

# C3 COUNTY CLERK'S CORNER

Paula Sollami Covello, Mercer County Clerk

## Welcome from the Mercer County Clerk, Paula Sollami Covello, Esq.



**Dear Mercer County Resident:**

The Mercer County Clerk's Office is pleased to introduce you to our newest publication— County Clerk's Corner. It is my hope that this newsletter will help you

stay better informed of all the important services we provide and how you can utilize our office.

You may not be aware that the County Clerk's Office provides many services that residents and businesses in Mercer County use every day. We file and record all documents concerning real estate ownership and transfer; register small business trade names; process U.S. passport applications; and process and issue County identification cards and notary public applications.

Early in my administration, we also began offering photos for people seeking passports and County ID cards to make things a bit more convenient for you.

In addition, the County Clerk has certain election responsibilities including the counting of votes cast by electronic machines. And finally, one of my favorite jobs—as Clerk, I am empowered to perform marriage ceremonies for County residents!

My staff and I strive to provide you with the level of service you deserve and expect. We've extended our hours and opened a satellite office to make it even easier for you to do business with us. If you have any suggestions on how we can serve you better, please call my office at (609) 989-6998. I welcome your input!

All the best,

*Paula Sollami Covello*

Paula Sollami Covello  
Mercer County Clerk

## New County Satellite Office opens in Hamilton

Need a passport, an absentee ballot or other county government service? County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello is now offering most services out of the **County Connection** office opened by Mercer County Executive Brian M. Hughes in March, 2007.

The 2,100-square-foot, glass front store is located in Hamilton on Route 33 in the Acme Shopping Center with plenty of free parking.

For more information on what Mercer County Connection has to offer, call (609) 890-9800 or email [countyconnection@mercercounty.org](mailto:countyconnection@mercercounty.org).



"I just love the new office in Hamilton! I didn't have to fight the traffic and find parking in Trenton and got my passport application taken care of on a Tuesday night on the way home after work!"

— J.P. in Robbinsville

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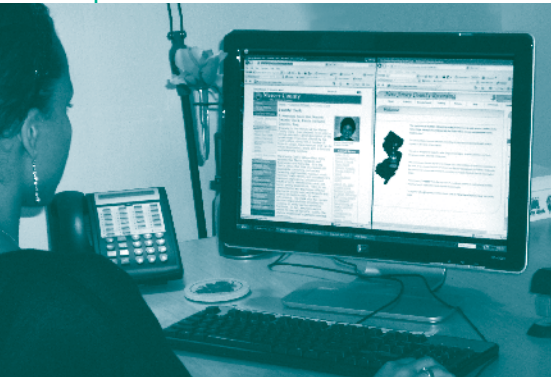
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## Mercer County Clerk's Office Launches New E-Filing System

In an effort to bring greater convenience to Mercer businesses, County Clerk Sollami Covello launched an electronic filing system in early 2007



for land records. E-filing allows mortgage companies, law firms, and other businesses to directly file land records and communicate with the Clerk's office via the Internet, further expediting the filing process and eliminating the disorder of paper masses. The office will continue to accept requests through the mail for more traditional businesses that wish to operate under the older system.

*"I have been pleasantly surprised to find no more backlogs in the office and have recently switched to e-filing. It saves my office (and clients) time and money!" — K.T. in Lawrenceville*

The electronic-filing system offers independence and more efficient communication for Mercer County businesses with no new costs; the only expense to subscribers is the original fees per page. In late 2007, the Clerk's office also launched an online payment system for e-filing so money and checks no longer need to be sent through the mail. Interested businesses can apply through the Clerk's Office at (609) 989-6472.

*"The County Clerk's office saved the day with my client's recent house closing." — T.D. in Princeton*

## CREDIT CARDS NOW ACCEPTED:

Credit Cards Permitted for Land Transactions and Other Government Services

The Mercer County Clerk's Office recently began accepting Visa and Mastercard for land transactions, passport processing fees and small business registrations.

According to Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello, credit card introduction is an integral part of her plan to enhance convenience and technology for Mercer residents and businesses.



*"I am proud to usher in this latest improvement and watch our office enter the 21st Century," said Ms. Sollami Covello.*

## Passports:

### What You Need to Know Before Planning Your Next Vacation Abroad



With the tightening of passport requirements for international travel, the County Clerk's Office has added Saturday and evening hours at the newly opened **County Connection** in Hamilton, in addition to evening hours on Wednesday nights in Trenton.

It is critical that applicants bring all the necessary credentials when applying for a passport. Passport applications require

two photographs (which can be taken at both the Clerk's Passport Office and the County Connection), proof of U.S. citizenship, and a valid form of photo identification such as a driver's license. You can download passport applications and obtain additional information by logging onto [www.MercerCounty.org/CountyClerk](http://www.MercerCounty.org/CountyClerk).

To check the status of a passport that is already in processing, customers should call 1-877-487-2778 or check online at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).



## Deed Certification Scam

If you receive a direct mail solicitation from a private company called “National Deed Service” offering to provide you with a certified copy of your deed for a cost of \$69.50—do NOT fall for it. This is a scam. The solicitation letter leads the reader to believe that the County Clerk’s office only records deeds and that in order to get a certified copy you must pay a \$69.50 to their company. This is absolutely untrue. Mercer County land owners may obtain a certified copy of their recorded deed, at anytime, at their convenience, directly from the Mercer County Clerk’s Office for the cost of only \$1.50 per page and a certification charge of \$10.00.

“Don’t fall for this trap,” warned Mercer County Clerk Sollami Covello. “It is regretful that a company would prey upon unknowing, financially overburdened homeowners, especially in our senior population, many of whom are on fixed incomes, by offering a service already provided by County government,” she said. The State of New Jersey’s Division of Consumer Affairs is looking into this matter, and the County Clerks of New Jersey are urging legislation on a united front to avoid this problem in the future.

Homeowners interested in obtaining a certified copy of their deed should call the Recording Section of the Mercer County Clerk’s Office at (609) 989-6464.

## New Absentee Voting Laws Provide Freedom to Choose

Mercer County Clerk, Paula Sollami Covello, advises that new laws allow all citizens - including seniors - to vote via absentee ballot by request. Mercer County residents may contact the Clerk’s office to obtain absentee ballots or to sign up on a permanent absentee ballot list.



*Paula Sollami Covello Bringing News to Residents in the Mercer County Geriatric Center in Hamilton*

## County Clerk Transfers Newly Discovered Historical Documents to State Archives

Several historical documents that hold extreme significance in Mercer County history were discovered during an inventory project conducted last year by Anna Shifton, a records specialist hired by Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello. The records include several slave manumissions, which are a record of freedom for slaves. The oldest record dates back to 1839, and documents the transfer of three slaves who lived in Mercer County from property to free citizens.



*From left: County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello, County Executive Brian M. Hughes, New Jersey Secretary of State Nina Mitchell Wells*

In addition to the manumissions, the County Clerk’s office found incorporation records for the New Jersey State Normal School Association (now The College of New Jersey), John A. Roebling & Sons (the world renowned, Trenton based manufacturer specializing in suspension bridges like the Brooklyn Bridge), and the power of attorney reports from Joseph Napoleon Bonaparte (a relative of the French emperor).

The Mercer County Clerk’s Office has voluntarily transferred all of the records to the State Archives. For more information about the Public Records Room, please visit the Mercer County Clerk’s Office in Trenton or the County website at <http://nj.gov/counties/mercer/>.





**Paula Sollami Covello**  
**Mercer County Clerk's Office**

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**Paula Sollami Covello**

Mercer County Clerk: (609) 989-6998

**Walker M. Worthy, Jr.**

Deputy Clerk: (609) 989-6998

**Ernest C. Cerino, Jr.**

Special Assistant: (609) 989-6353

**Passports/County ID:** (609) 989-6473

**Recording:** (609) 989-6466

**E-filing:** (609) 989-6472

**Indexing:** (609) 989-6476

**Elections:** (609) 989-6495

**Business Registrations:** (609) 989-6469

[www.mercercounty.org/countyclerk](http://www.mercercounty.org/countyclerk)

**Hours of Operation:**

**Elections Office**

Monday through Friday  
8:30 AM-4:30 PM

**Passport Services/Notary Public**

Monday through Friday  
8:00 AM-4:00 PM  
Extended Hours Wednesdays until 6:45 PM

**Public Records Room/Recording Department**

8:00 AM to 4:30 PM Monday through Friday  
Extended Hours Wednesdays until 6:45 PM

**County Connection**

Highway 33 and Paxson Avenue, Hamilton, NJ  
Monday, Wednesday, Friday 10:00 AM-6:00 PM  
Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 AM-8:00 PM  
Saturday 10:00 AM-3:00 PM  
(609) 890-9800