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To the Residents of Ottawa County,

It is my honor to present to you the 2022 Annual Report of the Clerk and Register of Deeds office. Last year was a busy and productive one for our team as we processed hundreds of thousands of documents in our Circuit Court, Register of Deeds and Vital Records divisions. We provided customer service to thousands of residents across the county – by phone, by mail, online, and in-person at our counters. We also supported our city and township clerks, and Ottawa County's 220,000 voters as our communities' held elections in May, August, and November.

Our team continues to explore new ways to make our services more efficient and effective, ensuring that we are accessible to every Ottawa County resident. Online transactions continue to rise as our customers find it simple to renew a CPL, order certified copies of documents or apply for a marriage license at their convenience from home or on the go. In 2022, 76% of all land records were recorded electronically, and we saved over $8,000 taxpayer dollars in postage alone returning documents to customers electronically instead of by mail. Our Elections Team hosted three successful town hall meetings in the lead up to major elections in 2022, where we were able to have great conversations with our voters, answering questions and listening to ideas. These are just a few of the ways we are working to be efficient and responsive to our customers.

Our mission in the Clerk Register’s Office is simple and clear – to help customers and encourage their trust in government. I believe that we create trust through honesty and transparency, and by building relationships with our customers. I could not be more grateful for the team I work with every day at the Clerk/Register’s Office to do this important work. Our dedicated staff is the heartbeat of these customer relationships, and I am thankful for their professionalism and commitment to Ottawa County and its residents. I remain grateful for your support!

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as your County Clerk and Register of Deeds.
MISSION
WHY DO WE EXIST?
To help customers and encourage their trust in government.

WHAT DO WE DO?
Create and preserve records for current and future generations.

VISION
HOW WILL WE SUCCEED?
Exceed the expectations of our customers in every aspect of service.
Be creative, strategic, and forward thinking leaders to continually improve.
Create a positive, caring, and engaging environment for our employees and coworkers.
Be conscientious of taxpayer resources.

VALUES: How do we behave?
We provide excellent customer service.
We are humble.
We value people.
We are authentic.
We are eager to learn.
We seek input from others.
We are accountable.
We believe the key to providing great service is listening to our customers. To that end, our team developed and launched a simple customer satisfaction survey that will accompany any and all branded materials from the Clerk/Register’s Office. The goal is to provide multiple, easy touchpoints for our customers to reach out and provide immediate feedback.

Another critical way for us to receive customer feedback is to simply have conversations. Our team engaged with hundreds of Ottawa County residents in multiple communities in the lead up to the 2022 mid-term elections. During these Community Conversation events we gave a brief update from our elections team, and then listened and answered questions from the public.

We launched an online portal for candidates to file and for the public to search campaign finance records online. This was a big step forward for transparency and accessibility of candidate and committee financial records to the public. The platform also allows candidates the convenience to file online and offers our office better tools for managing the database of information.

This year our team development was centered around “The Ideal Team Player” model, by Patrick Lencioni. This concept highlights three critical behaviors of any successful team member: Humility, Hunger, and Emotional Intelligence. Our Team Leads guided staff in a number of discussions and exercises that highlighted these qualities in our team members.
In the Community

We aim to apply our values not just to colleagues and customers, but outwardly in our community as well.

In 2022, our team partnered with organizations such as the West Coast Chamber for Community Action Day, helping the most vulnerable of animals through the Harbor Humane Society and assisting the West Michigan Veteran’s Assistance Program with donations for their pantry.
The Vital Records division is the official registrar for birth certificates, death certificates, marriage licenses, concealed pistols licenses, notary applications, and business license registrations.
County Clerk
Budget

Includes Vital Records and Circuit Court

$610,568
Total general fund cost

$2,295,871
Expenditures

$1,685,304
Revenue
Birth Records

2,095 Babies born

4,429 Copies of birth certificates

0.7% decrease in births from 2021
## Top Baby Names of 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boy Names:</th>
<th>Girl Names:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry</td>
<td>Emma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levi</td>
<td>Nora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezra, Liam, Lucas (Tie)</td>
<td>Olivia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theodore</td>
<td>Isla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carter, Wesley (Tie)</td>
<td>Camila, Charlotte, Claire, Eleanor, Josie (Tie)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
De a th

Records

2,122
deads

17,587
Copies of death certificates

0.5%
increase in deaths from 2021
Notary Public

Our office processed 475 Notary Public applications.

To be a Notary, applicants must:

- Obtain a $10,000 bond, most often from a state-licensed insurance agency or a bonding company
- Fill out an application online and visit our office to finalize the application
- Mail the completed application and applicable fee to the Michigan Department of State, Office of the Great Seal

Doing Business As (DBA)

711 business registrations processed
How were vital records ordered?
Of the 3,794 CPL applications that we processed:
- 1,306 were new applicants
- 2,488 were renewal applicants

New applicants must apply in-person, but renewal applicants can apply in-person, online, or by mail.
Concealed Pistol Licenses

- **Total Renewed:** 2,488
- **Total New:** 1,306

Graph showing the number of concealed pistol licenses issued and renewed throughout the year.
Honor Rewards is a nationally recognized program that allows veterans to receive discounts at participating area businesses by showing their Honor Rewards ID card. To obtain a card, Ottawa County Veterans can fill out an application and file their military discharge paperwork with our office.

As a way of connecting our businesses and veterans more often, we started a quarterly newsletter that welcomes new Honor Rewards members, highlights veteran events in the area, and draws attention to veteran organizations and issues. The newsletter has an average open rate of 41% and is sent to almost 1,000 subscribers.

**New in 2022**

- Veterans 21
- Businesses 40
- Total: 34%

**Total Since 2015**

- Veterans 571
- Businesses 355
- Total: 62%
For the 2022 Veteran's Day our team was able to connect with our local veterans through a variety of community events! We got to know some veterans and their loved ones at the Annual Veteran's Day Breakfast held in Allendale Township. Our office hosted an Honor Rewards presentation at Four Pointes Center for Successful Aging where we were able to register both new applicants and businesses. Finally, we were invited to set up a registration table at Holland High School's Veteran's Day celebration.

We are looking forward to growing our Honor Rewards program in 2024. Stay tuned to our social media and website at www.miOttawa.org/HonorRewards, for event updates!
The Register of Deeds division is the keeper of the public record for all land documents.
Register of Deeds Budget

$3,072,782
Revenue

$789,298
Expenditures
Funds Received

- State Transfer Tax: $17,357,876
- County Transfer Tax: $2,590,637
- Recording Fees: $928,662
- Remonumentation: $166,820
- Copy Sales: $138,291
- Bulk Images: $154,157
Free Online Record Search

12,260 documents were purchased through this service

$38,931 Revenue generated in the General Fund

4.6% decrease in revenue from 2021
33,635 documents were recorded electronically.

43,816 total documents recorded.

76% of documents were recorded electronically.
Our office processed 708 passport applications in 2022.

$24,780
Total revenue from passports

$4,375
Total revenue from passport photos
CPL Fingerprinting

1,353 fingerprints taken

January - December 2022

$20,295 Revenue from CPL fingerprinting
Plat Board

The Ottawa County Plat Board consists of three members including the Chairperson of the Board of Commissioners, the County Treasurer, and the County Clerk | Register of Deeds. The County Clerk | Register of Deeds is the secretary to the Plat Board and therefore responsible for accepting the plats to be reviewed by the board. The board reviews and approves plats to ensure the dimensions of the proposed plat are compliant with the provisions of the Subdivision Control Act of 1967.

2022 Approved Plats

10 Final Plats Approved in 2022
Postage Savings from Electronic Return of Land Documents

Total Savings: $8,205.74
Trends Over Time

2022: 21,336,443
2021: 21,556,271
2020: 18,057,373
2019: 17,383,406
2018: 15,733,595

[Bar chart showing funds received over time]
Trends Over Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documents purchased</td>
<td>10,232</td>
<td>10,776</td>
<td>11,862</td>
<td>13,453</td>
<td>12,260</td>
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<tr>
<td>Electronically recorded</td>
<td>27,460</td>
<td>33,126</td>
<td>47,149</td>
<td>51,360</td>
<td>33,635</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>documents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total documents</td>
<td>45,960</td>
<td>49,256</td>
<td>59,922</td>
<td>63,704</td>
<td>43,816</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 2018
- 2019
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022
The Circuit Court Records Division is the keeper of the 20th Circuit Court's records for all Civil, Criminal, Domestic, and Family Division cases.
Circuit Court Records receipts all funds for the Circuit Court and the Juvenile Court for items including restitution, state fees, fines and costs, bonds, court orders, filing fees, attorney fees, and several others.

Funds Received

$2.9 Million
Cases Filed

- Total cases filed in 2022: 4,410
- Total documents filed: 124,725
- Cases sent to Appellate and Supreme Courts: 19

- Criminal: 698
- Civil: 367
- Domestic: 1,363
- PPO: 660
- Family: 1,269
Jury Trials

1,628
Jurors were called to serve

33
Trials commenced as Jury Trials

↑
32%
increase in jurors called to serve
Family Division Adoptions

102 adoption cases filed

8 Adoptions finalized on Michigan Adoption Day

4.1% increase in adoption cases
Trends Over Time

Documents Filed

- 2018: 124,725
- 2019: 115,534
- 2020: 113,998
- 2021: 133,946
- 2022: 121,088
The Elections division is responsible for administering and overseeing all elections within Ottawa County.
2022 Elections Rundown

May 3rd
Special Election

28,746
Ballots Cast

\(^\text{16\%}\)

Voter Turnout

August 2nd
State Primary Election

76,838
Ballots Cast

\(^\text{34\%}\)

Voter Turnout

November 8th
State General Election

147,273
Ballots Cast

\(^\text{64\%}\)

Voter Turnout
2022 Elections: How were Ballots Cast?

- **May 3rd Special Election**: 72% In-Person, 28% Absentee
- **August 2nd State Primary Election**: 48% In-Person, 52% Absentee
- **November 8th State General Election**: 40% In-Person, 60% Absentee
2022 Same Day Voter Registration

May 3rd Special Election
104 Voters registered on Election Day

August 2nd State Primary Election
308 Voters registered on Election Day

November 8th State General Election
821 Voters registered on Election Day
Leading up to the August Primary and November General elections, our office hosted three events around the County that we named Community Conversations.

The goal of these events was to share information about how the elections process works and answer questions from voters. Topics ranged from absentee ballots, to drop boxes and tabulator security. Over 100 citizens attended the events and our office answered over 50 questions related to elections.
Our office partnered with several community organizations to share information about the August and November elections!

- Grand Valley State University presentation about the voting process.
- Voter registration event at the Momentum Center in Grand Haven.
- Voter registration event at Grand Valley State University.
- Election security presentation at Hope College.
Social Media

#StepIntoElections was a social media and email information campaign before the August and November elections that shared information about the elections process.

The campaign followed the Lifecycle of an Election, which lays out the eight major steps in an election. The campaign consisted of graphics, videos, and community events.

218,100
Impressions on Twitter

70,074
Reach on Facebook
In 2022, our office launched an online campaign finance program called Easy Campaign Finance. The system allows candidates to file all reports online, which are immediately accessible to the public for free.
In December 2022, the State of Michigan conducted a partial recount of Proposal 22-3. Two precincts in Ottawa County were selected for the recount – City of Ferrysburg Precinct 1 and Holland Township Precinct 4 (in-person and absentee ballots).

A bipartisan team of workers hand-counted ballots from each precinct to compare totals from the tabulator on election day.
To enhance the security of our election results reporting, and in keeping with best practice standards from the U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), we plan to develop and launch a new elections website with the .gov domain designation. In addition to the protections of hosting election results on a recognizable government domain, the new site will also include user-friendly upgrades.

Elimination of Modems for Election Results Transmission

Modems are devices currently used in many communities across Michigan for the electronic transmission of unofficial election results from the precinct to the county clerk. Our team is eliminating the use of this technology beginning in 2023 and will be implementing a new chain of custody process for efficient and secure physical delivery of election results data on Election Night.
2023-24 Goals Continued

Implementation of Electronic Roll Call and Agenda Management Software
Our Register of Deeds received funding in 2022 to implement new technology that will allow for greater transparency in the online searchability of the minutes and agendas of the Board of Commissioners’ meetings. Our goal in 2023 is to allow residents to search Board minutes by topic, as well as the votes of individual commissioners on any Board action.

Rollout of Case Management System
Our Circuit Court Records team is excited for the official implementation of a new case management system in 2023. The project will streamline our document management and electronic filing processes in the Circuit Court, and also includes an expansive migration of all historical court data from our legacy system.

Developing Our Team
We believe that growing our team personally and professionally allows us to provide exceptional customer service to our residents. This year our teams will complete coaching in the Clifton StrengthsFinders course, that seeks to highlight innate individual abilities that each team member brings to the table, and promotes discussion on how each member of the team can best utilize their strengths.
THANK YOU