

# Ottawa County Clerk Annual Report 2010

DANIEL C. KRUEGER

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2010

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Processed 768 Passport/ Concealed Weapons Permit Photos
- Trained nearly 900 precinct workers for the Primary and General Elections
- Vital Records went live on the State's Electronic Death Registration System
- Implemented online applications for marriage licenses
- All 26 employees participated in the DiSC—"Understanding Difference Behavioral Styles" training

As always, an even numbered year proves to be a very active and interesting year. While we are always aware of the multitude of elections that we have in an even year, we were also involved in the implementation of our new Identiphoto program for the concealed weapons process and, as a pilot county, implemented the Electronic Death Registration program along with 4 other counties in the State.

We were active in the elections area with several recall efforts in a number of townships. The Elections Commission met numerous times dealing with language issues in these efforts, none of which ever moved beyond the approval phase. While those things were taking place, we conducted 3 major elections. The gubernatorial election in November of 2010 was most disappointing in that we barely had 50% turnout compared to our usual 60+%.

During the November election process, we instituted a different method of providing for the counting of absentee ballots in each of the counting boards used by local units. We also implemented a change in the reporting process by allowing a few of our larger local units to use our software to compile election results and email those into our office election night. We also initiated a program for more automatic transferring of election results to our website on election night. All of these programs will

amount to reduced costs for us and local units as we continue to improve and modify them.

The court records division continues to improve its electronic processes and implement new procedures to increase service and efficiencies. Our progress was enhanced in this area by new legislation that allows for electronic seals to be placed on documents and the ability to produce an electronic certification for documents as well. While we have implemented the electronic seal process which has increased our efficiency and customer service, we continue to work through the more complex process of electronic certification and are looking forward to having some success in that area this year.

In October of 2010, the US Department of State sent us a curve regarding our issuance of passports. Their new guidelines have given us a significant challenge and we are still in the process of attempting to implement their directives.

Since early 2008, I have been working with my colleagues in the State and with the Vital Records Bureau of the Health Department to implement an electronic death records program modeled after our electronic birth registration program. Late last summer, we were one of 5 counties to begin using that program and have had significant success with

the program to the extent all but one of our funeral homes in the county participate in the process and the last one will be coming on board soon. This program in itself involved training issues with the funeral directors and their staff as well as getting hospitals, doctors and medical examiners on board.

We continue to look for ways to improve our service as is evident with the Identiphoto process we implemented in our concealed weapons program. This program allows us to provide credit card type licenses to CCW holders rather than the picture laminated to a paper card process. In purchasing the program, we estimated the payback would take approximately 3 years. After implementation in December of 2009 and doing a great deal of advertising on the website and in other notices promoting the one stop shopping process of making application, getting your photo taken and then going upstairs to get your fingerprints, I am pleased to announce the program has generated enough revenue to pay for the purchase of the program in one year and pay for the supplies needed.

Sincerely,

Daniel C. Krueger, CCO, MCCO  
County Clerk

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## ADDITIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

2010 proved again to be an extremely busy year in the Clerk's Office. We worked closely with a number of departments in implementing new and more efficient processes.

We worked with the Treasurer's Office on an "Unclaimed Check" lookup on "MiOttawa.org". This allows people to search by name or business to see if they have any unclaimed checks at the County.

In 2010, we worked with Administration, Human Resources and

WebTecs, Inc., to design, develop and implement an online application database for Board and Committee Appointments. This allows applicants to apply online as well as archiving past and present information.

As we continue to look for ways to improve our service, we have made more items available through the website. In June, we implemented online applications for marriage licenses. We started with 11% applying in June and

saw that number rise to 41% in December.

As always, I would like to thank our staff because without them we would not be able to implement new ideas and focus on quality service to our customers and the citizens of Ottawa County.

Sincerely,

Sherri Sayles, CMC  
Chief Deputy Clerk

**VITAL RECORDS**

We are available to the public so they may have access to birth, marriage, and death records, to name the preponderance of records available. The procedures listed below require great attention to detail, precision, and knowledge of the legislative initiatives and pending statutes.

Passports empower citizens to travel outside of the borders of our country. We process and transmit to the passport agency, applications and fees for passports. There are many strict guidelines and rules that must be followed when accepting these applications.

The majority of certified copies requested from our office consist of birth, marriage, and death records. To the right is a chart depicting the breakdown of those records for 2010; a total of 19,382.

We also control, administer, and oversee business registrations for all of Ottawa County. If a business opens in the County it must register with our office unless it is a corporation or a limited liability company.

There are many genealogists who use our office to search through birth, death, and marriage records hoping to find records relative to their family.

**VITAL RECORDS**

Almost all legal papers must be notarized. Therefore, Notary Publics are an important part of society and we administer this service, file, and manage the surety bonds.

statement acknowledging that the Notary Public who witnessed the signature is a current and duly commissioned Notary. We distributed 70 certificates in 2010, compared to 49 in 2009.

individuals who must be sworn in to their respective offices. Oaths of Office are prepared and filed in our office.

*The Ottawa County Clerk's Office is the keeper of Vital Records, including Birth, Death & Marriage records.*

We also file discharge papers, DD 214, for veterans as a complementary gesture. Where as, should they ever need a copy they can obtain a certified one through our office.

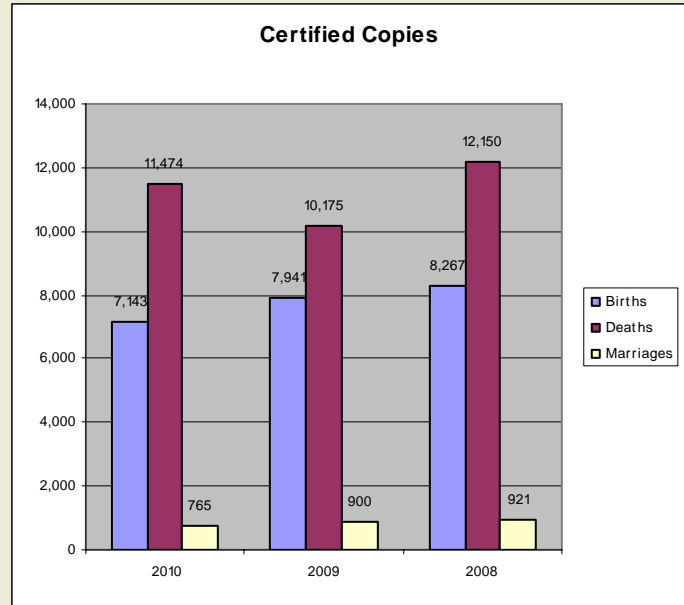
Concealed weapons applications are accepted, managed, processed, and eventually stored here. A concealed weapons permit is only granted after an extensive background check is performed and the applicant has met all of the necessary requirements.

We also file and disperse appeals to the Sanitary Appeals Board. These are filed when an individual wants to request a hearing with the Sanitary Appeals Board.

Traffic Control Orders are received from the Road Commission or Department of Transportation. Orders are for traffic signs at specific locations. We filed 11 Orders in 2010.

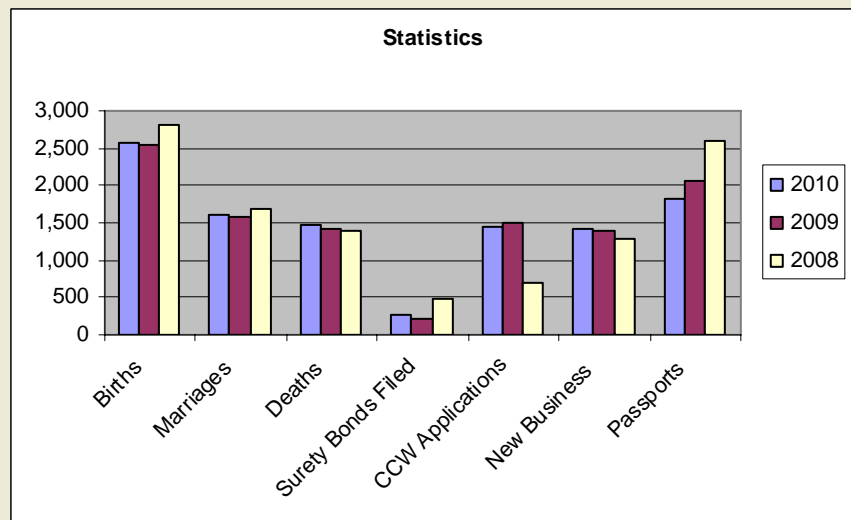
We offer Clerk's Certificates for important papers traveling outside of Michigan. This is a

An Oath of Office is for those



**STATISTICS**

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
New Births	2,803	2,550	2,563
Marriages	1,699	1,568	1,620
Deaths	1,381	1,407	1,463
Surety Bonds Filed	483	207	279
CCW Apps	709	1,502	1,435
DBA's	1,287	1,395	1,411
Passports	2,594	2,056	1,812



## ELECTIONS

Ottawa County conducted elections in May, August and November of 2010 – with a School Board Election on May 4, the State-wide Primary on August 3 and the State-wide General Election on November 2. In the August 3 Primary Election, Ottawa County saw one of the highest percentages of turnout in the State of Michigan, at over 10% of the statewide average.

The Ottawa County Clerk serves as the chief election official in the county, and with the assistance of Elections Staff, oversees the canvass of all elections in Ottawa County. These responsibilities also include the programming and testing of all elec-

tions equipment and the proofing and printing of all ballots county-wide. Elections Staff also assists our 23 local city and township clerks as well as any candidates for office with any elections questions or needs they may have.

The Elections Division is also responsible with keeping updated with any key legislative or administrative changes at the State and Federal level with regard to elections, and for disseminating this information to all local clerks and election officials.

## EQUIPMENT

Ottawa County uses the M-100 Optical Scanner to tabulate all ballots cast. The optical scan system is accurate and efficient, while also maintaining the integrity and security of the election by allowing a “paper trail” to verify every vote cast. The Auto-MARK Voter Assist Terminal is an ADA compliant device which enables voters with disabilities to cast a secret ballot by use of touch screen technology, or with a keypad and headphones. The Auto-MARK prints the voter’s selections onto a regular optical scan ballot, which is then tabulated in the M-100 device. The Elections Division of the County Clerk’s Office is responsible for the maintenance, up-keep and programming of all elections equipment countywide.

Ottawa County also served as a pilot county for the rollout of the new Electronic Poll Book technology in 2010. The Electronic Poll Book (or E-Poll Book) greatly improves the speed and accuracy of processing voters on Election Day, allowing precinct workers to swipe a voter’s driver license or state ID and mark them as having voted. The E-Poll Book also greatly decreases the risk of mathematical errors during the closing of the polls on Election Night. Seventy percent of the precincts in Ottawa County used the new technology in the November General Election, and the software has generated positive responses from many clerks, precinct workers and voters.

## REGISTERED VOTERS

The Elections Division of the County Clerk’s Office processed a total of 13,968 voter registrations in 2010. This includes name and address changes that are passed to our office from the Michigan Secretary of State, as well as mail in voter registrations and Federal post card registrations from members of the military or oversees voters. Elections Staff also at-

tended four naturalization ceremonies in West Michigan in 2010, assisting staff from the Michigan Bureau of Elections in registering hundreds of new citizens to vote, many of whom are Ottawa County residents. As of December 2010, there are 178,961 registered voters in Ottawa County.

## ELECTION COMMISSION

The Ottawa County Election Commission is comprised of three members: the Judge of the Probate Court, the County Clerk and the County Treasurer. The Commission is responsible for certifying candidates for each school and county election, and approving ballots for all countywide elections held within Ottawa County. They have the discretion to determine the consolidation of precincts in local and school elections. The Election Commission is also responsible for holding clarity hearings in relation to recall petitions within Ottawa County.

They may also be called upon to appoint temporary township, city or county officials if a sufficient number of board members are recalled, so as to prevent a quorum from being met. These appointments are in effect until the next election can be held to fill the vacancies.

The Ottawa County Election Commission met six times in 2010, for the purpose of approving ballots for the May, August and November elections and the conduct of clarity hearings for local recall petitions.

## BOARD OF COUNTY CANVASSERS

The Canvassing Board consists of four appointed members, two from each of the two political parties casting the greatest number of votes for Secretary of State at the preceding General November Election. Each member is appointed by the Board of Commissioners from three nominations which are provided by the county political parties. The members serve four year terms, which are staggered, meaning two terms expire every odd numbered year.

The County Canvassing Board meets after each election to certify and canvass the results of the election. All election results are considered unofficial until the Canvassing Board has completed certifying all election returns and results. The Canvassing Board conducts all recounts within the county.

The Ottawa County Board of Canvassers met three times in 2010 to certify the May, August and November elections. The canvassers also conducted a countywide examination of all ballot containers used in each local jurisdiction for the storage of voted ballots. By law, the Board of Canvassers must certify these containers for use every four years.

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE

All candidates, political action committees and ballot question committees at the county level or below are required to file campaign finance documents with the County Clerk. These documents are kept on file with the Elections Division, and help to maintain the accuracy, integrity and openness of the elections process. Elections Staff processed 115 separate campaign finance filings in 2010.



## C I R C U I T C O U R T R E C O R D S

The Circuit Court Records Division of the Clerk's Office is responsible for maintaining all civil, criminal and Family Division records pertaining to court events which occur within the jurisdiction of the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court. This involves processing documents necessary to initiate new cases filed with the Court, receiving, reviewing and processing all documents pertaining to pending matters before the Court, pulling court records for scheduled hearings and clerking in the courtroom. Our staff also assists the public, attorneys and other County Departments by providing various legal forms, providing access to public court records and answering questions regarding the status of pending matters via telephone, email and the public service counter.

To the right is a general list of the types of cases filed with and maintained by Circuit Court Records:

- Civil: Civil Appeals, Administrative Reviews and Extraordinary Writs  
General Civil Matters involving Real Estate, Contracts and Tort
- Criminal: Capital Felonies  
Non-Capital Felonies  
Criminal Appeals
- Domestic: Divorce  
Custody  
Non-Support  
Paternity  
Personal Protection Orders  
Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act  
Uniform Interstate Family Support Act  
\* Adoption  
\* Name Changes  
\* Abuse and Neglect  
\* Juvenile  
\* Emancipation  
\* Parental Waiver

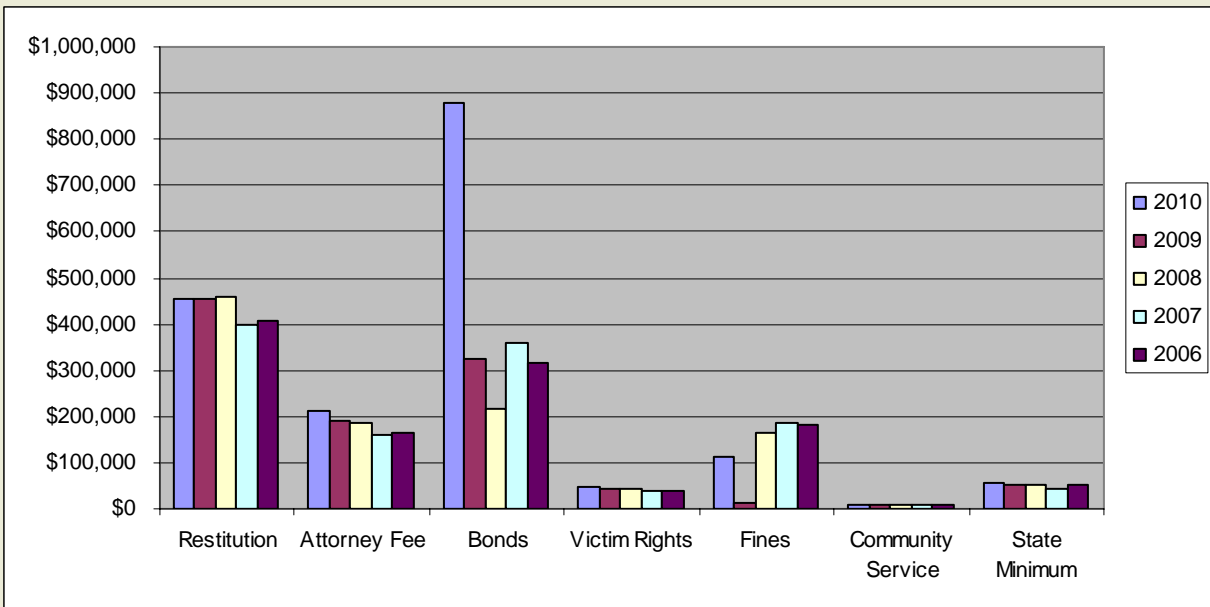
\* These records are maintained by the Family Division of the 20<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court located in West Olive, Michigan.

*The Circuit Court Records Division is responsible for maintaining all civil, criminal and family division records.*

## A C C O U N T I N G

The Clerk's Office receipts for all payments made and bonds posted in conjunction with any civil or domestic relations case pending before the Circuit Court. This includes collection of all fees mandated by court rule or statute applicable to the filing of court documents or maintenance of court actions such as filing fees, jury fees and motion fees.

In addition, the Clerk's Office receipts for bonds and receives payments on criminal files for restitution, fines and costs. Circuit Court Records works closely with the Circuit Court Collections Officer and the Probation Department in order to maximize collection efforts and to insure proper application of payments received on criminal files.



**A D D I T I O N A L  
C O L L E C T I O N S**

Filing Fees	\$249,469
Order Fees	\$ 13,750
Motion Fees	\$ 25,291
Jury	\$ 9,775
Garnishments	\$ 13,230
Record Searches	\$ 2,191
Escrowed	\$ 67,836

**S T A T I S T I C S  
F O R C I R C U I T  
C O U R T  
R E C O R D S**

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Criminal Cases	1040	1007
Criminal Appeals	5	3
Civil Cases	572	524
Civil Appeals	43	46
Divorce Cases	1029	1003
Divorces Granted	1054	1067
Cases to Appellate & Supreme Courts	30	25
Paternity	158	159
Support	304	265
Personal Protection Orders	822	727
Other Domestic Relations	31	34
UIFSA	17	12
Adoptions	149	147
Neglect & Abuse	79	93
Other Family	50	66
Release for Adoption	49	60
Juvenile Delinquency	1431	1338

**F R I E N D O F T H E  
C O U R T**

Circuit Court Records provides many services to the Friend of the Court office, including providing attested copies of orders in cases involving issues of parenting time, custody or support, facilitating the issuance and processing of Bench Warrants and providing assistance in the courtroom during hearings involving Friend of the Court.

**A N N U A L R E P O R T**

All cases filed with the Court must be reported to the State Court Administrator's Office annually. Several portions of this report are prepared and submitted by the Circuit Court Records Division of the Clerk's Office. This report contains important statistical information regarding caseload data such as the number of new

cases filed each year. This report also tracks the age of each case in order to monitor the number of days that the Court spends on each case from the date of filing to the date of final disposition. This information is used by the State Court Administrative Office to assist in the preparation of the Michigan Supreme Court Annual Report as well as for other important reporting purposes.



Lady Justice

**J U R Y**

The Clerk's Office also administers and maintains the jury by working in conjunction with the Jury Board to process jury questionnaires, process requests for excusal from jury service, process payroll for jury service and provide correspondence to jurors verifying jury service. The Clerk's Office also

plays an integral role in the juror selection process by summoning the jury to court when a jury trial is scheduled and assisting with the selection, swearing in and sequestration of the jury during a trial.

*All cases filed with the Court must be reported to the State and in certain cases they must be reported to other governmental agencies.*

**R E P O R T I N G T O S T A T E  
A G E N C I E S**

Circuit Court Records prepares a Judgment of Sentence for each individual convicted of a felony, high court misdemeanor or probation violation and is responsible for reporting these issues to the appropriate governmental agencies such as Michigan Secretary of State, Michigan State Police and Michigan Department of Corrections. The Clerk's Office must also send a state abstract to the Secretary of State for all

cases involving a motor vehicle. In addition, Circuit Court Records prepares and submits the Record of Divorce or Annulment to the Michigan Department of Community Health in conjunction with divorce cases filed with the Court.



Our goal remains to provide a greater level of service each year to reflect the pride we have in our county and the sincerity we have in serving the citizens of Ottawa County.

## LOCATIONS

**Vital & Circuit Court Records:** Hudsonville District Court  
3100 Port Sheldon Road  
Hudsonville, MI 49426  
Tuesdays only  
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon  
(616) 662-6085

Ottawa County Courthouse  
414 Washington Avenue  
Room 320  
Grand Haven, MI 49417  
**Vital Records:**  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. &  
1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
(616) 846-8310  
**Circuit Court Records:**  
Monday through Thursday  
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
Fridays only  
9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
(616) 846-8315

Health Services Building  
12251 James Street  
Holland, MI 49424  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
(616) 494-5566

Fillmore Complex  
12220 Fillmore, Room 130  
West Olive, MI 49460  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
(616) 994-4531

**Family Division only:**  
12120 Fillmore Street  
West Olive, MI 49460  
Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.  
(616) 738-4108

## IMAGING

Our staff continued to excel in the utilization of the imaging system. All documents are now filed electronically from Juvenile Services and all new Child Support/Paternity cases are filed electronically from the Prosecutor's Office.

Approximately 28.8% (32,433 out of 112,653) of documents received for filing were received electronically from other departments. Approximately 7,100 orders were signed by the Judges electronically.

We sent 14,784 documents electronically through workflow to other departments. In early fall, we began sending documents electronically to the Department of Human Services.

13.5 Circuit Court Records staff members indexed 80,220 and filed 112,653 documents for a total of 192,873 documents processed in addition to scanning 102,627 documents (350,336 pages).

6 Vital Records staff members scanned 32,565 documents (59,003 pages).

## CLERK OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The County Clerk serves as the Secretary to the Board of Commissioners, and the keeper of all official Board records. Though we do not print or distribute the agendas, we are required to attend and post all Board and Committee meetings. We also handle correspondence for the Commissioners. The permanent Board minutes are kept on record in our office and are available, either through hardcover book or CD, for public perusal.

### County Directory

The Clerk's Office is responsible for updating the County Directory. There is a great deal of staff hours that go into collecting information and gathering data for this directory. The directory is available on-line, under the County Clerk's portion of the website and under "Quick Links" on the homepage.

### Posting Vacancies

The Clerk also oversees vacancies on any board, commission or advisory committee for the County. These postings are available on-line at "MiOttawa.org". A new database was designed in 2010 which allows for an on-line application process along with maintaining and archiving of past and present committee information. The system was developed to modernize and streamline the application process. Letters are now generated automatically to inform applicants of our receipt of their application as well as notify them of appointment when approved by the Board of Commissioners.



## PLAT BOARD

The Plat Board is a statutory committee consisting of the County Register of Deeds, County Treasurer, and County Clerk. The Board's responsibility is to review all preliminary plats to determine the viability of the subdivision name and to review all plats to determine the accuracy of the description in relation to the corresponding plat. In 2010, the Board met 6 times approving 1 final plat and 2 preliminary plats.