



COUNTY OF ERIE

MICHAEL P. KEARNS

COUNTY CLERK

KEARNS 100 DAYS IN ERIE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

What's new, what's accomplished, and what's on the horizon...

PISTOL PERMIT DEPARTMENT:

Facing a looming and immediate deadline for NYS Pistol Permit Recertification, the Erie County Pistol Department was a top priority upon entering the Clerk's Office.

Recertification:

In the month of January, the Clerk's Office partnered with Erie County Legislators to host 'Pistol Permit Recertification Outreaches'. During January, ten recertification outreaches were held throughout Erie County. Additionally, 'recertification stations' were setup at the downtown office for licensees to recertify at the Clerk's office.

Elma Pistol Office:

On February 23rd, 2018 the new Erie County Pistol Department Satellite Office opened in the town of Elma. The Elma satellite office is open weekly on Fridays from 10:00 am - 3:30 pm, and will process specific transactions, including add / remove a gun, change of address and help with general pistol permit questions. The Elma office is the first satellite office to open since the Cheektowaga satellite office closed in August of last year due to staffing issues. The Clerk's Office is working to reopen the Cheektowaga satellite office later this year.

Pistol Permit Applications:

Due to the high volume of people coming to the Erie County Pistol Department for the NYS Recertification requirement, a new process for taking in pistol permit applications was put in place. After analyzing the amount of time on average that each pistol department transaction takes, taking in new pistol applications was moved to an appointment process, significantly cutting the wait time to submit an application and increasing privacy for the applicants. The appointment process has received positive feedback and has continued.

Furthermore, the Pistol Permit Office has been restructured to help expedite the processing of new applications once they are submitted and the applicants' fingerprints have been received. In the month of December 2017, more pistol permit approval letters were sent out, than in all of 2007.

Currently, new pistol permit applicants must schedule fingerprinting for their applications outside of the Clerk's Office. After analyzing the number of applicants who submit their applications and never get their fingerprints, the Clerk's Office is working with the Erie County Sheriff's Office to establish a system for new applicants to get their fingerprints through the Sheriff's Office, cutting the inconvenience for the new applicant and securing additional revenue for Erie County.

Daily Pistol Department Transactions:

After conducting an analysis of the amount of time on average that each pistol department transaction takes, the Pistol Office was restructured to cut wait times for current pistol permit holders needing to complete a specific transaction. A cuing system and 'Express Line' for transactions under 10 minutes have been added to the Pistol Office. Additionally, the Pistol Department began accepting credit card payments in February.

FORECLOSURES & ZOMBIE PROPERTIES

The Erie County Clerk's Office stores a wealth of information regarding properties and housing in the county. In January, the Clerk's Office launched the ALERT Program to help communities prevent 'zombie properties'.

A.L.E.R.T. Program:

The 'Neighborhood Foreclosure A.L.E.R.T Program' is a collaborative effort working with each municipality in Erie County to preserve neighborhoods and prevent foreclosures. ALERT allows municipality leaders access to a new database of property information to help them proactively monitor foreclosures in their communities through lis penden filings at the Clerk's office. Nearly 20 municipalities participated in the first ALERT Program training session, with a second training session being offered in April.

A- Accessing

L- Lis Penden data for

E- Erie County and

R- Reporting to

T- Towns, Cities and Villages

VETERANS SERVICES

In the first 100 days, we have worked to both continue and expand existing veterans programs and incorporate new veterans' initiatives at the Clerk's Office.

Erie County Clerk's S.A.L.U.T.E.S. Program:

Showing Appreciation Loyalty and Unity Towards Erie County Servicemembers

The SALUTES Program will encompass the various veterans initiatives sponsored through the Clerk's Office. Each of the initiatives under the SALUTES Program seeks to either, provide a

service, such as the popular ‘Thank-A-Vet’ Discount Card Program offering veterans discounts to more than 1,400 Erie County businesses, or to pay tribute to our veterans’ sacrifice and dedication, such as through the Purple Heart Combat Wounded Designated Parking Spaces. Other initiatives under SALUTES include Valentines for Vets, the W.N.Y Veterans Housing Coalition Family Christmas Drive, and the *William J. Donovan Purple Heart Recipients Book of Honor*.

Continuing/ Expanding Thank A Vet Discount Program:

The popular program offers discounts and benefits to more than 1400 Erie County businesses. Since becoming clerk, there have been 7 Thank A Vet outreaches throughout Erie County. These outreaches have also been expanded to include evening events, in order to allow veterans working during business hours the opportunity to sign up for their Thank A Vet card. These outreaches will continue to be held throughout the county during the year.

The Clerk’s Office is also working to facilitate partnerships with other veterans’ services in Erie County. The Veterans One Stop Center of WNY has teamed up on Thank A Vet Outreaches to help provide additional resources and information to Erie County vets.

HEALTH

According to a study from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, Erie County ranks 57th out of 62 counties in the state for health and wellness. At the Clerk’s Office we are aiming to make health and wellness a central focus.

Erie County Clerk’s Wellness Collaborative:

For the month of February, American Heart Month, the Clerk’s Office partnered with Mercy Hospital of Buffalo to offer free blood pressure screenings at each of the county Auto Bureaus. “Heart Healthy” Auto Bureau Blood Pressure Screenings offered free and confidential ‘snapshots’ of a person’s health and identified any red flags of more serious problems down the road. Health practitioners were able to provide immediate feedback, such as connecting the person to a primary care doctor onsite.

HDI: Healthy Districts Initiative

The Healthy District Initiative is a program under the Clerk’s Wellness Collaborative. HDI is a partnership between the Erie County Clerk’s Office, the *Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo* and 5 Erie County school districts to focus on health and wellness of the students. As part of the HDI, the *Mental Health Association of Erie County* is hosting a ‘mental health workshop’ for the 5 school districts.

BRINGING THE CLERK’S OFFICE TO THE PEOPLE

Recognizing that it can often be difficult for those needing to utilize the services at the Clerk’s Office to do so during regular business hours, the Clerk’s Office has held or scheduled 22 outreaches throughout Erie County, in the first 100 Days.

As previously noted, the Clerk’s Office held NYS Recertification outreaches to help Erie County residents recertify their pistol permits with NYS. The Clerk’s Office office both continued and

expanded Thank A Vet outreaches for veterans throughout Erie County. Coming up in March, the Clerk's office will be hosting a Disability Awareness Outreach, and four Passport on the Move outreaches.

AUTO BUREAUS

This year at the Erie County Auto Bureaus we are expecting the highest volume year for license renewal. It is estimated that about 132 thousand Erie County residents will need to renew their license this year. We are continuing to promote our Renew Local campaign to keep both license and registration renewal money right here in Erie County.

Additionally we are conducting an analysis of security measures at each county auto bureau. A 'security task force' has been formed to identify areas of improvement, implement safety protocols, and ensure the safety of both the customers and employees.

Finally, we are conducting an analysis of the various transactions conducted at the Auto Bureaus and have held discussions with NYS Department of Motor Vehicles about additional support needed from the state to update and expedite services. Analyzing and implementing changes to the Auto Bureaus is a top priority heading into our next 100 Days.

ON THE HORIZON

As the Erie County Clerk, I will continue to look for areas to make improvements and better serve our constituents in Erie County. There are several changes on the way that will have an impact on our residents, such as:

- Passport fees increase, April 2, 2018. Service Fee \$25 to \$35
- Cashless tolls on Grand Island Bridge, March 29, 2018.
- Real ID 2020, Beginning October 1, 2020, the federal government will require your driver license, permit or ID card to be REAL ID compliant if you wish to use it as identification to board a domestic flight (within the U.S.), or enter military bases and certain federal facilities.
- Continued NYS Recertification, deadline January 2019

The Clerk's Office will continue to reach out to the community to inform Erie County residents about these changes, and how the Clerk's Office can help them.

CONCLUSION:

In closing this 100 Day report I would like to take a moment to thank the employees of each department in the Clerk's Office for their tireless efforts to serve the residents of Erie County. I have had the pleasure of meeting each employee of the Erie County Clerk's Office and I am grateful for their upmost professionalism and work ethic.