WHILE THE ESTATE IS OPEN

What I do at an empty estate house, from the court's appointment to closing

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If you are settling an estate and the house sits empty, you do not have to be the one who drives or flies back to check on it. From the day the court names who can sign until the closing, I keep the house: **a dated photo visit every two weeks and one page a month** to you and your attorney. Most Iowa estates take 6 to 18 months to finish; the house is usually the part that cannot wait that long unattended.

FOUR THINGS, EACH ON PAPER

- **A dated photo visit every two weeks.** The thermostat reading, any water where it should not be, doors and windows, the exterior, the mailbox and anything posted on the door. An extra visit after a hard freeze or a storm. If the insurance policy asks for visits more often than that, the schedule follows the policy.
- **One page that says who handles what.** Each utility and who pays it, the date the insurance agent was called and what they said, who clears the snow and mows, the property-tax due date, and who holds a key.
- **Before-and-after photos of any work you approve.** You pick the company from three names and hire it directly. I let them in and photograph what was done, so you can match the invoice to the finished work.
- **One page a month to you and your attorney.** What is unresolved, what was done, what you authorized, and what needs a decision. A sample is on the next page.

TWO MORE THINGS I TAKE OFF YOUR LIST

- **The abstract.** An Iowa closing needs the abstract, the record of the property's title history. I find out where it is early, so the closing does not wait on a search for it.
- **The same numbers for every heir.** What the house would likely sell for and what it would net go to every heir the executor names, at the same time, so nobody is working from a different figure.

WHO DECIDES WHAT

Question	Who answers it
Who can sign, who may direct work at the house, when it can be listed	The estate's attorney
Whether the policy covers an empty house, and what it requires	The licensed insurance agent. If there is no agent to call, I give you three names.
Winterizing, repairs, clean-out, the estate sale	Companies you choose from three names, hire and pay directly
What the house is worth and what it would net, and what is happening at the house	Me, in writing

WHAT IT IS NOT, AND WHAT IT COSTS

I do not handle the estate's money, give an insurance or legal opinion, or winterize the house myself. There is no separate charge: it is part of how I handle an estate house that is going to be sold. Legal, tax and title questions stay with the estate's attorney and tax preparer.

TO START

Send the address by text to **(563) 513-8771** or by email to **sarah@smartmovedsm.com**. Within 1 business day you have, in writing: a price range from named sales, the net at both ends, and what I would check first. No call required and nothing to sign.

For attorneys: with the executor's permission you receive the monthly page. Nothing else lands in your inbox unless it is an offer, damage, or a deadline. General information, not legal, tax or insurance advice. If the property is listed with another broker, this is not a solicitation of that listing.

SAMPLE MONTHLY PAGE

Made-up address, names and entries, shown so you can see the format

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SAMPLE ONLY. The address, the names and every entry below are made up to show the format. No real estate, person or company is described.

Estate of Sample A. Owner · 123 Sample Street, Des Moines · Month covered: December · Sent the first business day of January to the executor and, with the executor's permission, the estate's attorney.

1. UNRESOLVED

Issue	First seen	Status
Slow drip at the basement utility sink	Dec 2 visit	Photographed Dec 2 and Dec 16; no spread. Three plumbers named Dec 3; waiting on the executor's choice.
Mail still arriving at the house	Dec 2 visit	Collected each visit and held. Forwarding request is the executor's to file.

2. WORK COMPLETED THIS MONTH

Work	Who did it	Proof
Furnace service and filter	Heating company hired by the executor	Access given Dec 9; before and after photos; invoice matches what was done
Snow cleared from walk and drive, two snowfalls	Snow service hired by the executor	Photos Dec 11 and Dec 20

3. SPENDING THE EXECUTOR AUTHORIZED

Furnace service, approved by email Dec 5, paid by the executor to the company. Snow service at the per-visit rate the executor agreed to on Nov 28. No money passed through me.

4. DECISIONS NEEDED

- Choose a plumber for the utility sink from the three names sent Dec 3, by **Jan 10**.
- File the mail forwarding request, by **Jan 10**.

5. FOR THE ATTORNEY ONLY

- A sibling asked to remove furniture before the estate sale. Who may approve that is a question for counsel; nothing has left the house.

6. VISITS AND READINGS

Date	Thermostat	Water	Doors and windows	Notes
Dec 2	58°F	Drip at utility sink	Secure	Mail collected
Dec 16	58°F	Drip unchanged	Secure	Nothing posted on the door
Dec 21 (after the hard freeze)	57°F	No new water	Secure	Extra visit

7. INSURANCE

Agent contacted Dec 1. Reply received Dec 3. Instructions, quoted: "Keep the heat on and have someone check the house on a regular schedule; send us the dates." Visit dates sent Dec 22. I record what the agent says; whether something is covered is the agent's answer to give.

Sample only. Every name, date, reading and instruction on this page is invented.