



Crystal K. Kinzel

Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller
3315 Tamiami Trail East, Suite 102
Naples, Florida 34112-5324
www.CollierClerk.com

Dear Citizens,

It has been a busy summer for our offices! I appreciate your patience as we renovate the customer service area on the first floor in the courthouse annex. We are making improvements to enhance our customer service processes to serve you better! I am also excited to announce the ribbon-cutting event for the Heritage Bay satellite office. We have been “softly” opened for a couple of months, but now the “official” opening is here! Please join the celebration on August 4 at 10:00 am at 15450 Collier Boulevard, Naples 34120.



August is back-to-school month, with school starting August 10. While it is a busy time for families, don't forget to take advantage of the Back-to-School tax-free holiday that runs through August 9, 2022. Families can save money by taking advantage of the tax holiday. To learn more, please visit www.floridarevenue.com. In addition, National Traffic Awareness Month is the perfect reminder for everyone to pay close attention when driving within a school zone.

This month you will receive your Notice of Proposed Property Taxes, a Truth in Millage (TRIM) notice from the Collier County Property Appraiser. If you feel the assessed value of your property is inaccurate or does not reflect the fair market value or that you are entitled to an exemption for what is not reflected, contact the property appraiser's office. If you feel the issue is not settled, you may file a petition to appeal the assessment with the county's Value Adjustment Board (VAB). My office receives and processes those petitions then we schedule the hearings. After August 16, we will post specific instructions about the process to petition the VAB on our website. Please visit www.CollierClerk.com. The deadline to file a petition is September 9, 2022.

August is a VERY important month in the 2022 election cycle. Primary ballots have been mailed, and early voting begins August 13th – 20th, from 10 am to 6 pm at numerous Collier locations. The primary has many very important races, including 2 Board of County Commissioner Districts and 3 School Board Districts. Find more details on these and all voting processes at: www.colliervotes.gov/Election-Info/Upcoming-Elections/2022-Primary-Information.

Lastly, I want to hear from you. Please let me know when you're hosting a homeowners association meeting, business event, community gathering, or any opportunity where there may be interest in the many functions of the Clerk's Office and how we might help you. The Clerk's office provides a variety of services to the citizens of Collier County, but many are unaware of what we do. Please email Lisa Kasparian, Director of Community Relations and Outreach, at Lisa.Kasparian@Collierclerk.com and she will work with you to schedule my visit.

We are blessed to live in paradise, so enjoy the rest of the summer, and please find some time to relax and enjoy all that Collier County has to offer. We'll be here working for you!

Crystal K. Kinzel

Collier Clerk Newsletter August, 2022



Main Office Courthouse

3315 Tamiami Trail E.
Naples, FL 34112
(239) 252-2646

Satellite Offices

Airport Motor Vehicle
725 Airport Road South
Naples, FL 34104

Eagle Creek
6654 Collier Boulevard
Naples FL 34114

Everglades City Hall
102 Copeland Ave. N.
Everglades City, FL 34139

Golden Gate Gov. Center
4715 Golden Gate Parkway
Naples, FL 34116

Heritage Bay
15450 Collier Blvd.
Naples, FL 34120

Immokalee
106 South First Street
Immokalee, FL 34142

North Collier Gov. Ctr.
2335 Orange Blossom Drive
Naples, FL 34109

Customer Service
(239) 252-2646

www.CollierClerk.com



www.facebook.com/CollierClerk



**PARDON
OUR
DUST**

We are excited to announce the renovation of our customer service area located on the first floor in the Courthouse Annex building. Please pardon our dust as we are working to enhance our services. During the renovation, our services will be available on the 2nd floor in the Recording Department. Stay tuned for future updates.

Our office continues to find opportunities to enhance our customer service. As we transitioned to e-file and e-recording, direct mail has been significantly reduced. To save \$5,000 annually in costs, we are discontinuing P.O. Box 413044. Please use 3315 Tamiami Trail E., suite 102, 34112.



Saving Taxpayer Dollars



On July 6, 2022, Collier County closed the Series 2022B Special Obligation Refunding Revenue Note. The Collier Clerk and Comptroller's staff worked diligently with the County and their consultants on the \$76M

refinancing, saving the taxpayers of Collier County nearly \$12M in gross debt service payments in the transaction.

The Note was unique in that it was structured as a forward fixed rate lock purchase agreement, entered on March 8, 2022, by the Collier County Board of County Commissioners. Since the time of the rate lock, interest rates have increased dramatically. If not for the forward-looking rate lock executed months prior, the interest rate savings would have been significantly lower.

“As the custodian of public funds for Collier County, saving taxpayers’ money is always great news. However, we must continue to review the sustainability of future projects and minimize required borrowing. While some borrowing is necessary and the cost of funds lower than projected in the future, it is still debt. The ongoing costs to maintain the underlying projects must be considered. We will continue to take advantage of refinancing opportunities in our ongoing effort to ensure we keep the overall cost of borrowing to a minimum.” said Crystal K. Kinzel, Collier County Clerk and Comptroller.

Heritage Bay Ribbon Cutting Event

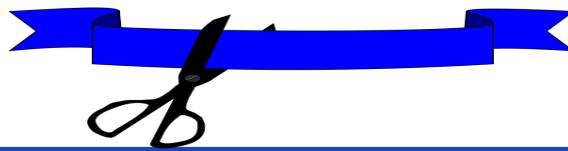


Please join the celebration on August 4th at 10:00 a.m. as we cut the ribbon on our newest government services satellite office at the Heritage Bay location located at 15350 Collier Boulevard, Naples. Services will include the processing of traffic and criminal fines. We will also process forms for such services as marriage licenses, perform marriage ceremonies, accept declaration of Domicile, notice of commencement, passport applications, provide DMV records and certified copies.

“It is great to celebrate the opening of the Heritage Bay customer service center. Our goal is to bring the services closer to those using the services. With the incredible growth in this area, we hope this center will save travel time and costs for our customers. Co-location with other Constitutional offices has proven to serve the public better, and the inclusion of the community meeting space will enable us to provide education on Clerk’s services. I want to thank the Tax Collector and County staff for working on this project.” said Crystal K. Kinzel, Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller.

Heritage Bay offers a one-stop location for government services from the Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller, Tax Collector, Clerk of Courts, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections, and the Growth Management Community Development Department.

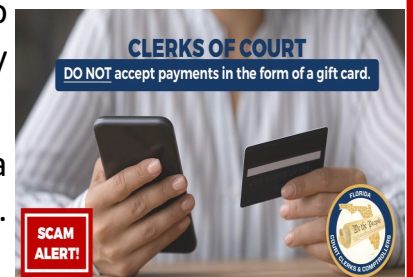
Construction on the 22,780-square-foot facility was completed ahead of schedule and under the \$11,700,000 budget through a successful project management partnership of the Collier County Tax Collector’s office and Collier County Facilities Management.



Don’t be a Victim to the Jury Duty Scam

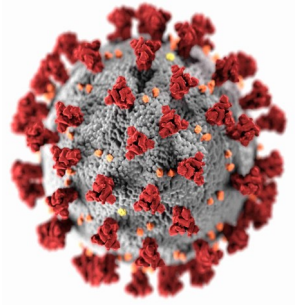
Please be aware that scammers are contacting Florida residents claiming they missed jury duty and requesting residents to pay a fine by purchasing a gift card to Clerks’ offices. This was reported in the Manatee and Sarasota County area, and it is not clear the extent of the spread of the scam.

The Collier County Clerk’s office does not offer the option to purchase a credit card, please contact our office immediately at (239) 252-2646. This is a scam!



Collier County Clerk and Comptroller Confirms Fraudulent COVID Assistance Applications

The Collier County Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller's Division of Inspector General (IG) questioned \$1,828,753 in ineligible and potentially fraudulent CARES Act funds and COVID assistance payments in 2020 and 2021. A total of 2,220 grant applications were reviewed, resulting in a fraud case for approximately \$200,000 referred to law enforcement.



The IG identified ineligible payments for reasons such as duplicate submissions, duplicate dependents claimed, unsatisfied liens, conflicting compensation under another federal program, and homestead exemptions on rental properties. In conjunction with other governmental auditing executives statewide, the IG is exploring more preventative controls to combat the various fraud schemes detected.

On July 11, 2022, IG Senior Investigator Ruben Ramos attended the monthly Collier County Affordable Housing Advisory Committee and discussed 59 potentially fraudulent Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program applications currently under review. Ramos discovered that the identities of three Collier County residents and one Miami-Dade County resident were stolen and utilized on two Collier ERA grant applications. Two individuals were subsequently arrested. Additionally, the IG confirmed what appeared to be fraudulent documentation in 56 other applications. The IG could clear payment on only one application that was initially flagged with potentially fraudulent information.

The Clerk & Comptroller's office thanks Collier County Government's Community and Human Services Division management and staff for their partnership in identifying and addressing these potentially fraudulent applications.

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The Clerk & Comptroller's office thanks Collier County Government's Community and Human Services Division management and staff for their partnership in identifying and addressing these potentially fraudulent applications. The IG provides independent, objective audits, reviews, and investigations designed to add value and improve Collier County government. In addition, the IG works to preserve the public trust and to enhance the effectiveness of various Clerk and County departmental internal controls. Their internal controls include a complex environment of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

**Building Your Family Tree? Or just interested in the History of Collier County?
The Clerk's Office Can Help!**

If you're one of the millions who've begun your search for family history or are a recent history buff, you'll want some resources to help you research. The journey to "find my ancestors" requires navigating the multigenerational web of births, marriages, migrations, and milestones that have made you uniquely you.

The growing interest in genealogy has made it easy for amateur genealogists to uncover deep insights into where they came from and their ancestors. With genealogy and family tree building tools, you can sleuth out your long-ago origins and discover more about who you are and where you came from, and find your ancestors, all from the comfort of your computer.

Your past begins with your family tree, and the Collier County Clerk's office has the resources to help make the connection between your family history and Collier County. Our office is one of the first places to begin your journey. In addition, you can piece together essential parts of your family history through our court records, mortgages, deeds, marriage, and divorce records.

The Clerk's Office has records from the inception of Collier County, including records on the creation of the county in 1923. We currently provide digitized records from 1981 to the present, which can be easily searched and printed directly from our website for free. We are working on digitizing the remaining historical documents by next year to celebrate Collier County's 100th year. For now, to obtain records prior to 1981, you can visit our website at www.CollierClerk.com and complete the information request form or visit us at one of our locations (listed on the first page of the newsletter) to receive an e-mailed copy for free or a printed copy for \$1.00 or a certified copy for \$2.00. If you have any questions about accessing our records, please call (239) 252-2646. The Deputy Clerks of Collier County are available to assist you, and wish you all the best on your historical search.



Welcome, Lisa Kasparian!

Lisa began her journey with the Clerk's office in June. Lisa is the new Director of Community Relations and Outreach. Her goal is to ensure all Collier County residents know what services the Clerk's office provides and to increase our visibility within the communities of Collier County.

Lisa spent over 30 years in telecommunications as the Director of Government and Community Relations. Lisa relocated to Florida with her husband Rich and daughter Veronica to be closer to her son Kyle when he was accepted to the Dental/Ph.D. program at the University of Florida. Lisa also loves to visit her son *Marco and his family in Arizona.*

Exciting News!

Florida Court Clerks & Comptrollers released their 2022-23 Board and Committee List. Clerk K. Kinzel, Collier County Clerk and Controller has been appointed to Chairman of the Bylaws Committee and a member of the following committees; Comptroller & Clerk to the Board, Best Practices, Budget & Finance and Court Operations/Rules Review. Congratulations Clerk Kinzel!

Did you know?

The Florida Constitution, which has governed Florida citizens for more than 175 years, established a Clerk & Comptroller as an elected public trustee in 1838 and established at the county level a system of checks and balances that has served the public well. The functions and duties of Clerk & Comptrollers vary from state to state. In most jurisdictions, the Clerk & Comptroller is generally vested with many administrative duties. The Florida Clerk is not only the Clerk of the Circuit Court but also the County Treasurer, Recorder, Auditor, Finance Officer, and Ex-Officio Clerk of the County Commission in most counties.

The Office of the Clerk & Comptroller performs a wide range of record keeping, information management, and financial management for the judicial system and county government. Because the Clerk & Comptroller's duties affect the rights and property of county citizens, it is essential that the Clerk & Comptroller remain accountable for their actions. For this reason, the constitution and statutes require that the Clerk:

- is governed by statutory authority in carrying out the duties and functions of the office,
- as auditor and custodian of county funds is subject to state Auditor General rules and regulations, and
- is subject to annual audits by independent firms.

Public evaluation and scrutiny in the election process every four years also ensures accountability of your locally elected Clerk & Comptroller.

We want to hear from you, our readers!

You're receiving our newsletter; that's great! To enhance our communications, we would like to hear from you. What do you like best or least about the newsletter? Do you find it informative? The Clerk's office welcomes your comments and suggestions.

Please email Lisa.Kasparian@collierclerk.com.