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Huron County Clerk of Courts 2009 Year In Review

2009 was a financially stressful year for Huron County citizens and for our county offices. The area's high unemployment and poor economic conditions placed huge burdens on the families of our county. Foreclosures represented a record high, 34 percent, of the total new cases filed in the Common Pleas Court. Action on tax liens and garnishments also multiplied.

Due to emergent county fiscal concerns, on September 1, 2009, the Court of Common Pleas and the Clerk of Courts office joined many other Huron County offices in closing at noon on Fridays. The Clerk of Courts, Susan Hazel, joined her staff in taking a voluntary reduction in salary. The conservative actions helped allow the county to finish 2009 with a better-than-expected year-end balance.

As a cost-saving measure, the title staffing was again reduced at the end of August by not replacing a retiring employee. (A 30% reduction in staff within 3 years.) Despite cuts, the Title Office continued to serve the public Monday through Friday 8:00 to 4:30 and 8:00 to noon on Saturdays. In order to improve efficiency, the Willard branch hours were shifted to Tuesdays and Thursdays 9-11 / noon to 4:30.

Unchanged since 1993, legislated title fee adjustments went into effect the first of July. In a nation-wide comparison, Ohio's same-day title service continues to provide outstanding service at an affordable cost. The needed fee adjustments enabled each of Ohio's 88 counties to continue to have a self-sufficient title office.

Funds collected for Ohio Department of Taxation by the Huron County **Title Office** were down by more than \$750,000 from 2008. Titles issued were down by 8% from the previous year. The number of salvage titles almost tripled in part due to the "Cash for Clunkers" federal program. Local title fees collected increased by 18%. Cross-county title work or titling for non-Huron County residents was again positive in 2009 thanks to a focus on customer service.

Legal revenue of \$167,735 distributed to the county was consistent with the five year average.

The Huron County Clerk of Courts filed **1222 new cases** in 2009. This fell below 2007's record number but was consistent with the 5 year average. The case load was 40% greater than what was recorded ten years ago.

In 1995, 3% of the total cases filed were foreclosures. In 2009, a record-high, 34% of the new cases were **foreclosures**. 61% of the cases filed in 2009 were civil complaints. While the number of new criminal, domestic

and appeals cases were down in 2009, pleadings and hearings remained up.

The clerk worked with the court and law enforcement on changes in bond procedures which were legislated in 2009. New rules of superintendence enacted by the Ohio Supreme Court also affected the clerk and court. Those filing documents are now responsible to not include personal identifiers within the public record.

**The clerk's legal and title offices continued to work cooperatively
with the other Huron County offices.**

- Work with Children's Services brought in \$13,345 of federal monies to the county general fund. (almost \$80,000 over the past 6 years)
 - Title and License offices continued to coordinate efforts to provide one-stop-shops for the public.
 - The clerk's office worked daily with the Common Pleas Court staff, magistrate and judge and the 6th District Court of Appeals to assure proper handling of records, advancement of technology and assistance to the public.
 - County office holders participated together in a fifth successful year at the county fair booth.
 - Once again, the clerk joined with the Senior Service Center to offer an evening passport clinic.
 - Clerk Hazel also served on the Records Commission, Data Processing Board, Save Our Homes Task Force, Community Stabilization Grant Committee, County InterAgency, Homeless Prevention Rapid Rehousing, Hispanic Task Force, Ohio Clerk of Courts Association legislative and education committees
- ◇ 803 passports were processed by the Clerk of Courts - a 14% increase from the previous year.
- ◇ 249 domestic cases were filed in 2009. This was 30% below the 10-year average.
- ◇ 227 new criminal cases were filed in 2009 – That figure was more than 20% below the 10-year average.
- ◇ The 746 new civil cases filed in 2009 represented a 37% jump over the 1999-2009 average. 414 of those civil cases were foreclosures. This was a 5.6% increase from 2008.
- ◇ 31 cases from the county were filed in the 6th District Court of Appeals. That number was almost 30% less than the ten year average.
- ◇ 2009 Title local revenue was \$305,955. The Huron County Title Office distributed \$89,631 to the state BMV and just under 8 million dollars to the Ohio Department of Taxation.

2009 Clerk of Courts Yearly Summary		
	<u>2009</u>	<u>2004-2008 5 year ave</u>
Legal	\$167,735	\$172,138
Titles	\$305,955	\$252,689
B.M.V.	\$89,631	\$87,666
Dept. Taxation	\$7,985,027	\$7,870,869
Passports	803	773
Cert. of Title	28739	28913
Notations of Lien	6838	7288
Memos	6366	6201
Duplicates	1400	1512
W/C Cert of Title	395	502
W/C Notations	6	53
Salvage	543	183
Divorces Granted	101	130
Dissolution Granted	96	91
Total Cases Filed	1222	1232
Civil	746	620
Domestic	249	316
Criminal	227	296
Court of Appeals	31	42
Foreclosures	414	327

Respectfully submitted by,

Susan S. Hazel