



# ANNUAL REPORT

(2016 through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 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

# Table of Contents

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## Contents

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| To The Board of Commissioners                         | 3     |
| Office of the Register of Deeds                       | 4-7   |
| Office of the County Clerk:                           |       |
| Circuit Court Records                                 | 8-11  |
| Elections   | 12-15 |
| Vital Records   | 16-20 |
| Upcoming, and Ongoing Projects, Issues and Challenges | 21    |



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 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017

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 2016 (including information and statistics for the first three quarters of 2017).

This year's report is in a slightly different format than previous years with more text accompanying the various trends in transactions, filings and recordings that are processed each day by the hardworking county employees in the Register of Deeds Office and the Divisions of the Circuit Court Records, Elections, and Vital Records under the Office of the County Clerk. The ANNUAL REPORT is an attempt to not only provide the important details of the day to day operations of the Office and all of the many benefits it provides to Allegan County, it is an effort to paint a picture of the varying needs of those individuals who visit 113 Chestnut or phone our offices each day and the polite professionalism of the talented deputies who go the extra mile to help those in need of county services.

The Offices of County Clerk and Register of Deeds have seen a lot of change this year with more on the way for 2018. However, the number one priority for each team member remains the same – providing outstanding customer service for the more than 114,000 residents of the Allegan County.

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 customer service – polite, professional, accurate and timely.

Over the last several months, the talented deputies in the Register of Deeds Office have been very busy meeting with, learning from and listening to different vendors for a new land records system. The Office and its regular customers are excited for new opportunities and services we will soon be able to provide our customers.

Register of Deeds Office Quick Facts -

Chief Deputy Register: Patricia Fales

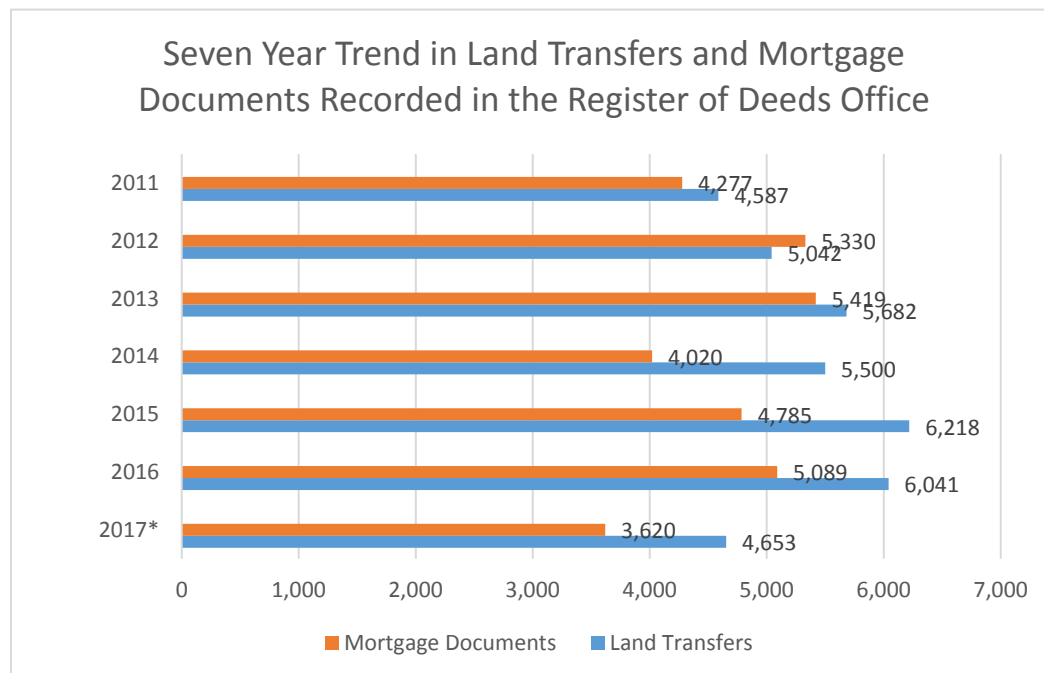
Fulltime Employees: Four

Money Collected (for 2016 including State Transfer Taxes collected): \$5, 311,135.15

Total Transactions: 23,990 (2016)

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). Within those numbers, land

transfers recorded hit a high in 2015 of 6,218 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 September 2017 was 5,419 in 2013. The low of 4,020 recorded was hit in 2014 although through September of 2017, the office has filed only 3,620.

*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*  | \$3,632,553.75                 | \$564,389.65                    | \$387,229      | \$73,723                    | \$65,428.10 |
| 2016   | \$3,994,830.-                  | \$616,974.05                    | \$394,547      | \$93,520                    | \$82,544.90 |
| 2015   | \$3,549,772.50                 | \$543,366.45                    | \$343,908      | \$83,339                    | \$81,244.19 |
| 2014   | \$3,201,015.-                  | \$494,222.55                    | \$305,431      | \$75,880                    | \$69,193.85 |
| 2013   | \$2,967,986.35                 | \$453,638.55                    | \$392,886.80   | \$95,864                    | \$86,041.50 |

\*through September 30th

Definitions:

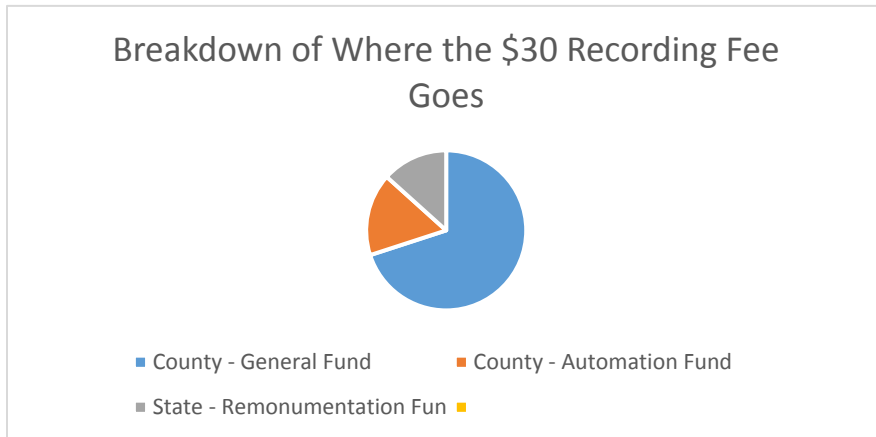
State Real Estate Transfer Tax: collected on all deeds recorded and sent to the State of Michigan.

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\*. Twenty-one dollars of that goes to the County General Fund, \$5 of that goes to the Automation Fund (for upgrading technology in the Register of Deeds Office), the remaining \$4 goes to the State Remonutation 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 | \$91,890 | \$118,321 | \$115,082 | \$108,507 | \$134,580 |

\*through Septmeber 30<sup>th</sup>.

**PASSPORT SERVICES:**

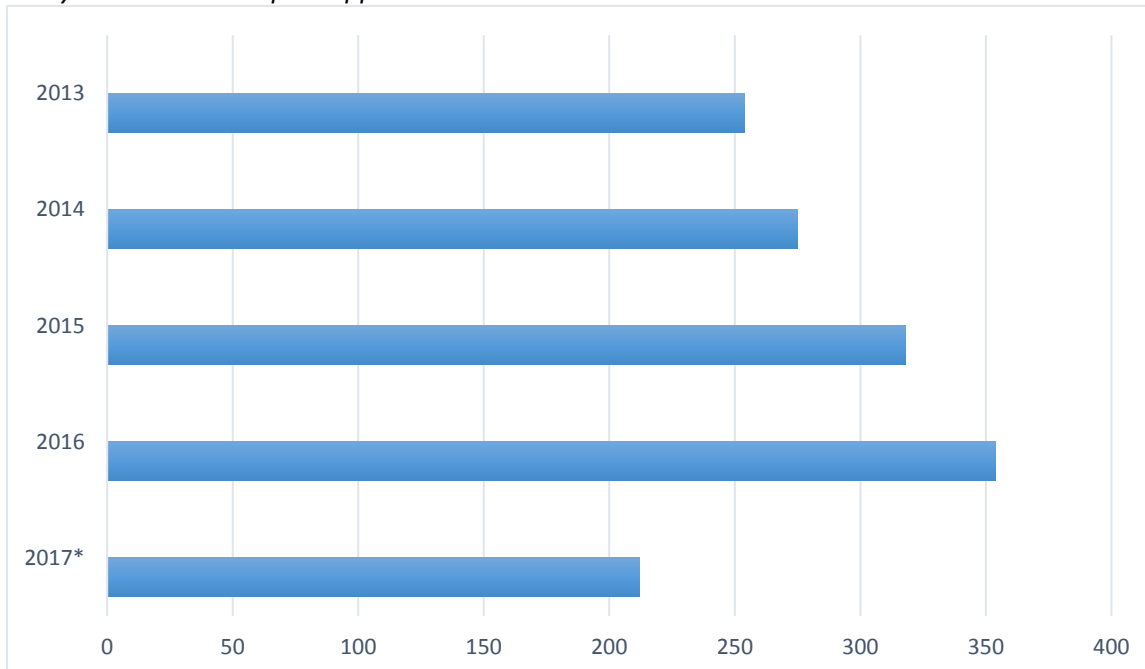
The Register of Deeds Division accepted 354 Passport applications in 2016 and has accepted 212 through the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter of 2017.

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. However, though September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2017, we have only 212 applications so far, so this year could see the lowest number of applications in a while unless the final quarter of the year sees quite a boost in business.

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

| YEAR  | APPLICATIONS | REVENUES TO THE COUNTY |
|-------|--------------|------------------------|
| 2017* | 212          | \$5300                 |
| 2016  | 354          | \$8850                 |
| 2015  | 318          | \$7950                 |
| 2014  | 275          | \$6875                 |
| 2013  | 254          | \$6350                 |

\*through September 2017



In 2016, for the second year in a row, the Office earned a “Certificate of Achievement” from the Passport Acceptance Program for exemplary performance on Facility Oversight visits. 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 in the Vital Records Division of the Clerk’s Office until 2014.

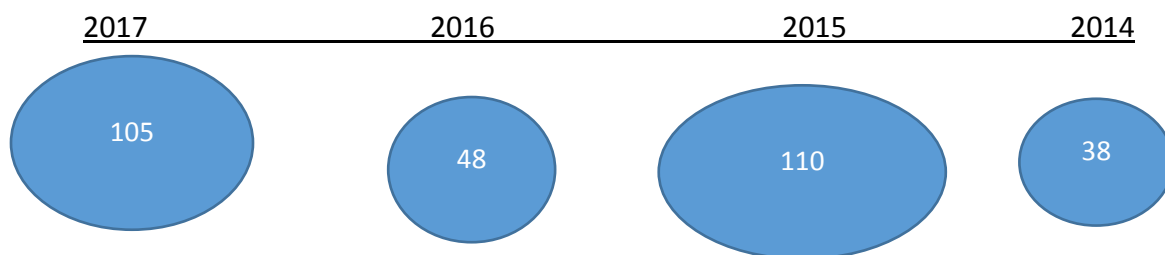
**Centennial Farms and the Register of Deeds Office:**

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.



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

THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30TH OF 2017, THE OFFICE HAS PROCESSED 218 JURORS FOR CIRCUIT COURT JURY DUTY WHICH ENTAILS CHECKING IN, THE SELECTION PROCESS, AND ORCHESTRATING REIMBURSEMENTS FOR THEIR SERVICE (569 WERE PROCESSED DURING 2016).

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 48<sup>th</sup> 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 (\*through September 2017)*

| 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        | \$211,868.16        |
|          | Total:                | \$192,044.90        | \$130,236.60        | \$142,010.13        | \$222,262.42        |
|          | Disbursed to victims: | <b>\$185,433.49</b> | <b>\$116,469.11</b> | <b>\$131,856.73</b> | <b>\$208,228.98</b> |
| 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         | \$11,116.13         |
|          | Total:                | \$76,676.14         | \$67,735.24         | \$60,627.12         | \$18,038.77         |
|          | Dispersed to victims: | <b>\$27,068.59</b>  | <b>\$24,660.79</b>  | <b>\$52,704.48</b>  | <b>\$10,136.53</b>  |



### **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> |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 40           | 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\*: 2,246

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

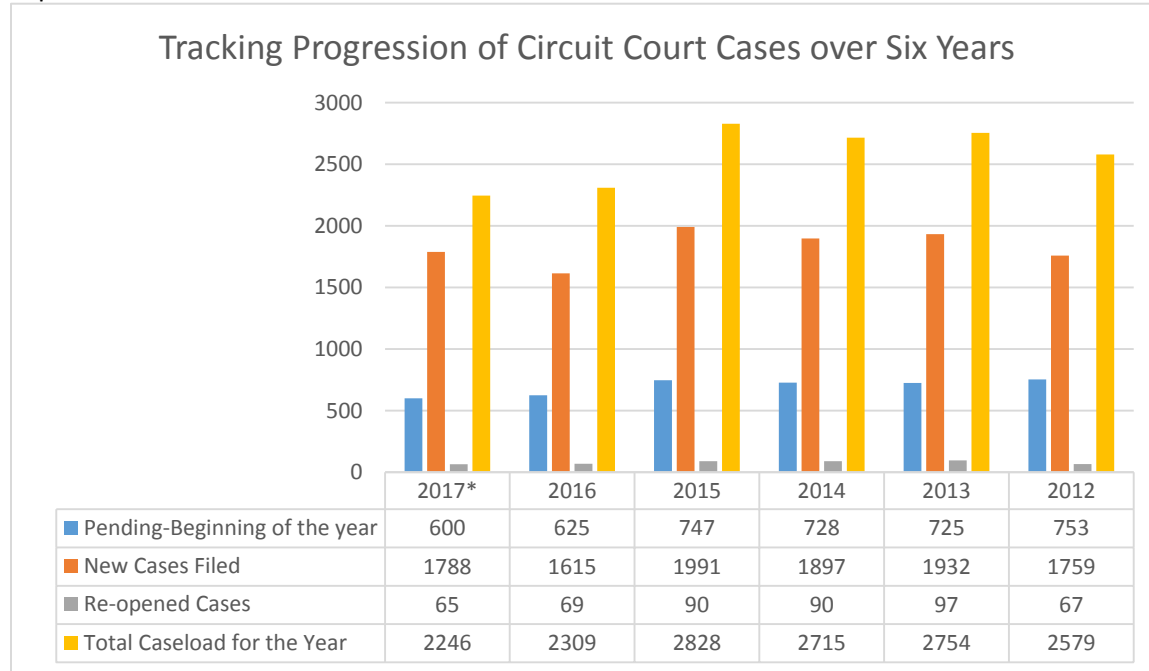
Restitution, Attorney Fees, Bonds, Victim Rights Fund, Fines, State Minimum, Filing Fees, Motion Fees, Jury Trial Fees, Garnishments & Subpoena Fees.

The Division serves as a pass through entity whereby restitution payments are collected and sent to victims of crimes. Through the third quarter of 2017- \$218,364.51 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.

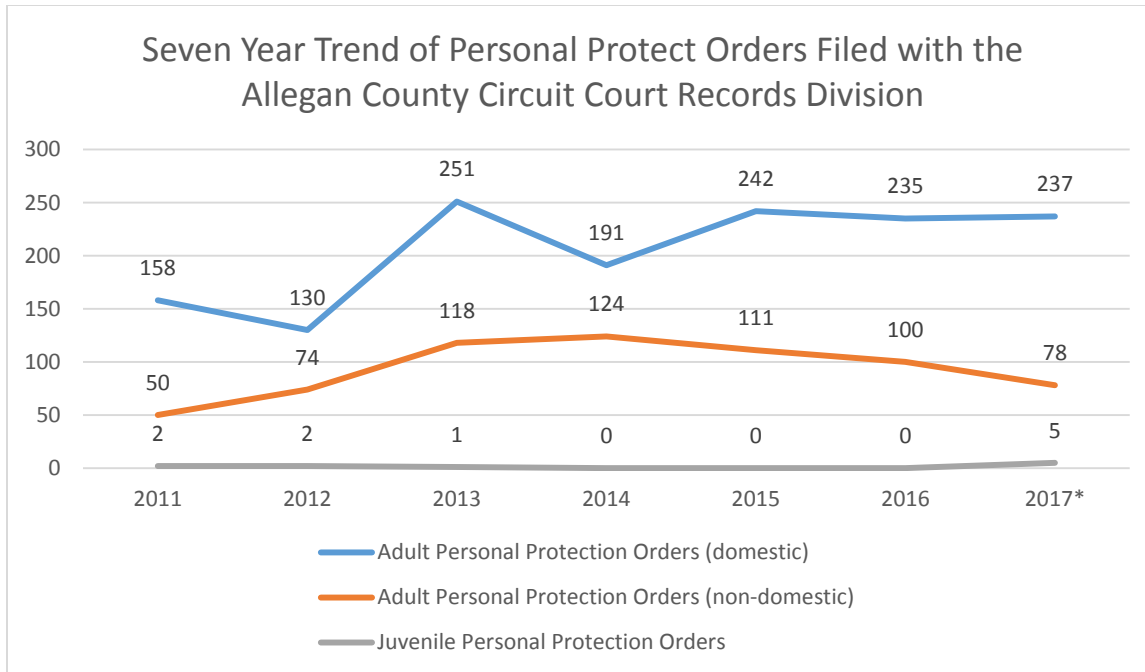


*“THE ALLEGAN COUNTY CLERK’S OFFICE AND THE ALLEGAN COUNTY CIRCUIT CLERK HAVE ESTABLISHED AN EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP THAT PROVIDES QUALITY SERVICE TO OUR COMMUNITY. THE CLERKS ARE RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE COURTS, AND WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THEIR CONTINUED PATIENCE WITH BOTH THE PUBLIC AND THE COURTS. CLERK GENETSKI’S LEADERSHIP HAS SPARKED RENEWED ENTHUSIASM FOR PUBLIC SERVICE,”* CHIEF JUDGE OF THE 48<sup>TH</sup> 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 Cases | 304   | 502  | 667  | 530  | 732  | 762  | 1,101 |

\* - through September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2017



\*through September 30<sup>th</sup>.

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 (although 5 have already been filed through the first three quarters of 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 and are at 78 through September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2017. Domestic Adult Personal Protection Orders filed at the Clerk's Office from 2011 to 2017 show much more fluctuation. The fewest and the highest number recorded were hit within a year of one another: 130 filed in 2012 and 251 in 2013. Through the third quarter of 2017, 237 domestic Adult PPO's were filed, 2 more than during all of 2016.



## 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. Elections 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 request to be removed or who have passed away. The coordinator also communicates with other states to scrub rolls when a voter moves across state lines.

Through September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2017, Election Coordination has mailed more than 2,984 voter registrations and address changes to city and township clerks 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 May of 2016 through September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2017, the active voter count for Allegan County of 75,583 increased by 4,853 voters for a total of 80,436 active voters.**

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 is 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 have 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**

**2016 Elections**

Allegan County held four elections, one statewide recount, and two local recounts in 2016.

**The March 2016 Election:**

On the March 8<sup>th</sup> Ballot, electors throughout the county cast ballots in the Presidential Primary. In all jurisdictions except for Dorr, Wayland, Leighton Townships and the City of Wayland, voters participated in the General Election to fill a partial term in the State House of Representatives. At the same time- Fennville, Martin, and Otsego Public Schools each had ballot initiatives and Overisel Township had a Road Improvement Renewal Millage. Countywide turnout for the election was 37% with 30,152 voters participating.

***Allegan County 2016 Presidential Primary Voters’ Top Choices:***

***Republican***

| Name         | Number of Primary Votes |
|--------------|-------------------------|
| Ted Cruz     | 7,556                   |
| Donald Trump | 5,337                   |
| John Kasich  | 4,658                   |
| Marco Rubio  | 1,991                   |
| Ben Carson   | 364                     |

***Democratic***

|                 |       |
|-----------------|-------|
| Bernie Sanders  | 5,569 |
| Hillary Clinton | 3,511 |
| Uncommitted     | 142   |



## Elections Division

By the Numbers-

Chief Deputy Clerk: Jackie Porter

FTE's: .25 (through September 30<sup>th</sup> of 2017)

Coordinating Elections for:

45 "In-County" Precincts

10 "In-County" School Districts

Voter Turnout in 2016:

37% in the March 8<sup>th</sup> Presidential Primary

67% in the November 8<sup>th</sup> General Election

Turnout in Actual Number of Voters:

30,152 for the March 8<sup>th</sup> Presidential Primary

56,574 for the November 8<sup>th</sup> General Election (84,132 registered)

4 - Number of Elections Managed in 2016

2 - 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.

\*\*November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2017 election is NOT included in this report.

### The May 2016 Election:

Voters in Zeeland, Hamilton, Hopkins, and Hudsonville Public School District went to the polls on May 3<sup>rd</sup> for various initiatives. The City of Otsego had a public safety millage up for a vote while Laketown Township had a Fiber Optic Bond Proposal on the ballot.

Turnout was low county wide except for in Laketown where 42% of voters cast a ballot.

### The August 2016 Primary:

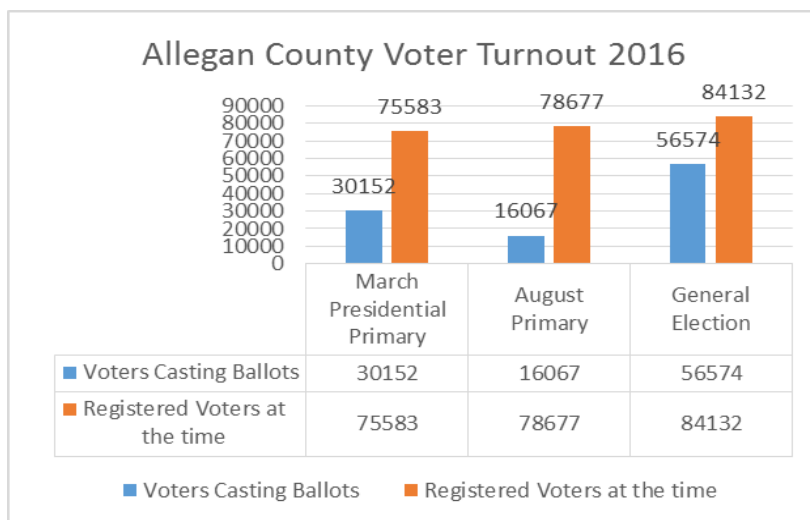
The August 8<sup>th</sup> Primary had Allegan County voters cast a partisan ballot for every partisan elected county officer as well primaries for State Representative in both the 72<sup>nd</sup> and the 80<sup>th</sup> Districts. Voters in the Allegan District Library area had a millage proposal and numerous township boards had primary races.

The Board of Canvassers oversaw two recounts. Neither the Republican Primary for Saugatuck Township Supervisor, nor the race to be the Republican nominee for the 6<sup>th</sup> County Commission District, were overturned.

Turnout across the county was low.

### The November General Election:

Two-thirds (67%) of registered voters turned out on November 8<sup>th</sup> for the General Election to cast ballots for President of the United States, all County Officers, State Board of Education, University Boards of Governors (or Regents), the State House seats for the 72<sup>nd</sup> and 80<sup>th</sup> Districts as well as township boards, city council seats and numerous local and school initiatives. Overall- local clerks helped 56,574 Allegan County residents participate in the democratic process.



### The Historic Recount of the 2016 Presidential Election

In late November of 2016, the Green Party Candidate for president, Jill Stein filed for a recount of the election results for the presidential elections in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania. The Elections Division worked closely with the Board of Canvassers, local clerks, election inspectors, the Secretary of State's Bureau of Elections and volunteers in an effort to recount by hand all of the 56,574 ballots cast throughout the county.

The recount began at 9 AM at the Allegan High School Conference Center and was complete by 7 PM that evening. Allegan County was one of the few in the entire state to complete theirs before a judicial order ended the recount statewide.

### The May 2017 Election

The May 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup>. 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 Department, all of the results were posted online by 9:30 PM, and elections staff left for home by 10 PM.



## 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.

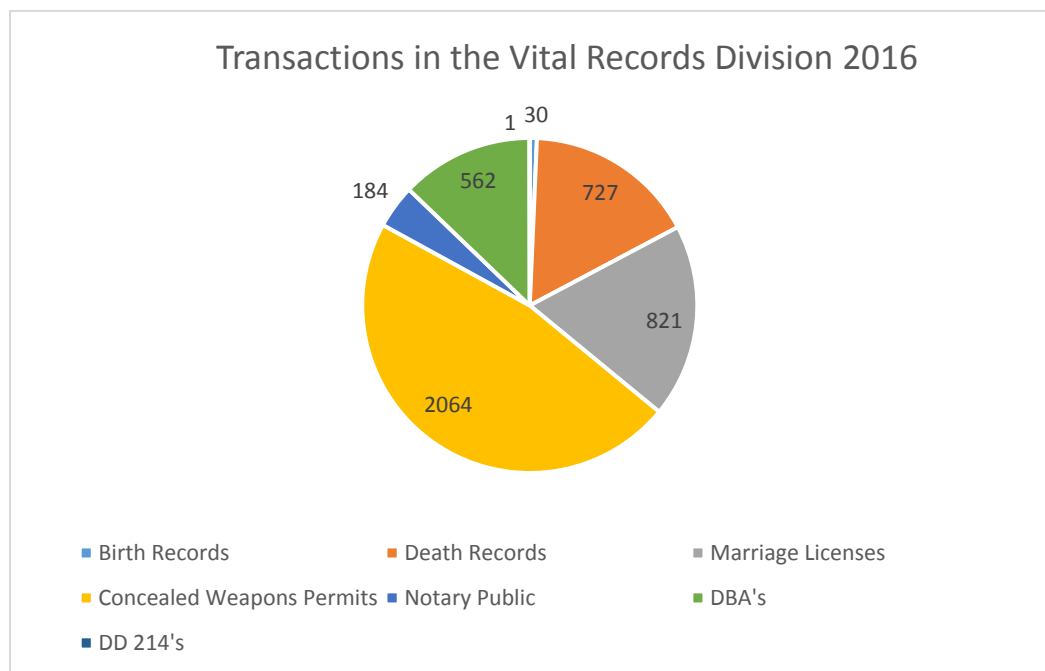
In addition, the Division assists with applications for concealed pistol licenses (CPLs), the recording of home births, notary applications, business registrations and provides the free service of registering Military discharge papers (otherwise known as DD 214's).

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 2016. All told, they processed some 4,389 transactions – the greatest number of which were Concealed Weapons Permits



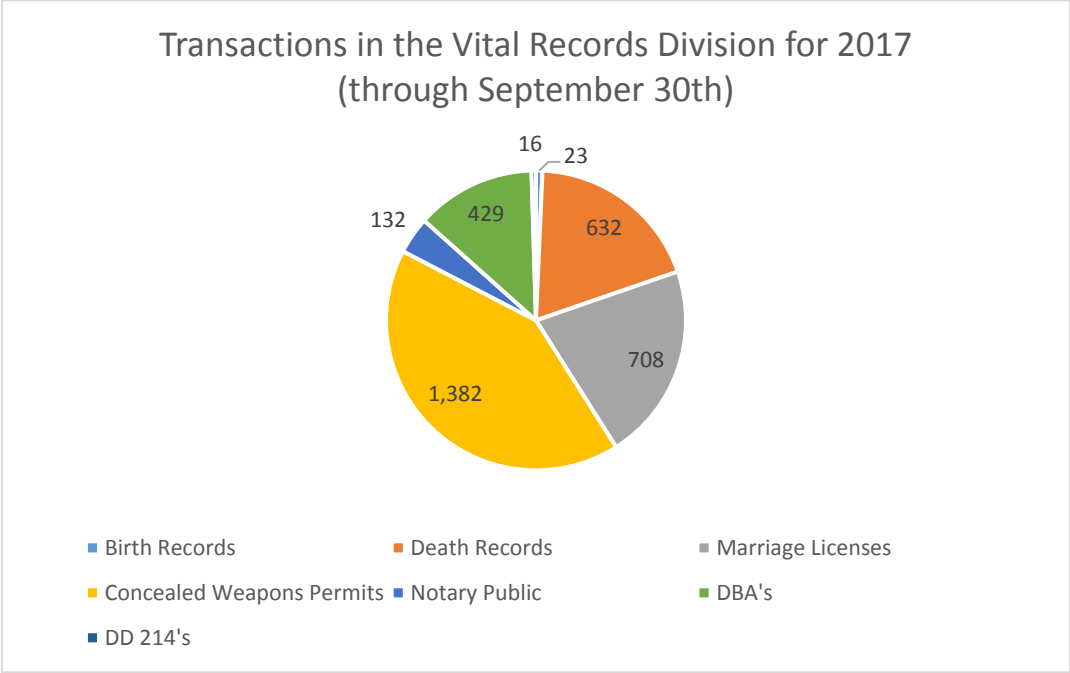
(2,064). The lowest number of filings were for military discharge papers and birth certificates. There was only one DD 214 filed at the Office during 2016 while only 30 home births were registered. Marriage certificate requests at 821 outpaced deaths recorded (727) by just shy of 100. Small business owners registered 562 applications for an individual "Doing Business As" (DBA's) in Allegan County. Notary Public applications numbered 184 for 2016.

*Total Transactions in the Vital Records Division Year over Year 2016-2017 (September 30<sup>th</sup>)*

| Year                   | 2016  | 2017* |
|------------------------|-------|-------|
| Number of Transactions | 4,389 | 3,322 |



### Transactions in the Vital Records Division for 2017 (through September 30th)



January through September of 2017 have been just as busy as 2016 in the Vital Records Division of the County Clerk's Office with 3,322 transactions. This means that through three-quarters of the current

year, the talented staff has processed 75.6% of transactions through all of 2016.

Again, the greatest number of applications processed so far were Concealed Weapons Permits at 1,382. Similar to last year, marriage licenses (708) and death records (632) were the second and third most frequently processed transactions. In a familiar pattern- DBA's, Notary applications, and Home Births were processed 4th, 5th, and 6th most frequently at 429, 132 and 23 through September 30. Veterans' discharge papers were the least of any transactions at 16.

\$ \$ \$ \$ \$

**WHERE THE MONEY GOES:** Birth Certificates, Death Certificates, Marriage Licenses, and DBA filings cost \$10 to file (if purchasing certified copies, the first is \$10 and \$4 for each after that). 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 Michigan State Police Information Center for the cost of background checks. The remaining monies in each case (\$26 or \$36) go 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 Live Home Births

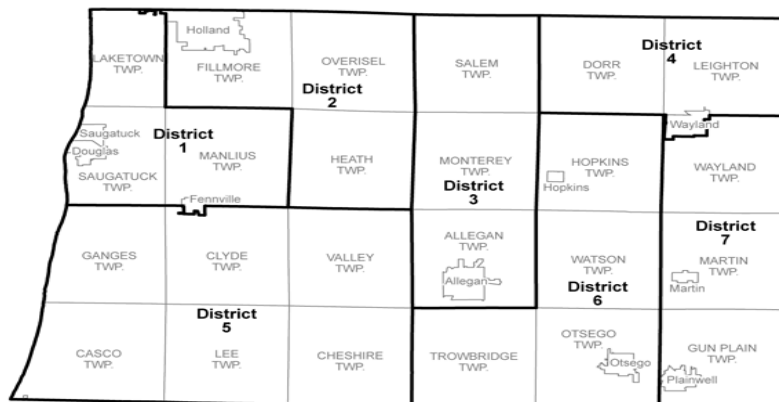
Alleghen County no longer has any “birthing hospitals”. So (outside of emergencies), the only birth certificates initiated in the Alleghen County Clerk’s Office are those for “Live Home Births”, whereby the newborn and his or her mother or father physically come to the office with identification. When identification is verified, the most recent birth in Alleghen 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 Alleghen County (\*through September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017):*

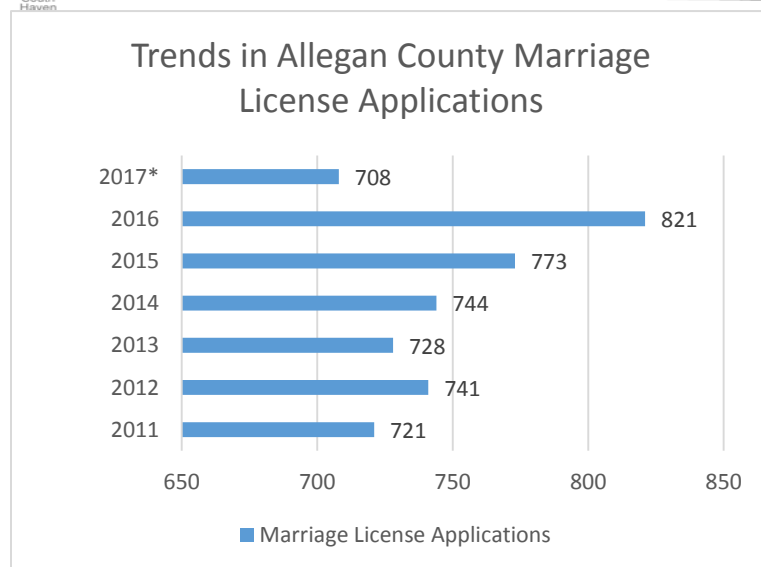
| Year            | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017* |
|-----------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Births Recorded | 12   | 27   | 25   | 30   | 23    |

## GEOGRAPHY OF HOME BIRTHS:

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



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



*Trends in Alleghen County Marriage License Applications:* From 2011 to 2017\*(through September), requests for marriage licenses hit a high of 821 during 2016. The low of EXACTLY 100 fewer (721) was logged in 2011. The numbers for 2017 so far are 86% of last year’s and are on pace to eclipse those of 2011, 2013 with the possibility of besting 2012 and 2014 as well.

## VITAL RECORDS DIVISION / Quick Facts:

Chief Deputy Clerk - Jackie Porter

FTE'S - 2

Earliest Records on File:

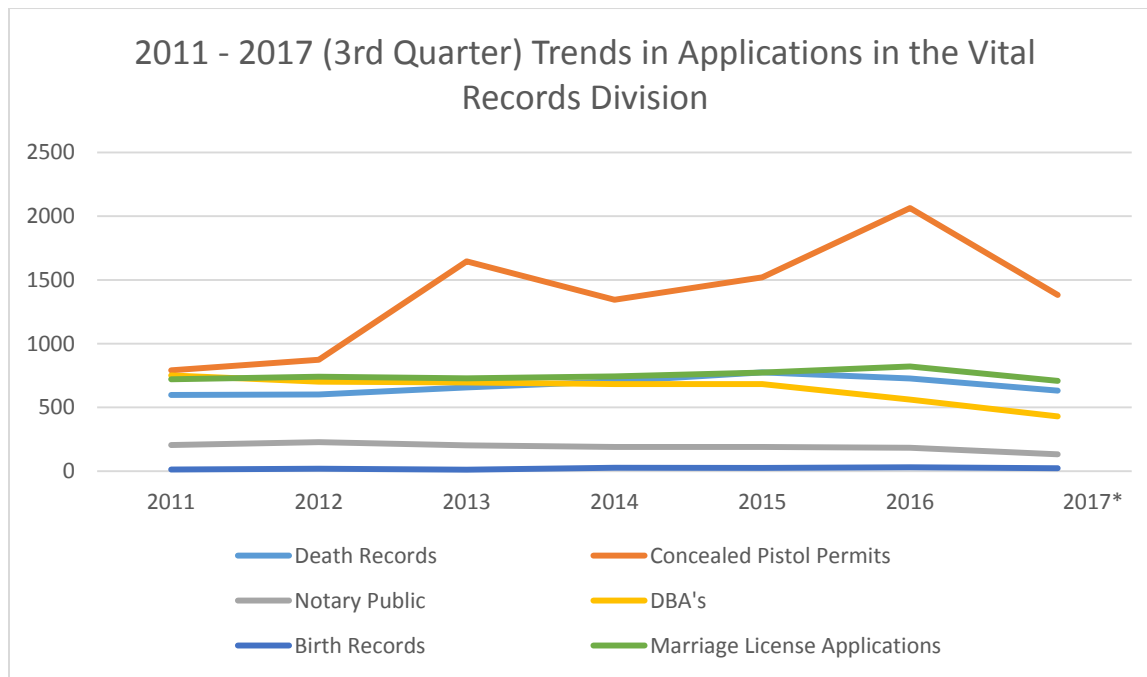
September 1, 1835 County Organized

January 24, 1867 Birth Records

June 25, 1836 Circuit Court Records

February 13, 1867 Death Records

October 4, 1836 Board of Supervisors Proceedings



*Seven Year Trends in Applications in the Vital Records Division:* From 2011 through September of 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 into 2017 - through the third quarter only 429 DBA's were filed in the office.

### 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 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    | 16    |

The campaign to encourage veterans to visit the Courthouse and file their DD 214's for the year of 2017 is

producing very strong results so far. Through September of 2017, the office has processed more than the previous three years combined, and we are on track to possibly double that number.



## **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

Anticipated by the end of 2017, new voting machines for Allegan County elections will be delivered. The process will be triggered when a state purchase order is emailed to the Clerk's Office. The new tabulators and ADA compliant voting machines will require training for local clerks and the County Clerk's Office.

### 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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.



