

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021

FROM THE

ALLEGAN COUNTY CLERK AND REGISTER OF DEEDS

BOB GENETSKI

respectfully submitted

**to the ALLEGAN COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS**

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Census population estimates show Ottawa, Allegan counties growing again

Sentinel Staff

Published 7:30 a.m. ET May 9, 2021

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HOLLAND — According to U.S. Census population estimates released May 4, no county in Michigan saw greater population growth from 2010 to 2020 than Ottawa.

Census data shows Ottawa's population grew from 263,801 residents to an estimated 294,635 residents. That's a 10-year growth of about 11.7 percent, the highest rate in Michigan.

Many of the headlines from 2021 originated from the release of the 2020 Census numbers showing that Allegan County had grown to a population of 120,502 and was the 4th fastest growing county in the state.

Thursday, March 10th, 2022

Chairman Storey and Honorable Commissioners Cain,
DeYoung, Dugan, Jessup, Kapenga and Thiele-

On behalf of Chief Deputy Clerk Jackie Porter and former Chief Deputy Register Patricia Fales as well as the deputy clerks and deputy registers that comprise the best customer service team in Allegan County, it is my pleasure to present to you the ANNUAL REPORT for 2021.



The big news of 2021 was that according to the U.S. Census, Allegan County was the 4th fastest growing county in Michigan. While news that Allegan County is growing came as no shock to any of us, our county's population growth to 120,502 comes with many blessings and challenges regarding services provided at the Offices of the County Clerk and the Register of Deeds which you will find reflected in this report.

In the Elections Division, the county will add at least three new precincts to accommodate population increases. This will create a lot more programming to pay for, more teams of election workers to train, and more election night issues to manage among other issues.

The Register of Deeds Office set records during 2021 for the amount of money taken in as well as the number of documents recorded, which increased by 3,137 over 2020 (which also set a record).

As the 48th Circuit Court learned to manage trials with COVID 19 protocols, the deputy clerks of the Circuit Court in my office managed the files for 2,415 new cases.

In the Vital Records Division, every category of transaction except for Concealed Pistol Licenses increased from 2020 – with marriage licenses and the filing of DD 214's up significantly.

At no point during 2021, did either offices under my purview close their customer service windows to the public in fear of COVID 19. The wonderful deputy clerks and registers manned their stations every work day providing valuable service to the PEOPLE OF ALLEGAN COUNTY all year long.

A close-up of a handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored surface. The signature is stylized and appears to read 'Bob Genetski'.

Sincerely,

Bob Genetski, Allegan County Clerk – Register of Deeds

Table of Contents

Contents	Pages
To the Board of Commissioners	2
Office of the Register of Deeds	4-10
Office of the County Clerk:	
Vital Records Division	11-19
Circuit Court Records Division	20-24
Elections Division	25-28
Other Duties of the Clerk – Register	29
Upcoming and Ongoing Projects, Issues and Challenges & Notes	31-34

The Offices of the Allegan County Clerk and Register of Deeds are open from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. on weekdays. Both are located at:

The Allegan County Courthouse
113 Chestnut Street
Allegan, MI 49010

Deputy Clerks and Registers can be reached by phone at:

(269) 673-0450 for Vital Records, 673-3290 for Elections

(269) 673-0300 for Circuit Court Records

(269) 673-0390 for the Register of Deeds

County Clerk Bob Genetski is available at (269) 673-0291



Office of the Register of Deeds

By Law, the Register of Deeds is the “keeper of Public Record” for land documents. The recording of a document with this office does not make the document legal. The action of recording makes the document public.

Division Overview

The Office of the Register of Deeds records all documents pertaining to real property including deeds, mortgages, liens, powers of attorney, certificates of trust; federal, state, and MESC tax liens; master deeds and plats; sheriff’s deeds and redemption certificates. The hardworking deputies in the Register’s Office must be familiar with more than 200 different types of legal documents and the unique statutes for recording each of them. ROD staff works closely with attorneys, real estate agents, banks, title agencies and the public. The number one goal is to provide customer service – polite, professional, accurate and timely.

The Register’s Office broke records in 2021 for the second year in a row. The number of documents recorded increased significantly from the previous year, and the office collected nearly nine million dollars in taxes and fees.

The second full year of the County’s new record system has increased efficiency and effectiveness in the office.

The new technology includes the long awaited service of an online searchable database for land records that allows customers to search on the Internet and purchase copies on record 24 hours a day from any location with internet service.

Register of Deeds Office Quick Facts:

Chief Deputy Register: Patty Fales

FTE’s: 4 (with a combined 103 years of experience recording)

Money collected during 2021 (including State Transfer Tax): \$8,920,861.35

Total number of recordings in 2021: 31,015 (3,137 more than in 2020)

Records available from 1835 to present

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Allegan County Register of Deeds website. At the top, there is a header with the Allegan County seal, the title "Allegan County Register of Deeds", the name "Bob Genetski", and the "CountyFusion" logo. Below the header, the page is divided into two main sections. The left section, titled "Allegan County Register Online Services", contains a welcome message, login instructions for public and registered users, and contact information for Bob Genetski, Register. The right section, titled "Public users please log in here.", contains a login form with fields for "Username:" and "Password:", a "Login as Public" button, and links for "Forgot Password?" and "Need Help?". At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with technical details, a disclaimer about browser versions, and a statement about the online searchable database.

Allegan County Register of Deeds
Bob Genetski
CountyFusion

Allegan County Register Online Services

Welcome! Our Online Services provide a convenient and centralized way to access documents recorded in our office. You have the ability to search records and view document images.

Please login to website using the fields to the right, either via the Login as Guest/Public Button or the username and password if you are a credentialed user.

Additional information about the site is available once you login.

Bob Genetski, Register
Allegan County Register of Deeds
113 Chestnut Street
Allegan, MI 49010
Phone: [269-673-0390](tel:269-673-0390)

Build: 1053 191212_0745_A19_JUN
©All rights reserved, Allegan County

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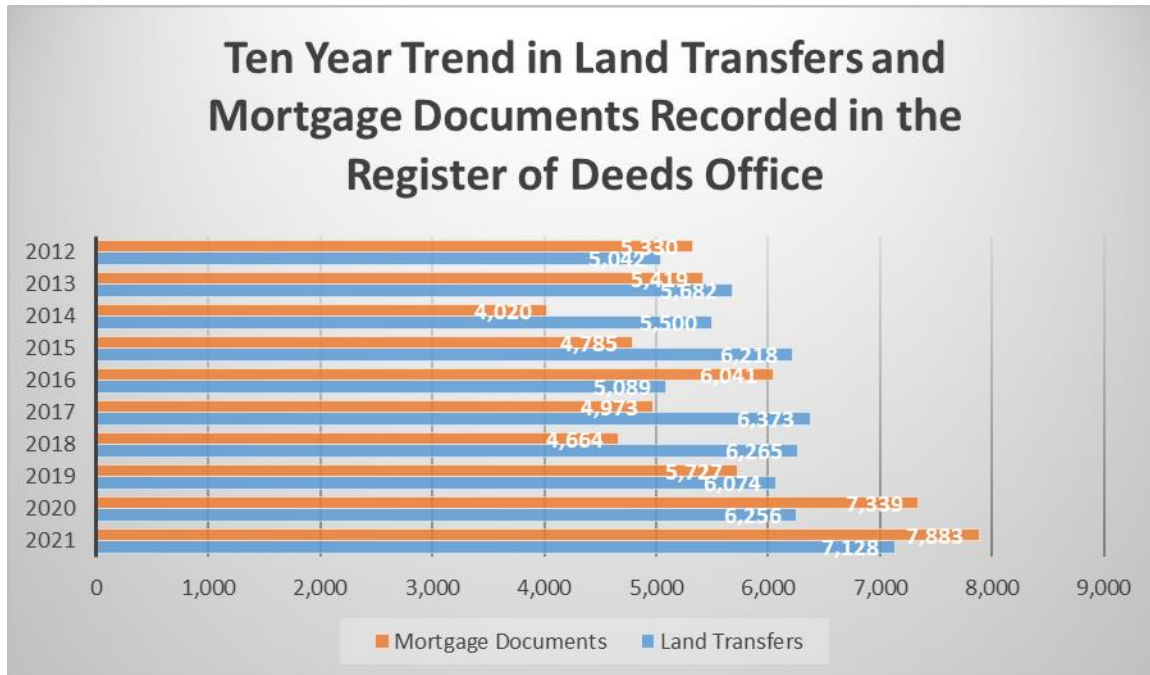
For best results, current web browser versions are always recommended. JavaScript must be enabled to utilize the site. If you are having difficulty, please ensure that you have installed all available software and security updates.

The webpage shown here is the new online searchable database where customers can search for and purchase copies of deeds from their homes.

(Continued – Register of Deeds)

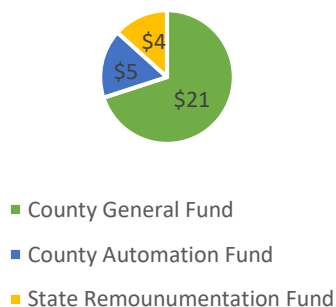
Document Recording

The total number of documents recorded in 2021 was 31,015 – an increase of 3,137 over the 27,878 recorded in 2020.



Trends in Recordings: The two most often recorded documents at ROD are Land Transfers and Mortgage Documents, and the two drive the overall number of recordings. County landowners recorded 7,883 mortgage documents during 2021 or 544 more than 2020's record breaking year. Land transfers recorded during the same period were 7,128 – 872 over the previous year. These numbers represent at least 11 year highs and perhaps the all-time highest numbers recorded.

Breakdown of Where the \$30 Recording Fee Goes

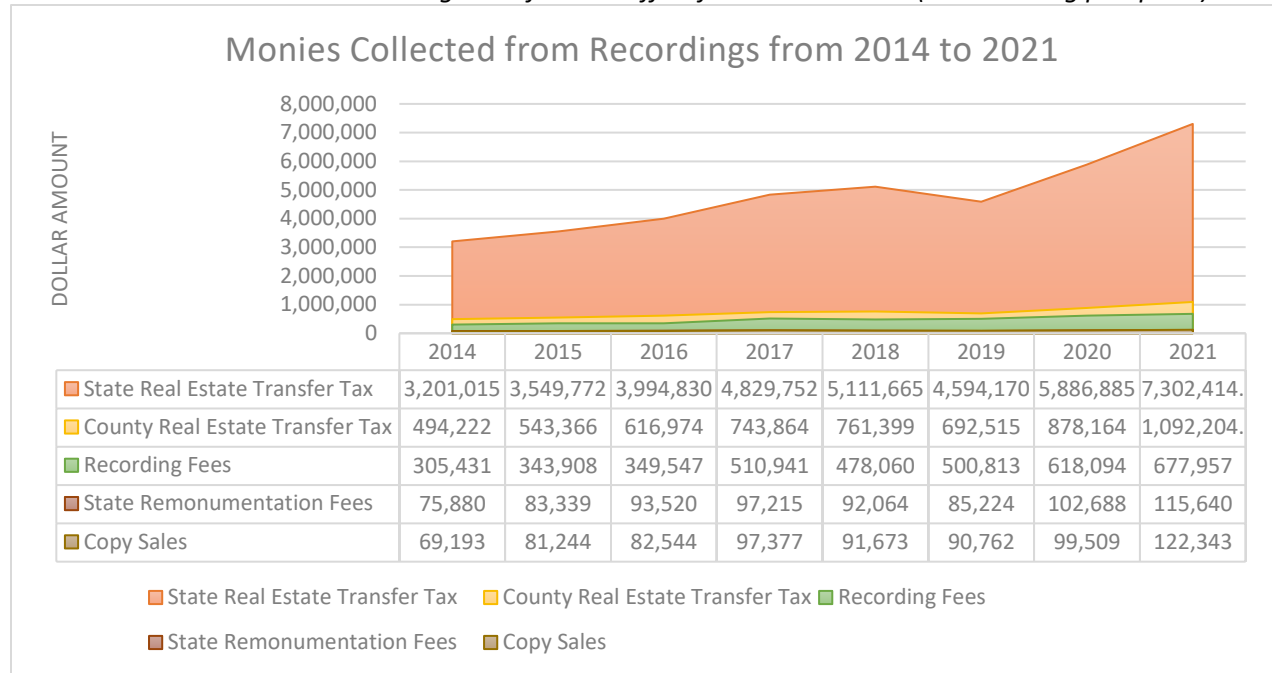


With each document recorded at the Register of Deeds, the Office collects \$30. Of that amount, the County General Fund receives \$21 while \$5 of that goes to the County Automation Fund (for upgrading technology in the Office). The remaining \$4 goes to the State Remonumentation Fund.

The recording fee was set by the Legislature (implemented in 2016) at \$30. Prior to that, the fee was \$14.

(Continued – Register of Deeds)

Trends in Monies Collected in the Register of Deeds Office from 2014 – 2021 (not including passports)



The chart above shows a breakdown of total monies collected in ROD from 2014 through 2021. The total amount taken in for the year 2021 was **\$8,920,861.35**. Receipts from transfer taxes, fees, and sales all increased from the year 2020. Real Estate Transfer Tax (State) collected climbed from \$5,886,885 to \$7,302,414.50 (a \$1,415,529.50 jump). County Transfer Tax receipts were \$1,092,204.85, an increase of \$214,040.85 over the previous year's \$878,164. **The Register of Deeds Office believes that all of the 2021 receipts are all-time records for Allegan County.**

Definitions:

State Real Estate Transfer Tax: collected on all deeds recorded and sent to the State of Michigan – 1.5% of this is sent to the County General Fund as an administrative fee **(\$109,536.22 for 2021).**

County Real Estate Transfer Tax: collected on all deeds recorded and sent to the County General Fund.

Recordings Fees: collected on every document recorded (of the nearly 200 hundred different types of documents) most of which goes to the County with a small portion going to the state (see the pie graph on the previous page for a breakdown).

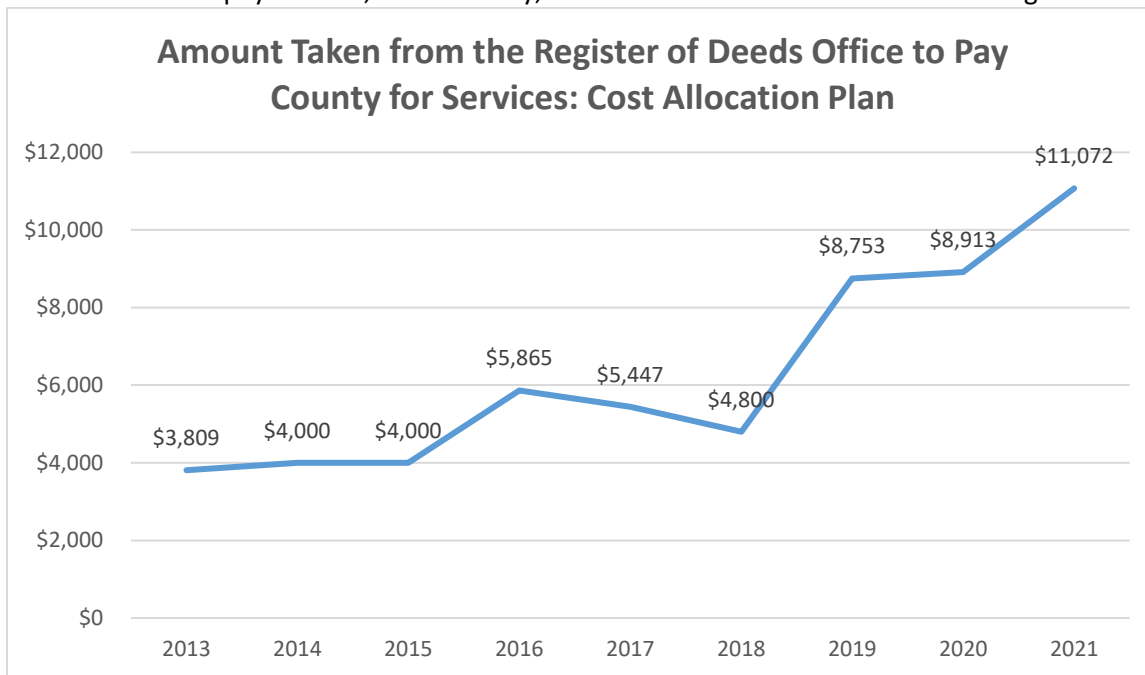
Remonumentation Fees: collected on every document recorded (with the exception of State Liens, Federal Liens, County Treasurer documents and MESC Liens) and sent to the state for the cost of surveying land corners. The monies are collected as part of the \$30 recording fee with the County General Fund receiving 1.5% as an administrative fee.

Copy Sales: collected on each document - \$1 per page and \$.20 per image (bulk sale to two title companies). This money goes to the County General Fund.

Eight Year Trend of Deposits Made to the Register of Deeds Automation Fund:

Year	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Amount of Deposit	\$154,951	\$139,390	\$114,450	\$115,050	\$121,255	\$118,321	\$115,082	\$108,507

NINE YEAR TREND IN MONIES DEDCUTED FROM THE AUTOMATION FUND & SENT TO THE COUNTY COST ALLOCATION PLAN: Since 2013, **\$56,659** has been taken from the Automation Fund for the County Cost Allocation Plan to pay for rent, door security, and overhead at the Courthouse building.



Did you know? That when you look up the Allegan County Register of Deeds Office on Google Reviews, you will find that our commitment to customer service earns five stars?

Google reviews

Jon Lanning
31 reviews · 1 photo

★★★★★ a month ago
Very nice people! She even helped me out by mailing something to a township instead of my home.

👍 1 🔗

Register of Deeds

5.0 ★★★★★ (1)
County government office in Allegan, Michigan

OVERVIEW **REVIEWS** PHOTOS

Google review summary



(Continued – Register of Deeds)

Passport Services

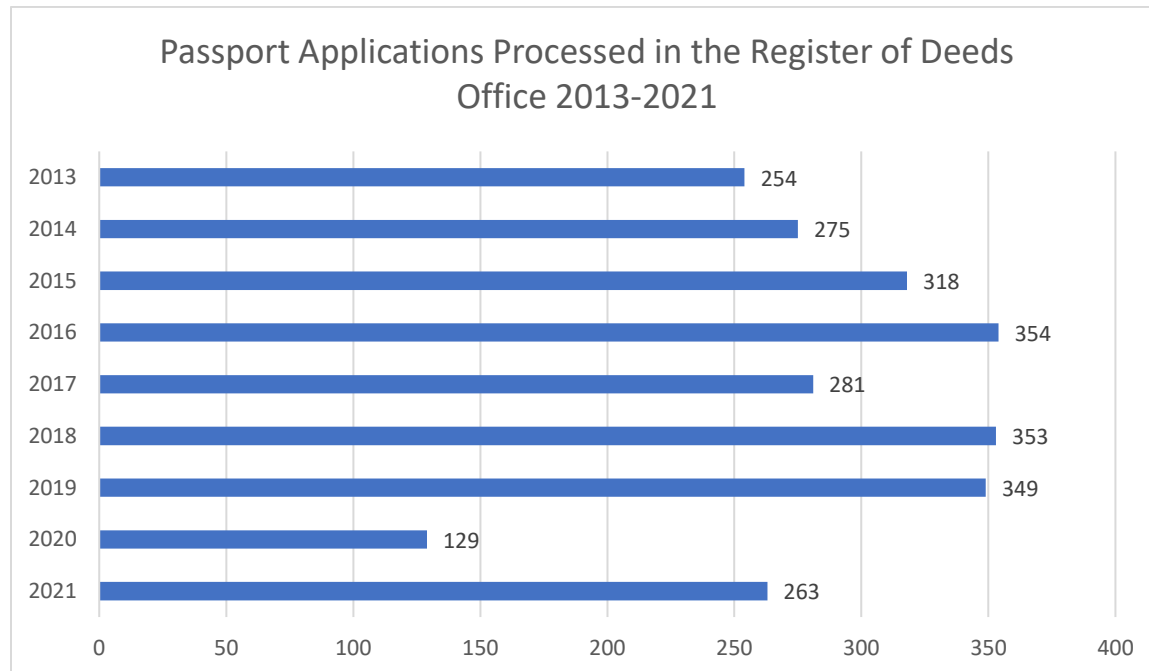


The Register of Deeds Office helped customers from Allegan County (and beyond) to obtain their United States Passports by accepting 263 Passport Applications in 2021.

The fee a customer pays for obtaining a routine passport through the office is **\$165** (which was \$145 until a mandated increase by the federal government that went into effect in **December 2021**). **With the change, \$130 of the total goes to the U.S.**

Department of State while the remaining \$35 is collected by the Register of Deeds Office and goes into the County General Fund.

Blank application forms are available in the office or online, and in addition to the check or money order, a customer will want to bring in a valid photo ID and supporting documents (such as a birth certificate). The Register of Deeds Office is pleased to offer passport size photos taken in the Office for initial applications for \$10. Customers may still bring their own passport size photos if they wish.



The number of passport applications accepted in 2021 rebounded to 263 after a nine year low of 129 during the previous year due to COVID 19. That increase of 50.9% is the highest year over year improvement since 2013 when ROD took over this duty from the Vital Records Office.

(Continued – Register of Deeds)

Revenues to the County General Fund from Passport Applications (at a rate of \$35 per application since April 2nd 2018; prior to the increase, the County earned \$25 per application):

Year	Applications	Revenue to Allegan County	Revenue at \$25/\$35
2021	263	\$9,205	\$9,205
2020	129	\$4,515	\$4,515
2019	349	\$12,215	\$12,215
2018	353	\$8,925	\$8,925/\$2,450*
2017	281	\$7,025	\$7,025*
2016	354	\$8,850	\$8,850*
2015	318	\$7,950	\$7,950*
2014	275	\$6,875	\$6,875*
2013	254	\$6,350	\$6,350*

The Office also took in \$1,620 for taking passport photos during 2021, up from the \$650 in 2020.

REAL ID UPDATE: With COVID 19 shutting down Secretary of State Branch Offices for most of the year- the Oct 1, 2021 deadline to obtain a REAL ID compliant Driver's License has been delayed until May 3, 2023. After that date, under federal law travelers will need to present a REAL ID compliant identification card to board an airplane within the United States or to enter federal facilities.

The new requirement is one more reason to visit the Register of Deeds Office because a U.S. Passport is considered valid documentation to obtain the REAL ID.



Each deputy in the Office is annually certified as a Passport Acceptance Agent by the United States Department of State. The Office offers Passport services from 8:00 A.M. until 4:30 P.M. Monday through Friday.

Unlike the competition, there is no appointment necessary.

These appointments take between 20 and 30 minutes provided the applicant has all of his or her necessary documentation.

PASSPORT SERVICES MOST FREQUENT CUSTOMER FEEDBACK:

- 1) THE DEPUTY REGISTERS ARE POLITE, FRIENDLY AND VERY HELPFUL.
- 2) THE "NO APPOINTMENT NECESSARY" BENEFIT IS A GREAT CONVENIENCE.
- 3) THE PROCESS WAS QUICK AND EASY.

(Continued – Register of Deeds)

Centennial Farms and the Register of Deeds

As the number one agriculture producing county in the state, Allegan County is blessed with many families that have been tilling the land for generations. Allegan County families that have farmed the same land for 100 years or more will want to visit the Register of Deeds Office for a copy of the deed or mortgage documents that show the history of the property & ownership of the working farm. This is the documentation the Historical Society of Michigan will request for the Michigan Centennial Farm Program.



Questions on Centennial Farms? Contact the Historical Society of Michigan at (517) 324-1828 or by email at farms@hsmichigan.org. The state approved 4 Centennial and 4 Sesquicentennial Farm applications from Allegan County in 2021.

Farmland and Open Space Preservation Applications

Under Public Act 116 of 1975, Allegan County Farm owners can enroll their land in the Farmland and Open Space Preservation Program. The trends in applications recorded at the Register of Deeds Office under PA 116 are list by year below:

Year/Number of Applications Recorded

2021 / 99

2020 / 49

2019 / 103

2018 / 127*

2017 / 48

2016 / 48

2015 / 110

2014 / 38*

*= 8 year high

^= 8 year low



Bob Genetski detasseling corn with an Allegan County crew.

Office of the County Clerk

VITAL RECORDS

Division Overview

The Vital Records Division assists Allegan County residents with filing and obtaining birth certificates, marriage certificates, death certificates, and genealogy research. In addition, the Division assists with applications for concealed pistol licenses (CPL's), the recording of home births, notary applications, business registrations (DBA's) and provides the free service of registering military discharge papers (otherwise known as DD 214's). Certified copies of certificates can be obtained by visiting our office between 8 AM and 5 PM, Monday through Friday. If someone is unsure of a record, phoning first at (269) 673-0450 is never a bad idea. Application forms for many of our services can be found online at: <https://www.allegancounty.org/departments/county-clerk/vital-records>

VITAL RECORDS DIVISION / QUICK FACTS

Chief Deputy Clerk – Jackie Porter FTE's – 2

Earliest Records on File:

September 1st, 1835 County Organized
(within the "Michigan Territory")

December 17th, 1835 First Marriage License

June 25th, 1836 Circuit Court Records

October 4th, 1836 Board of Supervisors Proceedings

January 24th, 1867 First Birth Recorded

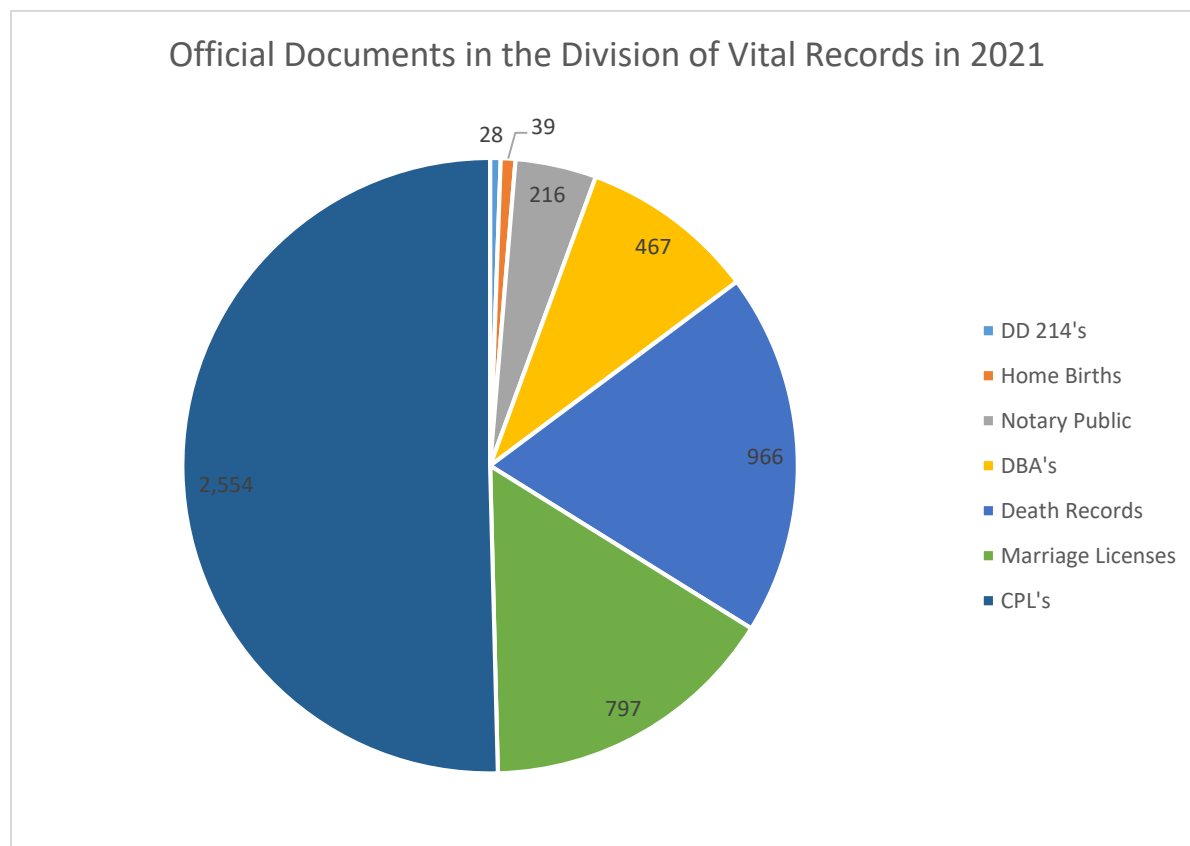
February 13th, 1867 First Death Record
(William Collman of Cheshire, died at one year, one month and 5 days. Cause of death: "Too Powerful Medicine")

The challenges of COVID 19 continued to affect how the Vital Records Division conducted business through 2021. However, the hard working deputy clerks recorded 5,067 vital documents throughout the year – the second highest number of the last six years. The overall amount of transactions was down by 62 from the year 2020; this is despite every category of vital record increasing in number except for one. Concealed Pistol Licenses declined from the 2,855 - an all-time high. The drop in CPL's was 301. Concerns over the virus which led to obvious declines in marriage licenses and Doing Business under an Assumed name applications the previous year, were alleviated and both items increased in 2021.

While the Office at 113 Chestnut Street processed fewer CPL's in 2021 than in 2020, there were more home births, death records, marriage licenses, DD 214's, Notary Public Applications, and DBA's recorded over the same time period.

Year	Number of Transactions
2016	4,389
2017	4,210
2018	4,356
2019	4,254
2020	5,129*
2021	5,067

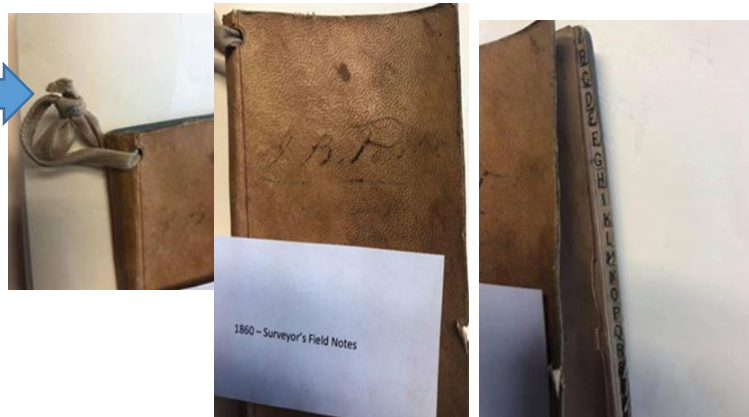
(Continued – Vital Records Division)



For the thirteenth year in a row, Concealed Pistol License Applications accounted for more of the transactions in Vital Records than any other- amassing 2,554 in 2021. However, in the reversal of a trend, the percentage of CPL's among all transactions was down to 50.2 %. There were 966 deaths recorded in Allegan County during the year, making that number the second highest of recordings. Marriage Licenses came in 3rd in the number of vital records created at 797. At 467, DBA's registered ranked fourth among all categories in 2021. The Office accepted 216 Notary Public applications while there were 39 home births and 28 DD 214's registered.

Did you know that Allegan County is blessed to have many original records dating back to the 1800's?

The pictures to the right are of the Field Notes of the Allegan County Surveyor's work from 1860.



(Continued – Vital Records Division)

Trends in Live Home Births

Since 2009, there are no longer any “birthing hospitals” in Allegan County. So, the only birth certificates initiated in the County Clerk’s Office are those for “live home births” (except in the case of emergencies). Due to a recent change in the law, fewer and fewer of the County’s little cherubs come to the Courthouse with their parents for physical verification. Currently, the midwife performs the verification and files directly with the state. When the birth record is generated, one copy is recorded with the County and the other is on file with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services – State Office of Vital Records.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Births Recorded	19	12	27	25	30	29	35	22	32	39

Table 1- Trends in Home Births- the Vital Records Division recorded 39 home births in 2021- the highest number in the last ten years. This represents an increase of seven from 32 in 2020.

Geography of Home Births in Allegan County: When the number of home births is broken down by the seven County Commission seats for 2021, the midwife was the busiest in Commissioner Cain’s District #7 which recorded 10. Commissioner Thiele’s District 3 was second with 8.

Live births broken down by County Commission District:

District 1 - 1

Kapenga

District 2 – 6

Storey

District 3 – 8

Thiele

District 4 – 5

Deyoung

District 5 – 6

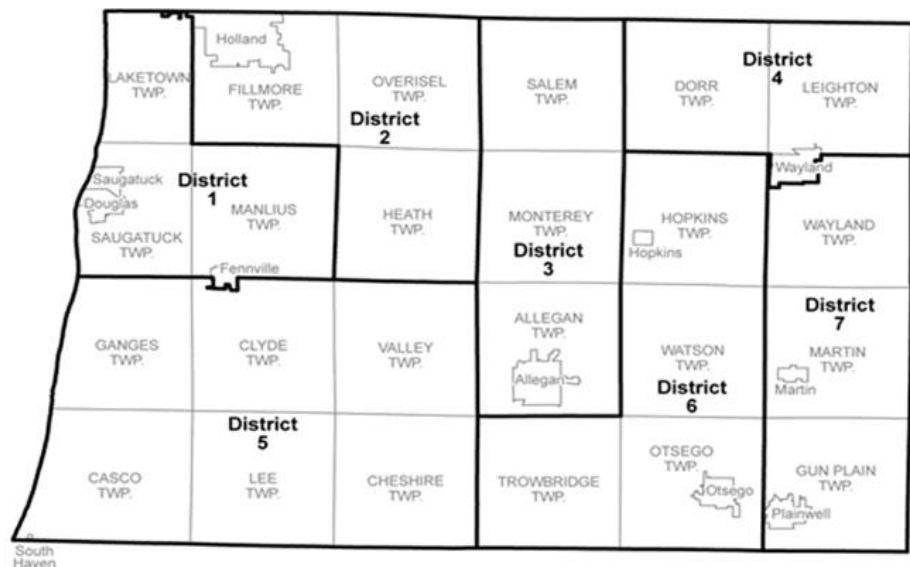
Jessup

District 6 – 3

Dugan

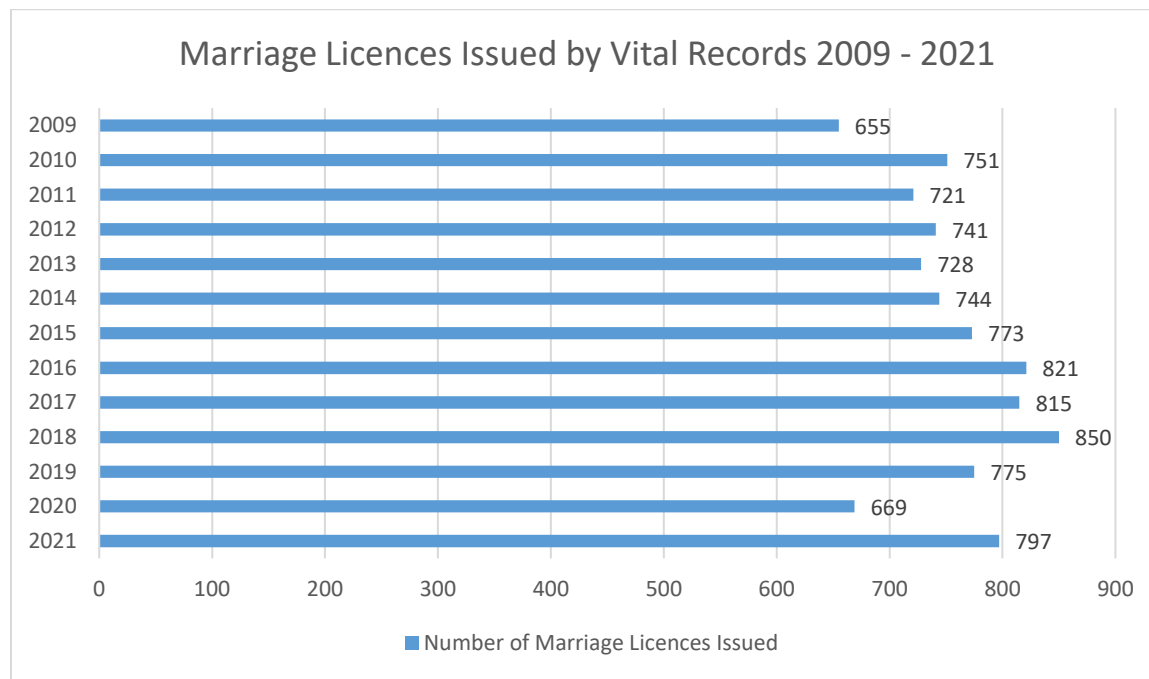
District 7 – 10

Cain



(Continued – Vital Records Division)

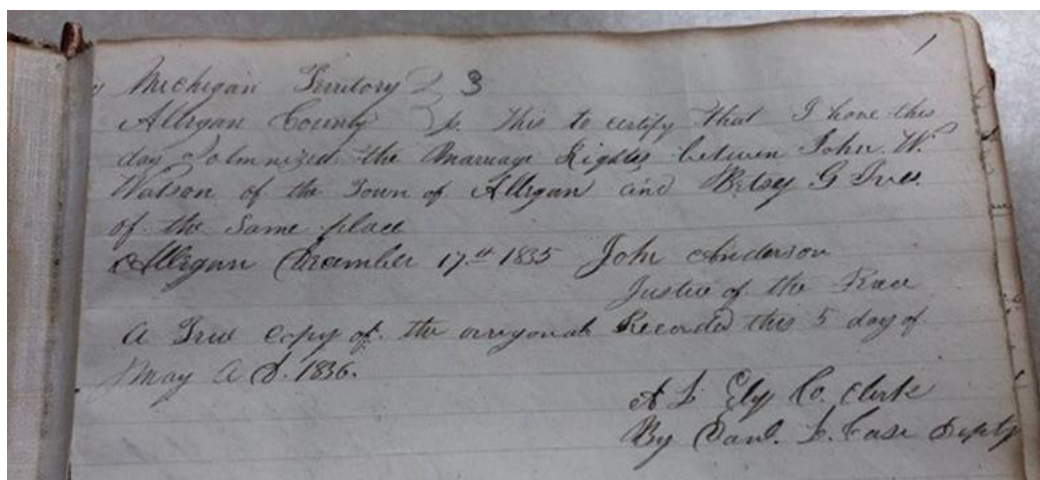
Trends in Marriage License Applications



Love rebounded in Allegan County in 2021 with 797 marriage licenses being issued after an 11 year low of 669 were recorded in 2020. This represents an increase of 128 couples that joined in marital bliss year over year.

Did you know??? The earliest recorded marriage license in the vault at the County Clerk's Office is for a marriage in the

"Michigan Territory." The marriage of John W. Watson of Allegan to Betsy Ives of Allegan occurred on December



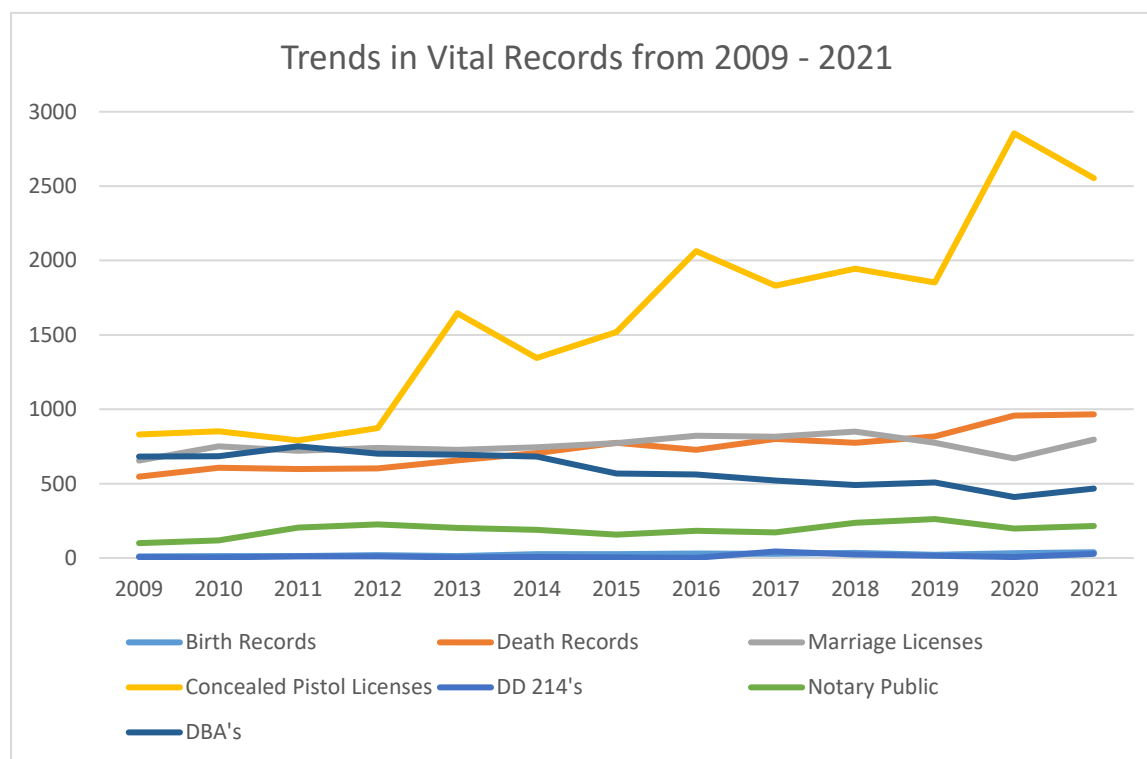
17th, 1835 and was solemnized by Justice of the Peace John Anderson. The certificate was recorded in May 1836 with County Clerk A. L. Ely.

(Continued – Vital Records Division)

A thirteen year look at requests of the Vital Records Division reflects a lot about the lives of constituents in Allegan County. Purchases of Concealed Pistol Licenses show more volatility than any of the other transactions. Applications for CPL's, during this time frame, were as low as 830 in 2009 and as high as 2,855 in 2020.

Marriage licenses issued hit their high of 850 in 2018 and their low in 2009 at 655.

Notary Public Applications from 2009 to 2021 varied from a low of 100 at the beginning of the period to the peak in 2019 of 262 accruing 216 in 2021.



Home births in Allegan County have ranged from as few as 11 in 2009 while hitting a new high in 2021 of 39 home births.

The number of death records increased in 2021 to a high of 966; that number more or less trends with the population increases as the low number – 547 – occurred in 2009.

Business License (DBA's) hit their high of the 14 years of 751 (in 2011) while bottoming out at 410 applications in 2019.

The number of honorable discharge papers for veterans (DD 214's) filed with the Vital Records Division hit their modern day high of 44 in 2017 with a low of 1 on more than one occasion (most recently in 2016) with 28 veterans registering their papers in 2021.

(Continued – Vital Records Division)



Trends in filing DD 214's for Our Veterans

One of the most important (and least known) services the Vital Records Division offers is the recording of military discharge papers otherwise known as DD 214's. Most often, when U.S. Military Veterans return to civilian life, they are given only one copy of their papers of honorable

discharge. If the papers are lost or destroyed, the federal government can be very difficult to deal with when a veteran tries to replace the originals.



In July 2021, Clerk Genetski joined with members of VFW Post 7911 in Clyde Township to recognize the post's 75th Anniversary of Service.

These papers are extremely important for veterans as they obtain VA benefits, GI Bill benefits, and even to obtain the "Veteran" designation on a Michigan Driver's License.

For this reason, the Office of the County Clerk is encouraging all Allegan County veterans to file their papers of honorable discharge with our office. It's a quick process; it's FREE, and it gives veterans and their families' peace of mind.

When a veteran comes in to file his or her honorable discharge papers, he or she will receive the original papers back, a free certified copy, and the

individual and the veteran's designated heirs will have access to free certified copies for any of their needs for the rest of their lives. As well, none of the information on the DD 214 (including whether the document is on file with the clerk) is available to the public.

*An eleven year trend in DD 214's filed with the County Clerk's Office: In 2021, **28 veterans** (the second highest number since 2004) registered their papers of honorable discharge at the County Clerk's Office. Since taking office in 2017, Clerk Genetski has prioritized veterans outreach.*

YEAR	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Number Filed	11	10	5	7	4	1	44	24	16	6	28

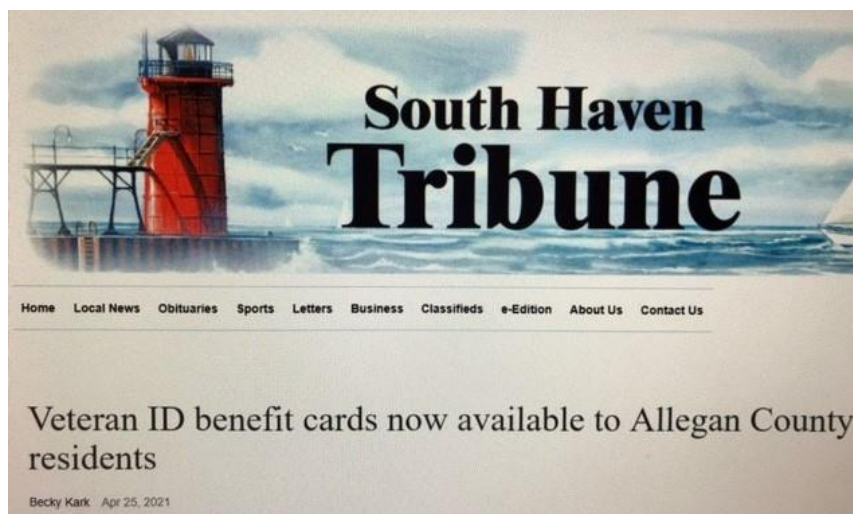
(Continued – Vital Records Division)

New Benefit for our Veterans

The Allegan County Veterans ID Card

In April of 2021, the Clerk's Office was able to roll out the new Allegan County Veterans ID card. This is a free benefit extended to those who have been honorably discharged from U.S. Military service and who file their DD 214 (papers of honorable discharge) with the Clerk's Office.

The process to obtain the card is quick and easy. The former serviceman or woman brings his or her **original** DD 214 to the Clerk's Office to be registered or brings an ID to confirm that the papers are already on file. The deputy clerks in the office make a copy, give the original DD 214 back to the veteran, take a quick digital photo and upload it before printing the card. The entire process takes no more than 10 minutes.



Veterans can present the cards at participating businesses throughout the County and in fact throughout the U.S. to obtain discounts and benefits. Each eligible Allegan County veteran is presented with a booklet of such benefits.

In 2021, the office presented **50** Veterans ID Cards between April 2021 and the end of the year. Prior to the release of the ID cards, this benefit was the number one request that

customers would ask for the Office to provide.

The Office would love to hear from more West Michigan businesses that offer veterans discounts to include in the booklet. Any business that would like to participate can call (269) 673-0450 or email bgenetski@allegancounty.org for details on how to participate.

(Continued – Vital Records Division)

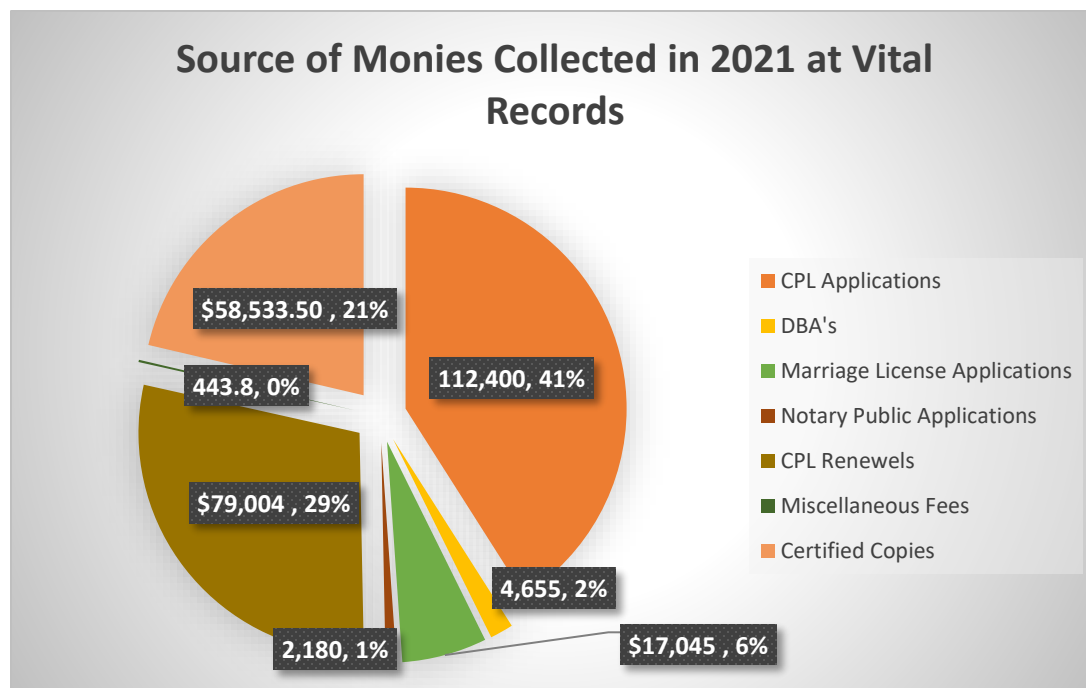
\$\$\$ Where the Money Comes from and Goes... \$\$\$

The Vital Records Division took in \$274,261.30 from the following sources:

Marriage License Applications – Fee of \$20	Filing of a DBA – Fee of \$10
Application for a Notary Public – Fee of \$10	(new) CPL Application – Fee of \$100
CPL renewal – Fee of \$115	Miscellaneous Fees* – Fee of \$10
Certified Copies (of Marriage Certificates, Death Certificates, and Birth Certificates) – Fee of \$10 (first copy), \$4 for each subsequent copy	

**Fees for things such as replacement of a lost CPL Card etc.*

Of the \$274,261.30 collected in the Vital Records Division during 2021, the source and percentage of the total receipts appear in the graph below.

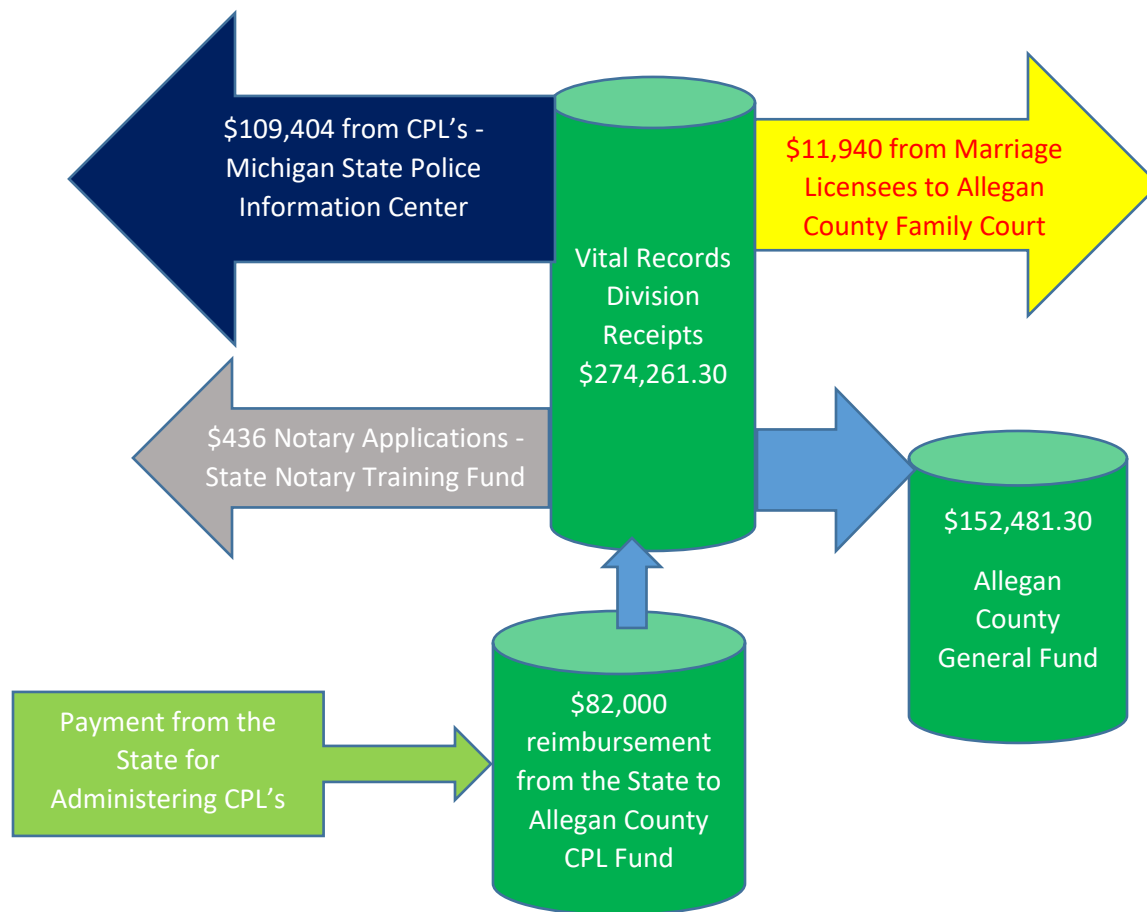


Concealed Pistol Licenses Applications comprised of 41% of all revenue received in the Vital Records Division in 2021, garnering \$112,400. CPL Renewals took in \$79,004 (29%), the second most money. Sales of Certified Copies earned the County \$58,533.50 or 21% of the total while Marriage License receipts represented 6% of all transactions – accruing \$17,045. DBA's, Notary Applications and miscellaneous fees were 2%, 1% and 0% of sales.

(Continued – Vital Records Division)

Fees collected in the Vital Records Division are deposited into different accounts - three at the county level and two at the state level. The accounts are: Allegan County's General Fund; the County CPL Fund (use to pay for staff who process CPL applications, equipment and supplies for processing applications). This account receives \$26 (of \$100) for each new CPL application and \$36 (of the \$115) for each renewal; the Michigan State Police Information Center receives \$74 for a new CPL application and \$79 for a renewal (for the cost of background checks for CPL applicants), and \$2 of the \$10 notary application fee goes to the State Notary Training Fund. The rest goes to the County General Fund. Marriage License Fees are split with \$5 of the \$20 going to the County General Fund, and \$15 is sent to Family Court for marriage counseling.

The breakdown of where all the monies end up looks like this:



Of the \$274,261.30 that the Vital Records Division took in for the year 2021, much of it (\$109,404) ended up with the Michigan State Police. The state sent \$82,000 to the County CPL Fund. Allegan County's General Fund received \$152,481.30. Allegan County Family Court received \$11,940 of Marriage License fees to pay for marriage counseling. The State Notary Training Fund received \$436 from Allegan County on the year.

CIRCUIT COURT RECORDS

Division Overview

The Circuit Court Records Division of the Clerk's Office is the fundamental access point to the 48th Circuit Court for all parties in a civil, criminal or Family Court matters. This office is where customers have their first interaction with the circuit court system. The talented deputy clerks work hard to make any experience at our service window as seamless and pleasant as possible by providing access to public court records and by answering questions regarding procedures, access to court related resources, Friend of the Court and the Legal Assistance Center.

The Office is also the point of entry for those who are called to Circuit Court jury duty.

Our services include processing documents necessary to initiate new cases filed with the Court as well as receiving, reviewing, and processing all documents pertaining to pending legal matters before the Court, pulling records for the scheduled hearings, and clerking in the courtroom. Our staff is friendly and polite – emphasizing customer service- knowing that many of the people who need our service might be



navigating a complex legal system for the first time.

Reporting to State Agencies

The Circuit Court Records Division is responsible for reporting all convictions of a felony or high court misdemeanor or to numerous state agencies. Depending on the situation, the Office might communicate with the Michigan Secretary of State, Michigan State Police, and/or the Michigan Department of Corrections. These reports help create accurate records for the public to access at the state level. In addition, all cases involving a motor vehicle are abstracted to the Secretary of State so the state may take necessary actions to uphold and protect the citizens of Michigan.

CIRCUIT COURT RECORDS DIVISION QUICK FACTS

Chief Deputy Clerk: Jackie Porter

FTE's: 6 (6.5 approved)

Circuit Court Records provides the essential framework behind the scenes for the 48th Circuit Court by collecting and disbursing monies to many circuit court, county, state, nonprofit, and private sector accounts involving:

Restitution, attorney fees, bonds, Victims' Rights Funds, fines, state minimum costs, filing fees, motion fees, jury trail fees, garnishment & subpoena fees. **In 2021, the Circuit Court Clerk's office collected approximately 1.2 million dollars.**

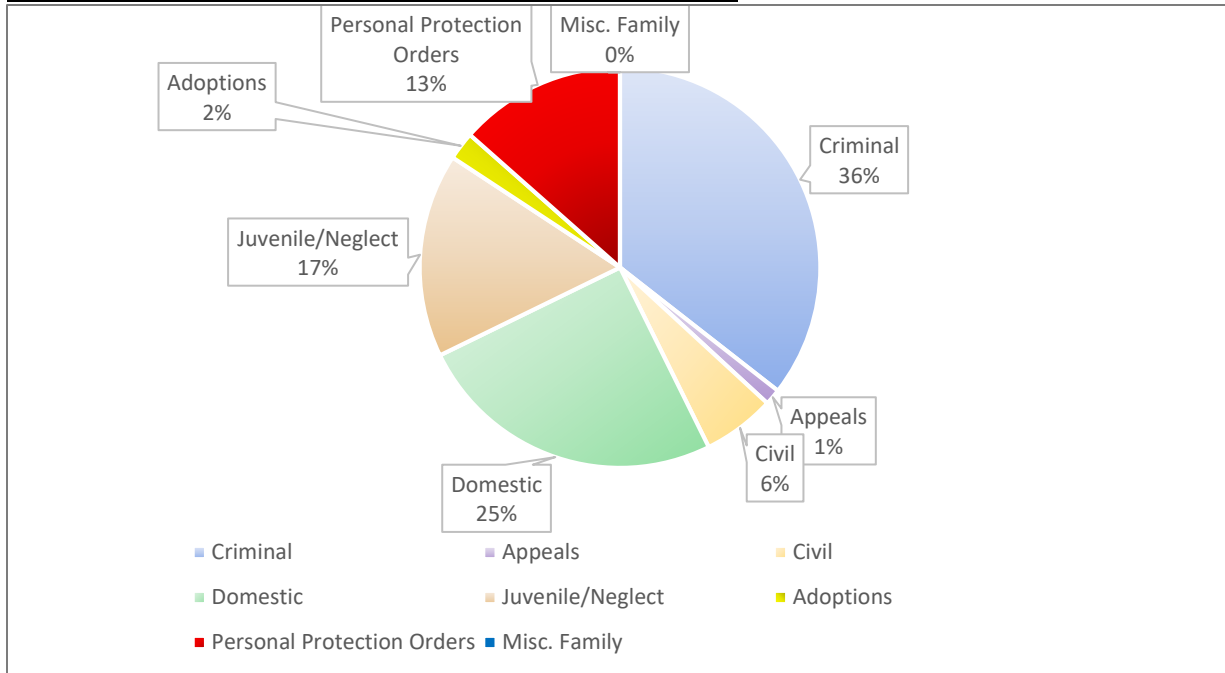
The Division serves as a pass through entity whereby restitution payments are collected and sent to victims of crimes

The Division is also responsible for processing adoptions.

Individual deputy clerks from this office serve as clerks in hearings of the 48th Circuit Court.

(Continued – Circuit Court Records Division)

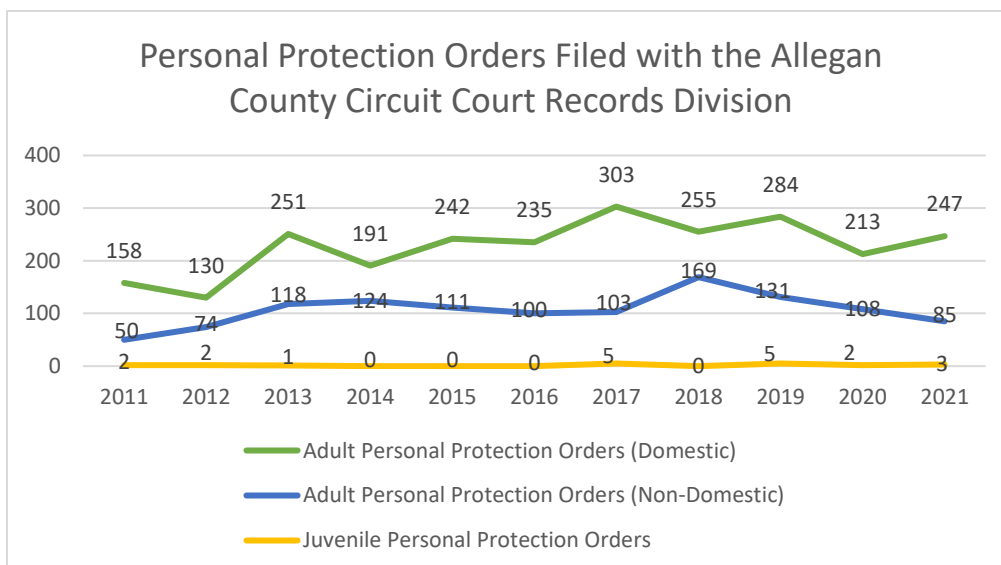
Overview of New Cases Filed in the Circuit Court in 2021



Appeals: 32 Adoptions: 56 Criminal: 876 Civil: 144 Domestic: 618
 Juvenile/Neglect: 406 Personal Protection Orders: 332 Misc. Family: 0

Trends in Personal Protection Orders

Personal Protection Orders in Allegan County are filed with the deputy clerks in the Circuit Court Records Division. In 2021, the Office accepted 332 PPO's. Of these, 3 were Juvenile



PPO's (up one from 2020's number of 2). Adult (Domestic) PPO's numbered 247 - up from 213 year over year. At the same time, Adult Non-Domestic PPO's were down from 108 in 2020 to 85 in 2021.

(Continued – Circuit Court Records Division)

Adoptions

Trends in Adoptions over the last eleven years.

Year	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Adoptions	56	42	74	36	45	46	68	55	84	121	105



Due to concerns of COVID 19, perhaps the most popular event at the Courthouse, Judge Buck's "National Adoption Day" ceremony needed to be moved online. In years past, the public & media would be invited into the Courtroom for the once a year event filled with laughter & tears of joy..

The adoption process in Allegan County begins in the Circuit Court Records Office. Deputy Clerks work with petitioning parents, Family Court, agencies and attorneys to facilitate the process. While all adoptions in Michigan are closed to the public, once a year the Clerk's Office participates in "National Adoption Day" during which families engage in a public ceremony at the Courthouse. This ceremony is one of the most moving and heartwarming events each year anywhere in Allegan County.

The Circuit Court Records Division helped process 56 adoptions in 2021.

Trends in Family Court Filings (other than adoptions) in the Circuit Court Records Division.

Year	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Juvenile/Neglect Cases	406	303	349	387	474	502	667	530	732	762

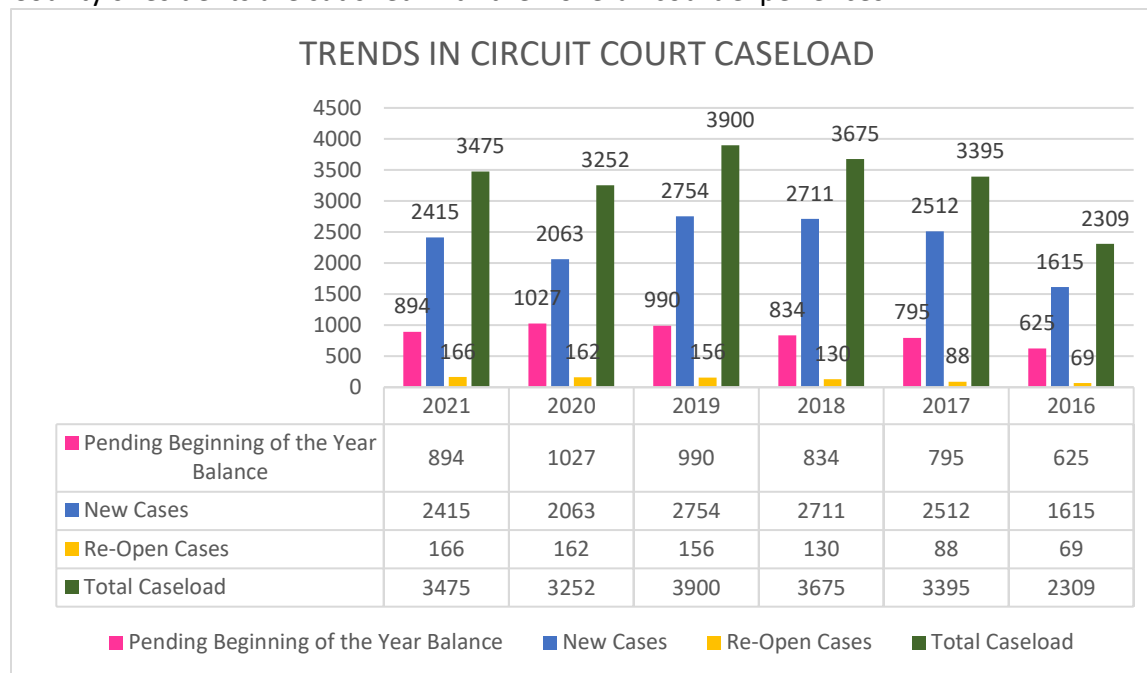
(Continued – Circuit Court Records Division)

Friend of the Court

This Division interacts with the Friend of the Court as well. The Office processes family cases initiated by F.O.C. and can also attest a “true copy” of a Friend of the Court order.

Annual Report to the SCAO

The Michigan State Court Administrator’s Office annually requests of all counties a caseload report that identifies important case data, such as the number of new cases filed each year as well as the age of each case from the initial filing date to the date of disposition. Each year, the Circuit Court Records Department helps prepare and submit this data to the state. The Clerk’s Office collaboratively works with the Circuit Court staff to review these statistics and improve upon the previous year’s data. Improvements to such procedures work to ensure that the County’s residents are satisfied with their overall court experiences.



“THE PARTNERSHIP THAT THE CIRCUIT COURT HAS WITH THE ALLEGAN COUNTY CLERK’S OFFICE IS AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF HOW GOOD PARTNERSHIPS BENEFIT NOT ONLY THE COURTS, BUT ALSO THOSE WHO NEED ASSISTANCE FROM THE JUSTICE SYSTEM. THANK YOU CLERK GENETSKI FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP,” – THE HONORABLE MARGARET BAKKER, JUDGE 48TH CIRCUIT COURT.

(Continued – Circuit Court Records Division)

Collection and Disbursement of Monies for the Court

The Clerk's Office is responsible for receipting in all payments for the 48th Circuit Court. This includes all statutorily mandated fees and court ordered fines, costs, restitution and juvenile delinquent fines for family court. These payments may be made at the Circuit Court Records window or online.

The Circuit Court Records Division accepted \$234,111.34 in 2021 for Adult Cases and disbursed \$216,086 to crime victims. At the same time, collections from juveniles amounted to \$17,690.50, and \$19,409.27 was paid out to victims of crime.

Trends in Monies Collected and Paid Out to Victims by the Circuit Court Records Division.

Adult	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Beginning Balance:	\$10,394.26	\$2,337.46	\$29,515.73	\$51,277.27	\$50,643.72
Collections:	\$245,026.56	\$186,124.09	\$210,500.12	\$236,431.88	\$234,111.34
Total:	\$255,420.82	\$188,461.55	\$240,016.45	\$241,559.15	\$284,755.06
Disbursed to Victims:	\$253,083.30	\$185,945.82	\$188,739.18	\$237,369.06	\$216,086.05

Juvenile	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Beginning Balance:	\$7,922.64	\$2,337.46	\$16,718.87	\$7,539.39	\$7,217.73
Collections:	\$15,029.98	\$24,125.67	\$15,474.47	\$14,848.05	\$17,690.50
Total:	\$22,952.62	\$31,854.74	\$32,193.43	\$22,387.44	\$24,908.23
Disbursed to Victims:	\$15,233.56	\$15,135.87	\$24,654.96	\$15,168.71	\$19,409.27

The Circuit Court Records Division processed 532 jurors for the 12 jury trials held in the 48th Circuit Court in 2021. This duty entails checking in jurors, the selection process, and orchestrating reimbursements for jurors' service.



ELECTIONS

Though 2021 was an “off-year” for most voters, the Clerk’s Office managed three elections, and our local clerk partners were still quite busy as city council races, school initiatives, road proposals, transit efforts, cemetery, and library votes all made the ballot.

County and local officials continued to provide excellent service while navigating the challenges that COVID 19 presented in ensuring one’s right to vote.



Clerk Genetski swears in Robin Phelps - Ganges Township Clerk

Elections Division Overview

The County Clerk is the chief election officer in Allegan County. While local jurisdictions run much of the day-

to-day operations of elections, the Elections Division is responsible for the administration of elections, the accurate accumulation of countywide results, and maintaining election records. The Elections Coordinator collaborates with the staff of the County Clerk’s Office, state agencies, other county clerks (across Michigan and throughout the United States), as well as township and city clerks throughout Allegan County. This work covers three basic areas related to elections: maintaining the Qualified Voter File, meeting the Campaign Filing and educational needs of candidates, and serving the election needs of Allegan County voters.

The Qualified Voter File

The Qualified Voter File (QVF) is a state-run database of every legally registered voter in Michigan. To ensure the integrity of voter rolls for Allegan County residents, the Election Coordinator facilitates entry of newly registered voters, address updates, and removal of electors who have moved, who request to be removed from rolls or who have passed away. The coordinator also communicates with other states to remove voters who move across state lines from Allegan County voter rolls. Maintaining the integrity of the QVF is essential to protecting the security of the vote.

Elections Division

At a glance:

Chief Deputy Clerk: Jackie Porter

FTE’s: 1

Coordinating Elections for:

45 “In-County” Precincts*

10 “In-County” School Districts

% of voter turnout in 2021:

17.16% in the May 4th Special Election (16 jurisdictions)

14.71% August 3rd Special Election

18.32% November 2nd Regular Election

Turnout in Raw Number of Voters:

May 4th - 4,314 voters (25,135 registered)

August 3rd - 2,361 voters (16,047 registered)

November 2nd – 5,831 voters (31,820 registered)

(Continued – Elections Division)

Campaign Finance

Maintaining the many election files that serve Allegan County candidates, residents, and the public at large is a constant effort. The Elections Division makes every effort to align Allegan County filing policies with the ever-changing Campaign Finance Law governed by the Bureau of Elections in Lansing.

During 2021, the Clerk's Office oversaw and accepted campaign filings from 15 candidates and 2 ballot initiative groups while accepting candidate filings from "write in" candidates for city council.

ELECTIONS AND THE PUBLIC 2021 Elections

Perhaps the biggest election related challenge in 2021 affected even those clerks that did not have to manage an election during the year. Election officials throughout Allegan County were engaged in responding to numerous FIOA requests, demands for audits of the 2020 Presidential Election, and even a few requests to take apart precincts' tabulators.



Some of the FIOA's took a tremendous amount of time, expertise and energy to process. The hard work, research and professionalism of clerks from South Haven to Leighton Township and all points in between continues to provide quality answers those with questions regarding election integrity throughout the County.

Though it was not a big election year, the Clerk's Office conducted numerous election trainings and spent all year improving and updating the current Election Inspector training the Office conducts to support local clerks and election inspectors.

Just wanted to thank you for a very well-run and organized training. I've been through a few over the years and I have to honestly say that yours was one of the best. Thanks.

—Garn

--

Garnet Lewis, Ph.D.

--

(Continued – Elections Division)

May 4th – Special Election

With light turnout across the county in May, voters in Allegan Public School District approved a new school complex by a vote of 1,308 to 1,107. At the same time electors in the Holland Max Transit District approved an increase. The same jurisdictions had a bond issue for Holland Public Schools on it. Individuals in Zeeland and South Haven school districts turned out for bond proposals and the operating millage as well as those in Hudsonville Public Schools- meaning those in far northern Salem Township. A total of 4,314 voters or 17.16% participated of the 25,135 registered at the time.

August 3rd, 2021 – Special Election

A total of 2,361 Allegan County voters or 14.71% of 16,047 registered showed up at the polls on a day that all four requests were approved in the August Special Election. The Hopkins Public Schools and Martin Public Schools saw their Operating Millage Renewals pass. At the same time- voters in Saugatuck Township, the City of Saugatuck and The City of the Village of Douglas approved a proposal for the local library 809 votes to 321 with Township voters approving an initiative for their cemetery.

November 2nd, 2021 – Regular Election

The November election found City Council races decided by voters from Allegan, Douglas, Fennville, Holland, Saugatuck, South Haven and Wayland (with Allegan voters choosing a City Constable as well).

The 6 or 7 South Haven voters in Allegan County had a law enforcement millage to enforce controlled substance laws on their ballots. Saugatuck Township voters approved a road maintenance provision. At the same time, voters in Hamilton Community Schools District defeated a \$21.7 million bond proposal with 1,279 in favor and 1,476 opposed while Fennville voters did the same to an amendment to the city charter- 37 votes for and 44 against.

Turnout among all jurisdictions was 5,831 or 18.32% of the registered 31,820.

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Sports Entertainment Lifestyle Opinion USA TODAY Obituaries E-Edition Legals

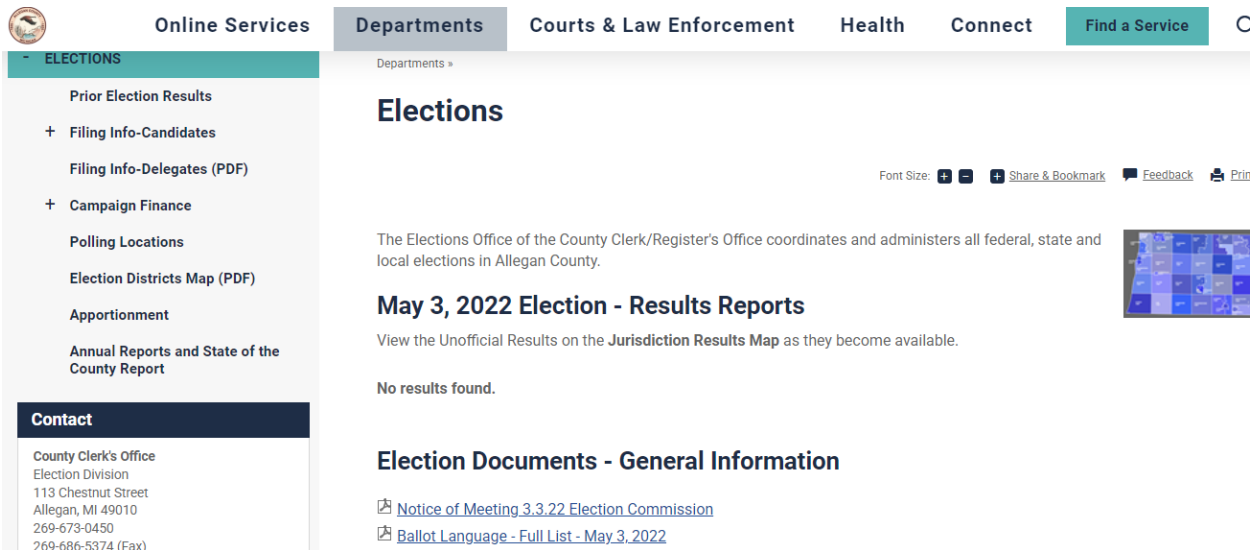
Hamilton Community Schools bond proposal fails for second time

Voters in the Hamilton Community Schools district rejected [the district's second try](#) at a bond proposal by 179 votes Nov. 2. The proposal was defeated 1,279-1,476, with 53.6 percent of voters opposed, according to unofficial vote tallies.

Last year's ask was defeated with 62 percent opposition.

The school district had cut the proposal down to \$21.7 million from the August 2020 proposal of \$65.6 million, striking plans to build a new middle school and community recreation center and focusing on renovating existing facilities.

(Continued – Elections Division)



The screenshot shows the Allegan County website's Elections Division page. The top navigation bar includes 'Online Services', 'Departments', 'Courts & Law Enforcement', 'Health', 'Connect', and a 'Find a Service' button. The left sidebar lists various election services: Prior Election Results, Filing Info-Candidates, Filing Info-Delegates (PDF), Campaign Finance, Polling Locations, Election Districts Map (PDF), Apportionment, and Annual Reports and State of the County Report. The main content area is titled 'Elections' and includes a description of the Elections Office's role. It features a section for 'May 3, 2022 Election - Results Reports' with a link to view unofficial results and a note that no results were found. Below this is a section for 'Election Documents - General Information' with links to a meeting notice and ballot language list. A contact section at the bottom left provides the address and phone numbers for the County Clerk's Office.

Online Services Departments Courts & Law Enforcement Health Connect Find a Service

ELECTIONS

Prior Election Results

+ Filing Info-Candidates

Filing Info-Delegates (PDF)

+ Campaign Finance

Polling Locations

Election Districts Map (PDF)

Apportionment

Annual Reports and State of the County Report

Contact

County Clerk's Office
Election Division
113 Chestnut Street
Allegan, MI 49010
269-673-0450
269-686-5374 (Fax)

Departments »

Elections

Font Size: [+](#) [-](#) [Share & Bookmark](#) [Feedback](#) [Print](#)

The Elections Office of the County Clerk/Register's Office coordinates and administers all federal, state and local elections in Allegan County.

May 3, 2022 Election - Results Reports

View the Unofficial Results on the [Jurisdiction Results Map](#) as they become available.

No results found.

Election Documents - General Information

[Notice of Meeting 3.3.22 Election Commission](#)

[Ballot Language - Full List - May 3, 2022](#)

THANK YOU! The County Clerk's Office owes a great debt of gratitude to the Allegan County Department of Information Services for their outstanding support every Election Night. Patti Wartella & Deb Jones of County IS have been an important part of the elections team. Deb has done great work to ensure our election results can be posted to the county website and has very much improved the look and accessibility of our posted results. Patti is in the office late into Election Night ensuring that election results can be transmitted to the County, properly accumulated and posted to the website. The Elections Division is grateful for their service.



OTHER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CLERK – REGISTER



The Allegan County Plat Board: the Clerk-Register serves (along with the County Treasurer and in Allegan County's case the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners) on the County Plat Board.



In 2021, the Board met three times to approve final plats - all three for subdivisions in Leighton Township.

The Clerk also serves as a member of the County Election Commission along with the Probate Judge and Treasurer. The Election Commission meets to approve ballots for the elections, reviews (and may approve) precinct consolidations, and reviews recall language. The Commission met three times in 2021.



The Board of Canvassers met to certify three elections in 2021.

As well, the Clerk serves as Secretary to the Allegan County Board of Canvassers. The bi-partisan Board meets to certify elections, conduct recounts as well as approve and certify ballot containers.

Finally, the County Clerk serves as Clerk to the Allegan County Board of Commissioners.



A meeting of the Allegan County Board of Commissioners.

Ongoing projects, outstanding issues, and concerns for the future...

A Property Fraud Alert System through the Register of Deeds Office for Allegan County Landholders: This project is on this list after the Register of Deeds Office made a request for COVID 19 Funds to pay for the project. That request never received a formal approval or rejection and seems to be in limbo. Property Fraud Alert would inform a deed holder if another party records a lien, a deed, mortgage papers or an easement in the deed holder's name. This is the NUMBER ONE REQUESTED SERVICE of ROD by constituents. Once implemented, the service be FREE to those who sign up. The Office has secured a bid for less than \$10,000. The request seems to be bogged down in the cumbersome county RFP process.



Ottawa County has offered Property Fraud Alert – a free service- to constituents for several years.

The Cost of Managing Elections:



The cost of running elections continues to increase exponentially.

Everything from programming to shipping costs are going up and quickly. In 2020, working with Allegan County Facilities, Clerk Genetski fought back against the shipping costs by securing a van and picking up ballots and precinct kits from the printer in Tecumseh. Wearing old clothes, the Clerk and a member of the county facilities team loaded the print jobs into the van for delivery to Allegan. These trips saved county taxpayers several thousand dollars in shipping

costs for each trek.

In anticipation of the big election year 2022 will be, the Clerk intends to make several trips in the county van again this year.

(Continued - Ongoing projects, outstanding issues, and concerns for the future...)

Staffing & the Circuit Court Records Division: With the increase in the annual number of court cases such that the Supreme Court Administrative Office seems to have recommended the state add another Circuit Court Judge to the 48th Circuit Court Bench, the Clerk's Circuit Court Records Division will need more staff – as least 2 FTE's, maybe 3. If not for COVID 19 and office space, issues, a request for another Circuit Court Deputy Clerk would have been made 2 years ago, simply to keep with caseloads. A request for one FTE specifically to enter warrants into the Law Enforcement Information Network is at this moment at Human Resources.



One of the three vaults at the Courthouse that house the files for cases in the 48th Circuit Court. Until recently there were four, one of the rooms was lost to make room for the new entrance. The files are maintained by the Circuit Court Records Division of the County Clerk's Office.

Staff Turnover: During 2021, one Office alone lost 58 years of experience due to the terminal illness of one employee and the retirement of another. Attempting to fill these positions with similar people is extremely difficult. For many of the County's longtime hourly employees, their skill sets and institutional knowledge make them close to irreplaceable. It is extremely important that the county do a better job to recognize this and do its best to make these individuals feel appreciated and respected.



Chief Deputy Register Patty Fales retired at the end of 2021. She took with her 37 years of experience and knowledge of ROD and land transfers.



Phil Anglin

I had to get a couple warranty deeds a few weeks ago, it took me about 30 seconds and \$2.50 to get one from Allegan County, to get one from [redacted] County I had to use someone in the finance business as it wouldn't allow me to access it as an individual.

A She had us write down ordained Christian minister. That is OK with you correct?

Officiant

You guys are AWESOME ! Yes I confirmed in person with Sue.



Brad Boone

Bob Genetski Thank you you sir... your office staff is awesome by the way!!

Allegan County Clerk's Office,

While we know you were just doing your job on election day, we wanted to thank you for doing it just the same. You know full well that the day can be very stressful, but being met with smiles and kindness at the end of a day is such a gift. THANK YOU!

Martin Township

April 8, 2021

Mr. Bob Genetski, Register of Deeds

Dear Mr. Genetski,

I wanted to let you know how efficient and professional your staff are in the Deeds Office! I contacted your office via phone on March 31st to find out what I needed to do to place my son on the title of property that I own in your county. The lady who answered the phone (I did not record her name) was very helpful and quickly explained what I needed to do and the process to get it recorded. I followed her instructions and delivered the required paperwork to your office on the afternoon of April 2nd.

I am pleased to report that the paperwork that I submitted was dealt with immediately and was recorded with a time of 3:15 PM. I again did not get the lady's name who helped me – but she too was pleasant, helpful and very professional!

The original document was returned to me via US Mail, and it arrived today. I find it refreshing that in these times where people are

bashing government employees that there are still shining examples in your office!

Congratulations and thank you and your office for your outstanding service!

Warm regards,

Greg Alexander

I truly enjoyed working on the election.

Your training was fantastic; I don't think there is much that could be done to improve on it.

My only fear was that once I got to the polls, I felt I had absolutely no idea what I was doing.

The training there for that day, combined with your overall training apparently worked, as I don't think I screwed anything up.

Keep up the good work, and perhaps I'll see you at the next training session (closer to Leighton Township would be nice).

Sincerely,

Lou LeTourneau



Steffanie Connelly VI...

Active 28m ago

Nice to speak with you. I appreciate your response to the Township meeting. One of the many topics you discussed was copying DD214 documents for veterans.

I will plan to stop by your offices during the week of the meeting.

Dick

12:16 PM

Just had excellent customer service from Linda Brower on getting a copy of our deed. Thought you'd like to know!

I learned so much that morning, mainly because you were good in explaining and presenting. Finally, that January letter was a class act, Bob. It's just one more indication of your dedication to us, the election inspectors, and also to the county office you hold and the citizens of Allegan County in general, regardless of party affiliation, which is as it should be, but so rarely is. In saying this, it not only underlines the honor I have in being a part of the three 2020 elections in Casso Township, but it encourages

Hi Bob,
God Bless You!
Deacon Russ

I'm so glad you are still there working for the people of Allegan County. I have always had so much respect for you and your dedication to my home state. Stay safe!
Nancy

