

ANNUAL REPORT for 2023

FROM

BOB GENETSKI

**ALLEGAN COUNTY CLERK AND REGISTER OF
DEEDS**

TO THE

TAXPAYERS OF ALLEGAN COUNTY



Autumn at Green Lake- Leighton Township

October 20th, 2024



Dear Allegan County Taxpayers,

On behalf of Chief Deputy Register of Deeds Linda Brower, Chief Deputy Clerk Jackie Porter and our entire staff, it is my pleasure to present to you the *ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2023* for the two offices and four divisions under my purview.

The year 2023 was another very busy one at 113 Chestnut Street in the County Seat. The Register of Deeds Office set an all-time record for the number of Passports processed serving 565 applicants. At the same time, the number land holders enrolled in our new Property Fraud Alert service exceeded 2,000 people.

On the Clerk's side of the hallway, the Vital Records Division helped over 4,386 customers with services & products. The 2nd Amendment is alive and well in the county as Concealed Pistol Licenses accounted for 48% of those transactions.

The Elections Division spent the "off-year managing" and supporting three elections, mostly for schools and city councils.

The Circuit Court Records Division also did its part for the 2,663 new cases filed with the 48th Circuit Court in 2023.

The year brought many new challenges and a lot of hard work, but I remained extremely proud throughout 2023 with our hardworking & talented deputy clerks and registers who provided amazing customer service to thousands of Allegan County residents. I hope you find the information *ANNUAL REPORT to TAXPAYERS* enjoyable.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Genetski", written in a cursive style.

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



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The Offices of the Allegan County Clerk and Register of Deeds are open weekdays from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. The Clerk's Office is located at the Courthouse in the County Seat; the Register's Office is at the Admin Building in Allegan Township:

The Allegan County Courthouse
113 Chestnut Street
Allegan, MI 49010

Administration Building
3283 122nd Ave.
Allegan, MI 49010

Deputy Clerks and Registers can help answer questions by phone at:

Vital Records (269) 673-0450

Election (269) 673-0290

Circuit Court Records (269) 673-0300

Register of Deeds (269) 673-0390



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 2023, for the 2nd year in a row, the total number of documents recorded in the Office declined. Since the all-time high of 30,015 land recordings in 2021, the county has seen annual declines of 6,996 and 5,008 in deeds, mortgages and other papers received by the Register.

Register of Deeds Office Quick Facts:

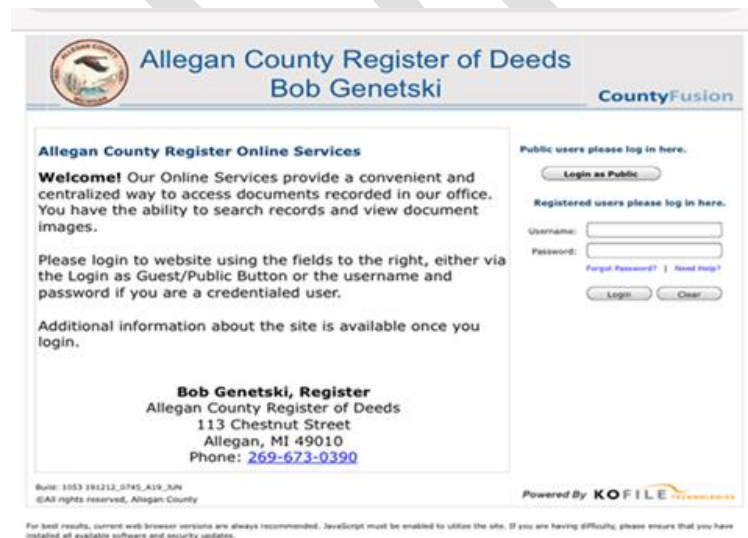
Chief Deputy Register: Linda Brower

FTE’s: 4

Money collected during 2023 (including State Transfer Tax): \$7,594,525.05, a decrease from 2022 of \$2,354.692.45.

Total number of recordings in 2023: 19,011 - a decrease of 5,008 in 2022 for a total decline of 12,004 since the 30,015 recorded in 2021.

FACT: The earliest recorded deed in the office was registered in 1833.



Last year marked the fourth 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.

(Register of Deeds Office – continued)

Property Fraud Alert



Allegan County offers property fraud protection alert service

Becky Kark Oct 16, 2022 1 min to read



ALLEGAN — Allegan County residents worried about property fraud and title theft can rest a little easier thanks to a new tool that will alert them if their homes or land become targets of potential theft, according to the county's Register of Deeds. Bob Genetski has announced his office is now offering a property fraud protection alert service.

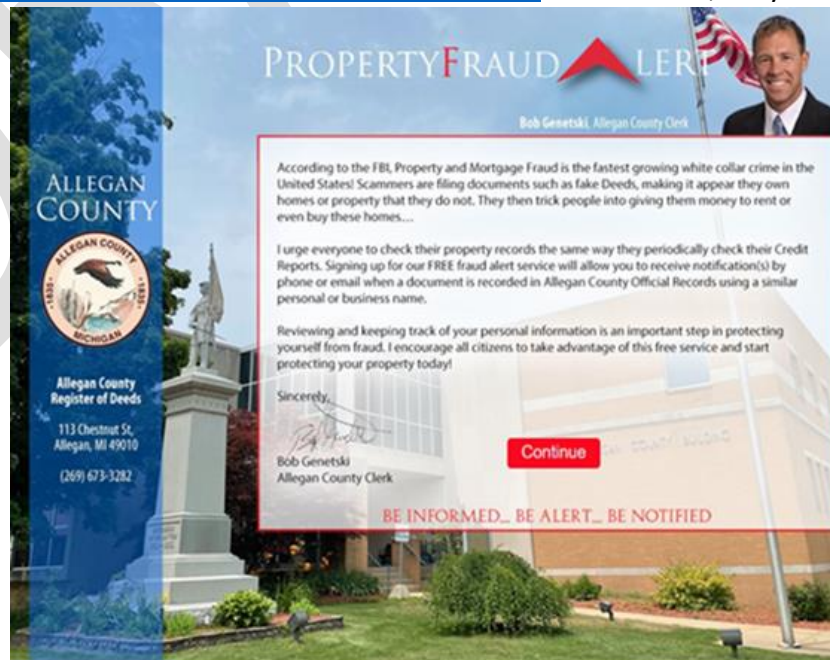
Allegan County residents worried about property fraud and title theft can now rest a little easier thanks to a new tool that will alert them if their homes or land become targets of potential title theft. Property Fraud Alert is an online subscription service offered to the public that allows residents 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 first announced the new FREE SERVICE in October 2022, and since its inception 2,210 Allegan County property holders have signed up!

Signing up for the Property Fraud Alert service is quick and easy. Homeowners will go to the website <https://www.allegancounty.org/departments/register-of-deeds>. From there, they

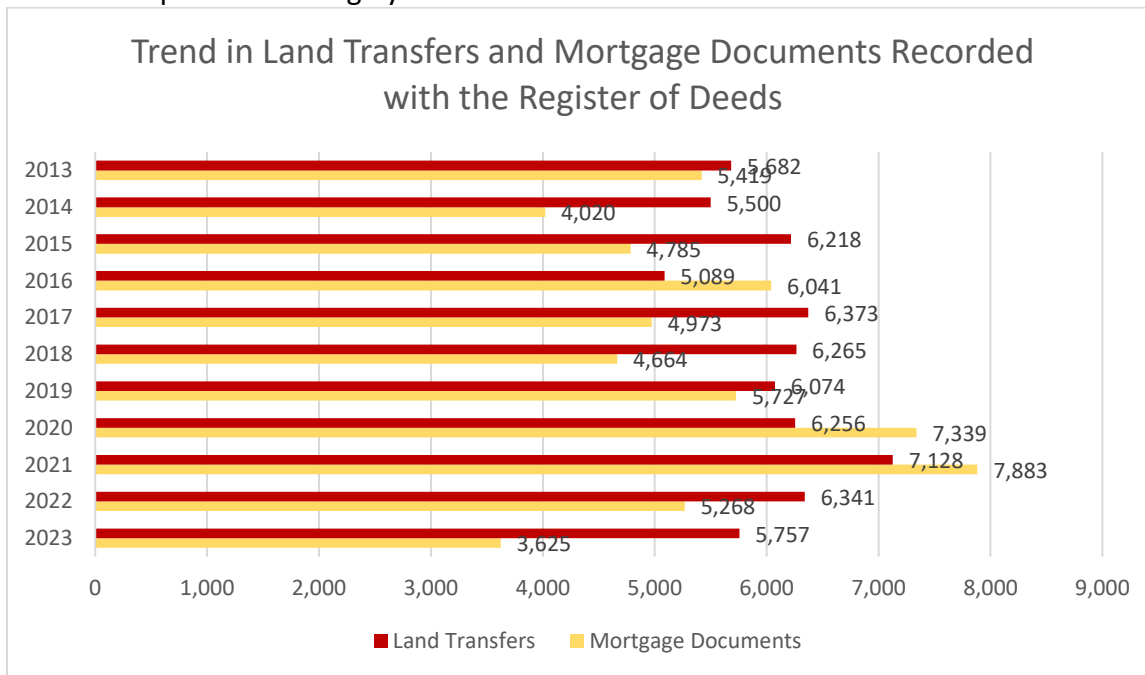
should click on the link that reads Property Fraud Alert. Then, they will click on a link to review the terms of the service and agree to them. After that, on the secure website, they will input their first and last names as well as their option to receive the alert via email, phone call or text message. 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.



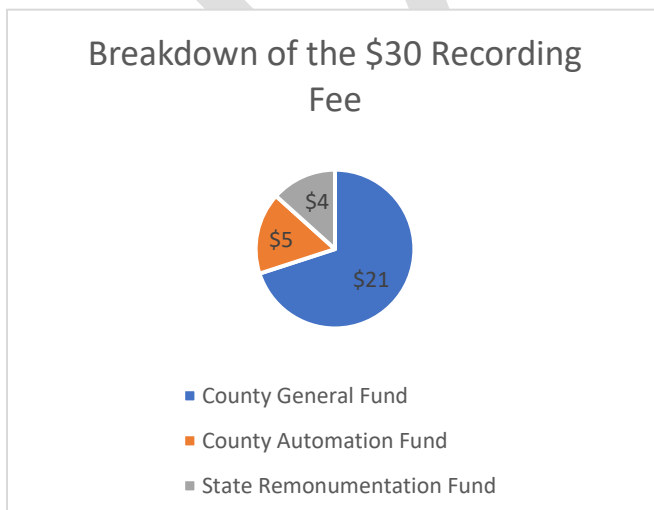
(Register of Deeds Office – continued)

Document Recording

For the second year in a row, the total number of deeds, mortgages, liens and other records declined significantly as the West Michigan real estate market cools down. From 2022 to 2023, there was a decline of 5,008 recordings logged at the Register of Deeds Office. The 19,011 recorded represents a roughly 37% decline in transactions from 2021.



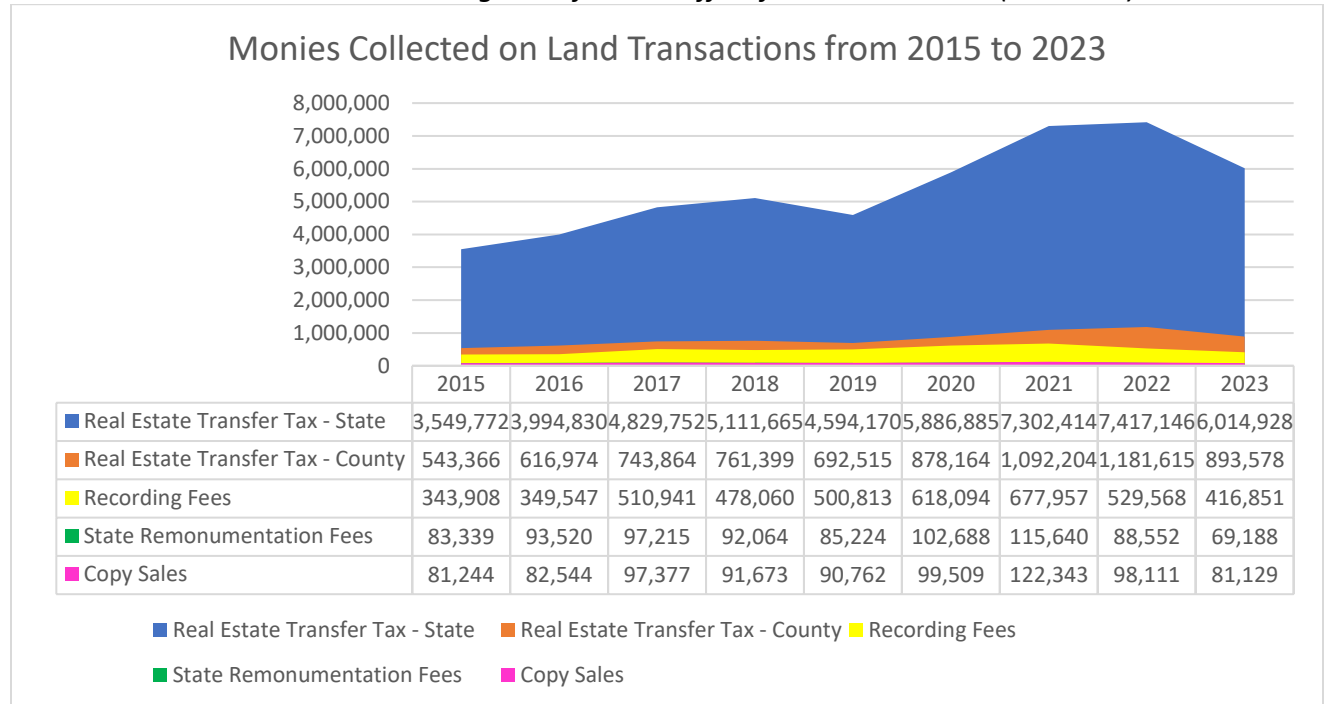
Trends in Recordings: The two most frequently recorded documents at the Register of Deeds Office are land transfers and mortgage documents. During 2023, the number of both categories declined from the year before as mortgage documents dropped from 5,268 to 3,625 and land transfers declined from 6,341 to 5,757- an indication that the formerly red-hot West Michigan real estate market has cooled off.



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

(Register of Deeds Office – continued)

Trends in Monies Collected in the Register of Deeds Office from 2015 – 2023 (in dollars)



The chart above shows a breakdown of the total monies collected for transactions at ROD for 2015 to 2023. **The total amount realized during 2023 was \$7,594,525.05.**

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 (\$90,223.93 for 2023).

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.

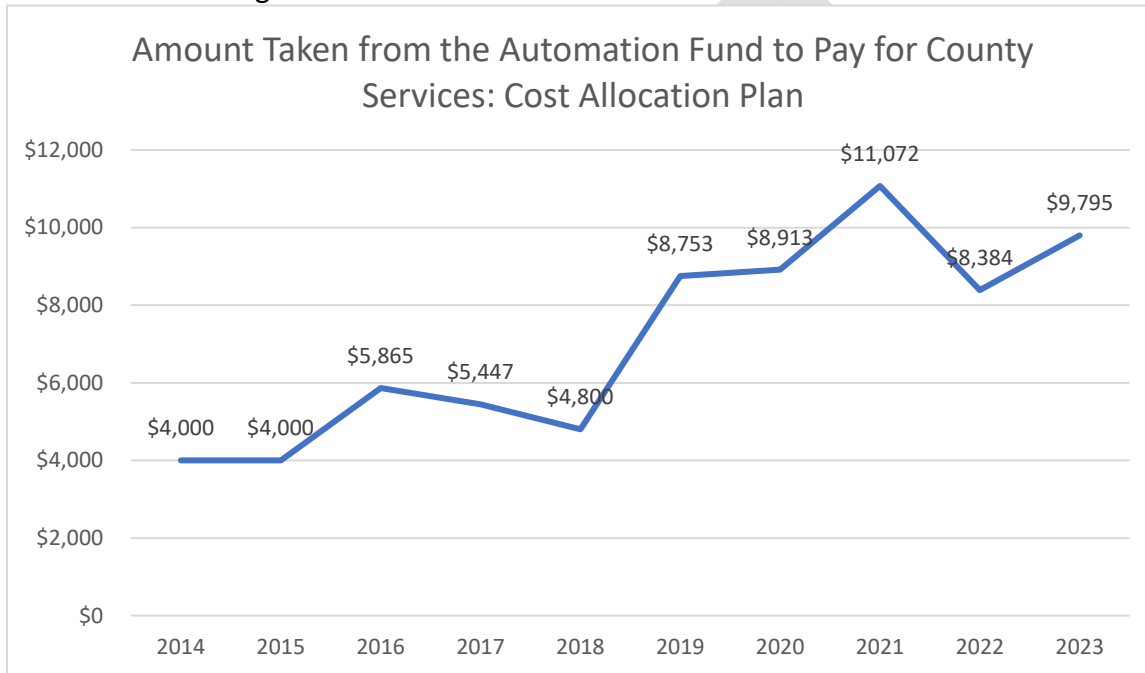
Copy Sales: collected on each document - \$1 per page and \$.20 per image (bulk sale to two title companies). This money goes to the County General Fund.

(Register of Deeds Office – continued)

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

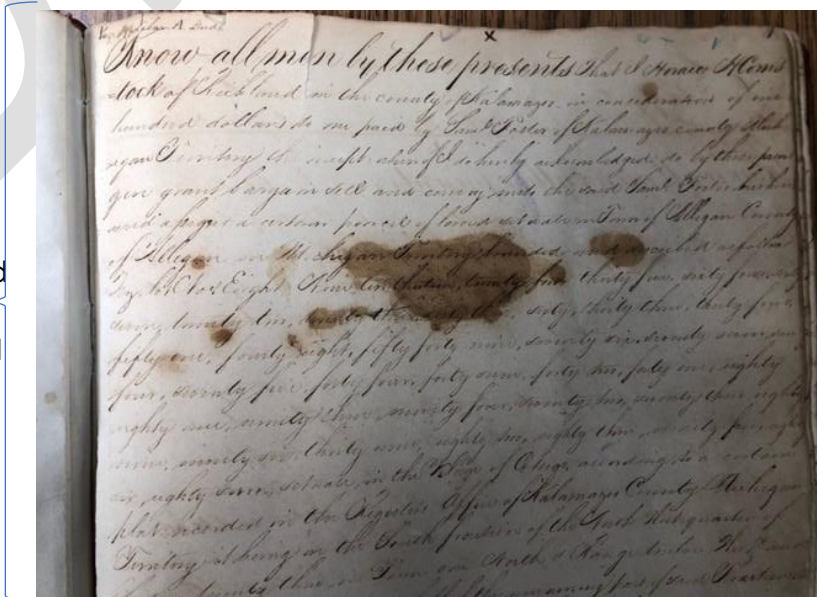
Year	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Amount of Deposit	\$95,000	\$120,505	\$154,951	\$139,390	\$114,450	\$115,050	\$121,255	\$118,321

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?

The oldest physical deed on file at the Register of Deeds Office is from 1833 (prior to organization of Allegan County in 1835 and statehood 1836). The deed between Horace Comstock and Samuel Foster executed the sale of many parcels of land in the Village of Otsego for \$100.



(Register of Deeds Office – continued)

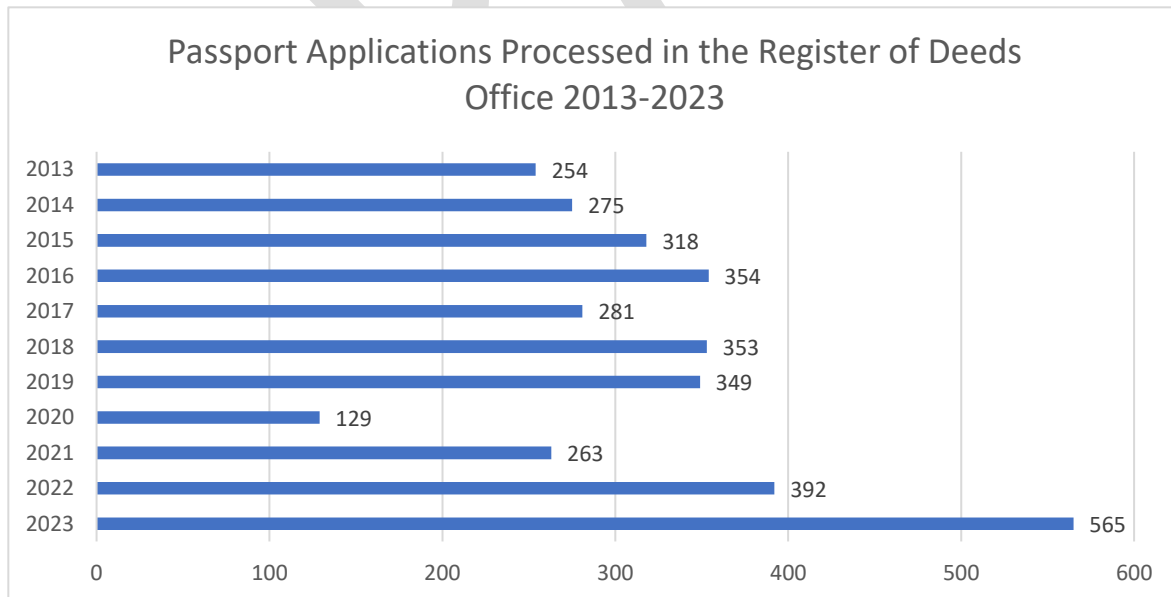
Passport Services

The Register of Deeds Office helped customers from Allegan County (and beyond) to obtain their United States Passports by accepting a **record 565 Passport Applications in 2023.**



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 2023, the Register of Deeds Office set a record for the highest number of Passport Applications with 565 besting the previous record of 392 set in 2022.

(Register of Deeds Office – continued)

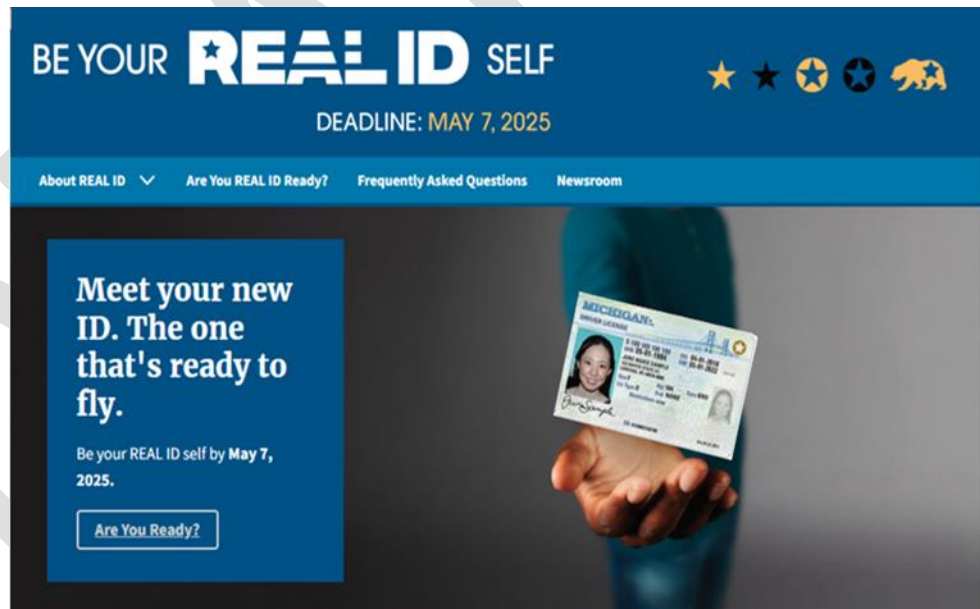
Revenues to the County General Fund from Passport Applications (at a rate of \$35 per application since April 2nd 2018; prior to the increase, the County earned \$25 per application):

YEAR	Applications	Revenue to the County	Revenue at \$25/\$35
2023	565	\$19,775	\$19,775
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 \$4,070 for taking passport photos during 2023, an increase of \$1,275 from 2022.

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 by appointment at (269) 673-0390. 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 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 1 Centennial and 2 Sesquicentennial Farm applications from Allegan County in 2023.

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:

2023 – 96
2022 – 66
2021 – 99
2020 – 49
2019 – 103
2018 – 127
2017 – 48
2016 – 48
2015 – 110



Bob Genetski detasseling corn with an Allegan County crew.

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY CLERK

The office of the County Clerk was established by the Michigan State Constitution. The County Clerk is elected on a partisan basis for a four-year term. Some Michigan County Clerks are also elected to serve as the Register of Deeds (as in Allegan County). The combination of the Office of the County Clerk and Register of Deeds was established in the 1850 Constitution.

Under the Michigan Constitution (Article VII, Section 5), *“The sheriff, county clerk, county treasurer and register of deeds shall hold their principal offices at the county seat.”*

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

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>

VITAL RECORDS QUICK FACTS:

Chief Deputy: Jackie Porter

FTE’S: 1.8

Earliest Records on File

December 17th, 1835 First Marriage License

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”)

Total Transactions in 2023

4,386

DIVISION OVERVIEW

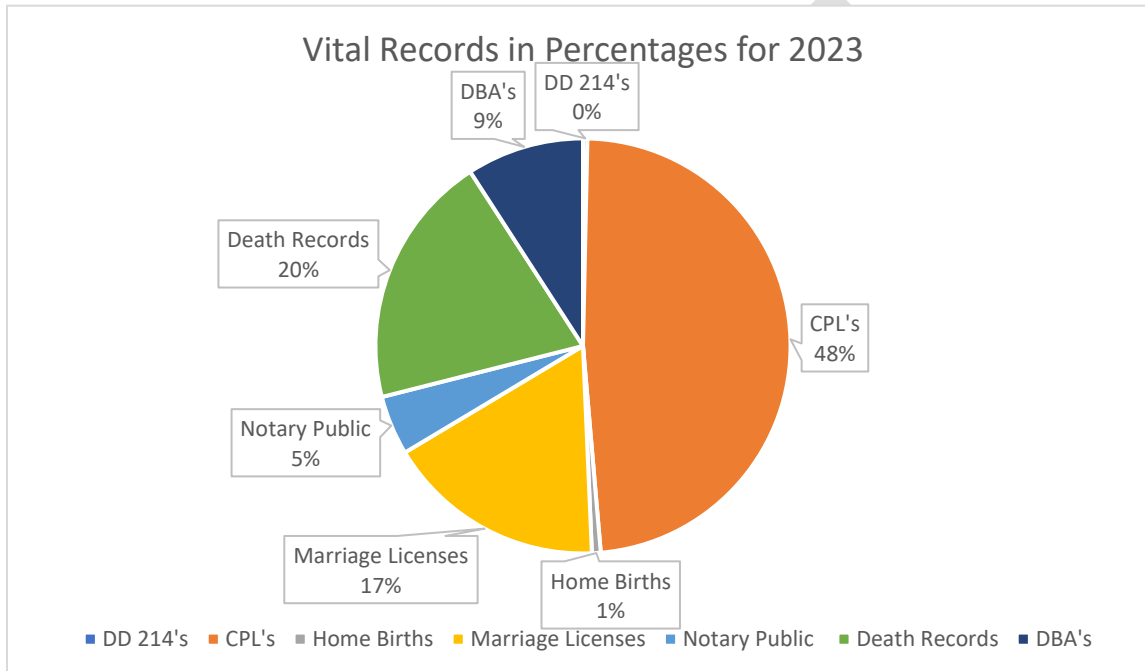
The hard-working deputy clerks recorded 4,386 vital documents throughout 2023 – a decline of 300 from 2022. On the year, 2,118 Allegan County residents applied for Concealed Pistol Licenses. There were 869 death certificates recorded while 750 couples applied for marriage licenses. The Office issued 401 small business licenses (DBA’s), accepted 203 Notary Public applications, recorded 30 home births, while 15 DD 214’s were filed with the Clerk. The only transaction to increase year over year was marriage licenses which increased by 19.

(Vital Records Division – continued)

Trends in Transaction in the Vital Records Division

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Transactions In Vital Records	4,210	4,356	4,254	5,129	5,067	4,686	4,386

A breakdown of those transactions appears in the graph below.



Monies Collected in Vital Records for 2023

In 2023, the Vital Records Division took in \$229,618.60 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
- CPL (new) 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 copy after that.

*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 newborns 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.

After three years of increases, the number of home births declined from 42 in 2022 to 30 in 2023.

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
# of Births	12	27	25	30	29	35	22	32	39	42	30

Where do babies come from? (home births - see map below)



Dorr Township & Salem Township tied with 4 home births each in 2023.

Gun Plain Township, Leighton Township, and Heath Township had 3 home births each.

Monterey Township, the City of Allegan, and Manlius Township each had 2 recorded.

And 1 home birth was logged in the cities of Holland and Otsego as well as the townships of:

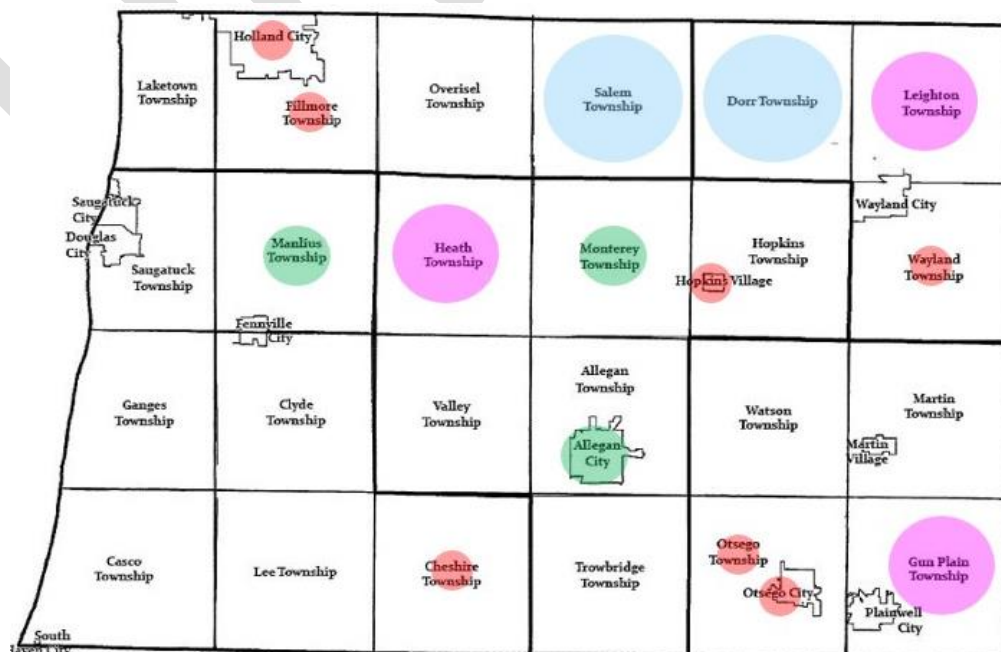
Hopkins

Fillmore

Otsego

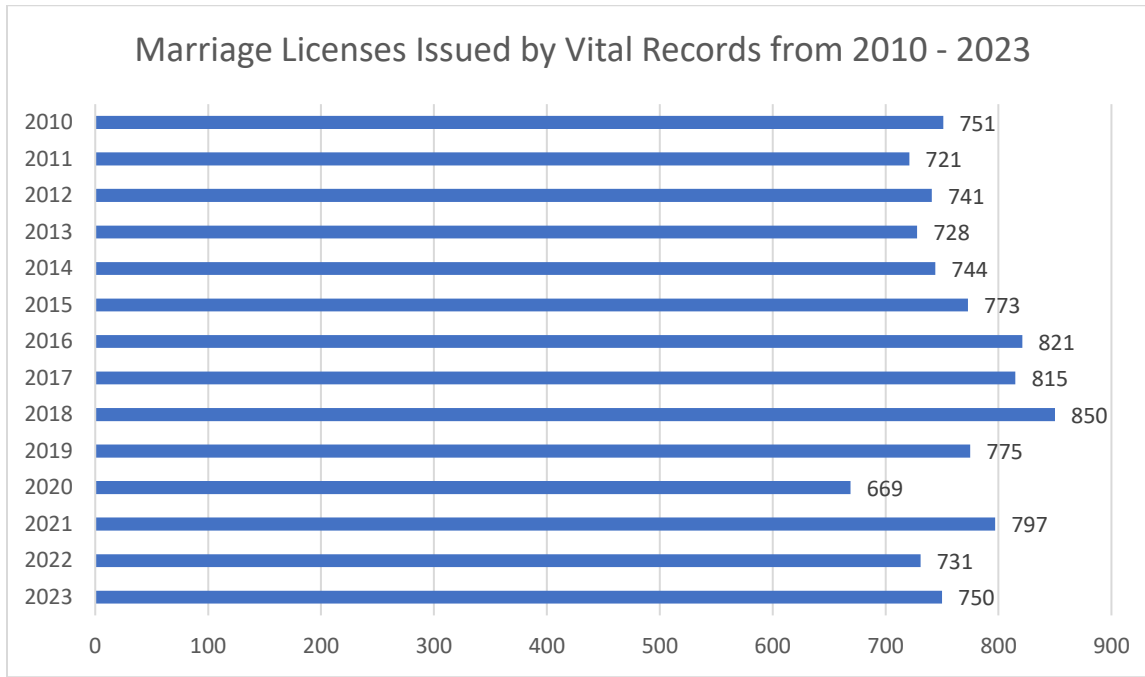
Wayland
&
Cheshire.

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



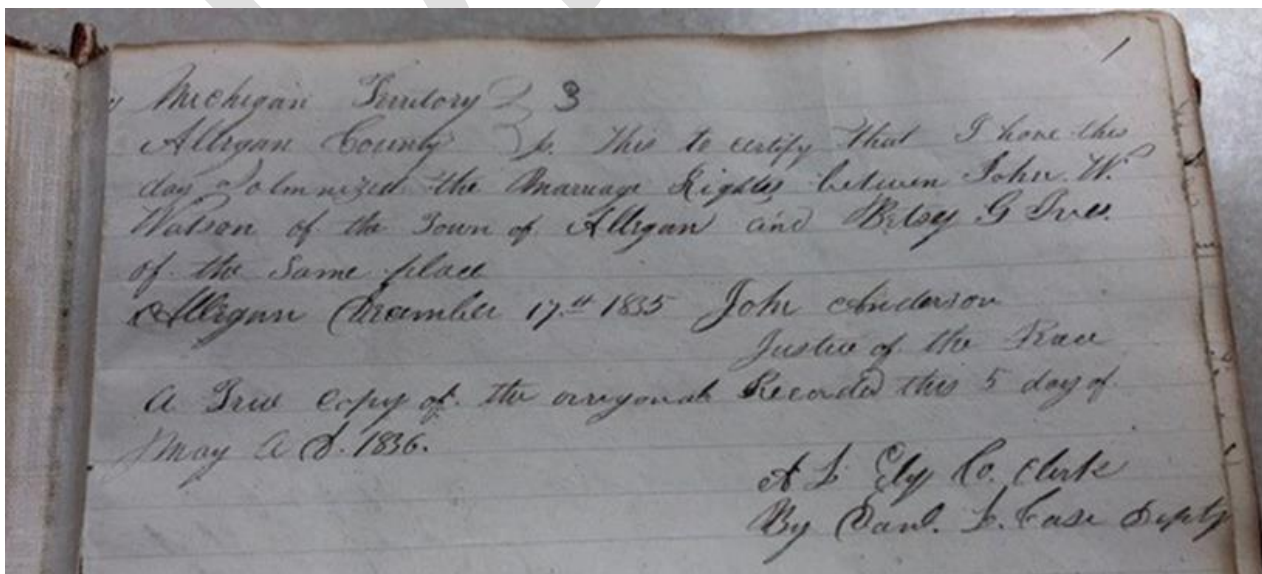
(Vital Records Division – continued)

Trends in Marriage Licenses



Love was in the air last year in Allegan County as 750 couple tied the knot, 19 more couples than did so in 2022. 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 that took place when Michigan was still a 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.

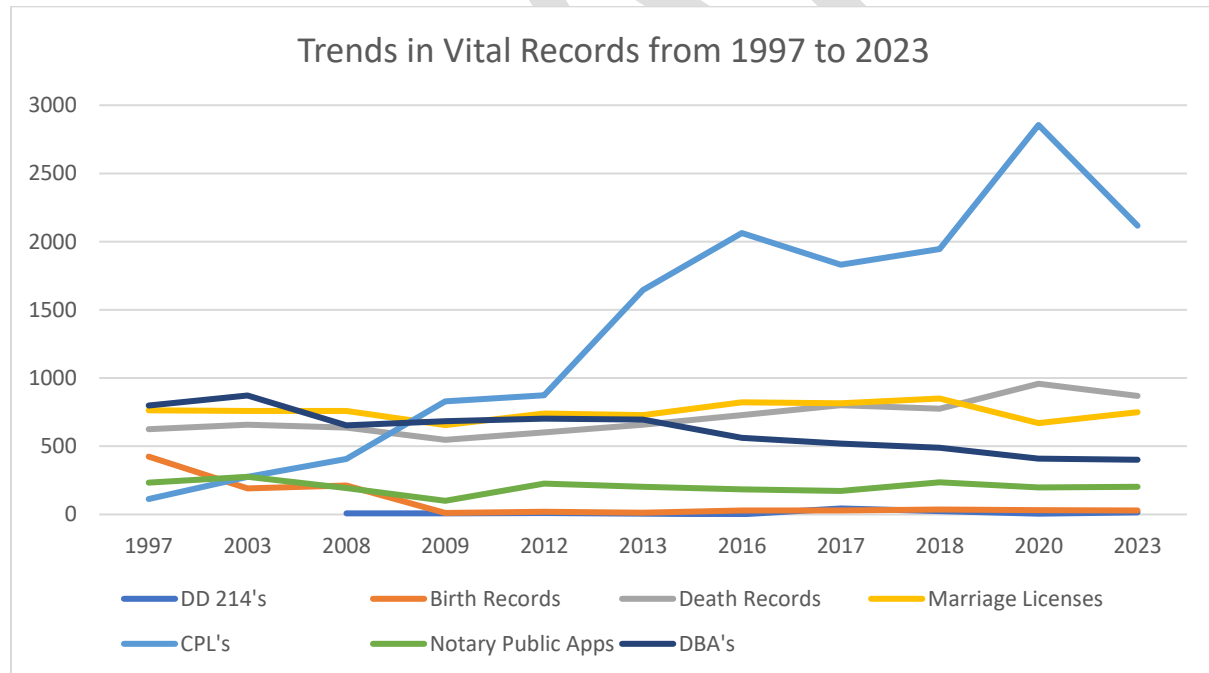


(Vital Records Division – continued)

Government policies and Allegan County Vital Records: Requests of the Vital Records Division over the last 26 years tell a lot about the lives of constituents in Allegan County. While some numbers naturally increase as the county grows in population, other numbers fluctuate because of government policies and legislative changes. For example, major changes in government healthcare policy led small and rural hospitals to discontinue operations as “birthing hospitals” resulting in the significant drop in birth certificates recorded from 2008 (with 213) to 2009 when only 11 births (all home births) were logged.

Similarly, a series of pro-Second Amendment laws passing the Legislature from 2012-2015 (among them the elimination of the county Gun Boards) shifted Concealed Pistol Licenses to be regulated by the State Police and locally administered by the County Clerk. In Allegan County, those holding CPL’s went from 874 in 2012 to 2,064 in 2016.

The most interesting statistic might be that of marriage licenses. From 1997 to 2022, Allegan County’s population has grown from 101,237 to 121,210 (19.7%). During that same time period, applications for marriage licenses have not grown. As a matter of fact, the Clerk’s Office issued thirteen more marriage certificates in 1997 (763) than in 2023 when 750 were issued. The high of 850 marriage licenses issued occurred in 2018 while the low of 655 was registered in 2009.



The Clerk’s Office began tracking military separation papers (DD 214’s) in 2005. There was a high of 44 recorded in 2017 with as few as only 1 recorded in 2005 and 2016.

From 1997 to 2023, the high for DBA’s registered was 872 in 2003 and the low was 401 in 2023. Notary public applications during the same time period hit 283 in 1999 and fell to a low of 100 in 2009.

(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 Bob Genetski became County Clerk, the number of Papers of Honorable Discharge Filed with the County Clerk has been in double digits every year except one – 2020.

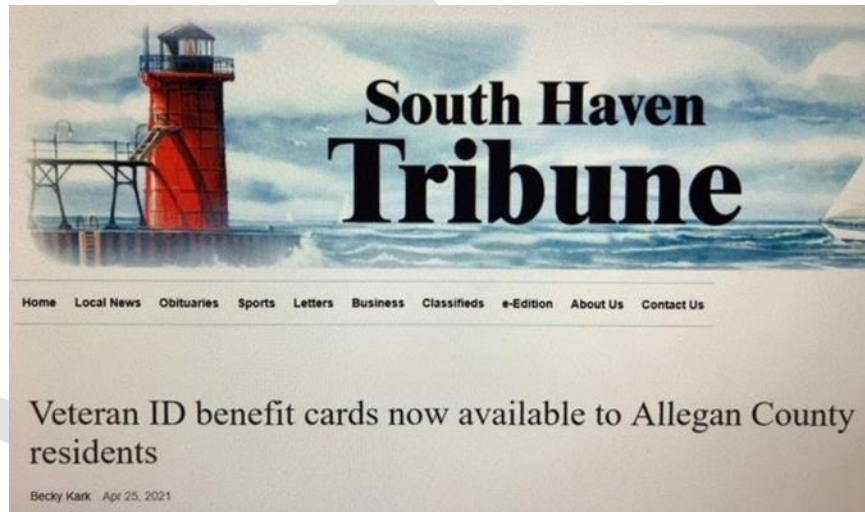
YEAR	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
NUMBER FILED	5	7	4	1	44	24	16	6	28	19	15

(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 80 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

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 matter. 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 trial fees, garnishment & subpoena fees.

In 2023, 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.

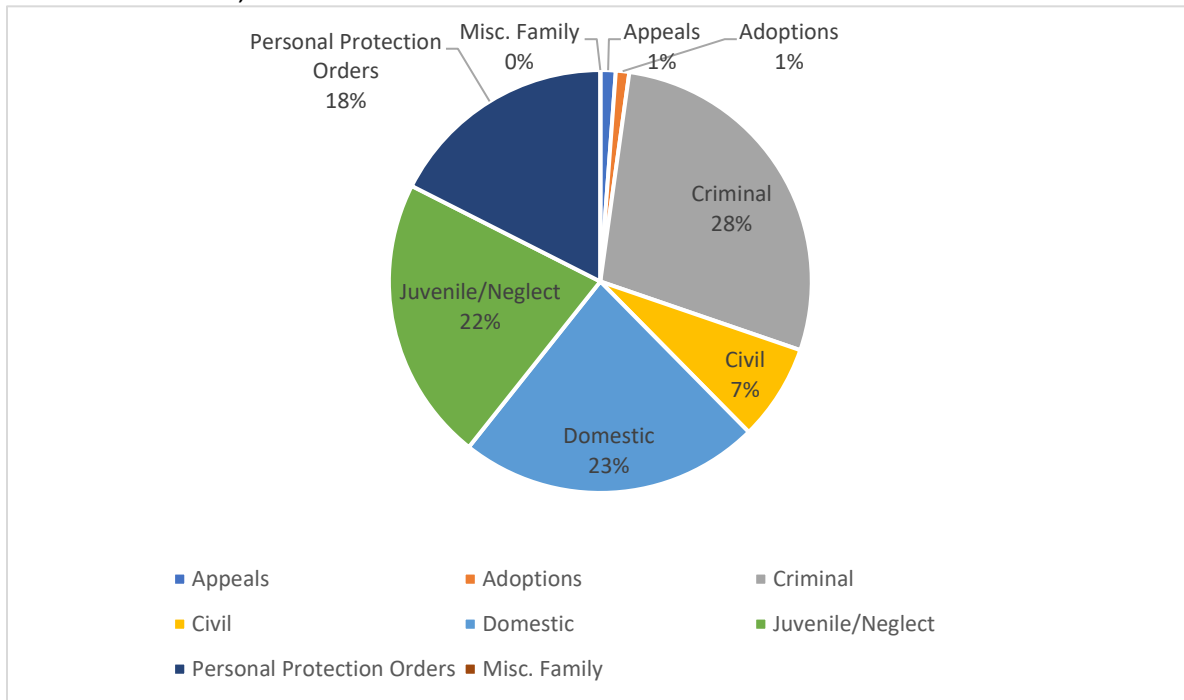
The Division is also responsible for processing adoptions.

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

*This number will go up in 2024 as a third Judge of the 48th Circuit Court is added to the bench.

(Circuit Court Records Division- continued)

Overview of the 2,663 New Cases Filed with the 48th Circuit Court in 2023

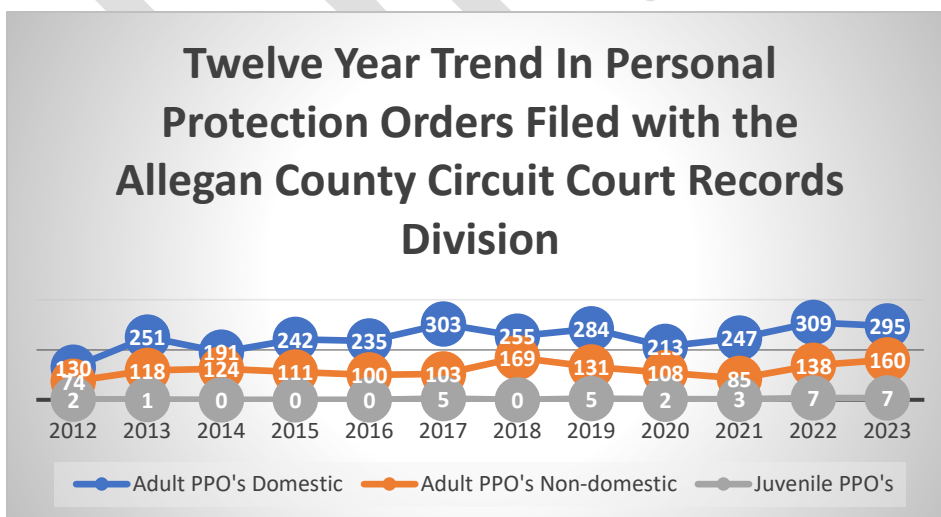


Appeals: 31 Adoptions: 27 Criminal: 741 Civil: 194 Domestic: 609

Juvenile/Neglect: 575 Personal Protection Orders: 463 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 463 filed with the office during 2023. One of the three categories of PPO increased from the year before. Adult PPO's decreased from 309 to 295. Adult Non-domestic were up to 160 from the 138 in 2022. Most concerning is

that Juvenile PPO's at 7 mark the second year in a row at the same number which is tied for the 11 year high. The mode during those years is 0.

(Circuit Court Records Division- continued)

Adoptions

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

Year	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Adoptions	27	54	56	42	74	36	45	46	68	55	84



Another heartwarming scene of a 2023 adopting family in Judge Buck's Courtroom.

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 27 adoptions in 2023.

The Ten Year Trend in Family Court Filings (other than Adoptions) in the Records Division is seen in the table below:

YEAR	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Juvenile/Neglect Cases	575	406	406	303	349	387	474	502	667	530

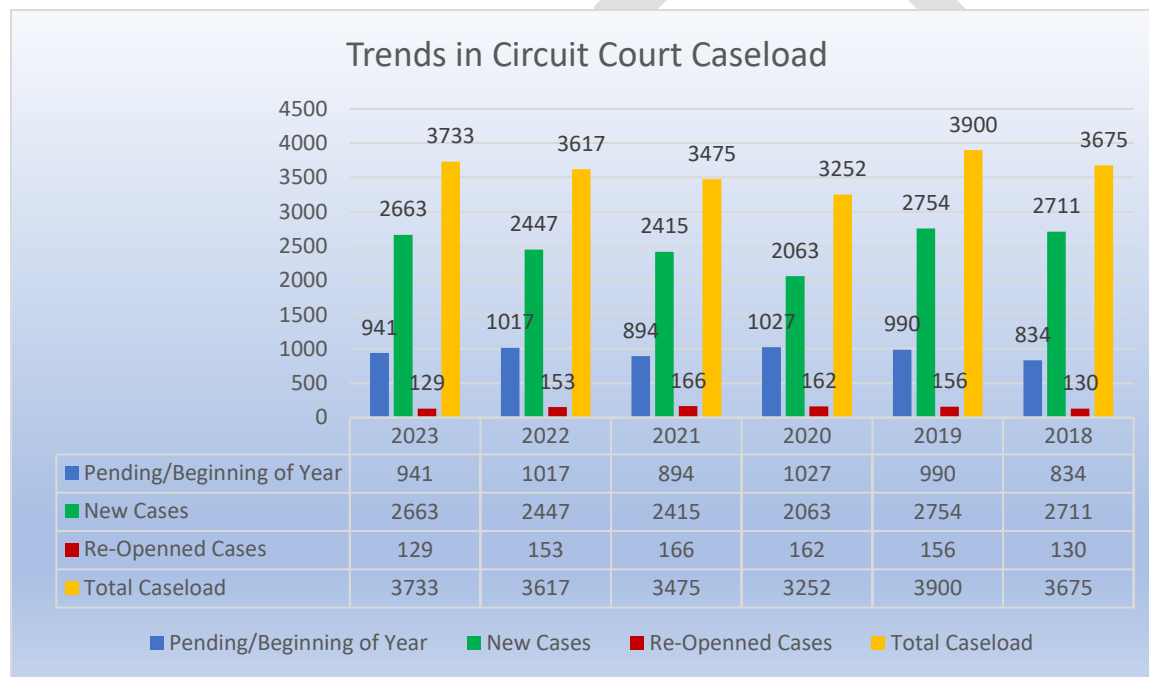
(Circuit Court Records Division- continued)

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.



“The Probate and Family Court staff on the Ground Floor continue to enjoy working with Bob, Jackie, and entire Clerk’s office. They are always personable and tremendously helpful as we together provide needed services to our Allegan County families,” The Honorable Michael Buck, Allegan County Probate Judge.

(Circuit Court Records – 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 2023, the Circuit Court Records Division received \$214,332.62 for Adult Cases and disbursed \$245,541.14 to victims of crimes. Collections from juveniles during the same period amounted to \$26,274, and \$25,406.58



Elections Division At a Glance:

Chief Deputy Clerk: Jackie Porter

FTE's: 1

Coordinating for:

49 "in county" precincts

10 "in county" school districts

% of voter turnout in 2023:

May 5th 21.03%

August 8th 16.38%

November 7th 20.01%

Raw Numbers Voter

Turnout:

May 5th 11,289 of 53,684

August 8th 3,492 of 21,314

November 7th 4,489 of 22,439

The Division spent much of 2023 supporting local clerks in implementing changes to Election Law.

ELECTIONS DIVISION

Though 2023 was an "off-year" at the ballot box, there were quite a few elections to administer during the odd year. School elections, city council elections and local initiatives meant that clerks were serving voters in May, August and November.

DIVISION OVERVIEW



Clerk Genetski swears in Steve McNeal, Chairman of the Board of Canvassers.

The County Clerk is the chief election officer in Allegan County. While local

jurisdictions run much of the day-to-day operations for voting, 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.

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.

(Elections Division – Continued)

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 2023, the Clerk’s Office oversaw and accepted campaign filings from 13 candidates and 1 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 2023 Elections

The Special Election of May 2th

The May Special Election had school district proposals on the ballot for: Bloomingdale Public Schools, Caledonia Community Schools, Hamilton Community Schools, Hudsonville Public Schools (2), Wayland Union Schools, Zeeland Public Schools (2) as well as for Lake Michigan College.



GRAND RAPIDS

Voters approve \$41M bond for Hamilton Community Schools after rejecting previous proposals

Updated: May 03, 2023, 1:00 a.m. | Published: May 03, 2023, 12:34 a.m.



Hamilton School District had a 30-year, \$41 million bond proposal on the election ballot Tuesday, May 2, 2023. Two previous requests failed. (MLive File Photo)

On the same date, voters in the cities of Otsego and Holland had opportunities to vote. Voters living in the Holland Pool Authority passed a millage while the townships of Otsego & Allegan went to the ballot box as well.

The races that drew the most attention were the Hamilton Community Schools Bond Proposal and the Wayland Union Schools Bond Proposal. The former passed 51.16% to 48.84% (after failing twice previously). The latter passed 58.31% to 41.69% on its second try.

(Elections Division – Continued)

The Special Election of August 8th

Only a handful of Allegan County voters had the opportunity to vote in August as voters in the Fennville Public School District and Otsego Public School District had operating milages as did Lake Michigan College. Each passed with overall turnout of 16.38%.

The November 7th Election

City Council races throughout Allegan County were the order of the day for the November election as voters in: Douglas, Fennville, Holland, Otsego, Saugatuck and Wayland went to the polls to choose their local civic leaders.

Also, on the ballot, Otsego Township Solid Waste Proposal passed by one vote (425-424). The Village of Hopkins passed a Headlee Override Proposal. Gobles and Martin Public Schools both had bond proposals.

Fennville voters had blank ballots and needed to write-in their choices which might have led to the turnout of 5.87% while City of Holland voters in Ward 4 had the highest turnout in the county of 34.4%.



ELECTIONS

Fennville City Commission election in November will be write-in only

 **Mitchell Boatman**
Holland Sentinel

Published 4:06 a.m. ET Aug. 17, 2023



FENNVILLE — Four seats on the Fennville City Commission up for election this November will be write-in only.

All four candidates who filed for the Nov. 7 election — Mayor Dan Rastall, commissioners Shawn Machan and John Jamros and newcomer Sarah Sliter — had their filing rejected. Current commissioner Jim Hayden is not seeking reelection.



Fennville City Hall is pictured May 17, 2023. Four seats on the city commission will be write-in only this November. Cody Scanlan/Holland Sentinel

(Elections Division – Continued)

Training Election Inspectors

as to encourage and thank me.
Second, I attended one of your sessions in Al-
legan 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 2023, the Clerk's Office offered 4 different specialized classes for Inspectors throughout Allegan County.

Working with our local clerks, Bob Genetski personally trained and certified hundreds of Election Inspectors for local jurisdictions.



Other Duties and Responsibilities of the Clerk – Register



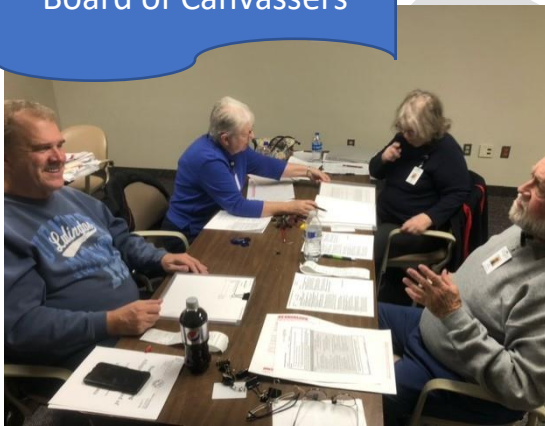
THE ALLEGAN COUNTY PLAT BOARD

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 and local agencies have reviewed, approved and signed off on any new plats.



The Plat Board met in 2023 to review a plat for a development in Leighton Township.

The Allegan County Board of Canvassers



Under State Law, the County Clerk serves as Clerk to the County Board of Canvassers. The Board of Canvassers comprised of two Democrats and two Republicans (nominated by their respective county parties) have the task of canvassing and certifying the election at the county level. In 2023, the Board certified elections in May, August and November.



THE ALLEGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS- under state law, the County Clerk serves as clerk at the County Board of Commissioners meetings.

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

Countywide Elected Officers Sue Upper Management at the County

In a very unfortunate situation, talks between upper management at Allegan County and the Allegan County Drain Commissioner, County Treasurer, and Clerk – Register broke down and leading the three officers having to sue the County. At issue, whether the City of Allegan or Allegan Township is the county seat and can the County legally move the three Constitutional

NEWS

Elected officials file lawsuit against Allegan County board over plans to move offices

Updated: Mar. 14, 2023, 11:11 a.m. | Published: Mar. 14, 2023, 7:17 a.m.



A controversy is brewing because of plans to move some elected officials' offices out of the county seat in Allegan. (MLive file photo) Joel Bissell | MLive.com



By [Brad Devereaux](#) | bdeverea@mlive.com

ALLEGAN COUNTY, MI -- Three elected officials in Allegan County have filed a lawsuit against the Allegan County Board of Commissioners over an alleged plan to move some county offices to a location outside of the county seat.

9 days of early in person voting and up to 29 days of early voting. Many other election laws changed as well - changes that would burden local clerks, weaken election security, and add tens of thousands of new spending to already strained township and city budgets.

Third Circuit Court Judge Preparations

Early preparations would begin in 2023 for a third judge of the 48th Circuit Court to be elected to the bench. The Legislature created the new seat at the end of 2022. As clerk to the circuit court, the office will need to hire new staff to support the new judge and manage the election ensuring that all the ballots throughout Allegan County reflect the new seat on them.

Offices outside of the city of Allegan to the campus at Dumont Lake.

The State Constitution, Article VII, Section 5 states that the principal officers of County Clerk, Register of Deeds & Treasurer shall be located at the county seat. And state statute directs that such offices and the Drain Commissioner shall be located at the seat of justice.

The Implementation of Proposal 2 of 2022

The County Clerk's Office was very busy throughout 2023 trying to navigate the legislation passed in Lansing to implement Proposal 2 of 2022. The Constitutional Amendment and the follow up legislation would pave the way for a minimum of

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!

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

Thank you so much Taylor!
By the way, I have arranged to have coffee in your office this coming Tuesday, February 8th around 10:30 a.m. Mugshots will be making the delivery.
I very much appreciate all you do for me and the survey group here at Holland Engineering!
Thanks,
Doug
Best,
Kate White
Election Coordinator & Deputy Clerk | City of Saugatuck

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

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

Bob Genetski
Stephen Young thank you!!!!

Just now Like Reply

Thank you and tell Bob you should get a raise.

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

Bob Genetski
Ryan Ewing thank you brother!

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

Hi Bob - Good to see you this past Monday. Your visit/report was much appreciated.

I read your 2020 report cover-to-cover (you called it!) and found it to be very informative. Thank you for sharing it with us.

There were many items of interest, but one in item under Vital Records of 13th, 1867 First Death Record...Cause of Death "Too Powerful Medicine" worse than the disease. Always interesting to read historical items and be reported.

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

Regards, Russ

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!

Verizon 12:55 PM
Steffanie Connelly VI...
Active 28m ago
12:16 PM
Just had excellent customer service from Linda Brower on getting a copy of our deed. Thought you'd like to know!
12:53 PM

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! I've never gotten such quick help before ever! :) have a great rest of your day!

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!
Madison Township



Brad Boone

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

