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AT YOUR SERVICE

Cook County Clerk David Orr
2009 Executive Report



COUNTY CLERK COOK COUNTY

This report was produced by the Communications Department at the Cook County Clerk's Office.

To request a hard copy, please email cgreve@cookcountygov.com or tlayton@cookcountygov.com.



Office of the Cook County Clerk

David Orr, Cook County Clerk



Dear Friends,

The year 2008 was a watershed for the Cook County Clerk's office. The Presidential Election made headlines for record-setting registrations, Early Voting and Election Day participation. Behind the scenes, we worked to implement projects to save taxpayers money and better serve the people of Cook County—in person and online.

All our offices, from Taxes to Ethics to Vital Records, now employ a new unified hardware and software system. Productivity is up, and customer wait time is down. Taxes, for example, has transitioned to an integrated cashiering, accounting and document production system that streamlines our process for serving property owners.

Such innovations have garnered national attention. In 2008, we won the Public Sector Industry Leadership Award from the Microsoft Corporation. We also received the Democracy Award from the Election Center for a Loyola University partnership that recruited hundreds of students to serve as Equipment Managers, specially trained and tech-savvy election judges.

From running elections to providing vital records, we're at your service. In the coming pages, we'll give you a closer look at what we've been up to.

David Orr

ELECTIONS

The 21st Century Vote

Since 2006, when the Cook County Clerk's office first implemented new election equipment to increase accessibility and accuracy, we have vastly expanded its use. On Election Day, voters can cast their votes on a paper ballot read by a scanner or on a touch screen with a voter verifiable paper audit trail.

Every polling place in suburban Cook County exceeds the single touch screen requirement of the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) by providing at least two touch screens.

Our website, voterinfonet.com, hosts a How-to-Vote video about both paper and touch screen ballots. Voters have embraced the new technology. All Early Voting is now conducted on touch screens, which have received rave reviews on our voter surveys.



The touch screens display ballots in multiple languages and have adjustable fonts and an audio ballot, and a sip-and-puff interface for voters with limited dexterity.

Early Voters Smash Previous Turnout Record

A campaign poster for early voting. The top left corner says "Cook County Clerk Election Department" and the top right says "WWW.VOTERINFONET.COM". The main text reads "VOTE EARLY!" in large, bold letters. A red ribbon banner across the middle says "PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION NOV. 4". Below the main text, it says "REGISTER TO VOTE BY OCTOBER 7" and "OCTOBER 13-30". There are several stars at the bottom left. The background is blue and white.

22% of voters cast ballots before Election Day, resulting in shorter lines and fewer headaches for voters and judges alike on November 4, 2008.

One of the most significant voting reforms of recent times is Early Voting, which was initiated here in Illinois in March 2006 by Clerk Orr.

The popularity of Early Voting was front and center in October 2008, when a whopping 226,000 people in suburban Cook County voted early for the Presidential Election.

With Early Voting, people can:

- Cast ballots up to 22 days before an election.
- Choose any one of dozens of convenient sites around Cook County.
- Avoid work or other scheduling conflicts.

Registrations Up

Early Voting set just one of many new records.

Suburban Cook County has more registered voters than ever:

- 1,436,210 people were registered to vote in November's Presidential Election.
- Registration increased in every suburban township: up 4 percent over 2004 and 9 percent over 2000.
- Democratic presidential nominee and Illinois Senator Barack Obama captured the highest number of votes (698,158) ever recorded by a presidential candidate in suburban Cook County.



Suburban Cook County had more registered voters in 2008 than it has in any previous Presidential Election.

Errors Down

Our new technology and ongoing voter education meant fewer voters skipped contests. Less than one percent of voters failed to record a vote for president—among the best accuracy records in the nation.

Youth Can Make a Difference

With the transition to new voting equipment, we developed more sophisticated training to match the touch screens and scanners, as well as a new category of specially-trained judges called Equipment Managers (EMs).



A record 1,700 students from 94 high schools applied to work as election judges last fall.

Loyola University provided a large corps of EMs to staff our polling places—a partnership that won the "Democracy Award" from the National Election Center in 2008 as one of the most innovative programs in the country.

It takes thousands of people to stage an election. In addition to EM's we employ more than 11,000 judges in suburban Cook County's 2,290 precincts. To help fill demand, we enlist computer-savvy high school students as judges. A record 1,700 of them from 94 high schools applied to work last fall.

ELECTIONS

Security and Efficiency

In 2006, our Elections Department moved its equipment storage and preparation operation to a warehouse rehabbed to our specifications.

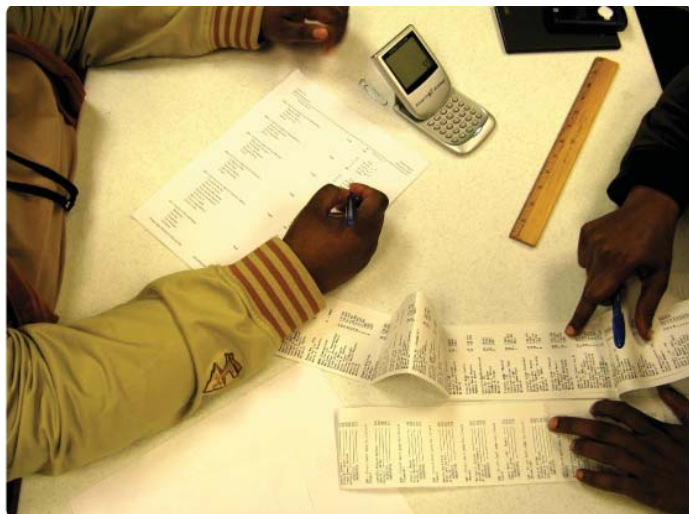
An enormous space, the Hawthorne Distribution Center was designed to:

- Hold voting equipment for all of suburban Cook County's 2,290 voting precincts.
- Enable modern election preparation.
- Provide layers of security and monitoring strategies.
- House a hot-line hub on election days.

Central to all elections operations are procedures to insure accuracy. The Clerk's office conducts one of the most thorough post-election audits in the nation, in precincts that are randomly selected by the Illinois State Board of Elections after the polls close on Election Day.



The Hawthorne Distribution Center houses all of suburban Cook County's voting equipment.



The Clerk's office performs a canvass of all precincts in suburban Cook County.

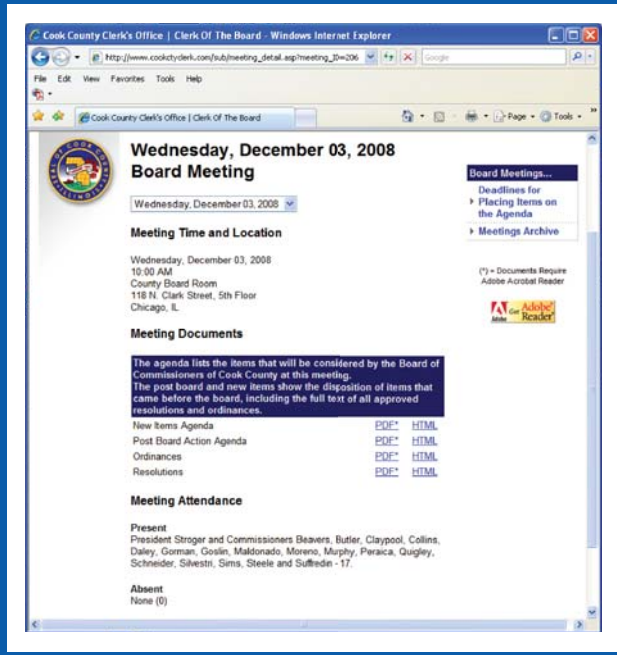


The Hawthorne Distribution Center is under 24-hour surveillance.

CLERK OF THE BOARD

The Clerk of the Board is the average citizen's portal to the Cook County Board. Now it is more convenient than ever to browse the Board of Commissioners activities and decisions.

Anyone with a computer can examine the board's detailed meeting agendas and meeting documents, which are posted on the Clerk of the Board's webpage and then archived. Plus, the Clerk now compiles online all ordinances passed by the board, dating back to December 2006, as well as a link to the compiled Cook County Code of Ordinances.



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Cook County Clerk's Office website. The page is titled "Wednesday, December 03, 2008 Board Meeting". It includes a dropdown menu for selecting a meeting date, a section for "Meeting Time and Location" (Wednesday, December 03, 2008, 10:00 AM, County Board Room, 118 N. Clark Street, 5th Floor, Chicago, IL), and a "Meeting Documents" section. This section lists "New Items Agenda", "Post Board Action Agenda", "Ordinances", and "Resolutions", each with links to PDF and HTML versions. A "Meeting Attendance" section lists "Present" attendees (President Stroger and Commissioners Beavers, Butler, Claypool, Collins, Daley, Gorman, Goslin, Maldonado, Moreno, Murphy, Pararca, Quigley, Schneider, Silvestri, Sims, Steele and Sulfredin - 17) and "Absent" attendees (None (0)). A sidebar on the right contains "Board Meetings..." with links for "Deadlines for Placing Items on the Agenda" and "Meetings Archive".

Select any board meeting date on the Clerk's website to view documents from that meeting.

ETHICS & CAMPAIGN DISCLOSURE

The Clerk's Ethics and Campaign Disclosure department maintains documents detailing the financial activities of public officials, candidates, certain government officials and lobbyists. Lobbyists file registration papers yearly and financial disclosure statements every six months. Elected officials and some public employees must file statements of economic interest.

All records are open for examination. The Clerk's office also posts summary reports online to keep the public informed. In 2008, the Cook County Board mandated a \$350 lobbyist registration fee. Since that time the number of lobbyists filing has dropped, but their reported income has increased.

In 2008, we:

- Processed 24,553 statements of economic interest.
- Recorded 1,056 campaign disclosure reports.
- Handled 765 lobbyist registration and expenditure reports.
- Recorded more than \$2.6 million in lobbyist compensation.
- Managed 3,629 individual requests to examine disclosure records.

VITAL RECORDS

Birth, Marriage, Death Records and More

The Cook County Clerk's office is the official record keeper for births, marriages and deaths that occur in Chicago and suburban Cook County. The office's 27 million vital records date back to 1871. In a massive preservation effort, we digitized nearly all these records, helping to preserve old documents and making them more accessible.

In FY 2008 we issued:

- 694,000 birth, death and marriage records.
- 33,606 marriage licenses.
- Nearly 7,000 business registrations.
- Almost 20,000 notary commissions.



In September, Vital Records moved from antiquated offices in the basement of the Cook County Building—which had been plagued with floods and vermin—to new space on the concourse level of Daley Plaza. In combination with a project to scan millions of historical documents, these changes add up to greater security and accessibility for Cook County's vital records.

Sweet Home Cook County

Tucked within the Vital Records files are birth certificates for notables including: Michelle Robinson Obama, Harrison Ford, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Ernest Hemingway, Patti Smith, Herbie Hancock and Raquel Welch.

The range of famous figures is so impressive that the Clerk's office compiled a book in 2007 entitled "Sweet Home Cook County," which features county natives celebrated for their wit, athleticism, brains or talent. Copies are available for schools and libraries, or can be downloaded from our website.



Common
Born: March 15, 1972 at Chicago (Chicago) Hospital in Chicago, Illinois

Judy Chicago
Born: July 22, 1939 at Lakeside Hospital in Chicago, Illinois

Betty Ford
Born: July 14, 1918 at Lakeside Hospital in Chicago, Illinois

A "Sweet Home Cook County" exhibit was displayed in the lobby of the County Building.



Download "Sweet Home Cook County" at cookcountyclerk.net.

Domestic Partnership Registry

Vital Records houses the Cook County Domestic Partnership Registry, which was created by the Cook County Board of Commissioners on October 1, 2003.



A grand party was held in the Chicago Cultural Center on October 1, 2008 to celebrate the registry's fifth anniversary. More than 1,500 couples have registered; they hail from all corners of Cook County.

Genealogy Online

In the summer of 2008, Vital Records launched CookCountyGenealogy.com, a website allowing people to search 8 million Cook County genealogical records dating from 1872. Records can be instantly downloaded for a fee.

In 2008, Genealogy Online had more than 151,000 online 'hits' from across the globe, including more than eighty countries such as Israel, Ireland and Iceland. The new service brought in more than a quarter million dollars from July to December 2008, and has more than paid for its development and implementation.

STATE OF ILLINOIS, }
COOK COUNTY. }
The Physician, Accouchour or person in attendance should immediately return this Certificate accurately filled out, to the County Clerk. Penalty, \$10.00, if not so certified and returned within thirty days.

VITAL STATISTICS DEPARTMENT, COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE.

1. *Full Name of Child (if any) *Ernest Miller Hemingway*

2. Sex *Male* Race or Color (if not of the white race) *Caucasian white*

3. Number of Child of this Mother *Second*

4. Date of this Birth *July 21, 1899*

5. *Place of Birth, No. *439 W. Oak Park Blvd. Oak Park, Ill.*

6. Residence of Mother, " *ditto* "

7. Nationality: Place of Birth: Age of:

a. Father *U.S.* *U.S.* *28 yrs.*

b. Mother *U.S.* *U.S.* *27 yrs.*

8. Full Name of Mother *Grace Ball Hemingway*

9. Maiden Name of Mother *Grace Ball*

10. Full Name of Father *Clarence Edmund Hemingway*

11. Occupation of Father *Physician & Surgeon*

12. Name and Address of other Attendants (if any) *Dr. W. H. Jones*

Dated *July 22* 18 *99* returned by *C. H. Hemingway M.D.* M. D. *1899*

Residence *439 W. Oak Park Blvd. Oak Park, Ill.*

*The given name of Child should be certified, if possible, when this Certificate is made, and should, in any case, be certified and registered within a year.
†City, village, street and ward; same in towns that have them; township or precinct.

CookCountyGenealogy.com provides genealogists with instant access to birth records at least 75 years old, marriage licenses 50 years old and death certificates 20 years old.

REAL ESTATE AND TAX SERVICES

New Location

Like Vital Records, the Real Estate and Tax Services office is now in a new, modernized location at 118 North Clark Street in downtown Chicago.

As part of its transformation, Real Estate and Tax Services has implemented processes that improve employee productivity and hasten customer service. A new accounting system seamlessly integrates cashing, accounting and document production. In the past, several computers, programs and employees were involved with every purchase of a birth certificate or a tax document. The process was often protracted and laborious. Now, with a few keystrokes, these tasks are completed instantly.



A new accounting system has streamlined customer service.



Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer congratulates Clerk Orr at the Convergence Customer Excellence Awards.

Award-Winning Technology

We've made several key improvements with our new accounting system:

- All types of delinquent tax documents—sold, open and forfeited—are now processed for walk-in customers in less than 15 minutes.
- Document production for walk-in customers is up 50%.
- Bar codes included on all tax bills and other documents eliminate redundant data entry.
- More automation has reduced staff overtime and improved accuracy.

In 2008, Clerk Orr was honored with a Public Sector Industry Leadership Award by Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer to recognize these technological advances.

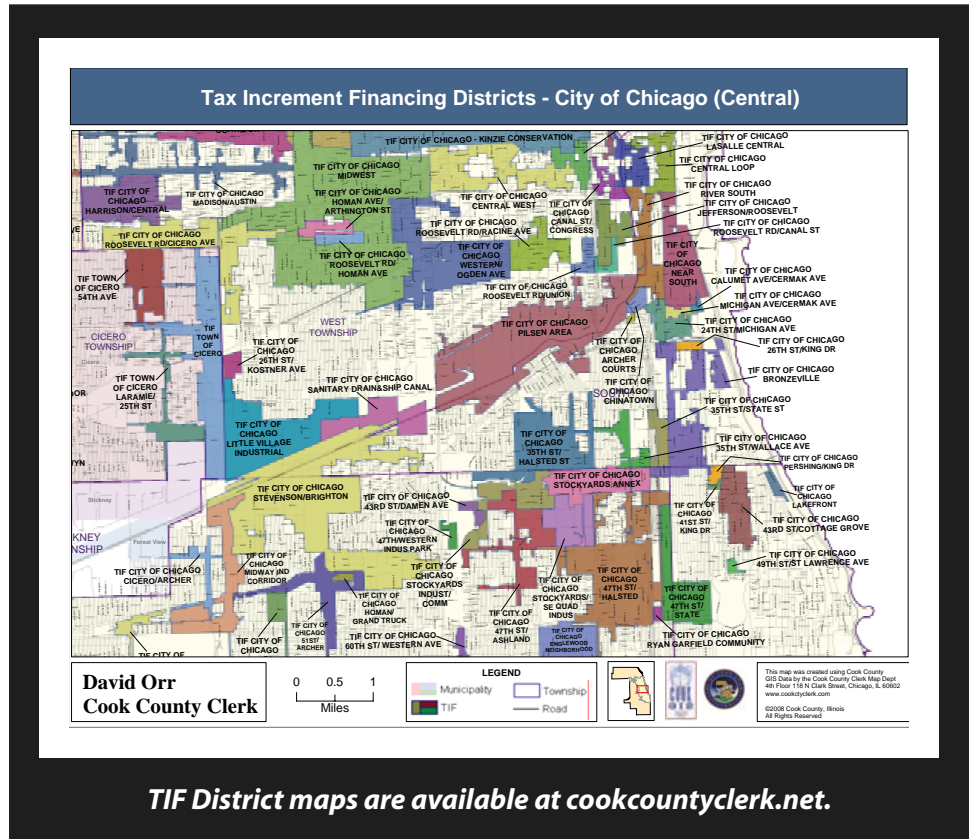
TIF Revenue Reports

Did you know Cook County taxpayers in 2007 contributed more than \$892 million to tax increment financing (TIF) districts? That's up 11.5 percent from the year before, according to an online TIF revenue report created annually by the Clerk's office. Orr's report is part of his ongoing effort to improve transparency on TIFs through easily-accessible information.

Since 2007, the Clerk's office has posted the TIF revenue report online in a user-friendly format. The report allows taxpayers to see money generated by more than 400 TIFs in Cook County.

The tools available include:

- An executive report.
- A primer on TIFs and township TIF district maps.
- Maps created by the Cook County Clerk's mapping department using sophisticated Geographic Information System (GIS) data.



Searchable Database for Taxing District Reports

Since June 2008, taxing districts and the general public have been able to access taxing agency reports on the Clerk's website through a new searchable database. This database includes the following reports: Agency Rate Report, Agency Equalized Assessed Valuation (Agency EAV) Report, New Property Report and Exemption Detail Report.

Mainly of interest to district finance experts and auditors, these reports were previously only available for public inspection in the Clerk's office or by mail or fax. This is the first phase of an automation initiative. A web component will soon allow greater interaction between the Clerk's office and taxing districts during the rate-making process, further streamlining communications and reducing overtime and postage expenditures.

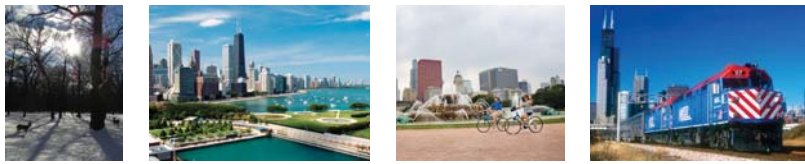
GREEN INITIATIVE

The Clerk's office is developing environmentally-friendly practices through our Green Initiative.

We have saved nearly 1 million sheets of paper—or 14 trees per year—and amped up recycling by implementing programs both big and small, including:

- Emailing rather than snail-mailing newsletters.
- Installing motion-activated lights.
- Printing double-sided documents and refraining from printing non-essential materials.
- Recycling printer cartridges.
- Recycling glass, aluminum and paper.
- Switching to an automated inventory system to prevent unnecessary ordering.
- Launching several online projects that drastically reduce paper usage: automated County Board agenda, CookCountyGenealogy.com and tax district rates online.

REMEMBER to Recycle



It's part of the job



- Place all acceptable paper waste in blue recycling bins.
- Blue recycling baskets are not trash bins.
- Kitchens have special receptacles for bottles and cans.
- Reuse the blank sides of first drafts and faxes.
- Print back-to-back whenever possible.
- Do not print emails unless necessary.

Thank you.

David Orr



We have installed automated lighting, implemented email newsletters and other online services to save energy and resources.

Recycling is part of the job.

Be conscious of your environmental footprint! Email me at clerkdavid@cookcountygov.com with any suggestions on my green initiative to make a greener office.

The Clerk's Green Initiative requires all employees to conserve and recycle as much as possible.



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Digital Graphics Unit

Front Cover

Top left: Clerk David Orr receives Microsoft's 2008 Public Sector Industry Leadership Award.

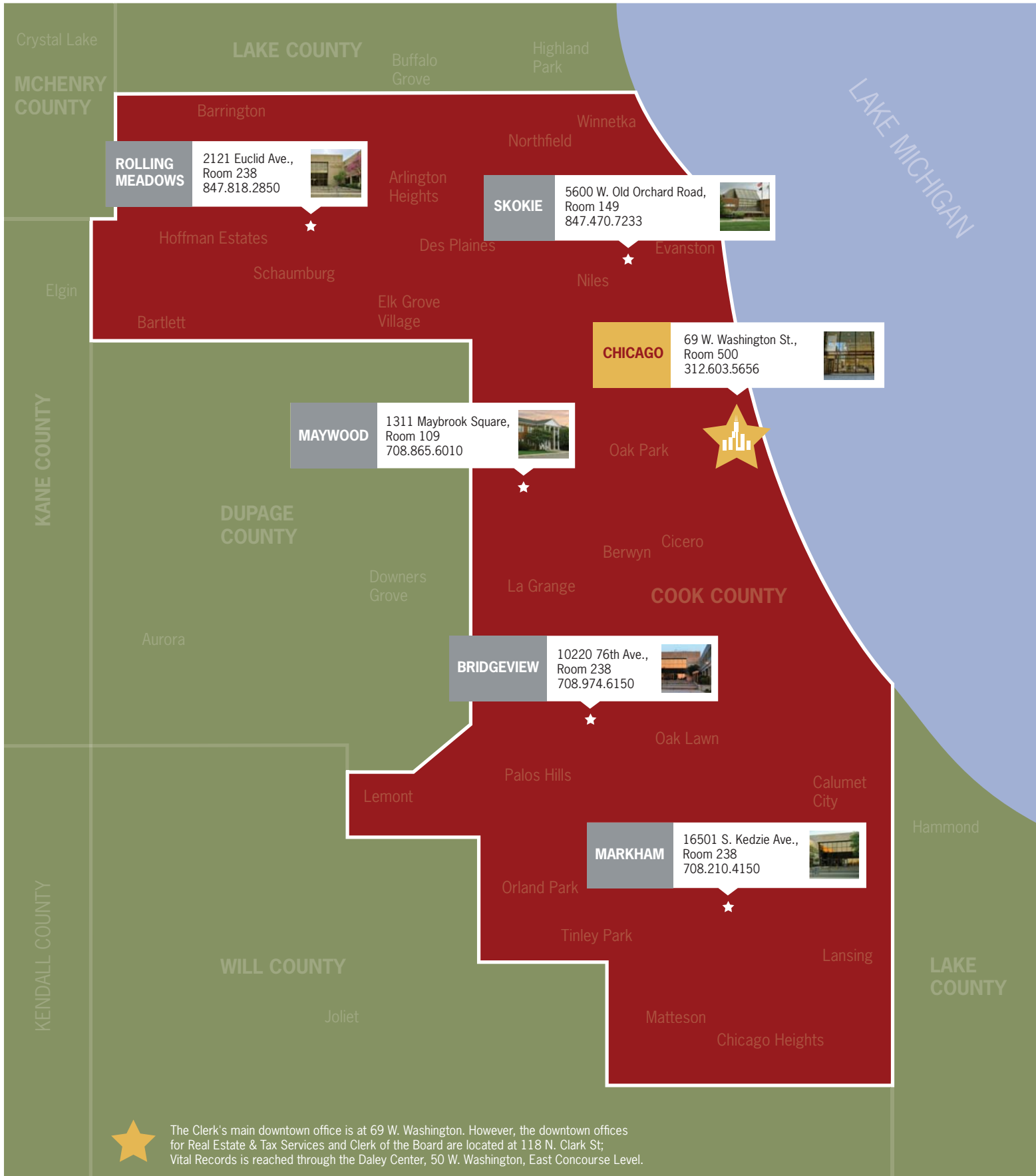
Top right: Clerk's office employee Michael Ponce conducts a voter registration drive in Daley Plaza.

Bottom right: Voter Supply Carriers, known as "Big Blue Boxes," hold voting equipment at the ready prior to Election Day.

Bottom left: A couple on their wedding day, representing nearly 34,000 Cook County couples who wed in 2008.

Back Cover

Exterior photos of Clerk's office locations by Brian Morowczynski.



COOK COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE LOCATIONS

Vital Records, Elections, Ethics, Real Estate & Tax Services, and Clerk of the Board

www.cookcountyclerk.net