

Paula Sollami Covello, Esq.

County Clerk's Corner Newsletter...At Your Service



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Welcome from the County Clerk

I'm proud and excited to report in this newsletter message that Mercer County has purchased new voting machines for our voters this year. And, after many years of advocating for a verified, auditable paper trail, I am so pleased to announce that Mercer County has purchased optical scan voting machines that have a verifiable paper trail. This means that after you cast your vote on a paper ballot and you scan it into the tabulator, the vote will be recorded by computer and on paper. The paper will then be dropped into a bin which can be accessed if there is a question about the outcome of the election. You will not walk away with a paper receipt, but you can rest assured there is a back-up for your vote.

The machines Mercer County purchased are the Dominion ICP machines and tabulators. They use optical scan technology. This is considered to be the safest way to vote among safe-voting advocacy groups because while computers may be hacked, paper cannot.

The County also purchased electronic poll books manufactured by Tenex. These poll books were needed because the State of New Jersey has adopted Early Voting this year, and Mercer will provide eight early voting centers for in-person voting nine days prior to election. The E-Poll books will communicate with each other so that poll workers will know if someone tries to vote twice, or if someone already received a vote by mail ballot. (You can read more on early voting on the article to the right, and see the voting center locations on page 2).

All of these innovations will be in place for the Fall, 2021 November General Election. My office, and the other two election offices in Mercer County, have been working very hard throughout the summer to make sure that all of the new voting equipment is ready to go this Fall. We want to ensure that all voters can have confidence in voting Mercer County, without fear of foreign interference, and we want it to be easy and seamless for everyone. (Continued on page 2)



Pictured: Dominion Imagecast Ballot Marking Device

Early Voting Comes to New Jersey

Earlier this year, a law was passed permitting in-person early voting in New Jersey. All registered voters can now cast their ballot in person, using a voting machine during a nine-day period prior to Election Day. Starting on Saturday, October 23rd through Sunday October 31st no matter where you live in Mercer County you can vote at any of our county's designated in-person early voting locations.

To handle the anticipated influx of voters who may elect to vote early, there will be 8 designated polling locations throughout Mercer County (See page 2). Both the Governor and Legislature felt the implementation of early voting in New Jersey needed to begin because of the convenience factor it presents our voters with, coupled with the fact that it will allow all of the eligible voters in Mercer County to plan ahead and choose an option that is easiest and most convenient. After the unexpected year Covid-19 presented us with, lawmakers felt as though having another option for voters was imperative. As citizens are ever evolving and dealing with uncertainty in our daily lives, this new option provides us with one less thing to worry about in terms of physically making it to the polls to cast a vote.

The use of early voting is extremely popular in the US because it eases Election Day congestion, leading to shorter lines and overall improved poll-worker performance as it lessens crowds of voters. Also, this process will free up election officials to correct any registration errors that arise and fix any voting system glitches earlier. Of course, you still have a choice to vote by mail or vote in person at your regular polling location on Election Day. By implementing early voting opportunities throughout New Jersey it will ensure that the voting process becomes more convenient for citizens, thereby increasing turnout and diversifying the electorate. Lastly, I would like to remind everyone to keep checking our website at www.mercercounty.org/countyclerk for updated details on this process as they become available.

Welcome from the County Clerk

(Continued from page 1)

Of course, this requires a lot of cooperation, not just among our County's three election offices, but also from Mercer County Executive Brian Hughes and his administration, and from the Board of Mercer County Commissioners (formerly Freeholders). Thankfully, they have been there every step of the way to select and purchase the voting machines and equipment. They also assisted us with the funds necessary to carry out the provisions of the new early voting law. I am grateful for the cooperation. The State of New Jersey Division of Elections has also been helpful in assisting us because Early Voting is going to be happening statewide.

Please remember that vote by mail will remain an option for New Jersey voters and, if you are on our permanent list, you will receive a vote by mail ballot in the mail. You can return these ballots by mail or to a County drop box. Drop boxes are here to stay and we have listed those locations as well in this trusty newsletter! (Please note that if you are not a permanent vote by mail voter, you WILL NOT receive a ballot this year. That was ordered only last year by the Governor to avoid the spread of COVID-19 -- before we had a vaccination option.)

Please know that my staff and I are always here to answer your questions and concerns regarding the new voting machines, drop boxes, early voting sites and more at Mercervotes@mercercounty.org. We are excited to offer these new technologies, as we move forward with verifiable voting and a new era for Mercer County voters.

***Note:** To register to vote in New Jersey, each applicant must be a citizen of the United States and a resident of the county in which they are registered for at least 30 days prior to the election. The deadline to register to vote is Tuesday, October 12th.

The following are the 8 designated Early Voting Centers which are available for all registered voters in Mercer County, NJ:

Early Voting begins Saturday, October 23rd through Sunday October 31st

All locations will be open Monday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. and Sunday, 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

TRENTON - Cure Arena – 81 Hamilton Ave, Trenton.
Gate C

HAMILTON - Courtyard Marriott – 530 Route 130,
Hamilton

EAST WINDSOR - Mercer County Library – 138 Hickory
Corner Road, East Windsor

EWING – Element Hotel - 1000 Sam Weinroth Rd East,
Ewing

LAWRENCE - Mercer County Library – 2751 Brunswick
Pike at Darrah Lane, Lawrence

PENNINGTON - Pennington Fire Department - 120
Broemel Pl, Pennington

PRINCETON - Princeton Shopping Center, 301 N
Harrison St, Princeton

WEST WINDSOR - Mercer County Community College –
1200 Old Trenton Rd, Conference Center, West Windsor

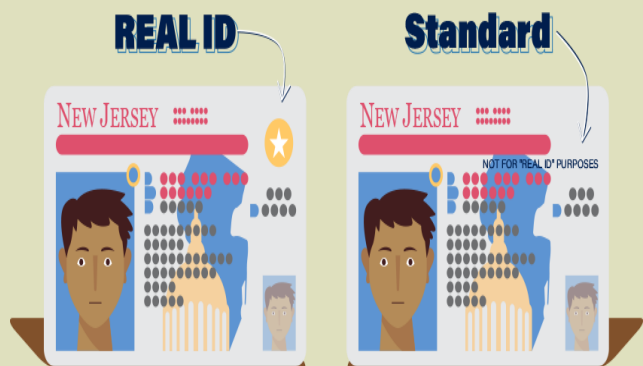


Pictured: Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello with her fellow New Jersey County Clerks. At a seminar on Early Voting and Cyber Security in Monmouth County. Sollami Covello is currently the president of COANJ the State Constitutional Officers Association of New Jersey).

Real ID Extension

The Federal Government has extended the requirement for citizens to have REAL ID from October 1, 2020 to May 3, 2023. As a result, this lessens the urgency for a new driver licenses, passport books and cards, which meet REAL ID requirements. "People do not have to feel stressed about needing a passport to meet federal REAL ID requirements at this time and this will allow only those who need them for international travel to visit the offices when they reopen."

Whereas a REAL ID-compliant drivers' license will require nine points of identification and an appointment at a Department of Motor Vehicles location to obtain, a passport will require an original birth certificate and a DS-11 (application for passport) for first-time applicants.



Mercer County Gets New Voting Machines!

The County Clerk's Office is proud to announce the County's acquisition of new voting machines.

- *Tenex Electronic Poll Books* (Apple I pads) will be utilized in all polling locations
- For Early Voting *Dominion Imagecast X BMD* (Ballot Marking Device) and *Dominion Imagecast Precinct II* (Tabulator) will be in all polling locations
- For Election Day the county will be using the *Dominion Imagecast Precinct* (Tabulator)



***TO TRACK YOUR VOTE-BY-MAIL BALLOT, LOCATE YOUR POLLING LOCATION OR SECURE BALLOT DROP BOXES, OR CHECK THE STATUS OF YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION, please visit www.Vote.NJ.Gov ***

Passport Renewal

Everyone enjoys traveling, don't ruin your vacation by having a expired Passport! Currently, the US Department of State is experiencing a delay in their passport renewal process. With this in mind, we would like to encourage all residents of Mercer County who have a passport that is expiring within the next 6 months or first time passport recipients, to make a appointment with our passport department by calling **(609-989-6473) or (609-989-6131)** to schedule a appointment to come into our office located at **209 South Broad Street Trenton, NJ 08608** or at the Mercer County Connection, (609)-890-9800, **957 NJ-33, Trenton, NJ 08690**

Things to bring:

- DS-11: [Application for Passport](#) (unsigned)
- Proof of Citizenship: Please supply one of the following: Birth Certificate - Original with raised seal or a certified copy with raised seal; Hospital certificates or baptismal certificates are unacceptable as Primary proofs of citizenship
- Driver's License - if you are at least 17 years old; learner's permits are not acceptable; if you are 17 and do not possess a valid license, then you will use a natural parent's license
- If you do not have a driver's license - Be prepared to present various forms of Identification such as school/college ID, business or government ID, voter registration and/or credit cards.
- Photographs - One (1) identical, recent, passport-quality 2"x2" photos; full face; NO hat; white or light background

Fees: (Pay with Money or Personal Check)

Two separate fees- Passport Services fee and a separate County Clerk processing fee (\$35.00 for processing)

Adult (16 years old and older):

- **Routine** - \$110.00 Passport Services fee (must be in the form of check or money order) \$35.00 Mercer County Clerk processing fee (payable either by check, money order or credit cards)
- **Expedite**- \$170.00 Passport Services fee (must be in the form of check or money order) \$35.00 Mercer County Clerk processing fee (payable either by check, money order or credit cards)
- Parents MUST submit long-form birth certificates (those that contain child's name and BOTH parent's names) for all children under age 16, even when submitting a previous passport or citizenship certificate.

Child (under 16):

- **Regular**- \$80.00 Passport Services fee (must be the form of check or money order) \$35.00 Mercer County Clerk processing fee (payable either by check, money order or credit cards)
 - **Expedite**- \$140.00 Passport Services fee (must be in the form of check or money order) \$35.00 Mercer County Clerk processing fee (payable either by check, money order or credit cards)
- Both parents need to be present with applying minor.

VOTE BY MAIL IS STILL A OPTION!

If you are a qualified and registered voter of New Jersey who wants to vote by mail in the General Election to be held on November 2, 2021, the following applies:

- You must complete the application form and send it to the county clerk where you reside or write or apply in person to the county clerk where you reside to request a mail-in ballot application.
- The name, address, and signature of any person who has assisted you to complete the mail-in ballot application must be provided on the application, and you must sign and date the application.
- A person who applies for a mail-in ballot must submit his or her application so that it is received at least seven days before the election, but such person may request an application in person from the county clerk up to 3 p.m. of the day before the election.
- Voters who request to vote by mail in all future elections will, after their initial request and without further action on their part, be provided with a mail-in ballot until the voter requests otherwise in writing.
- Application forms may be obtained by applying to the County Clerk either in writing or by telephone.

If you are currently signed up to receive mail-in ballots, but wish to now vote at the polls, either on Election Day or before, in accordance with NJ's new "Early Voting" law, you must first opt out of vote by mail by notifying the county clerk in writing at the address below. You may find a form for removal from the permanent list on the Mercer County Clerk's website at <https://www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk/elections>.

*All registered Mercer County voters should receive a Vote by Mail Application in the mail, the deadline to return the applications by mail is October 26th. If you have not opted out of vote by mail for this election and wish to vote in an early voting center, you will need to vote on a provisional ballot this year. However, you may opt out of vote by mail to vote early (in person) for **future elections**.*



Pictured: Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello with 2021 summer interns to remind students to apply for a vote by mail ballot, so that they may vote from their college or university, if living out of town.



Pictured: Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello at Trenton's National Night Out with New Jersey State Troopers. She visited several towns that evening.



Pictured: Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello, Deputy Clerk Walker Worthy Jr. and staff visiting the Essex County Clerk's Office to learn and share ideas with the Essex County election officials who have experience working with Dominion optical scan voting machines to bring best practices back to Mercer County.

Notary Night Schedule

Notary Nights will continue to be held on the first Thursday of each month, from 3 to 7:30 p.m. Notary Nights are held at the Mercer County Connection satellite office in Hamilton at **957 NJ-33, Trenton, NJ** as well as notary renewals by appointment at the County Clerk's Office located at 209 South Broad Street, Trenton. You must call **609-989-6465**, to schedule. A mask or face covering must be worn to enter. The remaining dates for 2021 are as follows:

October 7

November 4

December 2

To be sworn in by Mercer County Clerk's Office staff as a new notary, prospective notaries must apply and have their applications signed by a legislator. If you file your application online it will be sent to your legislator electronically. After the State of New Jersey processes your application, you will be sent your commission by mail. You must take your oath of office. The fee is \$15; checks and money order are accepted. Prospective notaries will also need a photo ID and their certificate on hand to be sworn in.

For current public notaries, an executive order signed by the Governor enables those whose commissions were due to expire to continue to perform notarial acts. The order allows any notaries public whose existing commissions have expired during the Public Health Emergency (March 2020-present) to continue to act as a notary as long as they enter the commission expiration date shown on their most recent renewal certificate when doing so. If they fail to renew their commission during the 90-day period following the last day of the PHE, their commissions will expire and they will have to reapply in order to conduct notarial acts.

For more information about notaries public and for updates please visit the Mercer County website at <http://www.mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk-/office-services/notary-public>, or call the office's main number at **609-989-6465**.

Secured Mail-In Ballot Drop Box Locations

EAST WINDSOR: East Windsor Municipal Court building— 80 One Mile Road, East Windsor, NJ, 08520

EWING: Ewing Municipal Building – 2 Jake Garzio Drive, Ewing, NJ, 08628 (In Front)

Mercer County Board of Elections- 1440 Parkside Ave, Ewing, NJ 08638 (In front of building entrance along curb)

The College of New Jersey, 1872 Pennington Road, Ewing, NJ 08618 (In front of the Administrative Services Building)

HAMILTON: Hamilton Golf/Call Center – 5 Justice Samuel A. Alito Way, Hamilton, NJ, 08619

Hamilton Municipal Building – 2090 Greenwood Avenue, Hamilton, NJ, 08609 (Left side of Bldg.)

Nottingham Firehouse – 200 Mercer Street, Hamilton Square, NJ, 08690 (Right side of Bldg.)

HIGHTSTOWN: Hightstown Firehouse #1 – 140 N. Main Street, Hightstown, NJ, 08520 (Front of Bldg.)

HOPEWELL TWP: Hopewell Township Administration Building – 201 Washington Crossing-Pennington Road, Hopewell, NJ 08560 (at the intersection of Scotch Road)

LAWRENCE: Lawrence Municipal Building – 2207 Lawrenceville Rd, (Rt 206) Lawrence, NJ 08648 (North Side-Right Side of the Municipal Bldg.)

Mercer County Board of Elections Office—930 Spruce St, Lawrence, NJ 08648

PRINCETON: Princeton Municipal Building – 400 Witherspoon St., Princeton, NJ, 08540 (Front of Bldg. facing Witherspoon)

Princeton University Wawa/Dinky Station- 152 Alexander St, Princeton, NJ 08540 (On the circle)

ROBBINSVILLE: Robbinsville Municipal Building- 2298 NJ-33, Robbinsville, NJ 08691 (In back parking lot of Municipal Bldg.)

TRENTON: County Clerk's Office- Courthouse Annex- 209 S. Broad Street, Trenton, NJ, 08608 (in front)

Trenton City Hall – 319 E. State Street, Trenton, NJ, 08608 (In back/ near Municipal Clerk's Office)

Henry J. Austin Center – 321 N. Warren St, Trenton, NJ, 08618 (Corner of Tucker)

Trenton Central High School – 400 Chambers Street, Trenton, NJ, 08609 (across from McDonald's)

WEST WINDSOR: Mercer County Community College-1200 Old Trenton Rd, Princeton Jct., NJ 08550 (Around the left side in the back by the Fine Arts Building)

West Windsor Municipal Complex- 271 Clarksville Rd, West Windsor, NJ, 08550 (Between the Municipal building and the Senior Center)

Use the Drop Boxes to return your VBM Ballot* You may also return your Mail in ballot by mail or by hand-delivering to the County Board of Elections office at 930 Spruce Street, Lawrence Twp., NJ

Get in Touch

**Mercer County Clerk's Office
209 South Broad Street
Trenton, NJ 08608**

**Mercer County Connection Satellite Office
957 State Highway 33
Hamilton, NJ 08690**

Visit our website: mercercounty.org/government/county-clerk

By Phone

Main number: 609-989-6464

Deputy Clerk Walker Worthy, Jr., and Administrative Offices: 609-989-6353

Press Inquiries: 609-278-7161

Elections: 609-989-6494

Indexing/Imaging: 609-989-6476

Business Registrations: 609-989-6469

Passports: 609-989-6473

County ID/Veteran ID/Gold Star Parent ID: 609-278-7108

Recording: 609-989-6466

Fax: 609-989-1111

County Connection: 609-890-9800

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Twitter: [@MercerClerk](https://twitter.com/MercerClerk)

Property Information Portal: pip@mercercounty.org