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To the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners and Residents of Ottawa County:

In the following pages you will find the 2019 Annual Report of the County Clerk and Register of Deeds Office. This document offers a glimpse into the work that our team performs on a daily basis as we carry out our mission, which is simply: **To help our customers and encourage their trust in government.**

During the course of our daily work throughout 2019 we interacted with thousands of Ottawa County residents; and our number one focus remains on them. Whether we are walking through the adoption process with a family, helping a new homebuyer record their purchase or educating a group of students about the voting process, our goal is to connect with residents in a meaningful way that leaves them with a positive view of their county government.

One of our ongoing priorities remains to expand customer access to our growing number of online services. Just a few of the most utilized of those online services are the electronic recording of documents in the Register of Deeds Office (67% done electronically), Marriage License Applications (78% done online), and also electronically certified copies of death records (98%). As I sit to write this introduction letter in the middle of a historic pandemic, we are realizing just how critical these online options are to the continuity of our operations and to serving this community.

None of our work would be possible without the excellent team of people that we have in place. I am proud to lead a group of individuals, from our management team to our front-line employees, that embodies the mission and vision of our organization. I continue to be grateful for the leadership of our County Board of Commissioners, Circuit Court Judges, County Administration and the professionalism and helpful spirit of my fellow County employees in every department. Each of you contribute to the success of our work, and to making Ottawa County the special place that it is.

[Signature]
To help customers and encourage their trust in government

Create and preserve records for current and future generations

Exceed the expectations of our customers in every aspect of service
Be creative, strategic, and forward thinking leaders to continually improve government services
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.  
"[Jacki] leaves her cubicle to go out into the lobby to help...she provides such excellent and personable service."

We are humble.  
"So many times [Amber] told me that she is just doing her job and in no way was that the case!"

We value people.  
"[Terry] could have told me to come back another day, but he graciously stayed late to process the application."

We are authentic.  
"[Sam] was calm and courteous in the face of my confusion and anxiety, which helped me realize that everything would be alright"

We are eager to learn.  
"Zac is always eager to help, very professional... He is willing to learn anything that is thrown at him."

We seek input from others.  
"Jody contacted the bank and others involved in the process while keeping us informed each step of the way."

We are accountable.  
"Instead of denying or throwing out my application, Paula sent me a friendly email asking for the missing pieces of information"

Quotes taken from 2019 Customer Service Nominations
Employee Highlights

Customer Service Award

The Clerk/Register's office received 14 Customer Service Award nominations in 2019. We are proud to announce that Chris Wolff was chosen for the 3rd Quarter Customer Service Award! On December 10, 2019, Chris was recognized at the Ottawa County Board of Commissioners meeting for receiving the Outstanding Customer Service Award—External. The customer wrote that Chris "was more helpful to me and my cause and remained very personable over three visits. Having dealt with other counties on many occasions I must say that she was unexpected and refreshing. Please commend her on a job well done." Chris is just one example of the excellent customer service that comes out of our office every day.

3rd Quarter Customer Service Award Recipient
Chris Wolff

Employee All-Star Award

The Employee All-Star Award is an internal award given to employees who go above and beyond the standard expectation.

Jacki Eastling, Clerk/Register Technician

Jacki earned the All-Star Award for helping out her co-worker. The Holland office has two employees, so when Jacki's co-worker called in sick, Jacki voluntarily pulled back vacation time to help avoid last minute scheduling changes.
The Clerk|Register of Deeds office is proud of our contribution to the total number of online transactions through Ottawa County's website.

36.7% of online transactions were for services offered by our office, which totals 31,628 online transactions.

Our office also contributed $238,657 or 8.6% of Ottawa County's total revenue for online services.

Clerk|Register of Deeds Revenue for Online Transactions

By Division

- Court Records: $126,513
- Vitals: $75,193
- Deeds: $36,950

Total page views: 69,278
Circuit Court Record page views: 21,975
Clerk|Register of Deeds homepage views: 21,382
Register of Deeds page views: 13,742
Vital Records page views: 3,628
Elections page views: 8,551
This year the Vitals/Deeds division embarked on a new journey as the first Michigan beta test site for a very promising software program. The program is called Apex and the benefits this software will provide are very advantageous to the long-term goals of our office. It will increase our efficiency, enhance our cross-training efforts, reduce data input errors, minimize our carbon footprint and surge our office forward in the effective use of advanced technology.

At the beginning of the year we were approached by our vendor, Fidlar Technologies, to partner with them in helping to create a software program that integrated the duties of the Register of Deeds division and Clerk Vitals division all in one program. Since our office has successfully cross-trained, we were the prime candidate to help with this project. This program provides customers the convenience of beginning the vital record process from anywhere and on any electronic device. Apex's guided application processes are customer friendly and fosters an environment that will minimize the likelihood of human error. Once the customer arrives at our office to finalize their requested vital record service, Apex's electronic verification process provides an additional inspection of the data, decreases processing time and significantly minimizes our carbon footprint as we no longer print out many documents. Signatures are obtained electronically. In addition, customers now have the option to have their receipt emailed, printed or both. Being a beta test site has its challenges. As with anything new, there are bugs to tweak and some hurdles to overcome as we continue to grow the program. However, we have already seen the positive impact this program will have on our office. We look forward to fully implementing this software as it will be a great benefit to our team and our customers!
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.

Increase in funds receipted compared to 2018:

- 12%

E-filing in Michigan:

E-Filing through the State’s program MiFile became mandatory for most Civil and Domestic Cases on December 3, 2018. The transition went even better than expected for both attorneys and in pro per parties.

- 2018:
  - $28,895 collected in statutory e-filing fees
- 2019:
  - $101,030 collected in statutory e-filing fees
  - 10,992 documents were e-filed
  - 30,596 documents were e-filed
Funds Received in 2019

- **State Transfer Tax**: $13,798,227
- **County Transfer Tax**: $2,056,550
- **Recording Fees**: $1,045,300
- **Remonumentation**: $186,894
- **Copy Sales**: $131,083
- **Bulk Images**: $165,352

Register of Deeds

**Property Fraud Alert**

Property Fraud Alert is a free system that notifies you every time your name appears on a document that is being recorded.

- Purchase real property
- Record documents in Register of Deeds office
- Sign up for Property Fraud Alert
- Protect your most valuable asset

**Free Online Search**

- **10,776 Documents**
  - Documents were purchased through the free online search, generating $31,230 for the County's General Fund

**Electronic Documents**

- **67%**
  - of documents were recorded electronically, which equates to 33,126 of 49,256 total documents, a 7% increase from 2018
Applications Accepted by Month

Total number of passports accepted in 2019. 848 of these appointments were made online.

Passports

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.

Plats Approved by Jurisdiction

- Allendale
- Crockery
- Georgetown
- Grand Haven
- Jamestown
- Park
- Port Sheldon

Preliminary
Final

Total revenue from passports $30,000
Total revenue from passport photos $4,710

Applications Accepted by Month

January February March April May June July August September October November December

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Passports

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Preliminary
Final

Total revenue from passports $30,000
Total revenue from passport photos $4,710
Vital Records

Records Ordered
Percentage of Online vs. In Office/Mail

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record Type</th>
<th>Online</th>
<th>In Office/Mail</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marriage License Issued</td>
<td>78.0%</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage License Copies</td>
<td>35.0%</td>
<td>65.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Registrations Issued</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Registration Copies</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>87.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death Certificate Copies</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth Certificate Copies</td>
<td>83.0%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1,811 Marriage Licenses Issued
986 Business Registrations
14,295 Copies of Death Certificates
7,022 Copies of Birth Certificates

Honor Rewards

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 papers with our office.
Birth Count vs. Death Count

OVER THE PAST YEAR,

2,420 BABIES BORN IN OTTAWA COUNTY

VS

1,865 DEATHS IN OTTAWA COUNTY

TOP BABY NAMES
Ottawa County

Boy:
1. Oliver
2. Jack
3. Theodore
4. Elijah
5. Lincoln
6. Wyatt
7. Caleb
8. Grayson
9. Levi
10. Benjamin

Girl:
1. Emma
2. Charlotte
3. Natalie
4. Harper
5. Sophia
6. Amelia
7. Isabelle
8. Evelyn
9. Mia
10. Olivia

Concealed Pistol Licenses

- Michigan State Police approved 3,245 applications, or 99%, of the applications we received
- Our office received a total of 3,267 CPL applications
  - 1,107 of these were new applicants
  - 2,160 of these were renewal applicants
- Renewal applicants now have the option to renew by mail, online, or in-person

How did Ottawa County applicants choose to renew?

- Online: 989
- In-person: 1,125
- By mail: 46
Voters decided on many important issues and candidates last year. In May, voters decided on several local school district proposals. In the August primary election, voters nominated candidates to city offices. In November, voters elected nominated candidates from the August primary and decided on charter amendments and several local school district proposals.

### BALLOTS CAST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>19,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>4,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>17,543</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VOTER TURNOUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### November City Elections

**City of Coopersville**  
**Council Member:** Degeus, Gavin, Lampe  
**Council Member (Partial Term):** Fynewever

**City of Ferrysburg**  
**Mayor:** Monetza  
**Council Member:** Fritz, Cummins  
**Board of Light and Power:** Crum

**City of Grand Haven**  
**Mayor:** Hopp  
**Council Member:** Montgomery, O’Donnell, Sias

**City of Holland**  
**Mayor:** Bocks  
**Council Member:** Raymond (At-Large), Peters (2nd Ward), Arendshorst (4th Ward), Hoekstra (6th Ward)

**City of Hudsonville**  
**Mayor:** Northrup  
**Council Member:** DeVree (1st Ward), Steigenga (2nd Ward), Leerar (3rd Ward)

**City of Zeeland**  
**Mayor:** Klynstra  
**Council Member:** Gruppen, Lam, Timmer

**City of Grand Haven**  
**Charter Amendment**  
- Yes: 69%  
- No: 31%

**City of Ferrysburg**  
**Charter Amendment**  
- Yes: 65%  
- No: 35%

**Grandville Public Schools**  
**Bonding Proposal 1**  
- Yes: 35%  
- No: 65%

**Bonding Proposal 2**  
- Yes: 34%  
- No: 66%

**Hudsonville Public Schools**  
**Bonding Proposal**  
- Yes: 69%  
- No: 31%

**Sparta Area Schools**  
**Sinking Fund Renewal**  
- Yes: 45%  
- No: 55%

**Kent City Community Schools**  
**Bonding Proposal**  
- Yes: 52%  
- No: 48%
Implementation of Proposal 3

In November 2018, voters passed Proposal 18-3, which changed the way elections are run in Michigan. Two main changes for voters include allowing same day registration and no reason absentee voting. We tracked how Proposal 18-3 affected Ottawa County voters in the May, August, and November 2019 elections.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Absentee Voting vs In-Person</th>
<th>Same Day Registration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>58.9% vs 41.1%</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>41.7% vs 58.3%</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>36.1% vs 63.9%</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Voters registered on Election Day

State Committees

**Election Modernization Advisory Committee**
Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson created the advisory committee in February 2019 in order to assist with the implementation of Proposal 18-3, which greatly impacted election administration across the state. Our office was one of four counties selected for the committee, and we worked with state and national partners to determine how to best implement same-day voter registration, no-reason absentee voting, and improving voter communication.

**Election Forms Committee**
Our office assisted the Michigan Bureau of Elections’ Forms Committee to redesign several critical elections materials in 2019. Among these changes were updates to absentee voting materials to reflect changes to absentee voting laws from Proposal 2018-3. The absentee ballot application was simplified because voters no longer needed to provide a reason to receive an absentee ballot. Absentee ballot envelopes were also updated and color coded to be more easily identifiable as election mail by the postal service.

**AV Working Group**
One of the most important changes from Proposal 18-3 was the implementation of no-reason absentee voting. Due to this change, election administrators across the state anticipated a large increase in absentee voting. To prepare for this change, the Michigan Bureau of Elections, in collaboration with the State Office of Continuous Improvement, used Lean Process Improvement (LPI) to streamline absentee voting. As part of this initiative, our office helped develop a calculator to estimate absentee ballot processing times and infographics to help voters understand how absentee ballots are processed.
In the Community

Our office has the privilege of attending various events around the county to engage with our residents. We believe attending events in our community helps us build relationships and encourage their trust in government.

Voter Registration Drives

Throughout 2019, our office participated in voter registration drives at Grand Valley State University, Hope College, Loutit District Library in Grand Haven, and Herrick District Library in Holland.

Girl Scout Troop

We had the opportunity to meet with a Girl Scout troop from Coopersville to talk about democracy and voting. We helped the girls earn their community engagement badge. Our staff talked to the girls about what democracy is, how elections work, who their elected officials are, and the importance of voting. The girls were able to fill out a voter registration form and vote using their own ballot. They voted on topics like what’s your favorite ice cream and who is your favorite superhero – no surprise that Captain Marvel won that category!
Constitution Day

Our Election staff went to Jenison High School to talk to government students about the constitution, voting, and democracy!

Veterans Day

To honor our veterans and promote the Honor Rewards program, staff attended veteran ceremonies at Allendale High School, Unity Christian High School, and Holland High School.

Naturalization Ceremonies

The Clerk's Office regularly participates in naturalization ceremonies where the country's newest citizens are welcomed and take their oath of allegiance to the United States.

The Clerk's Office is on hand to help them get started with the process of getting a US passport, and may also help them register to vote.

Our office participates in several of these ceremonies each year, some at the Loutit District Library in Grand Haven, and others at the Herrick District Library in Holland.
2020 Board of Commissioners
Roger A. Bergman, Chair
Matthew Fenske, Vice Chair
Francisco C. Garcia
Joseph Baumann
Douglas R. Zylstra
Allen Dannenberg
Randall J. Meppelink
Kyle J. Terpstra
James Holtvluwer
Gregory J. DeJong
Philip D. Kuyers

Clerk|ROD Management Team
Justin F. Roebuck
County Clerk/Register of Deeds
Sherri A. Sayles
Chief Deputy Clerk
Rachel A. Sanchez
Chief Deputy Register of Deeds
Jody L. Hansen
Vitals/Register of Deeds Supervisor
Renee E. Kuiper
Circuit Court Records Supervisor
Steven R. Daitch
Elections Coordinator

Clerk|ROD Staff
Amber Reagan
Amy Rooks
Arlette Quistian
Aubrey Williams
Barbara Holt
Carla Lieffers
Christine Wolff
Connie Barker
Curtis Hegel
Deborah Vickers
Elizabeth Lange
Jacklyn Eastling
Jonathan Marin
Karen Rubin-Fortier
Kathryn Sims
Kenneth Barry
Lauren Corrigan
Mariela Magner
Molly Johnson
Nicole Poel-Skofic
Patrice Frantz
Peggy Hoisington
Rebecca Nieboer
Samantha Rollins
Terrance Sands
Theo Randall
Todd Rasmussen
Viridiana Bautista
William Thayer
Zachary Carlson