will also have an opportunity to provide input on the proposal to add Steele County to the state formal quarantine. The MDA will take comments on the proposed formal quarantine through October 25, 2019, and proposes to adopt the quarantine on November 1, 2019. The quarantine limits the movement of ash trees and limbs, and hardwood firewood out of the county. The proposed quarantine language can be found at [www.mda.state.mn.us/eab](http://www.mda.state.mn.us/eab).

Comments can be made at the open house or by contacting:

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Emerald ash borer larvae kill ash trees by tunneling under the bark and feeding on the part of the tree that moves nutrients up and down the trunk. The invasive insect was first discovered in Minnesota in 2009 and is now found in 35 states.

Minnesota is highly susceptible to the destruction caused by EAB. The state has approximately one billion ash trees, the most of any state in the nation.

