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**CLERK SOLLAMI COVELLO ANNOUNCES SPECIAL
PASSPORT EVENTS FOR MERCER RESIDENTS**

Mercer County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello will once again hold special passport processing days for the convenience of Mercer County residents. The County Clerk and her staff will visit various municipalities throughout Mercer County to process US Passport applications on-site for all residents.

Passport processing events will take place on the following dates:

Hamilton: Saturday, April 2 - 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. "Passport Day in the USA," Mercer County Connection, 957 Highway 33 located in the Hamilton Square Shopping Center, (Additional hours for the County Connection are listed on the County Clerk's website)

Hopewell: Wednesday, April 6 - from 2:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Hopewell Township Municipal Complex, 201 Washington Crossing -- Pennington Road,

West Windsor: Tuesday, April 12 - 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the West Windsor Municipal Center, 271 Clarksville Road,

Lawrence: Thursday, May 12 - 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Lawrence Senior Center, 30 East Darrah Lane,

Residents are encouraged to call 609-989-6465 and reserve a time to have their applications processed and their passport photo taken, if needed. However, walk-in applicants are welcome. Additional representatives from the County Clerk's Office will be on-site to assist residents with their forms. Every effort will be made to include those residents who do not make an appointment.

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To apply for a US Passport, residents will need 1) Proof of US citizenship in the form of a state certified birth certificate, a US naturalization certificate or a previous US Passport. 2) Proof of identity in the form of a current driver's license or state issued identification card. A US Passport is valid for ten years for adults and five years for minors. The cost for a passport is \$110 for adults and \$80 for minors plus a processing fee of \$25. The federal government requires a separate check for each passport application. Passport photos will be taken on-site for \$15 or \$10 for senior citizens and minors under 16. The Clerk's Office will accept checks or money orders for payment. No cash or credit cards will be accepted at this event.

For children, Federal passport guidelines now require both parents to appear in person -- or one parent in person with notarized federal consent forms -- when applying for a passport for a child under 16.

While routine applications for US Passports are now being processed from four to six weeks, the early spring season is a good time to apply since the US State Department historically receives large numbers of applications as the summer nears. "Travelers who have not yet applied for a passport, should not hesitate, because the overall demand for passports has been rising due to changes in US travel requirements, which now requires travelers to have passports for air, land and sea travel outside of the United States, including Caribbean islands, Canada and Mexico," advises County Clerk Paula Sollami Covello.

For those who will be unable to participate in the passport event, the Mercer County Clerk's office processes US Passport applications on a regular basis, Monday through Friday during regular business hours at County Clerk's Office, 209 South Broad Street in Trenton. In addition, residents can also apply for a US Passport at the Mercer County Connection located at the Hamilton Square Shopping Center on Highway 33 & Paxson Avenue in Hamilton. The County Connection satellite office offers evening and Saturday hours for the convenience of Mercer County residents. Passport photos are available at both locations.

For further information on US Passport requirements, and what personal documents are needed to obtain a passport, residents should visit www.mercercounty.org and click on *County Clerk, General Info*, or call 609-989-6473.

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