

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

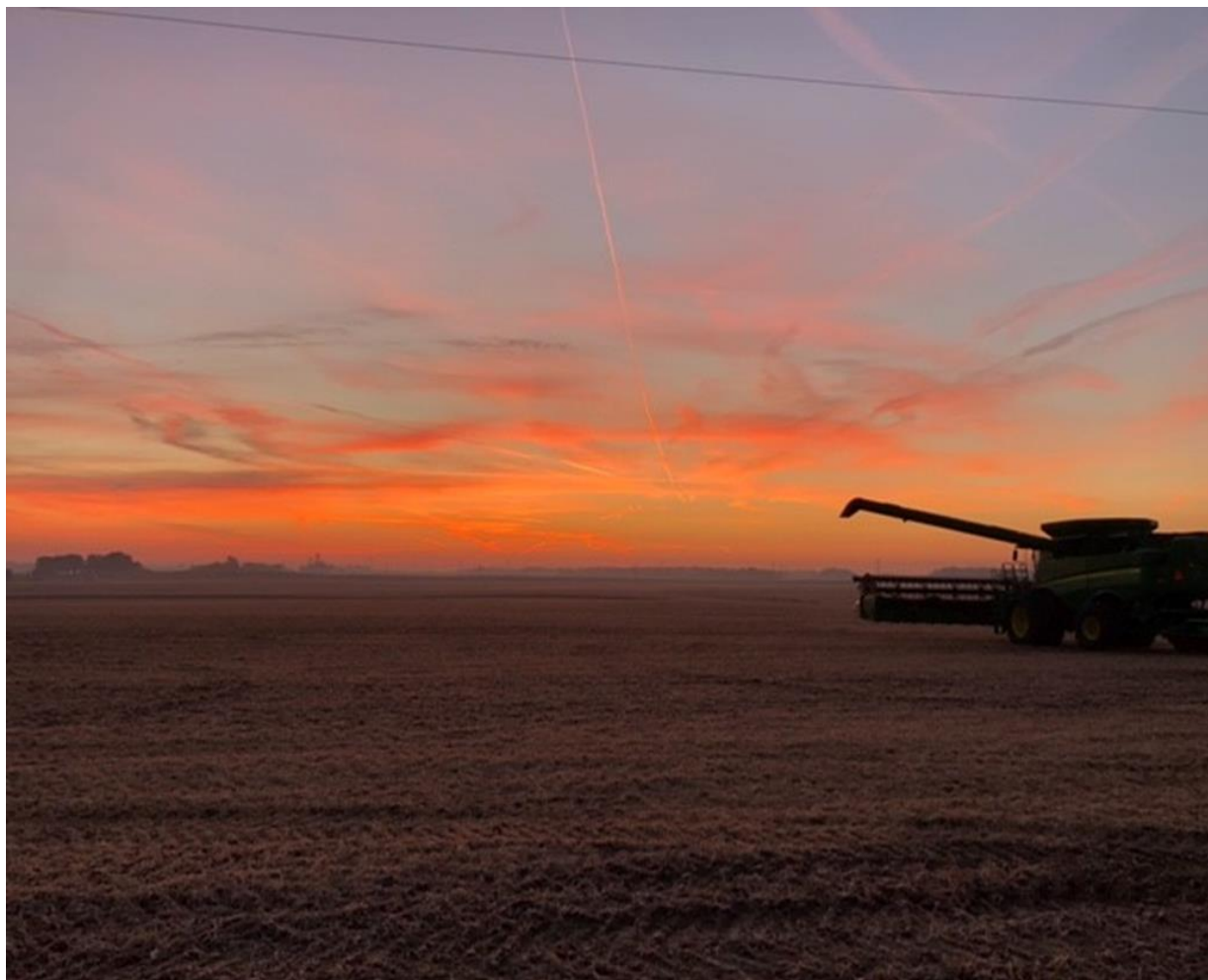
FROM

BOB GENETSKI

ALLEGAN COUNTY CLERK AND REGISTER OF DEEDS

TO THE

TAXPAYERS of ALLEGAN COUNTY



Harvest at dawn in Fillmore Township

Monday, March 27, 2023

Dear Allegan County Taxpayers-

On behalf of Chief Deputy Clerk Jackie Porter and Chief Deputy Register Amy Nelson as well as the deputy clerks and deputy registers that comprise the best customer service team in West Michigan, it is my pleasure to present to you the 2022 ANNUAL REPORT for the two offices and four divisions under my purview.

The year saw a great many accomplishments in working with our partners throughout Allegan County. The Elections Division worked with local jurisdictions adding three new voting precincts to accommodate the population increases of the 2020 census. This resulted in my office conducting more coordination than ever between local clerks, the Bureau of Elections, and our voters. In that effort, we trained and certified a record 683 election inspectors. The division oversaw 3 elections and one recount during 2022.

While the Vital Records Division saw a slight decline in overall transactions of 381 from 2021's total, the deputy clerks in that office were quite busy with the highest number of homebirths recorded in decades and an increase in applications to become a Notary.

Throughout 2022, the Circuit Court Records area of the Clerk's Office processed 454 applications for Personal Protection Orders. At the same time, the division disbursed \$250,319.73 to victims of crimes.

In the Register of Deeds Office, we were excited to roll out our new *Property Fraud Alert* service. This long awaited service will allow our constituents to receive an alert for free if someone should attempt to commit title theft or property fraud with a land record. The office also saw signs of the previously red-hot West Michigan real estate market cooling off as the overall number of land related documents declined for the first time in four years. At the same time, the amount of State Real Estate Transfer Tax collected in 2022 rose from \$7.3 million to \$7.41 million dollars. This number, though a record, represents the smallest increase in real estate transfer tax collected in over a decade.

I hope you find the information in the *ANNUAL REPORT* valuable. While on the surface the document may seem like simply a lot of numbers, those numbers are a testament to the customer service and professionalism of the deputy clerks and deputy registers who serve the taxpayers of Allegan County every day.

Sincerely,



bgenetski@allegancounty.org (269) 673-0291
Bob Genetski, Allegan County Clerk – Register of Deeds



Table of Contents Contents	Pages
Letter to Taxpayers	2
Table of Contents	3
Office of the County Clerk Elections Division	4-8
Vital Records Division	9-15
Circuit Court Records Division	16-20
Office of the Register of Deeds	21-28
Other Duties of the Clerk	29
Upcoming and Ongoing Projects, Issues and Challenges	30

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

The Allegan County Courthouse
113 Chestnut Street
Allegan, MI 49010

Deputy Clerks and Registers can be reached by phone at:

Vital Records	(269) 673-0450
Elections	(269) 673-0290
Circuit Court Records	(269) 673-0300
Register of Deeds	(269) 673-0390



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

The Clerk's Office is comprised of three divisions: Elections, Vital Records, and Circuit Court records.

ELECTIONS

Over 57,000 Allegan County residents cast ballots during the Gubernatorial Election in November 2022. High turnout and numerous changes to election law pushed the county's Elections Division into constant problem solving mode all year. In particular, the new maps of state house, state senate and congressional districts radically changed the district lines voters had lived with for ten years as a result of Proposal 2 of 2018. The many changes and challenges led the County Clerk's Office to collaborate with local clerks to improve and strengthen training



Clerk Genetski swears in Ganges Township Clerk Robin Phelps at Ganges Township Hall.

for election inspectors.

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 throughout the county office, state agencies, other county clerks (across Michigan and throughout the U.S.), 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 Finance and educational needs of candidates, and serving the election needs of Allegan County voters.

Elections Division

At a glance:

Chief Deputy Clerk:
Jackie Porter

FTE's: 1

Coordinating Elections for:

49 "In-County" Precincts

10 "In-County" School Districts

% of voter turnout in 2022:

11.84% in the May 3rd Special Election (15 jurisdictions)

30.59% August 2nd Primary Election

59.29% November 8th General Election

Turnout in Raw Number of voters:

May 3rd – 2,521 voters (21,293 registered)

August 2nd -29,417 (96,166 registered)

November 8th – 57,647 voters (97,235 registered)

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 Elections 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 from voter rolls those voters from Allegan County who move across state lines. Maintaining the integrity of the QVF is essential to protecting the security of the vote.

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 2022, the Clerk's Office oversaw and accepted campaign filings from 86 candidates and 3 ballot initiative groups while accepting candidate filings from "write in" candidates for school board positions as well.



Clerk Genetski congratulates the Honorable Tim Bala on his service. Bala was first elected Mayor of Wayland in 2008 and served through 2022.

ELECTIONS AND THE PUBLIC 2022 Elections

The May 3rd Election

The May 3rd Special Election affected 15 jurisdictions throughout the county. The school districts of Allegan, Delton- Kellogg, Hudsonville and Zeeland had proposals on the ballot while the City of Fennville had a 4 mill public safety initiative. Casco, Fillmore, and Trowbridge Townships ran ballot questions as well. Of eligible voters, 11.84% cast a ballot.

May 3 election: What passed, failed in West Michigan

by News Channel 3 | May 3rd 2022, 9:13 PM EDT



The Allegan Public Schools Bond Proposals were successful on May 4th, and while the City of Fennville's Public Safety initiative received a majority of votes, it did not earn the percentage needed to pass per the city charter.

(Elections Division – continued)

The August 2nd State Primary Election

The 24 townships and nine cities in Allegan County were very active in the August Primary. The ballot was long and complex, forcing clerks and election inspectors to put in overtime in preparation to help voters. Electors decided partisan nominees for federal, state, county and local office as well as a county proposal.

Of the eligible 96,166 voters, 30.59% (or 29,417) cast ballots in August.

Voters in Saugatuck Township, the City of Saugatuck & the City of the Village of Douglas saw a renewal on their ballots for the Interurban. Requests from the City of Holland, South Haven, and the townships of: Allegan, Cheshire, Dorr, Ganges, Gun Plain, Hopkins, Laketown, Lee, Martin, Overisel, Valley and Watson were all decided by the electorate on the 2nd. Fennville, Gobles, and Wayland Union public schools had requests as did the Fennville District Library.

The November 8th General Election

There was no shortage of decisions for voters to make on the November ballot.

In addition to deciding the race for governor, the November Election determined Allegan County's new U.S. Congressman-Bill Huizenga (R – Zeeland) in the newly created 4th Congressional District. Partisan nominees also were elected to the three new State Senate seats that represent parts of the county and the six State House seats that the county was carved up into.

Five candidates won seats on County Board of Commissioners, and several partial terms for township offices were filled.

On the non-partisan section of the ballot, two Justices were elected to the State Supreme Court on that ballot. Voters chose three judges for seats on the State Court of Appeals and one each for the 48th Circuit Court and for Holland's 58th District Court. Lake Michigan College and Grand Rapids Community College elected members to their Boards of Trustees.

The screenshot shows a news article from FOX 17 West Michigan. The article title is "Poll workers in Wayland train and prep for upcoming midterm election". The sub-headline reads: "State law only requires two hours of training for election inspectors, but these workers underwent 8-hours on Thursday". Below the text is a photograph of a man, Clerk Genetski, holding a ballot. To the right of the photo is a sidebar titled "Election 2022" with a list of links: "ELECTION RESULTS: See races across West Michigan", "Register to vote", "Find your polling place", "Apply for an absentee ballot", and "View your sample ballot".

Clerk Genetski conducted trainings in all four corners of the county and many points in between. Trainings were offered in the mornings, afternoons, evenings and on weekends to accommodate the all-time record of 683 election inspectors who were certified in 2022.

(Elections Division – continued)

Citizens throughout the county voted for mayor, city council as well as village trustee and village clerk.

Three state proposals were decided as well as local ones for: the townships of Cheshire, Laketown, Otsego (3 renewal requests), Saugatuck (2), and one for the Village of Hopkins and the cities of Fennville & Holland. Voters selected school board members for the districts of Allegan, Bloomingdale, Caledonia, Delton-Kellogg, Fennville, Glenn, Gobles, Hamilton, Holland, Hopkins, Hudsonville, Martin, Otsego, Plainwell, Saugatuck, South Haven, Thornapple-Kellogg, Wayland, and Zeeland.

There were numerous school proposals decided during the General Election while the Allegan District Library Board members were on the ballot as well.

Voters in the Village of Hopkins voted 72% to 27% to revise the Village Charter and elected a commission to oversee that duty as well.

The Statewide Recount in December

Shortly after the results of the General Election were certified by the State Board of Canvassers, an election integrity group successfully filed a petition to recount Proposal questions 2 & 3 in

View from the balcony above Griswold Auditorium during the statewide recount of two proposals. The conclusion showed the election night results to be extremely accurate. State officials praised the Allegan County Elections Division for how well the event was conducted.



jurisdictions statewide. The recount included four Allegan County precincts and their Absent Voter Counting Boards.

The State Bureau of Elections requested that Allegan County host the hand count for the Ottawa, Berrien, and Barry County jurisdictions involved as well. In December, the City of Allegan's Griswold Auditorium was packed with clerks, counters (performing the hand count of the ballots), state officials, county boards of

canvassers, election integrity advocates, the media and curiosity seekers.

Local elections teams from Allegan County had a lot to be proud of when the hand count was complete. Over 7,200 ballots were involved, and of all those votes, one additional "yes vote" was added to the totals (as the voter did not fill in the oval dark enough to be read by the tabulator). This result speaks incredibly well of the work our local clerks and inspectors do.

(Elections Division – continued)

Training Election Inspectors

as to encourage and thank me.
Second, I attended one of your sessions in All-
began and learned so much! I would love to at-
tend more sessions regarding any election topic
that would help us be more knowledgeable and con-
fident during the voting and vote-counting process.
I learned so much that morning, mainly because
you were good in explaining and presenting.



Recognizing the challenges of numerous recent changes in Election Law, increased scrutiny of processes in the precincts, and security concerns, the Elections Division worked hard to enhance Election Inspector Trainings.

In 2022, the Clerk's Office offered 5 different specialized classes (including an 8 hour one) for Inspectors throughout Allegan County.

Working with our local clerks, Bob Genetski personally trained and certified a record 683 election workers.



The Vital Records Division

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 receives applications for Concealed Pistol Licenses (CPL’s), the recording of home births, notary public applications, small business licenses (DBA’s) and provides the free service of registering papers of honorable military discharge.

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, friendly deputy clerks are happy to answer any questions they can over the phone at (269) 673-0450. Application forms for many of our services can be found online at:

<https://www.allegancounty.org/departments/county-clerk/vital-records>

Division Overview

The hard working deputy clerks recorded 4,686 vital documents throughout 2022 – the third highest number of the last six years. The overall amount of transactions declined by 381 from the year 2021. The biggest reason for the overall decline was a reduction in the number of Concealed Pistol Licenses. Even so, the year saw a record number of Allegan County home births at 42. Notary applications also saw an increase from numbers in 2021 as they grew from 216 to 235.

For the fourteenth year in a row, Concealed Pistol License Applications accounted for more of the transactions in Vital Records than any other- amassing 2,227 in 2022. There were 986 deaths recorded in Allegan County - the highest number on record. Marriage Licenses came in as the 3rd most popular record created at 731. At 446, DBA’s registered ranked fourth among all categories in 2022. The office accepted 235 Notary Public applications while there were 42 home births and 19 DD 214’s registered.

Vital Records Quick Facts

Chief Deputy Clerk: Jackie Porter

FTE’s: 1.8

Earliest Records on File:

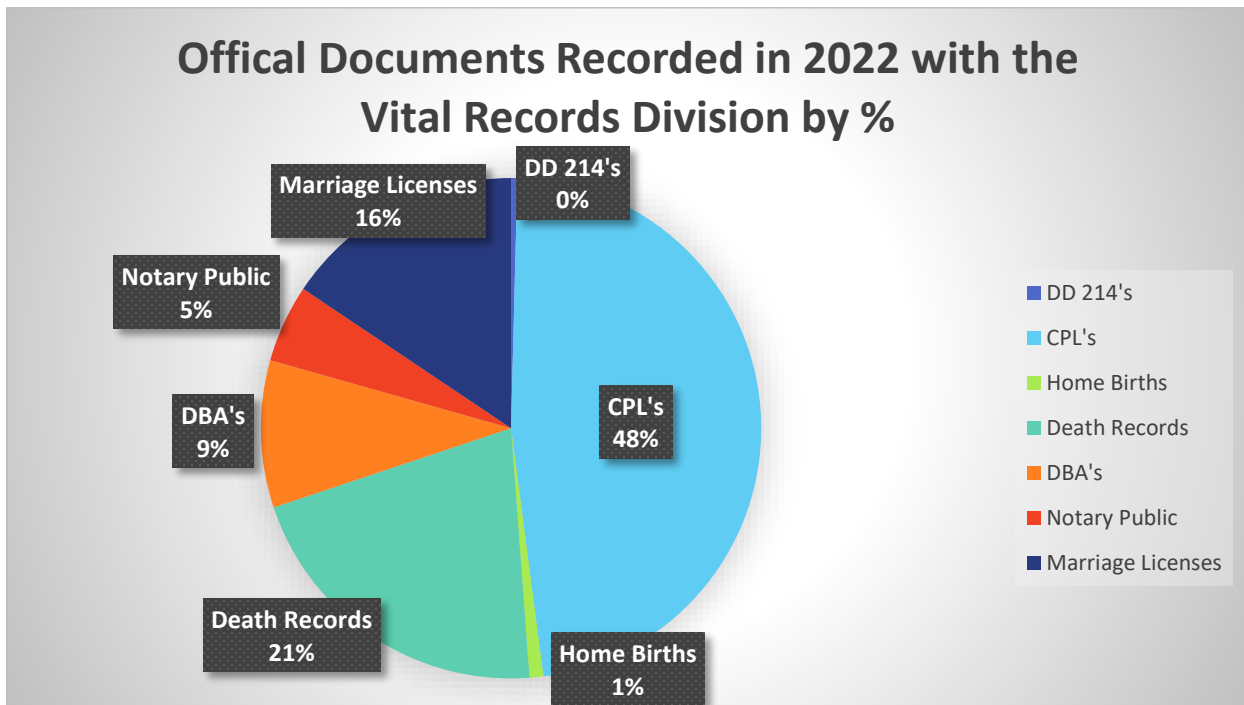
December 17th, 1835 First Marriage License

June 25th, 1836 Circuit Court Records

January 24th, 1867 First Death Record (William Collman of Cheshire, died at one year, one month and 5 days. Cause of death: “Too Powerful Medicine”)

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Transactions in Vital Records	4,210	4,356	4,254	5,129	5,067	4,686

(Vital Records Division – continued)



Concealed Pistol License Applications represented 48% of the total service requests in 2022 with 2,227. The 986 death certificates comprised 21% of all vital records for the year. At 16%, there were 731 marriage licenses filed, followed by the 446 DBA's (small business licenses) or 9% of all transactions. The 235 notary applications, 42 home births and 19 DD 214's recorded served as 5%, 1% and less than 1% of the total respectively.

Monies Collected by Vital Records

In 2022, the Vital Records Division took \$245,510.20 in fees for services at the following rates:

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 Licenses, Death Certificates, and Birth Certificates) – Fee of \$10 (first copy) and \$4 for each subsequent copy

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

(Vital Records Division – continued)

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 Vital Records at the Courthouse with their parents for physical verification. Instead, the midwife performs the verification and files the birth record directly with the state. When the 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.

The 42 births occurring in Allegan County in 2022 is the largest number since 2009.

Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Births Recorded	19	12	27	25	30	29	35	22	32	39	42

Geography of Babies Born at Home in Allegan County for 2022:

Salem Township had more home births than any other jurisdiction at 4.

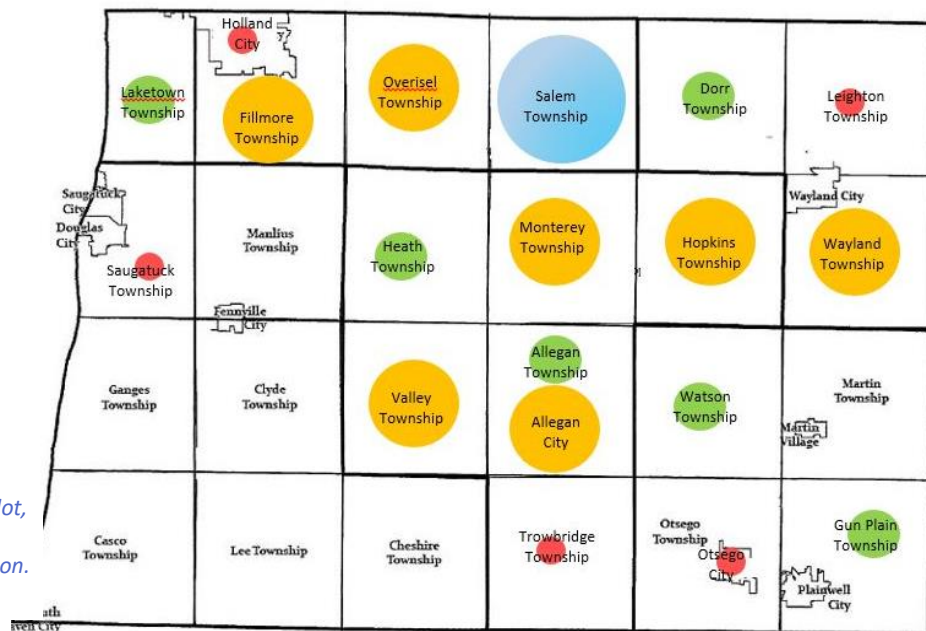
Fillmore, Overisel, Monterey, Wayland, Valley, Hopkins Townships and Allegan City had 3 home births each.

Laketown, Dorr, Allegan, Watson and Gun Plain Township each had 2 recorded.

The cities of Holland and Otsego and the townships of: Heath, Leighton, Saugatuck, & Trowbridge all recorded 1 home birth each.

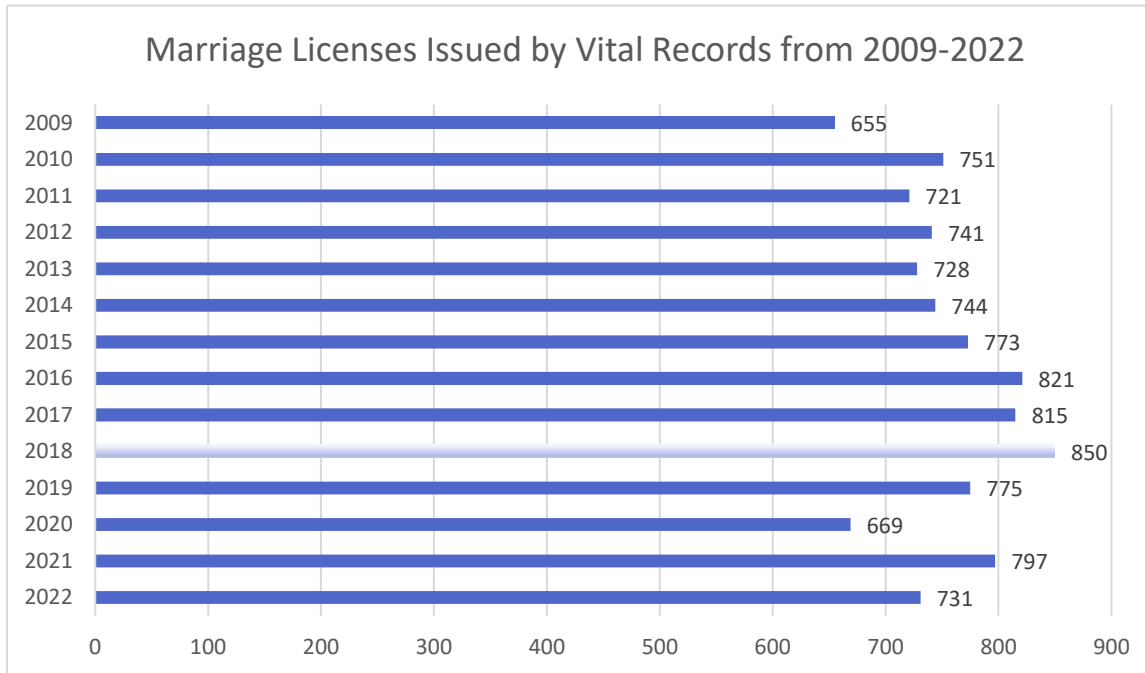


In this map, the larger the dot, the greater the number of homebirths in that jurisdiction.



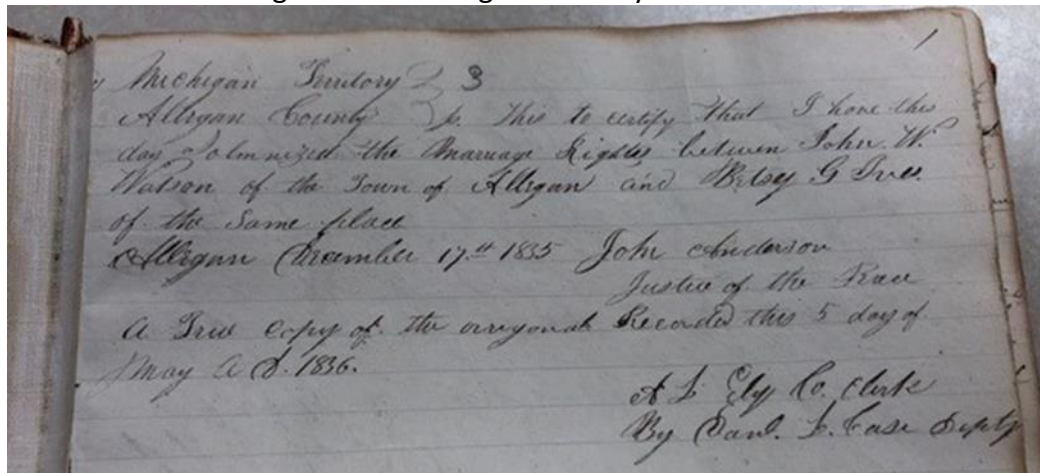
(Vital Records Division – continued)

Trends in Marriage Licenses



There were 731 couples who found love and got married in Allegan County during 2022. That number was down by 68 from 2021. Since 2009, the single year high of marriage licenses is 850 in 2018 while the low was 655 attained in 2009.

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.”



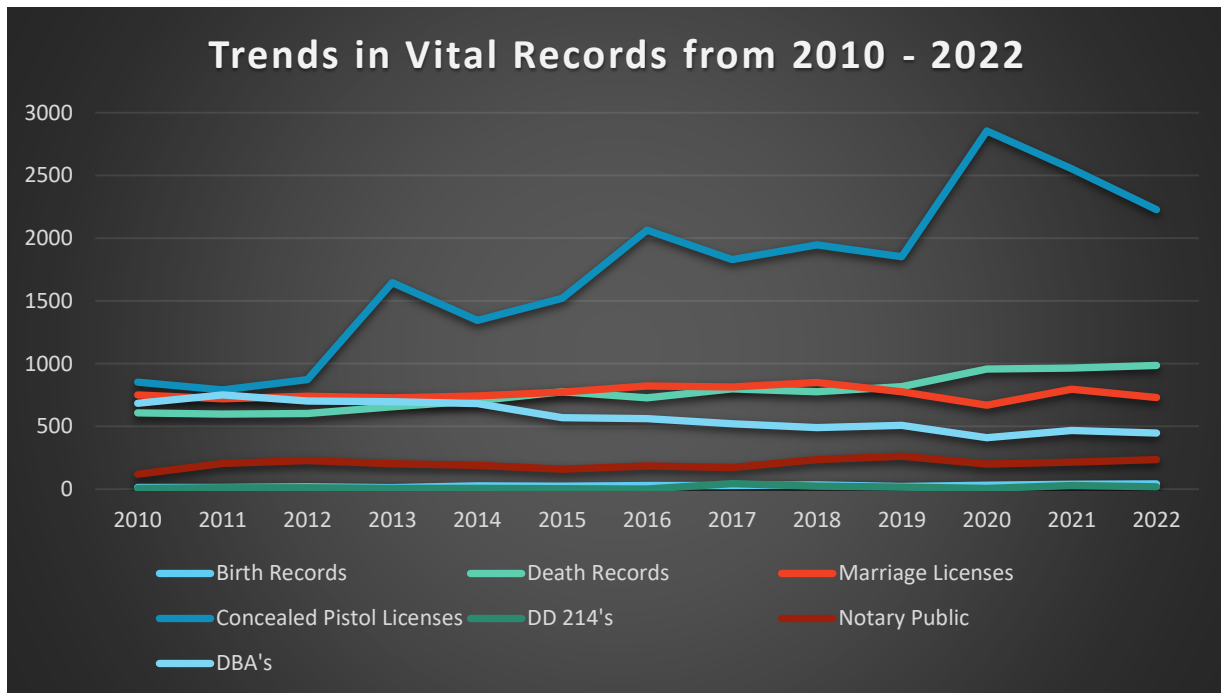
The marriage of John W. Watson of Allegan to Betsy Ives of Allegan occurred on December 17th, 1835 and was solemnized by Justice of the Peace John Anderson. The certificate was recorded in May 1836 with County Clerk A. L. Ely.

(Vital Records Division – continued)

Requests of the Vital Records Division over the last 13 years tell 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 more than tripled from 2010 when there were 853 to the year 2020 when there were 2,855.

Trends in Marriage Licenses range from the 850 issued in 2018 to the low of 669 in 2020.

Notary Public Applications from 2010 to 2022 varied from a low of 119 at the beginning of the period to the peak in 2019 of 262 accruing 235 in 2022.



The trend in home births in Allegan County is a gradual but upward trend. From a low of 13 in 2010, those numbers have more than tripled to 42 in 2022.

The number of deaths recorded in Allegan County have increased from a 2011 low of 598 to the 986 in 2022.

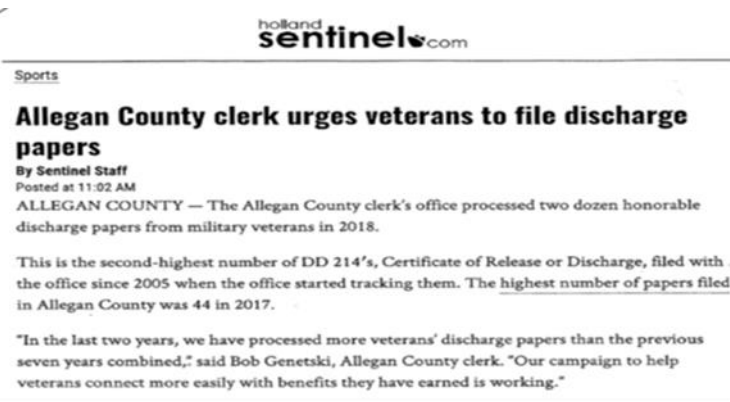
After hitting a high of 751 in 2011, the number of people Doing Business under an Assumed name (DBA's) has seen a gradual decline in applications during the 13 year time period. Their number bottomed out at 410 during 2020.

Veterans recording DD 214's has seen a resurgence under Clerk Genetski. Up from a low of 1 recorded in 2016 (the year before he was seated), there were 44 processed in 2017 and with the exception of COVID 19's affecting 2020, every year has been in double digits.

(Vital Records Division – continued)

Trends in Processing 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 service members return to civilian life, the military issues 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 apply for 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 the 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 all of their needs for the rest of their lives. As well, all of the information on the DD 214 (including whether the document is on file with the clerk) is non-public.

Since Clerk Genetski took office in 2017, the number of DD 214's registered has been in double digits every year but one. In 2022, the 19 DD 214's registered represent the 4th highest number since 2004.

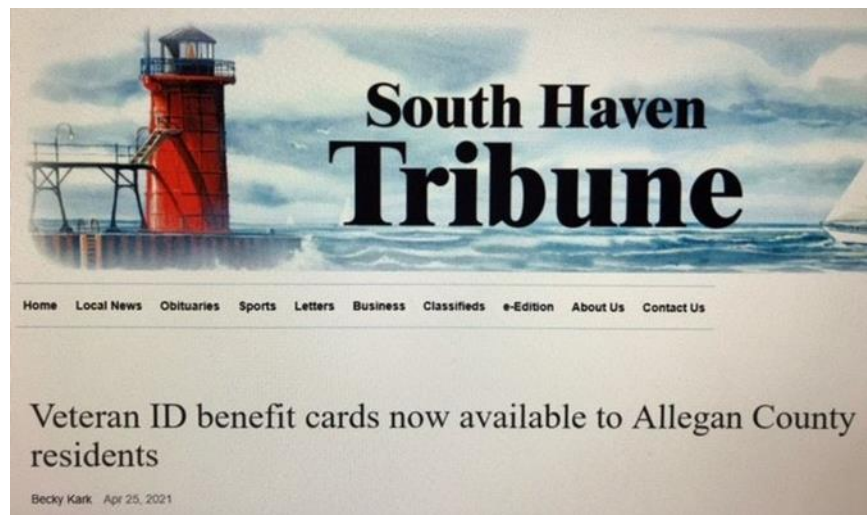
YEAR	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number Filed	10	5	7	4	1	44	24	16	6	28	19

(Vital Records Division – continued)

The Allegan County Veterans ID Card A Benefit for our Veterans

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.

The office has presented 67 Veterans ID Cards since the benefit was first rolled out. 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.

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 court system. The talented deputy clerks work hard to make any experience at our service window as seamless and pleasant as possible by providing information regarding procedures, access to court related resources, Friend of the Court and the Legal Assistance Center as well as by providing access to public court records.

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 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: 7

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 Fund, fines, state minimum costs, filing fees, motion fees, jury trail fees, garnishment & subpoena fees. **In 2022, the Circuit Court Clerk’s office collected approximately 1 million dollars.**

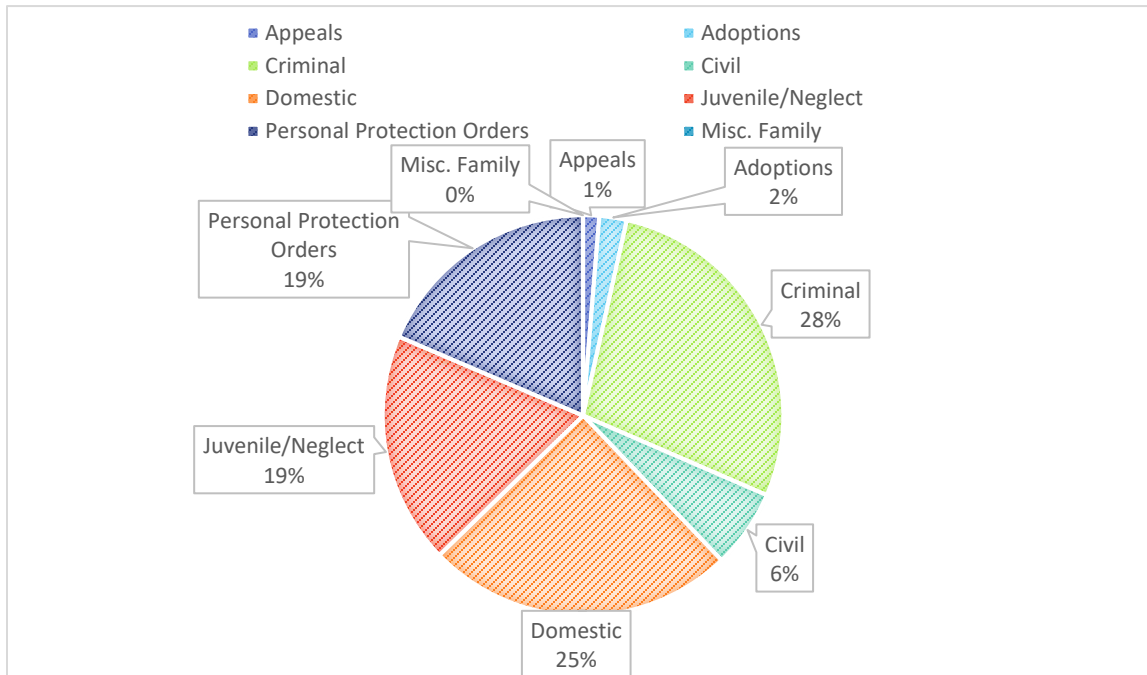
The Division serves as a pass through entity whereby restitution payments are collected and sent to victims of crimes.

The Division is also responsible for processing adoptions.

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

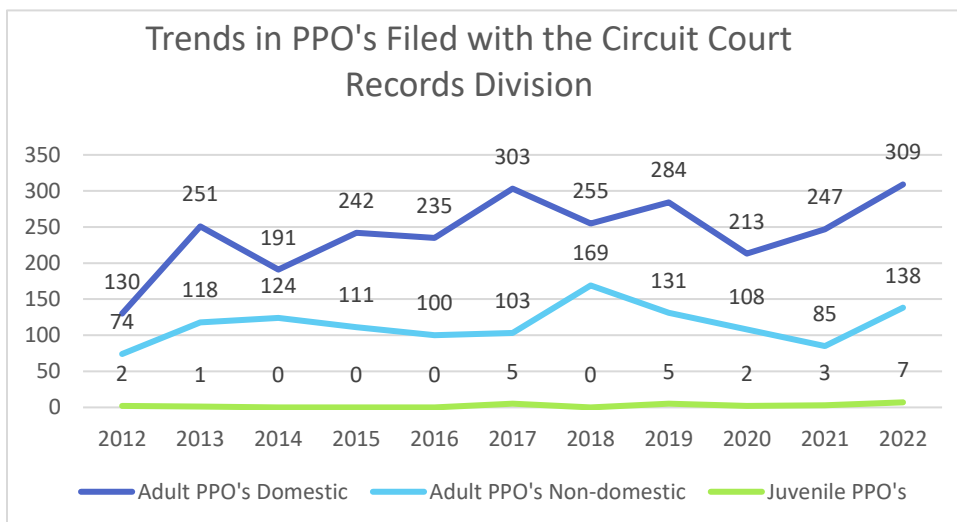
(Circuit Court Records Division- continued)

Overview of the 2,447 New Cases Filed in the Circuit Court in 2022



Appeals: 32 Adoptions: 54 Criminal: 685 Civil: 155 Domestic: 609
 Juvenile/Neglect: 458 Personal Protection Orders: 454 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. There were 444 filed with the office during 2022. All three categories of PPO increase from the year before. Adult PPO's were

up from 247 to 309. Adult Non-domestic were up to 138 from the 85 in 2021. Perhaps most concerning is that Juvenile PPO's at 7 are at an 11 year high.

(Circuit Court Records Division- continued)

Adoptions

The table shows the 11 year trend in adoptions in Allegan County.

YEAR	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Adoptions	54	56	42	74	36	45	46	68	55	84	121

The adoption process in Allegan County begins in the Circuit Court Records Office. Deputy clerks work with petitioning parents, Family Court, adoption 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 54 adoptions in 2022.



The heartwarming National Adoption Day Ceremony occurs in Judge Buck's Courtroom once a year.

A ten year trend in Family Court Filings other than Adoptions in the Circuit Court Records Division.

Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Juvenile/Neglect Cases	458	406	303	349	387	474	502	667	530	732

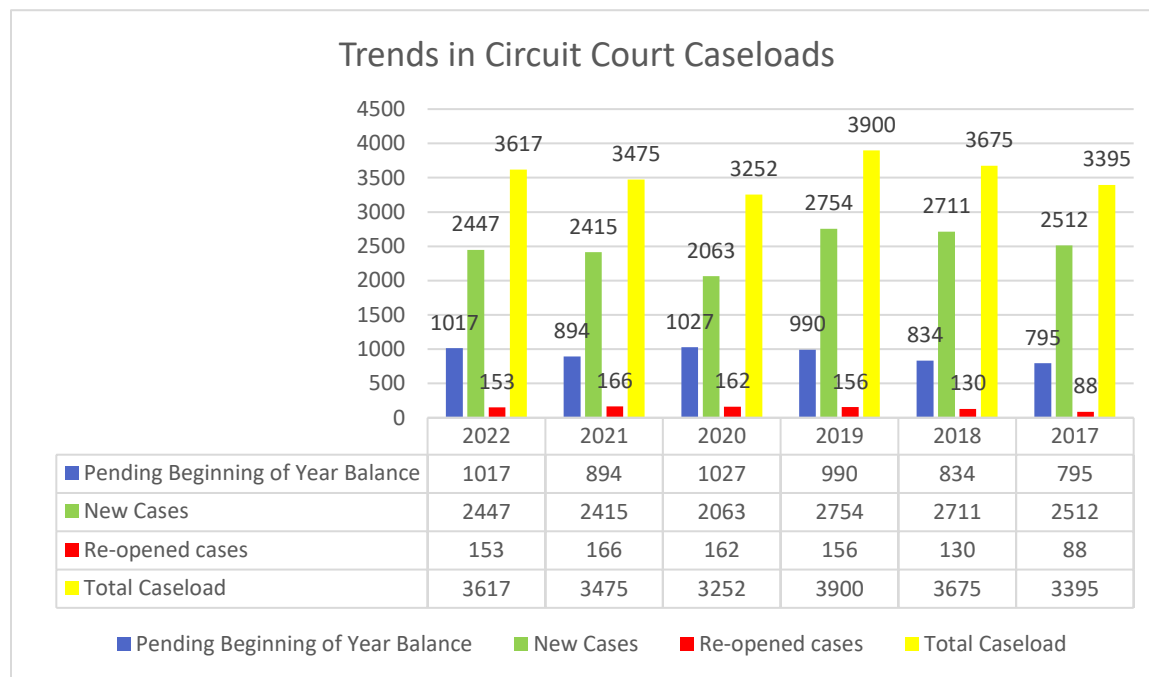
(Circuit Court Records Division- continued)

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.



“COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COURT AND THE CLERK’S OFFICE IS VITAL AND I AM PLEASED WITH THE HIGH LEVEL OF COOPERATION HERE IN ALLEGAN COUNTY. DUE TO OUR EVER INCREASING CASELOAD THIS COOPERATION HAS BECOME EVEN MORE VITAL. MR. GENETSKI’S TEAM WORKS VERY WELL WITH COURT STAFF. THEY DON’T JUST DO THEIR JOBS; THEY ARE KIND, COURTEOUS AND HELPFUL TO OUR CLIENTS.”

The Honorable Roberts Kengis, Chief Judge of the 48th Circuit Court

(Circuit Court Records Division- continued)

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.

During 2022, the Circuit Court Records Division received \$220,473.54 for Adult Cases and disbursed \$290,142.54 to crime victims. Collections from juveniles during the same period amounted to \$24,109.41, and \$22,305.18 was paid out to victims of crime.

Trends in the Circuit Court Records Division’s collection of fines and fees and distribution to victims of crimes.

Adult Monies	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Beginning Balance:	\$2,337.46	\$29,515.73	\$51,277.27	\$50,643.72	\$69,669.01
Collections:	\$186,124.09	\$210,500.12	\$236,431.88	\$234,111.34	\$220,473.54
Total:	\$188,461.55	\$240,016.45	\$241,559.15	\$284,755.06	\$290,142.55
Disbursed to Victims:	\$185,945.82	\$188,739.18	\$237,369.06	\$216,086.05	\$228,013.90

Juvenile Monies	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Beginning Balance:	\$2,337.46	\$16,718.87	\$7,539.39	\$7,217.73	\$6,188.96
Collections:	\$24,125.67	\$15,474.47	\$14,848.05	\$17,690.50	\$24,109.41
Total:	\$31,854.74	\$32,193.43	\$22,387.44	\$24,908.23	\$30,298.37
Disbursed to Victims:	\$15,135.87	\$24,654.96	\$15,168.71	\$19,409.27	\$22,305.18



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.

In 2022, the Register’s Office broke a record for the amount of money taken in for the third year in a row even though recordings decreased from the all-time high of 31,015 in 2021.

The year marked the third full year of the County’s new records system that 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.

Finally, in 2022- the office rolled out the new *Property Fraud Alert* system. Available for free for anyone who owns property in Allegan County, subscribers can sign up to receive a phone call or email whenever a recording is made at the Register’s Office relative to their property.

Register of Deeds Office Quick Facts:

Chief Deputy Register: Amy Nelson

FTE’s: 4

**Money collected during 2022
(including State Transfer
Tax): \$9,949,217.50**

**Total number of recordings
in 2022: 24,019 (a 6,996
decrease from 2021)**

The screenshot shows the website for the Allegan County Register of Deeds, Bob Genetski. The header includes the county seal and the text "Allegan County Register of Deeds Bob Genetski" and "CountyFusion". The main content area is titled "Allegan County Register Online Services" and contains a welcome message: "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." Below this is a login section with a "Login as Public" button and a "Registered users please log in here." section with fields for "Username:" and "Password:". There are also links for "Forgot Password?" and "Need Help?". At the bottom, contact information for Bob Genetski, Register, is provided: "Allegan County Register of Deeds, 113 Chestnut Street, Allegan, MI 49010, Phone: 269-673-0390". The footer includes a small "Powered By KOFI FILE" logo and some technical notes.

(Register of Deeds Office - continued)

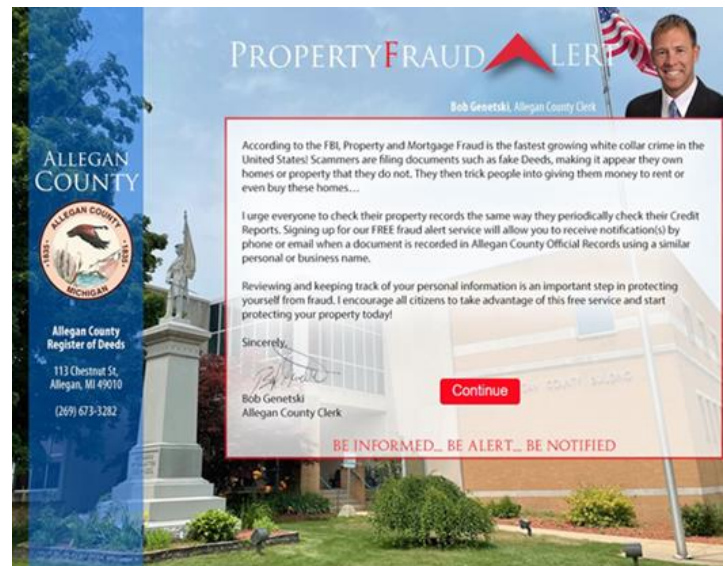
Property Fraud Alert

Allegan County residents worried about property fraud and title theft can now rest a little easier thanks to a new tool that will alert them if their homes or land become targets of potential title theft. *Property Fraud Alert* is an online subscription service offered to the public that allows residents to have their names monitored within the Register's Office in order to track possible fraudulent recordings that affect their property. With *Property Fraud Alert*, subscribers will be notified when the name they have submitted is used in any recording activities within the Register's Office. This had been the number one most requested service of the office from constituents.



Bob Genetski announced this new FREE SERVICE in October 2022.

Signing up for the *Property Fraud Alert* service is quick and easy. Homeowners will go to the website. From there, they should click on the link that reads Property Fraud Alert. Then, they will click on a link to review the terms of the service and agree to them. After that, on the secure website, they will input their first and last names as well as their option to receive the alert via email or phone call. Then, residents will receive a confirmation email that they are signed up. If the landholder does not have Internet access, he or she can call the office at (269) 673-0390 to sign up as well.



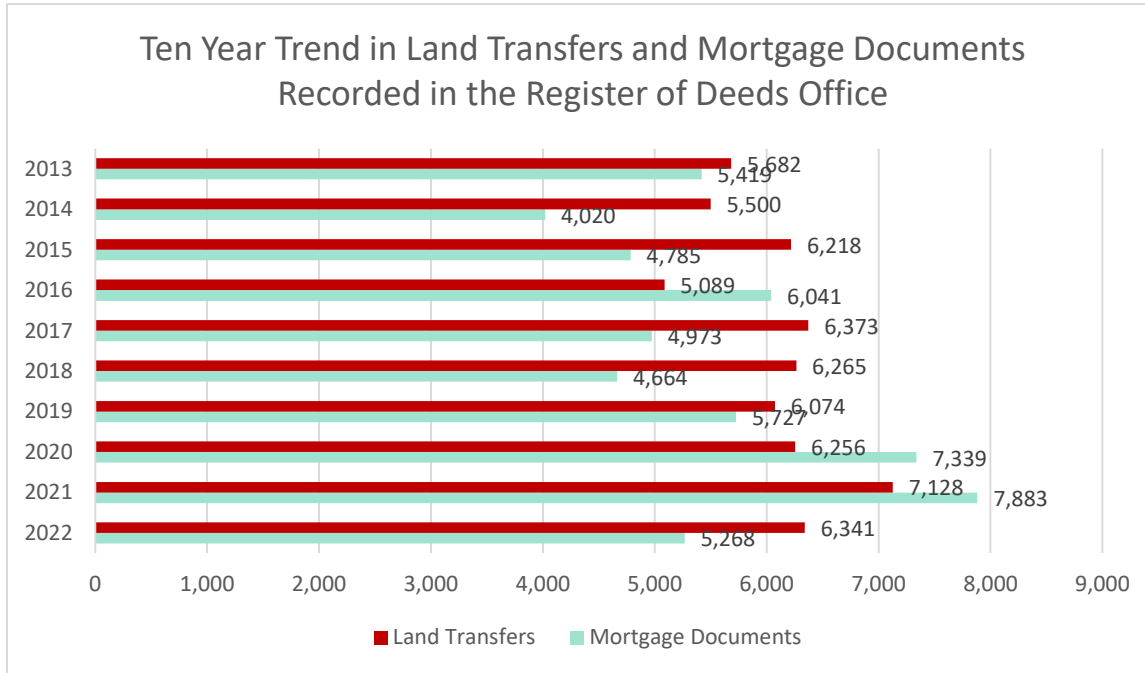
The web address is:

<https://www.allegancounty.org/departments/register-of-deeds>

(Register of Deeds Office - continued)

Document Recording

In 2022, there was a decline of 6,996 recordings logged at the Register of Deeds Office from the previous year. The all-time high of 30,015 recordings occurred in 2021 while 2022 saw 24,019.



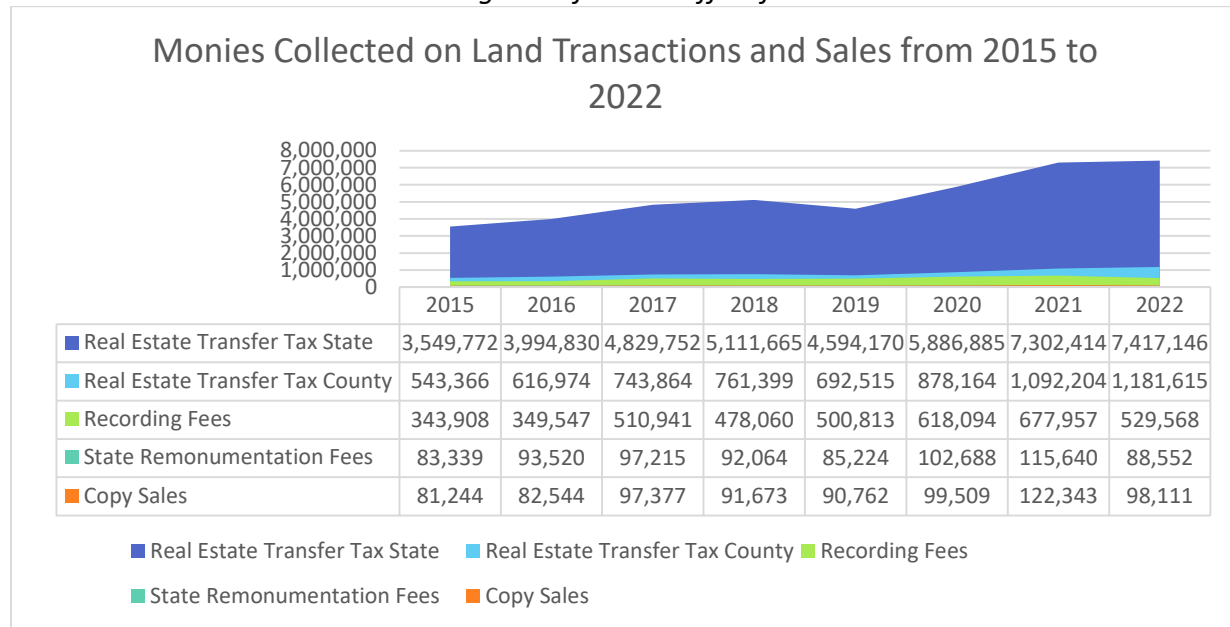
Trends in Recordings: The two most frequently recorded documents at the Register of Deeds Office are land transfers and mortgage documents. During 2022, the number of both categories declined from the year before as mortgage documents dropped from 7,883 to 5,268 and land transfers declined from 7,128 to 6,341- an indication that the formerly red hot West Michigan real estate market has cooled off.



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.

(Register of Deeds Office - continued)

Trends in Monies Collected in the Register of Deeds Office from 2015 to 2022



The chart above shows a breakdown of the total monies collected for transactions at ROD for 2015 to 2022. **The total amount realized during 2022 was \$9,949,217.50 – the largest number ever receipted to the 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 (\$111,257.19 for 2022).

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.

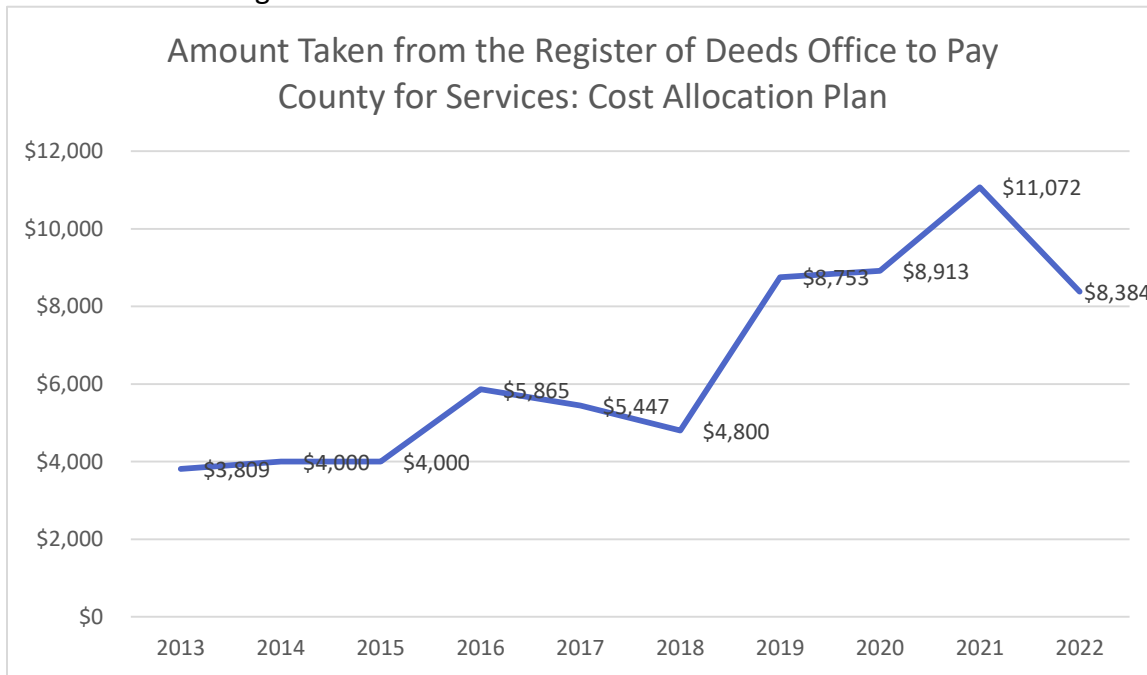
Copy Sales: collected on each document - \$1 per page and \$.20 per image (bulk sale to two title companies). This money goes to the County General Fund.

(Register of Deeds Office - continued)

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

Year	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Amount of Deposit	\$120,505	\$154,951	\$139,390	\$114,450	\$115,050	\$121,255	\$118,321	\$115,082

NINE YEAR TREND IN MONIES DEDUCTED FROM THE AUTOMATION FUND & SENT TO THE COUNTY COST ALLOCATION PLAN: Since 2013, \$65,043 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?

The screenshot shows the Google Reviews page for the Register of Deeds Office. The business name is "Register of Deeds" with a 5.0 star rating based on 1 review. The location is "County government office in Allegan, Michigan". The "REVIEWS" tab is selected, showing a "Google review summary" with a 5.0 rating. A review from Jon Lanning, dated "a month ago", is displayed with a 5-star rating and the text: "Very nice people! She even helped me out by mailing something to a township instead of my home." There is 1 like and a share icon below the review.

(Register of Deeds Office - continued)

Passport Services

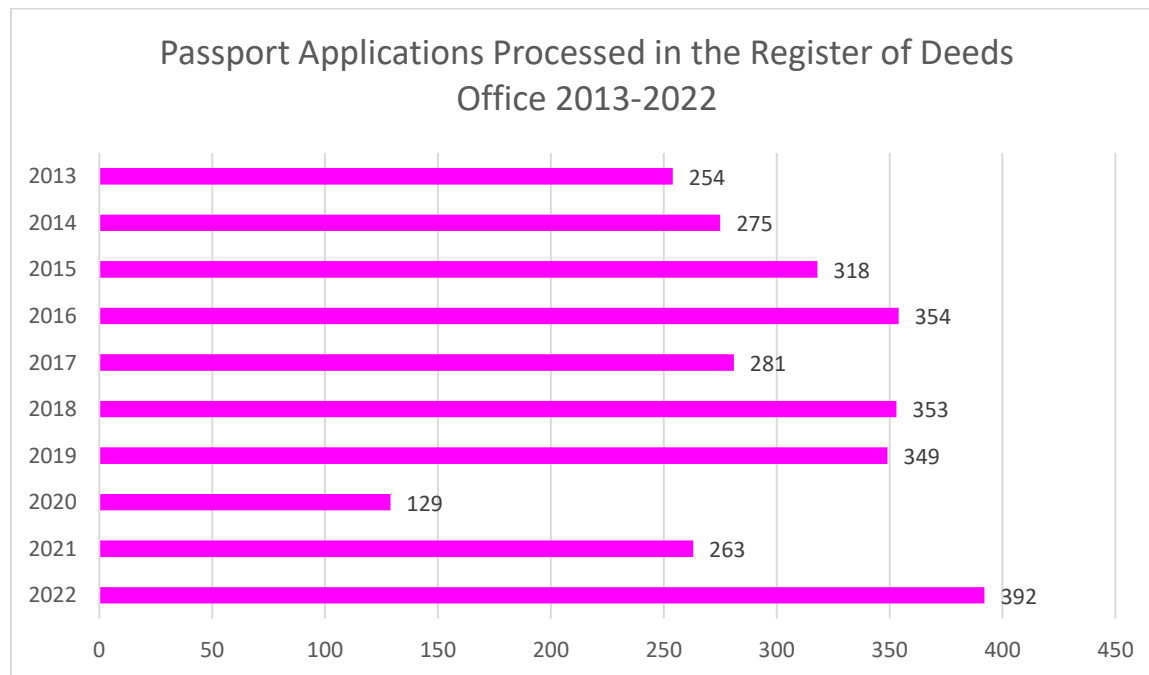
The Register of Deeds Office helped customers from Allegan County (and beyond) to obtain their United States Passports by accepting a **record 392 Passport Applications in 2022.**



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.



In 2022, the Register of Deeds Office set a record for the highest number of Passport Applications processed with 392. This is a 32.9% increase from the 263 in 2021 and more than 3 times the 10 year low of 129 set during 2020.

(Register of Deeds Office - continued)

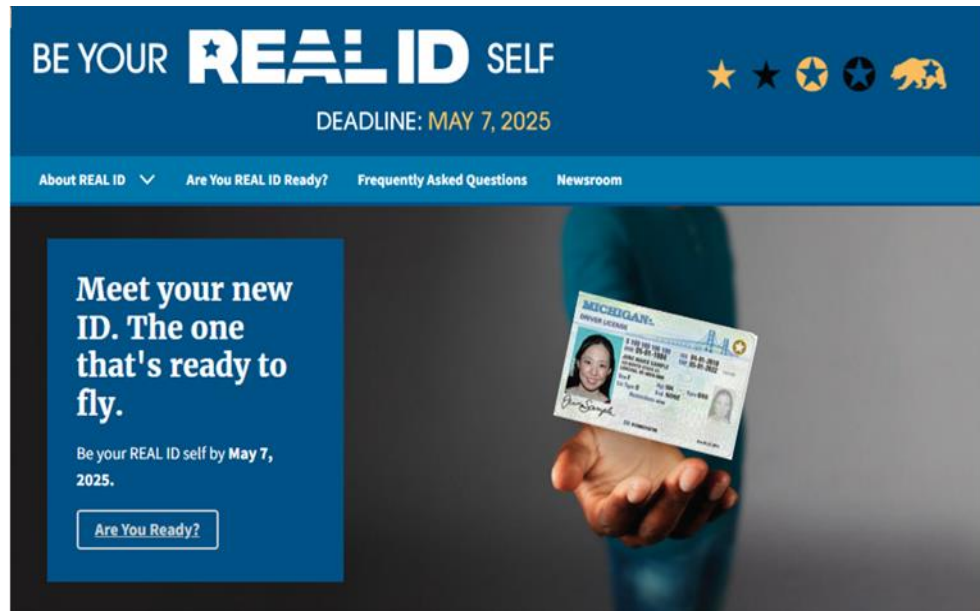
Revenues to the County General Fund from Passport Applications (at a rate of \$35 per application since April 2nd 2018; prior to the increase, the County earned \$25 per application):

YEAR	Applications	Revenue to Allegan County	Revenue at \$25/\$35
2022	392	\$13,720	\$13,720
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*

The Office also took in \$2,795 for taking passport photos during 2022, up by \$1,175 from 2021.

REAL ID UPDATE:

The updated deadline to obtain a REAL ID compliant Driver's License has been delayed until May 7, 2025. 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. Passport services are available from 8AM-4:00 PM Monday – Friday Unlike the competition, there is no appointment necessary. These visits take between 20 and 30 minutes provided the applicant has all of his or her necessary documentation.

(Register of Deeds Office - continued)

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 2 Centennial and 3 Sesquicentennial Farm applications from Allegan County in 2022.

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

- 2022 / 66
- 2021 / 99
- 2020 / 49
- 2019 / 103
- 2018 / 127
- 2017 / 48
- 2016 / 48
- 2015 / 110



County Clerk Bob Genetski detassling corn with an Allegan County crew.

Other Duties and Responsibilities of the Clerk – Register

The Allegan County Plat Board: State Law directs the County Clerk, the Register of Deeds and the County Treasurer to serve on the County Plat Board. The Plat Board makes certain that the proper county agencies have reviewed and approved any new plats.



*A meeting of the Plat Board:
The Board met to approve one
plat in 2022.*

The County Election Commission: The County Clerk serves as clerk to the County Election Commission, which is chaired by the Probate Judge. The Treasurer serves as well on the Board that approves ballots, precinct consolidations and reviews recall language.



The Board of Canvassers met four times in 2022 - three times to certify elections and once in December for the statewide recount.

County Board of Canvassers: The Clerk serves as Secretary to the Allegan County Board of Canvassers. The Canvassers are responsible for canvassing and certifying elections.

County Board of Commissioners: the County Clerk serves as Clerk to the Allegan County Board of Commissioners.



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

Navigating the numerous law changes following Proposal 2 of 2022: In the November Election of 2022, after being falsely sold to voters by a radical activist groups and a gullible media as “reform”, a statewide initiative- Proposal 2- passed to amend the Michigan Constitution. The results will greatly decrease election security and make it much easier for people to vote illegally. The changes will also create a ridiculous amount of work & new costs for local jurisdictions to cover for things like: prepaid postage on absentee ballots and AV ballot applications; 9 days of early in person voting for which each jurisdiction will have to purchase a new tabulator; and a requirement for thousands of Michigan municipalities to add new drop boxes to accept ballots. In addition, clerks and election inspectors will have to undergo many hours of added training to explain how to implement the numerous new procedures that derive from Prop 2.



Staffing for a Third Circuit Court Judge: With the Legislature approving a third 48th Circuit Court Judge in 2022, the Circuit Court Records Division will need at least 2 FTE’s to serve as clerk and maintain the docket for a new judge. The FTE’s will need to be in place when the judge is seated after the 2024 General Election.

Caseload Increase from Michigan Clean Slate Legislation: In October 2020, the Legislature enacted a group of bills collectively known as the “Clean Slate” package. These bills impact the rules and procedures an individual may use to have a prior conviction set aside. In addition to making several changes to the existing paper application processes and eligible offenses, the Clean Slate package also created a new automatic process to set aside eligible offenses without requiring an individual to file an application. These changes will greatly increase the workload for the Circuit Court Records Division while requiring implementation and training on a lot of new technology.



Afternoon Bob,

Just wanted to compliment the staff in your office for their kindness and professionalism in answering some questions my wife and I had about passports today. Tell them thank you for the assistance!



Stephen Young

I stopped by your office yesterday afternoon and received excellent and friendly service from your team. Thank you and your team.

1h Love Reply

1



Bob Genetski

Stephen Young thank you!!!!

Just now Like Reply

Thank you so much Taylor!
By the way, I have arranged to have come to your office this coming Tuesday, February 8th around 10 a.m. Mugshots will be making the day for me and the survey group here at Holland Engineering.

Thank you, Jenn! You are a rock star!
Best,
Kate White
Project Coordinator & Deputy Clerk | City of Sayre

Hi Bob - Great to see you this past Monday. Your visit was very helpful. I read your 2020 report cover-to-cover (you called it a masterpiece).

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



Dear Bob + Jen,
Thank you for all your support and guidance in this election! you do fabulous work and we truly appreciate you!
Most Sincerely,
Becky + Jaci

Again, thank you for the report and I look forward to seeing you again soon.

Regards, Russ



Ryan Ewing

Excellent job to you and your office staff Bob Genetskithey were extremely helpful when I utilized their services

34m Love Reply



Bob Genetski

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

Thank you so much Taylor! You guys are amazing! Ive never gotten such quick help before in your day!

ELECTION COMMITTEE.
THANKS FOR ALL THAT YOU DO FOR US CLERKS IN ALLEGAN COUNTY.
CHERI

Thank you and tell Bob you should get a raise.



Karmel Berens

My whole family was in not long ago to get passports and everyone was so friendly and helpful (even with all of us spring breakers converging, lol... there must have been 9 of us in there at the same time to get passports!) Thank you and your office for the great service Bob!

20h Love Reply

2

Hi Bob, Just sending a little thank you for the way you teach and review for us the info for all of the election inspectors, you make it interesting.

You are appreciated as our Allegan County clerk.

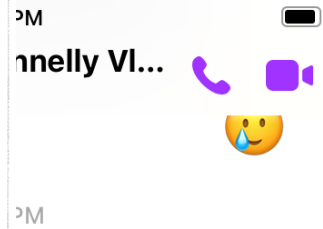
Lyn Becksford
Fillmore Township

Thanks Bob. I appreciate anything we can do to protect our residents.
Linda.

So it took two trips (our fault) but we got our passport applications in. The gal was super knowledgeable, helpful, and very nice! Very glad we went there as opposed to the post office.

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 by smiles and kindness at the end of a day is such a gift. THANK YOU!
Martin Township*



Bob Genetski
Good job Brad!

54m Like Reply



Brad Boone
[Bob Genetski](#) Thank you you sir... your office staff is awesome by the way!!

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

12:53 PM

