



ANNUAL REPORT

2017

OF THE COUNTY CLERK – REGISTER OF DEEDS

respectfully submitted

TO ALLEGAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



Bob Genetski

County Clerk – Register of Deeds

Jackie Porter

Chief Deputy Clerk

Patricia Fales

Chief Deputy Register of Deeds

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The Allegan County Clerk and Register of Deeds Offices are located at:

The County Courthouse

113 Chestnut Street

Allegan, MI. 49010

By Phone: (269) 673- 0450 for Vital Records

(269) 673-0300 for Circuit Court Records

(269) 673-0390 for Register of Deeds



Thursday, November 8th, 2018

Chairman Kapenga and Honorable Commissioners Jessup, Storey, Black, Dugan, DeYoung and Thiele:

On behalf of Chief Deputy Register Patricia Fales, Chief Deputy Clerk Jackie Porter and the entire staff in the Offices of the County Clerk and Register of Deeds, it is my pleasure to present to you the ANNUAL REPORT for the year 2017.

The ANNUAL REPORT is an attempt to not only provide the important details of the day to day operations of the Offices and all of the many benefits provided to Allegan County, it is an effort to paint a picture of the varying needs of those individuals who visit the Courthouse or phone our offices each day and of the polite professionalism of the talented deputies who go the extra mile to help those in need of county services.

Some of the highlights of the 2017 report reflect improved economic growth in Allegan County. For example, the 6,373 land transfers recorded in Register of Deeds office is the highest number since 2006. Other highlights demonstrate our staff's commitment to informing our constituents of services that we provide. As such, the Clerk's Office set a record for DD 214's filed with our office. The 44 sets of discharge papers beat the previous 30 year high (of 17 in 2007). This record is a testament to our Veterans as well as to the deputy clerks who worked hard to promote this service.

My office and I take great pride in the work we did last year for Allegan County's more than 114,000 residents. We consider it an honor and a blessing to serve them.

Sincerely,

Bob Genetski

Allegan County Clerk – Register of Deeds



Register of Deeds Office

Division Overview

The Register of Deeds Division records all documents pertaining to real property, including deeds, mortgages, liens, power of attorneys, certificates of trust; federal, state, and MESC tax liens; master deeds and plats; sheriff's deeds and redemption certificates.

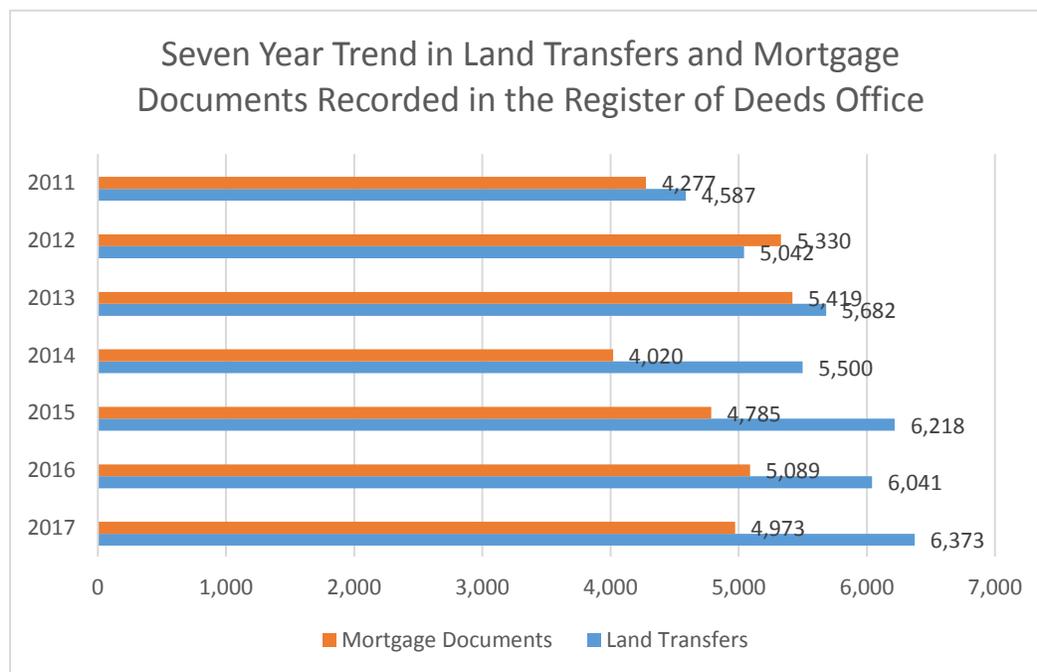
The hardworking deputies in the Register's Office must be familiar with more than 200 different types of legal documents and the unique statutes for recording each of them. Our staff works closely with attorneys, real estate agents, banks, title agencies and the public. The number one goal is to provide customer service – polite, professional, accurate and timely.

Beginning in 2017 and carrying into 2018, the Office began the process of soliciting bids for a new land records system that will allow online access to records for the general public. Our deputies & regular customers are excited for new opportunities and services we will soon be able to provide.

Register of Deeds Office Quick Facts -

- Chief Deputy Register: Patricia Fales
- Fulltime Employees: Four
- Money Collected (for 2017 including State Transfer Taxes collected): \$6,407,464.90
- Total Transactions: 27,750 (2017)
- Records available: From 1835 to present

Document Recording:



Trends in Real Estate Documents Recorded: Over the last seven years, total real estate documents recorded in the Register of Deeds office range from a high of 28,422 (in 2012) to a low of 23,073 (in 2014). Land transfers recorded hit a

high in 2017 of 6,373 while the low number for the period – 4,587 occurred during 2011.

(Seven Year Trend in Land Transfers - Continued) Meanwhile, the highest number of mortgage documents recorded from 2011 to through 2017 was 5,419 in 2013. The low of 4,020 recorded was hit in 2014.

Monies Collected in the Register of Deeds Office in the last five years (passports not included):

Source	State Real Estate Transfer Tax	County Real Estate Transfer Tax	Recording Fees	Remonumentation Fees (MSSR)	Copy Sales
2017	\$4,829,752.50	\$743,864.00	\$510,941.00	\$97,215	\$97,377.20
2016	\$3,994,830.-	\$616,974.05	\$394,547.00	\$93,520	\$82,544.90
2015	\$3,549,772.50	\$543,366.45	\$343,908.00	\$83,339	\$81,244.19
2014	\$3,201,015.-	\$494,222.55	\$305,431.00	\$75,880	\$69,193.85
2013	\$2,967,986.35	\$453,638.55	\$392,886.80	\$95,864	\$86,041.50

Definitions:

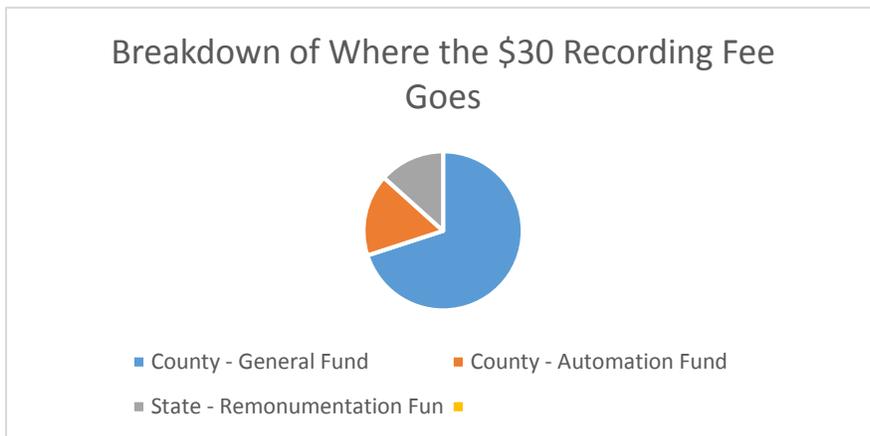
State Real Estate Transfer Tax: collected on all deeds recorded and sent to the State of Michigan.

County Real Estate Transfer Tax: collected on all deeds recorded and retained by the County.

Recording Fees: collected on every document recorded (nearly 200 different types of documents) and retained by the County.

Remonumentation Fees: collected on each document recorded and sent the state for surveying land corners.

Copy Sales: collected on each document - \$1 per page and \$.20 per image (bulk sale to two title companies).



BREAKDOWN of RECORDING FEES: With each document recorded with the Register of Deeds, the Office collects \$30*. The County General Fund receives \$21, while \$5 of the \$30 goes to the Automation Fund (for upgrading technology in the Register of Deeds Office), the remaining \$4 goes to the State Remonumentation Fund.

* The \$30 fee was implemented on Oct. 1st, 2016. Prior to that, the fee was \$14 broken down to the same sources at: \$5, \$5 and \$4.

FIVE YEAR TREND OF DEPOSITS MADE TO THE AUTOMATION FUND:

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Amount	\$121,255	\$118,321	\$115,082	\$108,507	\$134,580

PASSPORT SERVICES:

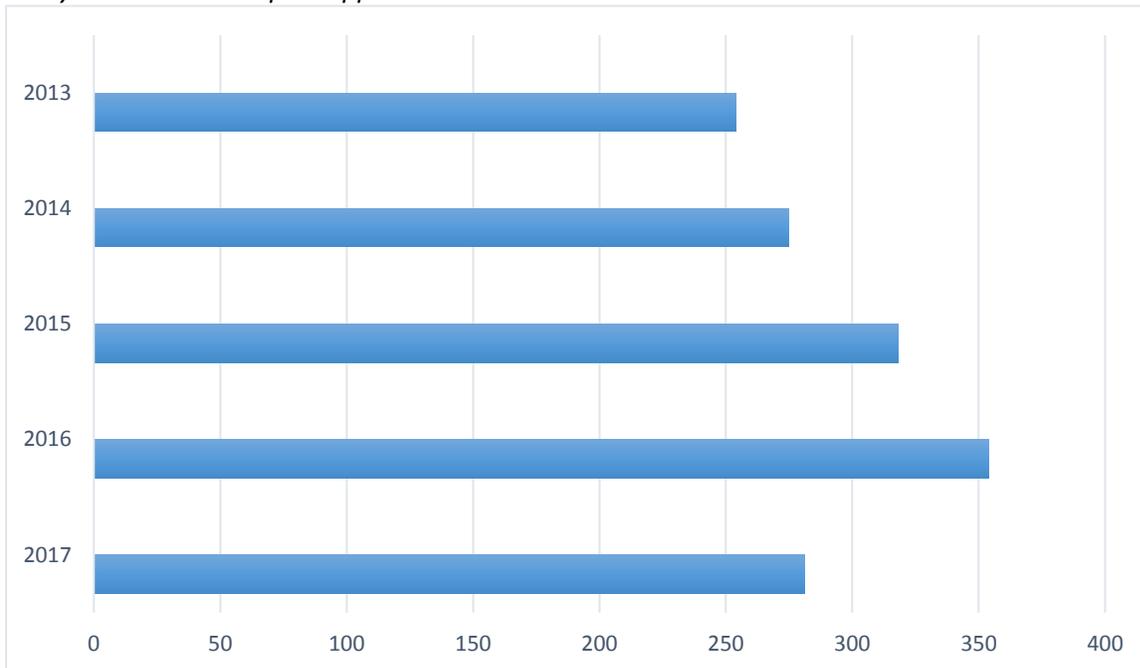
The Register of Deeds Division accepted 281 Passport applications in 2017.

The fee a customer pays for obtaining a routine passport through our office is \$135.00. Of this fee, \$110 goes to U.S. Department of State while \$25 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 one passport size photo, valid photo identification and other supporting documents as needed (such as a birth certificate).

Five year trend in Passport Applications:



Passport applications had been going up steadily from 2013 to 2016.

Revenues to the County from Passport applications (\$25 per application) are as follows:

YEAR	APPLICATIONS	REVENUES TO THE COUNTY
2017	281	\$7025
2016	354	\$8850
2015	318	\$7950
2014	275	\$6875
2013	254	\$6350

*through September 2017



Each Deputy in the Register of Deeds Office is annually certified as a Passport Acceptance Agent by the United States Department of State.

This service was formerly provided by the Vital Records Division of the Clerk's Office until 2014.

A U.S. passport is valid documentation to obtain REAL ID-compliant Driver's License. Beginning Oct. 1, 2020,

Michigan residents will need to present a REAL ID-compliant document to fly within the United States and enter certain federal facilities under federal law.

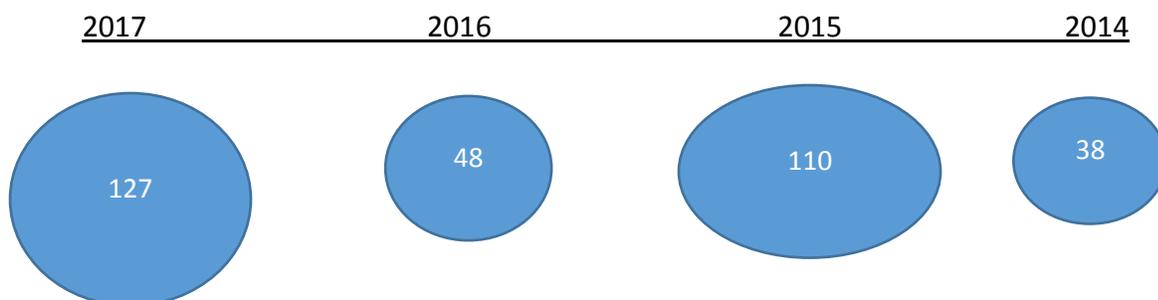
Centennial Farms and the Register of Deeds Office:

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

Other Questions? Contact the Historical Society of Michigan at (517) 324-1828 or by e-mail at farms@hsmichigan.org



Trends in Farmland and Open Space Preservation Applications Recorded under PA 116:



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 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 window as seamless and pleasant as possible by providing access to public court records and by answering questions regarding procedures, Friend of the Court and the Legal Assistance Center.



IN 2017, THE OFFICE PROCESSED 687 JURORS FOR CIRCUIT COURT JURY DUTY WHICH ENTAILS CHECKING IN, THE SELECTION PROCESS, AND ORCHESTRATING REIMBURSEMENTS FOR THEIR SERVICE (569 WERE PROCESSED DURING 2016).

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

Our services include processing documents necessary to initiate new cases filed with the court as well as receiving, reviewing and processing all documents pertaining to pending legal matters before the Court, pulling records for the scheduled hearings, and clerking in the courtroom. Our staff is friendly

and polite – emphasizing customer service – knowing that many of our customers might be navigating a complex legal system for the first time.

Accounting

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 and restitution. These payments may be made at the Circuit Court Records window or online.

Restitution Payments Collections / Disbursements

Type		2014	2015	2016	2017
Adult	Beginning Balance:	\$27,465.90	\$16,964.20	\$17,990.13	\$10,394.26
	Collections:	\$164,579.00	\$113,272.40	\$124,020.00	\$245,026.56
	Total:	\$192,044.90	\$130,236.60	\$142,010.13	\$255,420.82
	Disbursed to victims:	\$185,433.49	\$116,469.11	\$131,856.73	\$253,083.30
Juvenile	Beginning Balance:	\$55,764.02	\$49,607.55	\$43,119.45	\$7,922.64
	Collections:	\$20,912.12	\$18,217.69	\$17,507.67	\$15,029.98
	Total:	\$76,676.14	\$67,735.24	\$60,627.12	\$22,952.62
	Dispersed to victims:	\$27,068.59	\$24,660.79	\$52,704.48	\$15,223.56

Reporting to State Agencies

The Circuit Court Records Division is responsible for reporting all convictions of a felony, high court misdemeanor or probation violation 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 it may take necessary actions to uphold and protect the citizens of Michigan.

Permanency Indicator Report

Since 2015, the Circuit Court Records Division has prepared and submitted the Permanency Indicator Report to the State Court Administrator's Office. The information collected for this report will provide the circuit courts and the State Court Administrative Office with specific statistical information and data to determine compliance with statutes and court rules and to make management decisions about the effective and timely processing of child protective cases in order to achieve permanency for Michigan's neglected and abused children. The Family Court along with the Clerk's Office plays an integral role in performance measures set by the State Court Administrator's Office.

"Our Clerk's Office provides excellent consumer friendly service to our citizens. This is especially true for adoptions, where the office is an excellent partner with the Family Court. Although every adoption is a celebration, Bob's staff goes all out in helping on Adoption Day," the Honorable Mike Buck – Chief Probate Judge for Allegan County.

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.

Adoptions

The adoption process in Allegan County begins in the Circuit Court Records Office. Deputy Clerks work with petitioning parents, Family Court, agencies and attorneys to facilitate the process. While all adoptions in Michigan are closed, once a year, our Office participates in "National Adoption Day" during which families participate in a public ceremony at the Courthouse.

Trends in Adoptions in Allegan County:

<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>
45	46	68	55	84	121	105

CIRCUIT COURT RECORDS DIVISION QUICK FACTS

Chief Deputy Clerk: Jackie Porter

FTE's: 6

Circuit Court Caseloads for

2016: 2,309

2017: 3,395

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

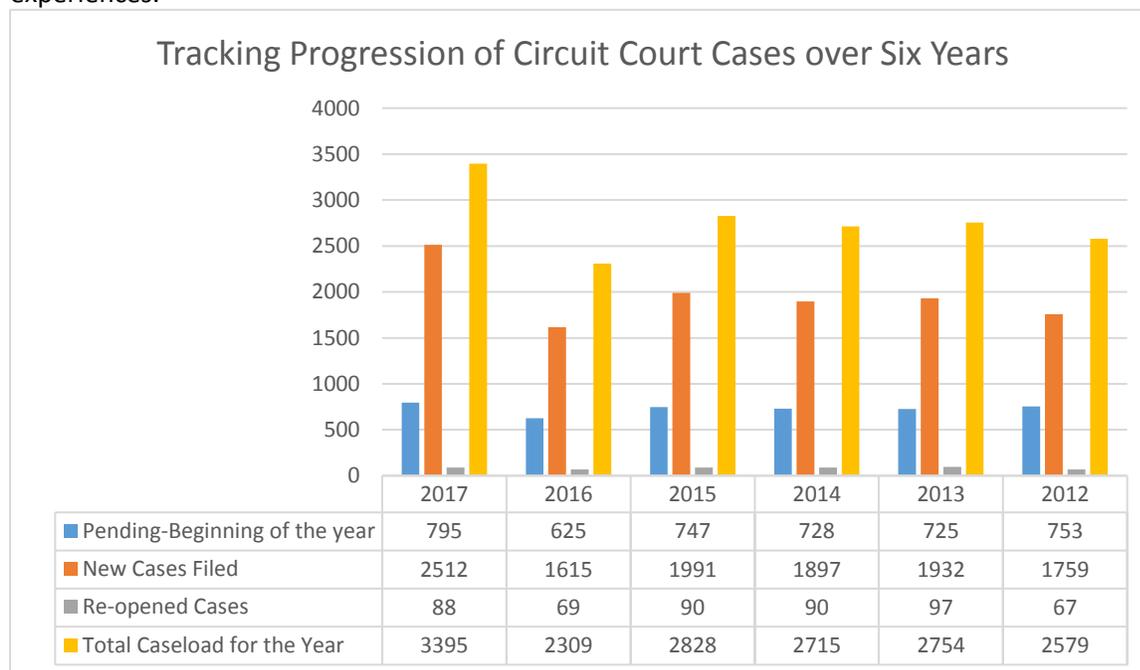
Restitution, Attorney Fees, Bonds, Victim Rights Fund, Fines, State Minimum, Filing Fees, Motion Fees, Jury Trial Fees, Garnishments & Subpoena Fees.

The Division serves as a pass through entity whereby restitution payments are collected and sent to victims of crimes. In 2017 \$245,027 has been collected for disbursement.

This Division is also responsible for processing adoptions.

Annual Report to the State Court

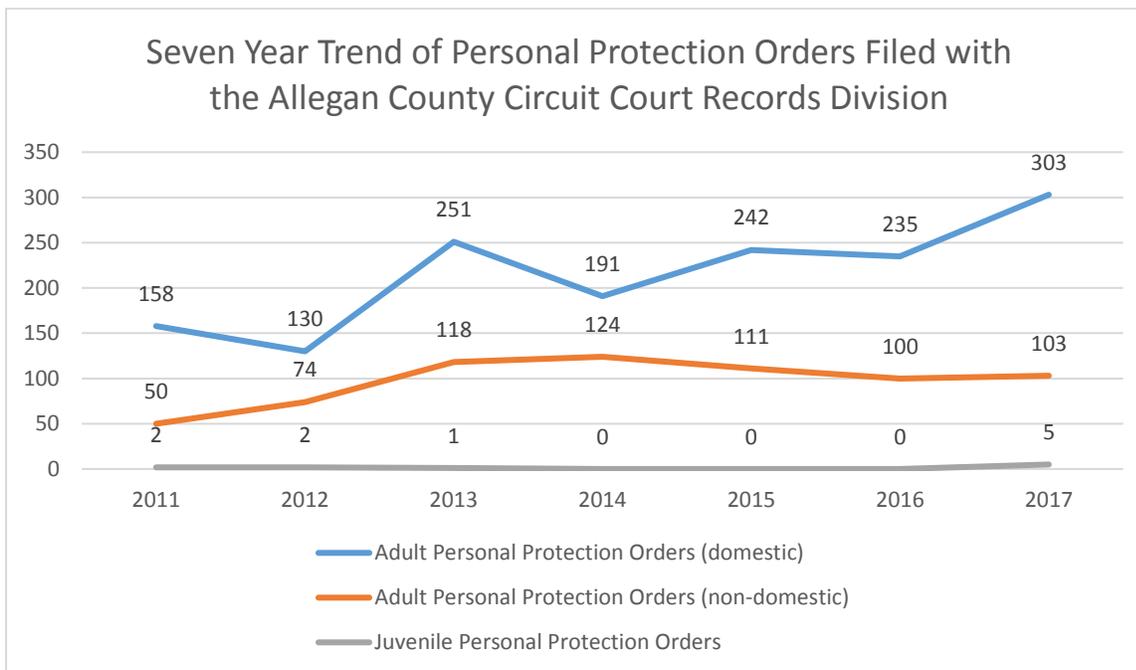
The Michigan State Court Administrator’s Office annually requests of all counties a caseload report that identifies important case data such as the number of new cases filed each year as well as the age of each case from the initial filing date to the date of disposition. Each year, the Circuit Court 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 our procedures help to ensure that our residents are satisfied with their overall court experiences.



“THE ALLEGAN COUNTY CLERK’S OFFICE AND THE ALLEGAN COUNTY CIRCUIT COURT HAVE ESTABLISHED AN EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP THAT PROVIDES QUALITY SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY. THE CLERKS ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE COURTS, AND WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THEIR CONTINUED PATIENCE WITH BOTH THE PUBLIC AND THE COURTS. CLERK GENETSKI’S LEADERSHIP HAS SPARKED RENEWED ENTHUSIASM FOR PUBLIC SERVICE,” CHIEF JUDGE OF THE 48TH CIRCUIT COURT
MARGARET BAKKER.

Trends in Family Court filings (other than adoptions) in the Circuit Court Division:

Year	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011
Juvenile or Neglect Cases	474	502	667	530	732	762	1,101



Personal Protection Orders in Allegan County are filed with the deputy clerks in the Circuit Court Records Division. The seven year trend for Juvenile PPO's is extremely steady with a low of 0 in 2014, 2015 and 2016. There were 5 filed in 2017. The Office handled 2 for the years 2011 and 2012 and only 1 in 2013. Through the same seven years, the trend in non-domestic Adult Personal Protection Orders begins with a low of 50 in 2011 and rose steadily to a peak of 124 (2014). Those numbers have been declining slightly since then with 103 during 2017. Domestic Adult Personal Protection Orders filed at the Clerk's Office from 2011 to 2017 show much more fluctuation. The fewest recorded since 2011 being 130 during 2012 and the high of 303 PPO's filed took place in 2017.



ELECTIONS

Division Overview



The County Clerk is the chief election officer in Allegan County. While local jurisdictions run much of the day-to-day operations of elections, the Elections Division is responsible for the administration of elections, the accurate accumulation of countywide results, and the maintenance of elections records. Election Coordination collaborates with the rest of the County Clerk’s Office, state agencies, other county clerks (across Michigan and throughout the United States), as well as township and city clerks throughout Allegan County to cover three basic areas related to elections: maintaining the Qualified Voter File, meeting the Campaign Filing and educational needs of candidates, and serving the election needs of Allegan County residents.

THE QUALIFIED VOTER FILE

The Qualified Voter File is a state-run database of every legally registered voter in Michigan. Maintaining the integrity of the QVF is essential to each citizen’s right to vote. To ensure integrity of voter rolls of Allegan County residents, the Election Coordinator facilitates entry of newly registered voters, address updates, and removal of electors who have moved, request to be removed from the list or who have passed away. The coordinator also communicates with other states to scrub rolls when a voter moves across state lines.

For the year of 2017, Election Coordination along with city and township clerks processed 6,221 voter registrations and address changes in Allegan County, as well as miscellaneous Absentee Ballot requests and items intended for other counties. A priority has been ensuring compliance with the Election Code to facilitate a smooth voting process for those who submitted registrations by the legal deadline marking 30 days of legal residence prior to Election.

From January 1st, through December 31st of 2017, the active voter count for Allegan County increased from 71,562 to 77,781. This continues a long trend of increases in voter rolls.

During the summer of 2017, Allegan County Elections Coordination was happy to announce an update to its death notifications process, saving both time and taxpayer dollars. Rather than printing paper lists every month for mailing to 32 local clerks and multiple surrounding counties, the coordinator developed an email notification system. Preferences were also updated with physician practices and others who were traditionally mailed monthly copies. County clerks outside Michigan continue to receive formal notices via U.S. Mail.

(the Qualified Voter File – Continued) This change is expected to save Allegan County up to \$235 per year at today's mailing rates. Transition to email was smooth, and local clerk feedback has been very positive. Along the way, four counties discovered gaps in their notification systems to Allegan County and made improvements. As a result, local clerks and stakeholders throughout Allegan County are receiving more direct, timely information for removing deceased voters from the QVF.

Campaign Files

It has been the pleasure of the Elections Division to assist with eight brand-new filings in Allegan County this year. Six candidates for office and two Ballot Question Committees filed papers with the Office. Many returning candidates filed Affidavits of Identity desiring to be placed on 2017 ballots. In addition to answering numerous individual questions, the office has assisted committees with filing Campaign Finance Statements or amendments to their Statements of Organization.

Maintaining the many election files that well-serve Allegan County candidates, residents, and the public at large is a constant effort. Election Coordination continues to make every effort to align Allegan County filing policies with current Campaign Finance Law.

Elections and the Public

2017 Elections

Allegan County hosted 2 elections in during 2017, a May 2nd Special Election and a November 7th Election.

The May 2017 Election

The May 2nd Special Election had voters in Wayland Union Public School District and Fennville Public Schools (for in-county school districts) participating in the election on two bond issues and an operating millage (respectively). Out-county Special Elections for Holland Public Schools (Operating Millage and Sinking Fund) were on the ballot. As well, Hudsonville Public Schools (Salem Township) and Zeeland Public Schools (Salem, Overisel and Fillmore Townships) were consolidated to precincts in Ottawa and Kent Counties in an effort to save taxpayer money. Kent ISD voters in Leighton Township (Caledonia Public Schools) found a millage proposal on their ballots.

Manlius Township voters had three millages on their ballots on May 2nd. On the same day, electors in Saugatuck Township had a road millage, and Valley Township voted on roads and fire protection.



Turnout was light across the county. With the help of the County Information and Technology Dept., all of the results were posted online by 9:30 PM, and elections staff left for home by 10 PM.

Elections Division

By the Numbers-

Chief Deputy Clerk: Jackie Porter

FTE's: .25

Coordinating Elections for:

45 "In-County" Precincts

10 "In-County" School Districts

Voter Turnout in 2016:

37% in the March 8th Presidential Primary

67% in the November 8th General Election

Turnout in Actual Number of Voters:

30,152 for the March 8th Presidential Primary

56,574 for the November 8th General Election (84,132 registered)

4 - Number of Elections Managed in 2016

3 - Number of Elections Managed in 2017

Cost of New Voting Machines to Taxpayers Beyond State Grant Monies: \$0*

*For the first five years of the new contract including maintenance.

The November 2017 Election

The November 7, 2017 election had numerous municipal and school proposals on the ballot. Voters in the City of Fennville had its operating millage before them. A millage for the Interurban Transit Authority was on the ballot in the cities of Saugatuck and Douglas and Saugatuck Township.

Voters in the City of Holland went to the polls for a renewal and increase of the West Michigan Regional Airport Authority.

Ballots in the townships of Casco and Saugatuck listed a Roads Millage and a Road Maintenance Proposal Renewal.

Voters in the following school districts renewed operating millages: Saugatuck and Martin.

Bonding proposals for Saugatuck, Fennville, and Otsego were voted on by electors from each school district.

Allegan Public Schools ran a proposal to create a sinking fund.

City council, commission and mayoral races were held throughout Allegan County in the jurisdictions of: Allegan, Fennville, Holland, Saugatuck, Douglas, South Haven, Wayland.

And Jim Richardson was elected Constable in the City of Allegan.

The election ran smoothly overall with light turnout for the most part countywide except for the Saugatuck Public School District region. Results were up on the website by 10 PM and lights were out in the office by 10:30 with the help of the County Office of Information Services.

Saugatuck Township Recall Effort

In December, a group of electors from Saugatuck Township brought before the County Election Commission language drafted to recall four Township Board members. The Commission decided the proposed language did not meet the threshold of the law to move forward with a recall election.

VITAL RECORDS

Division Overview

The Vital Records Division assists Allegan County Residents with filing and obtaining birth certificates , marriage certificates, death certificates, and geneology research.

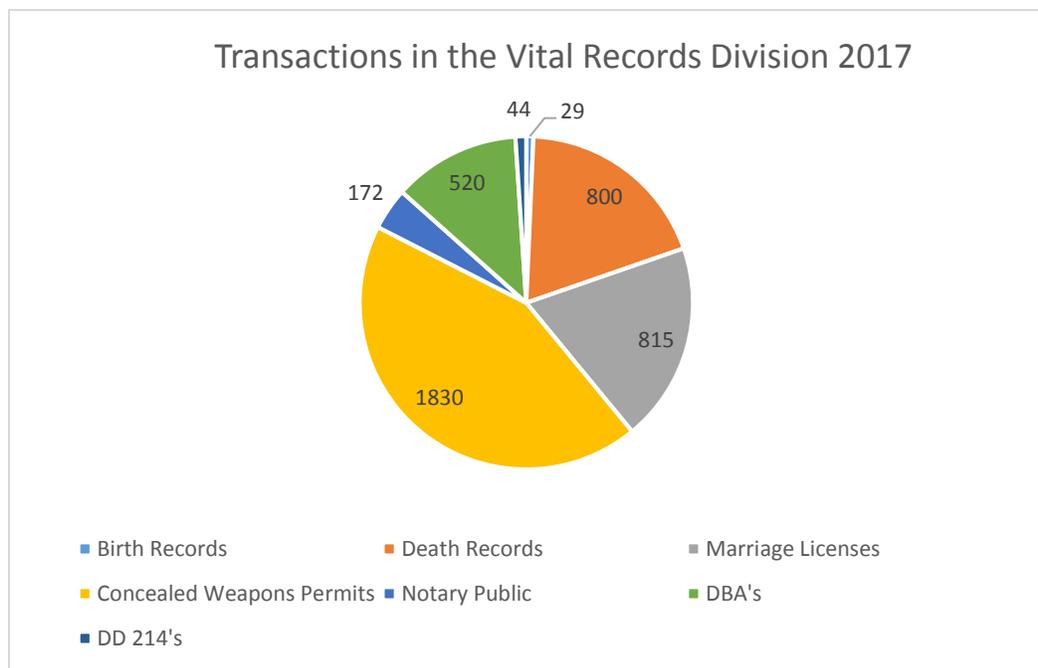
In addition, the Division assists with applications for concealed pistol licenses (CPLs), the recording of home births, notary applications, business registrations and provides the free service of registering Military discharge papers (otherwise known as DD 214's).

Certified copies of certificates can be obtained by visiting our office between 8 AM and 5 PM, Monday through Friday. If someone is unsure of a record, phoning first at (269) 673-0450 is never a bad idea.

Application forms for many of our services can be found online at

<http://cms.allegancounty.org/sites/Office/Clerk/VitalRecords/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

Deputy Clerks in the Vital Records Division of the County Clerk's Office were very busy in 2017. All told, they processed some 4,210 transactions – the greatest number of which were Concealed Weapons Permits (1,830). The



lowest number of filings were for military discharge papers and birth certificates. There were 44 DD 214's filed at the Office during 2017 while only 29 home births were registered. Marriage license requests at 815 outpaced deaths recorded (800) by just shy of 15. Small business owners registered 520 applications for an individual "Doing Business As" (DBA's) in Allegan County. Notary Public applications numbered 172 for 2017.

Total Transactions in the Vital Records Division Year over Year for 2016 and 2017

Year	2016	2017
Number of Transactions	4,389	4,210

Trends in Live Home Births

Allegan County no longer has any “birthing hospitals”. So (outside of emergencies), the only birth certificates initiated in the Allegan County Clerk’s Office are those for “Live Home Births”, whereby the newborn and his or her mother or father physically come to the office with identification. When identification is verified, the most recent birth in Allegan County is recorded. One copy of the certificate is retained at the county and another is sent to the State Department of Vital Records.

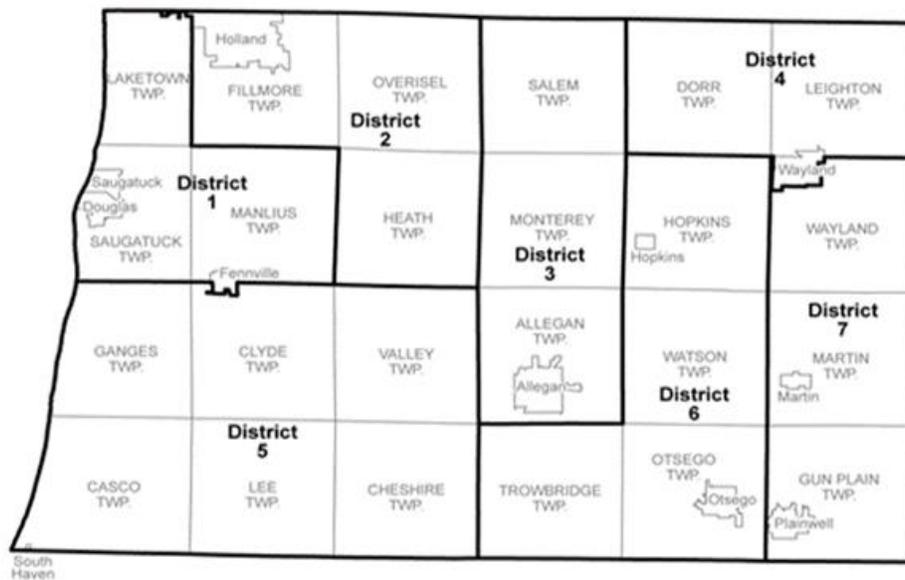
Recent Trends in Home Births Recorded in Allegan County:

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Births Recorded	12	27	25	30	29

GEOGRAPHY OF HOME BIRTHS:

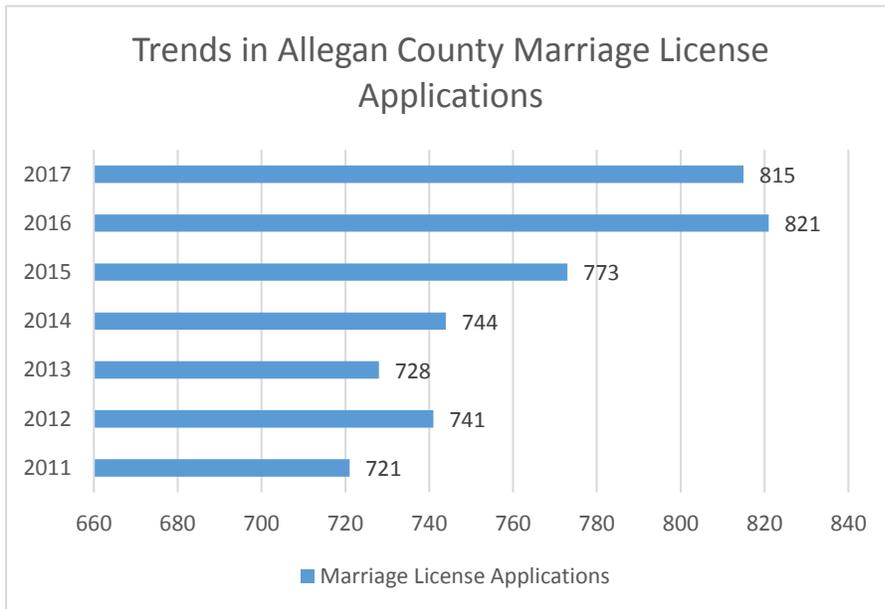
Home births seem to be equally popular throughout Allegan County. When broken down by County Commission District, the numbers for 2017 are as such:

- District 1 (Kapenga)- 4 home births**
- District 2 (Storey) - 3 home births**
- District 3 (Thiele) - 5 home births**
- District 4 (DeYoung)- 2 home births**
- District 5 (Jessup) - 6 home births**
- District 6 (Dugan) - 5 homebirths**
- District 7 (Black) - 4 home births**



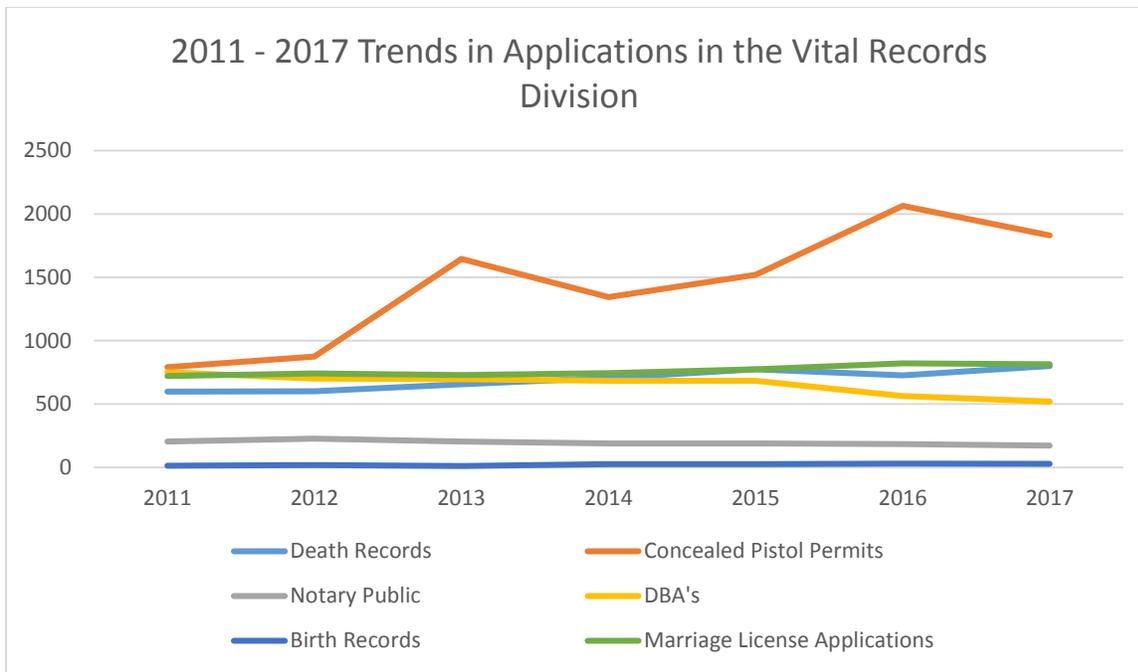
\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

WHERE THE MONEY GOES: Certified copies of Birth Certificates, Death Certificates and Marriage Licenses cost \$10 for the first and \$4 for each additional copy. DBA's cost \$10 to file. New Marriage License Applications cost \$20 for Allegan County Residents and Out of State Applicants cost \$30. The money from each of these goes to the Allegan County General Fund. Concealed Weapons Permit applications cost \$100 for an initial application and \$115 for a renewal application. Of the \$100 (or the \$115), \$74 (or \$79 for renewal) goes to the Michigan State Police Information Center for the cost of background checks. The remaining monies in each case (\$26 or \$36) goes to the County CPL Fund which is used to pay personnel who processes CPL applications. Notary Public applications are \$10. Eight dollars of that goes to the County General Fund, the remaining \$2 is deposited in the State Notary Training Fund. Processing DD 214's costs the applicant no money. The service happily performed by the Office FOR FREE as a service to those who have served our country in the military.



Trends in Allegan County Marriage License Applications: From 2011 to 2017, requests for marriage licenses hit a high of 821 during 2016. The low of EXACTLY 100 fewer (721) was logged in 2011.





Seven Year Trends in Applications in the Vital Records Division: From 2011 through 2017, the number of applications for the services provided through Vital Records in the County Clerk’s Office does not fluctuate drastically with the exception of Concealed Weapon Permit applications which numbered 791 in 2011 and hit a high in 2016 of 2,064 (a difference of 1,273 applications from the low to the high).

The second largest difference in the number of applications over the period occurs in applications registering small business names (applications for “Doing Business As”). From 2011 through 2016, the number of DBA’s declined by 189 applications (dropping from 751 to 562). The downward trend continues through 2017.

VITAL RECORDS DIVISION / Quick Facts:

Chief Deputy Clerk - Jackie Porter

FTE’S – 2

Earliest Records on File:

September 1, 1835 County Organized

January 24, 1867 Birth Records

June 25, 1836 Circuit Court Records

February 13, 1867 Death Records

October 4, 1836 Board of Supervisors Proceedings



Filing DD 214's (for our Veterans)

One of the most important services the Vital Records Division offers is the recording of military discharge papers otherwise known as DD 214's. Most often, when U.S. Military Veterans return to civilian life, they are given only one copy of their papers of honorable discharge. If the papers are lost or destroyed, the federal government can be very difficult to deal with when a veteran tries to obtain new copies. These papers are extremely important for veterans as they try to obtain VA Benefits and state benefits.

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



When a veteran comes in to file his or her honorable discharge papers, he or she will receive the original papers back, a certified copy, and they will have access to free certified copies for any of their needs for the rest of their life, and the information on that form is completely secure.

Trends in DD 214 filings (through September 2017):

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number Filed	7	4	1	44

The campaign to encourage veterans to visit the Courthouse and file their DD 214's for the year of 2017 produced very strong results.



UPCOMING AND ONGOING PROJECTS, CHALLENGES AND ISSUES for the Office of Clerk and Register of Deeds

Register of Deeds – Land Records System

The staff in the Register of Deeds Office were very excited to see the County's "2018 Capital and Other Projects – Scoped, Reviewed and Recommended as of 9/8/2017". On the list, on page 3 – Project #2560 – 33 for 2018 is to Replace Public Records Management System. A new system will help improve the efficiency in the Office and allow the public to purchase copies of Deeds online. The Register of Deeds and staff greatly appreciate the hard work by the County IT Department in preparation for this project.

New Voting Machines

The new Dominion Voting Systems were expected during 2017. Due to issues with the state grant process, Allegan County's machines would not arrive during 2017.

Election Inspector Training

Next year will be a big election year in Michigan. There will be a special election in May, primaries for state and federal offices in August, and general elections for U.S. Senate, U.S. Congress, Governor of Michigan, State Attorney General, Secretary of State, State House and State Senate as well as county offices in November. Michigan's governor is termed out of office creating the first time that seat has no incumbent from either party running for it since 2010. With speculation that U.S. Congressman Fred Upton might run for U.S. Senate or retire, the possibility exists for a large primary field on the Republican side for the 6th Congressional District seat. The field on the Democratic Primary side is already larger than it has been in recent memory.

With the number of open seats, amount of attention on elections, and number of new local clerks throughout the county who have not yet run a major election, the Clerk's Office will need to do a lot of training of Election Inspectors and poll workers. Plans are underway now for how to accomplish that while incorporating ongoing training with the new machines.





FAREWELL – the Offices of Clerk and Register of Deeds would like to offer congratulations and best wishes to long time County Commissioner Don Black (R- Wayland).

First elected to serve in 1998, Commissioner Black’s hard work, dedication and commitment to his constituents and to responsive county government set a very high bar for public service in Allegan County – one that will be respected and remembered well for many years to come.

Having served during some of the most

challenging times in history, Commissioner Black will be remembered for his even-keeled approach to issues as well as a calm and discerning nature. His tenure will be marked by a willingness to listen, a tremendously positive outlook and a strong faith in God that guides him daily.

As the 2017 ANNUAL REPORT will be the last one presented to Don Black as a Commissioner, Clerk Genetski would like to thank Black for his generous and forgiving guidance and counsel through the years.

We in the office wish Don and his family the best in a well-earned retirement, and in his service we call to mind the Book of Matthew (25:23) “Well done good and faithful servant.”

