

2011 Annual Report

Norfolk Circuit Court Clerk's Office

<http://icourt.info>



Clerk of Court
George E. Schaefer

Chief Deputy
Thomas A. Larson

Executive Assistant
Cheryl A.
Dougherty



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

OFFICE OF THE CLERK FOURTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT NORFOLK CIRCUIT COURT

100 Saint Paul's Boulevard
Norfolk, Virginia 23510
(757) 664-4580



Supervising Deputies

Criminal
DaVida M. Davis
Civil, Deeds & Probate
Anthony Fuller
**Licenses, Permits, Finance
& Jury**
Gerald L. Stokes

Comptroller
Nicholas D. Georges

Systems Administrator
Gregg J. Duquette

March 1, 2012

To: The Honorable City Council Members and City Manager
From: George Schaefer, Clerk of Circuit Court

CC: Budget Director, Circuit Court Chief Judge

Subj: Annual State of the Circuit Court Clerk's Office Report

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is with great pleasure that I present this report on the state of the Circuit Court Clerk's Office to you. Being re-elected for a second term, I now enter my 9th year as the Circuit Court Clerk. The partnership that we shared throughout my first term has proven invaluable and I look forward to another eight years, continuing to build on that foundation.

Efforts to streamline operations, create avenues for records research, and increasing productivity through my first term have seen great success. Providing best in class service to our customers continues to be our guiding principle. Throughout my first term, our office has digitized case files from 1996 to present in the criminal division and from 2004 to present in the civil division. This represents just over 13,000,000 images, and almost 250,000 cases. That volume of case files in paper format required 21,875 square feet of storage space. That need has been eliminated through the digital effort. We continue to digitize older case files on the civil side, which when complete, will realize an additional space savings of roughly 9,600 square feet. Digitizing case files has allowed the Clerk's Office and the Court to move to a paper-on-demand system, providing instant access to case files by the judiciary, office staff and the public. Additionally, we have been able to provide secure remote access to case files for agencies throughout Norfolk and the Commonwealth, as well as access to the private bar. The City Attorney, Commonwealth's Attorney, NRHA, Utilities, Sheriff's Office, AG's Office, and others have benefited from this effort as this service is provided to them at no cost, reducing their time for research and travel to the courthouse. The entire effort to date has been funded, at no cost to the city, by the Clerk's Technology Trust Fund. These funds have been all but exhausted, and we are now using salary savings realized as a result of the digital effort to complete the project prior to moving to a new courthouse.

My office continues its social media presence, utilizing Twitter, Facebook and Google Plus to inform citizens of trial results, jury service and other important events. We continue to look for ways to enhance citizen interaction and communication. The in-house development of mobile apps for attorneys has seen a reduction in phone calls to the office and the disappearance of scheduling issues for the court's docket. Wireless access was added over the past year for the use of private bar attorney's, leveling the playing field between prosecution and defense, balancing justice equally across all areas of practice.

During the latter part of the year, we saw a slight uptick in the real estate market, indicating a reversal of the downward trend over the past several years. Our e-recording solution continues to grow as we are seeing more documents being recorded electronically. We have been working closely with the Office of the Executive Secretary on the Supreme Court of Virginia to automate many of the man power intense processes related to recordation such as, judgments, marriages, and the purchase of packaged mortgages.

The Judges of the 4th Circuit are now realizing the benefits of portability. Access is available to the case files 24/7, anywhere in the world, allowing continuity and timeliness to justice. We are continuing to delve into the use of video, further reducing the costs involved with transporting defendants and witnesses.

Our criminal case load is below the 10,000 case mark for the fourth straight year indicating a slow but steady trend down in crime. Our civil case filings continue to increase and we expect this to continue throughout 2012. We are to begin the testing phase of the e-filing system developed in partnership with the Supreme Court of Virginia in mid-2012.

As General Receiver my office has continued to provide the best value to the citizens for which we are holding funds. By lowering the costs associated with the management of those funds and negotiating a higher interest rate, we have been able to add roughly 4.5% to each of the 450 individual accounts that we manage.

Restitution payments to victims continues to be a priority in my office and the use of the Tax Set-off program and other measures have resulted in the timely recoupment of funds. In 2011, the Clerk's Office has collected and disbursed over \$435,000.00 to victims in the 4th Circuit.

Specific examples of our case load follow:

Criminal Cases concluded in CY11: 9,482 (up 10.1%)

Civil Cases opened in CY11: 8,289 (up 24.1%)

Will documents processed in CY10: 8,362 (down 3.6%)

Land Record documents processed in CY10: 35,710 (up 28%)

Other (marriage license, weapons permits, trade names, etc.): 54,659 (up 3.1%)

Staff Back scanning of documents in CY11: 1,149,666 images

Our workload is up from 2010 primarily attributed to the increased civil case filings and Land Recordation however, the technology improvements made have allowed absorption of the additional work without an increase in staffing.

Working closely with Sheriff's Office staff, we have processed 153 community service letters resulting in the in-kind payment of \$173,377 dollars in court cost debt owed by inmates.

We continue to review each area of revenue on both the state and local level, ensuring a maximum collection of costs for the city and state treasury.

Passport Services continue to be in demand. We have processed 650 passport applications in 2011, an increase of 45.6%.

Cash flow through this office reached almost \$40 million dollars in calendar year 2011, a 5% increase over 2010.

With my continued preference toward Norfolk citizens, I am proud to announce that 96% of my staff calls Norfolk home.

Please find attached statistics from 2011. I have included, as a part of this package, graphs that we employ to determine the ebb and flow of the activities at the courthouse. This gives us the ability to manage our staff efficiently and foresee problem areas.

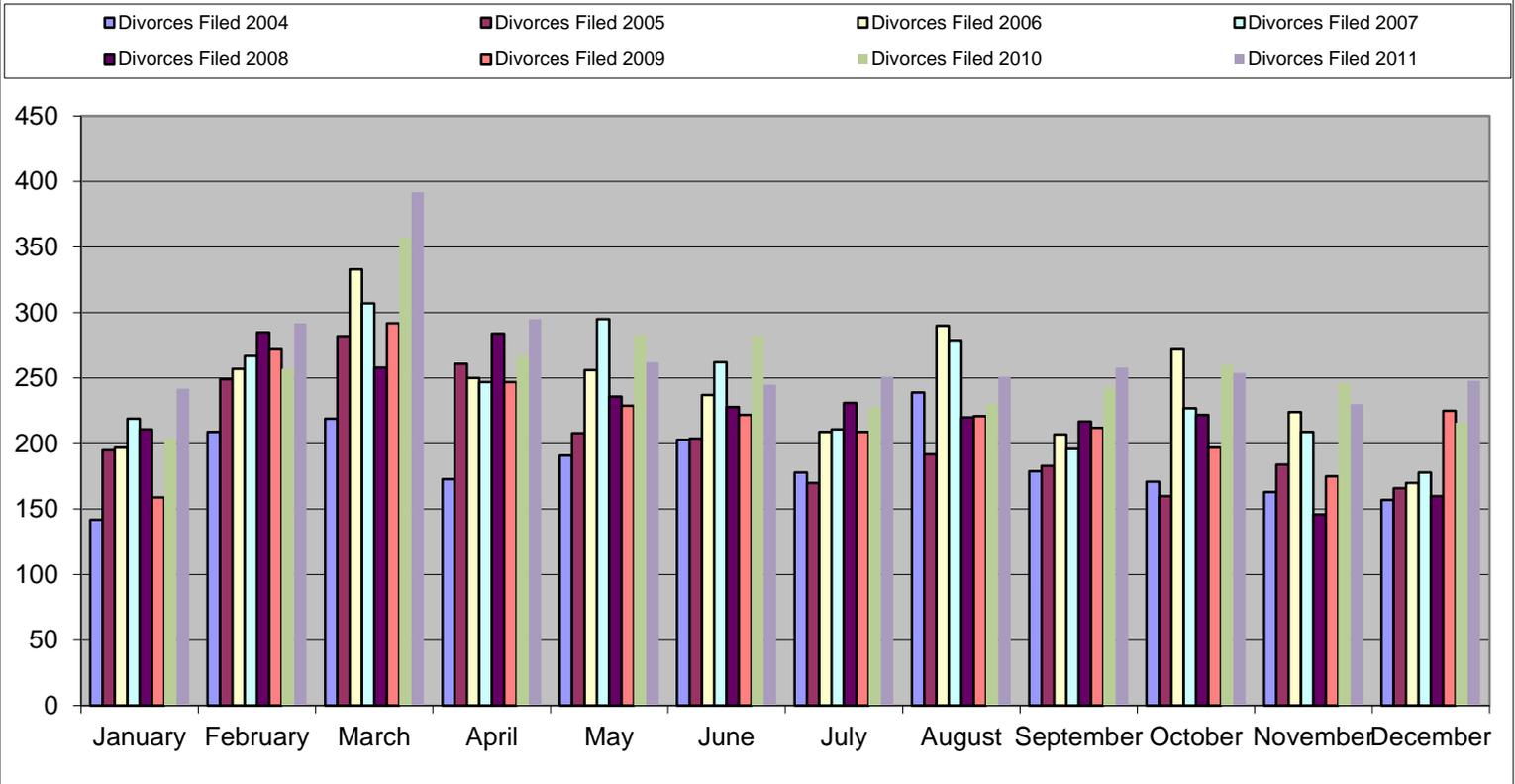
Thank you for your time and I look forward to a continued partnership between the Circuit Court and the City we serve.

Very truly yours;

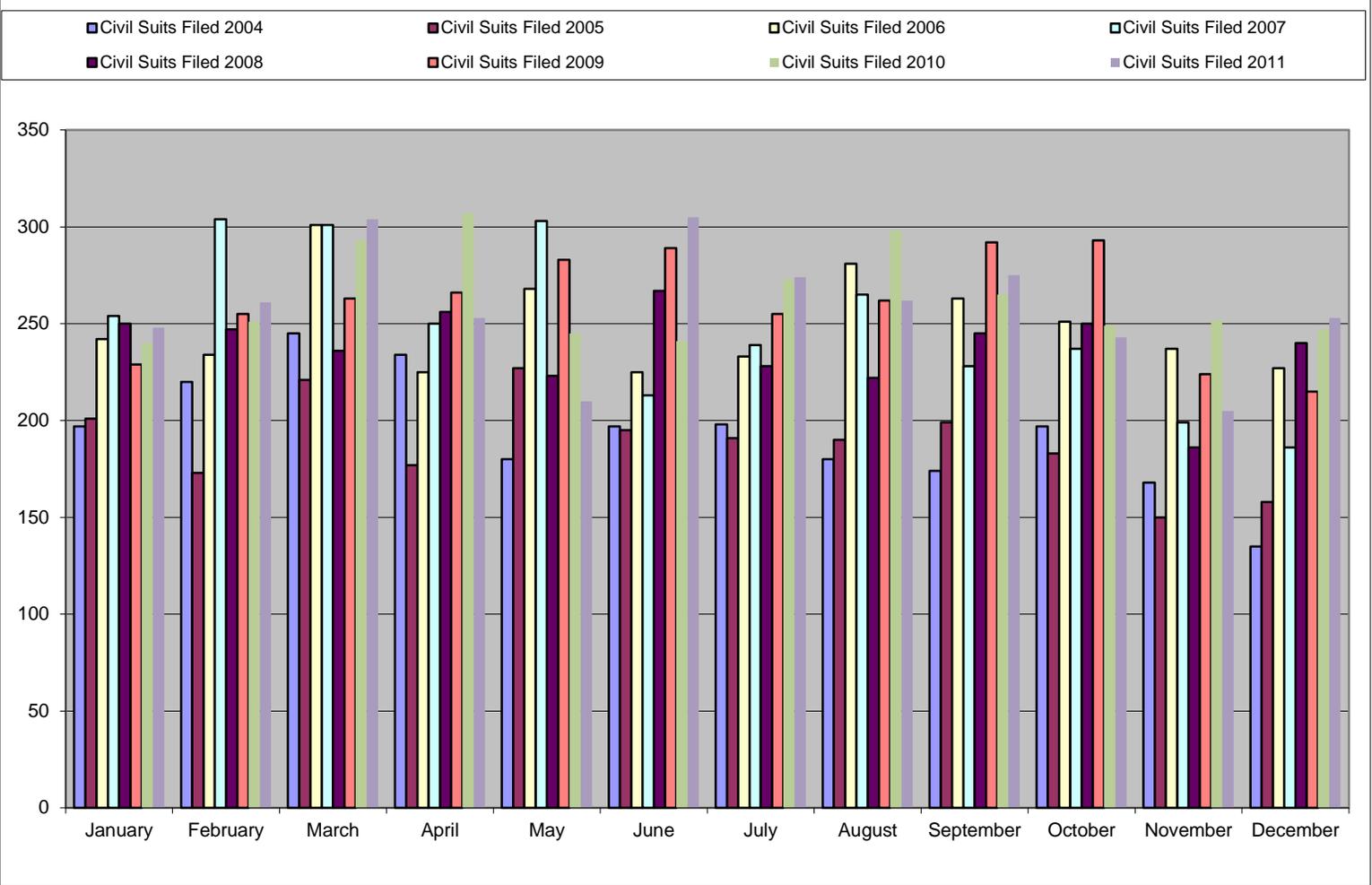
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George E. Schaefer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "G" and "S".

George E. Schaefer
Clerk of Circuit Court

Divorces

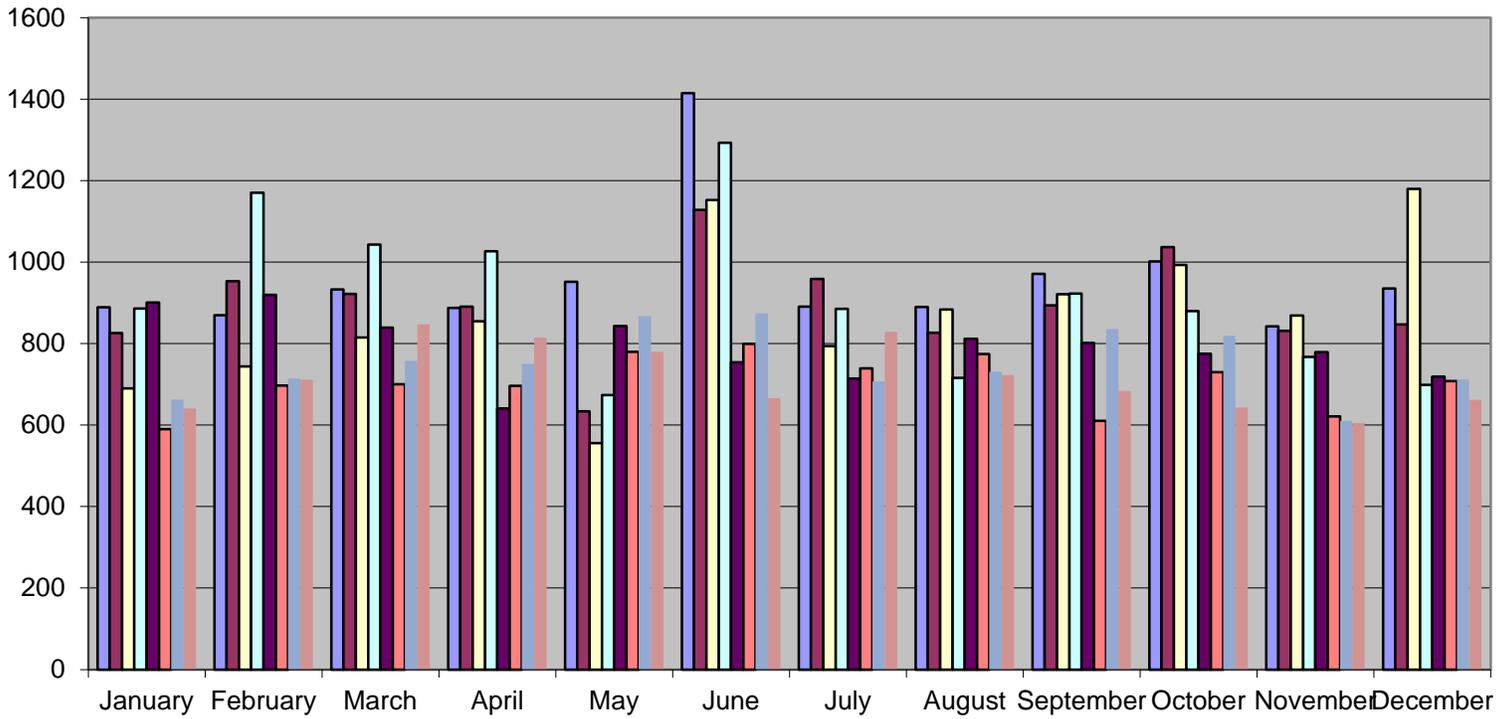


Civil Suits Filed



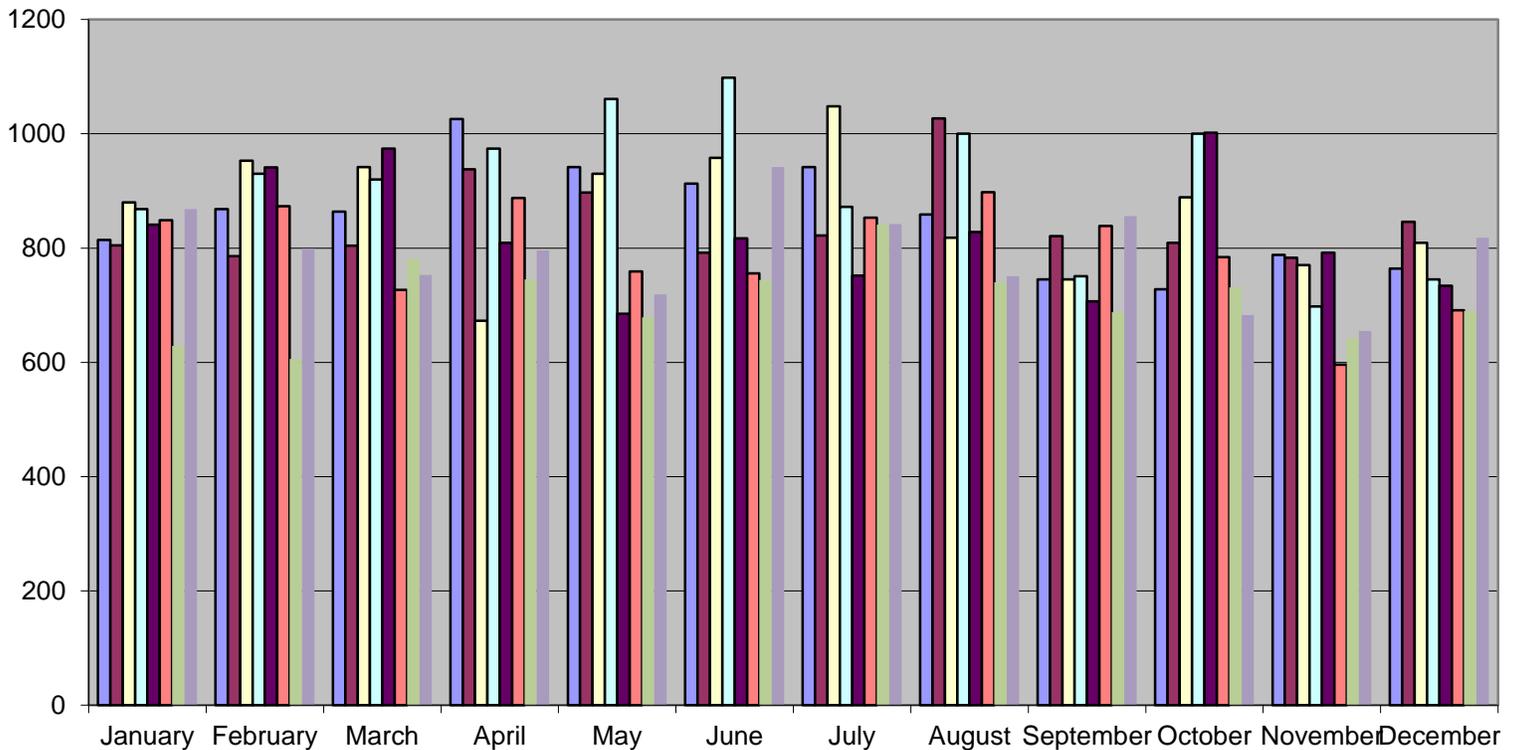
Criminal Cases Commenced

- Criminal Cases 2004
- Criminal Cases 2005
- Criminal Cases 2006
- Criminal Cases 2007
- Criminal Cases 2008
- Criminal Cases 2009
- Criminal Cases 2010
- Criminal Cases 2011



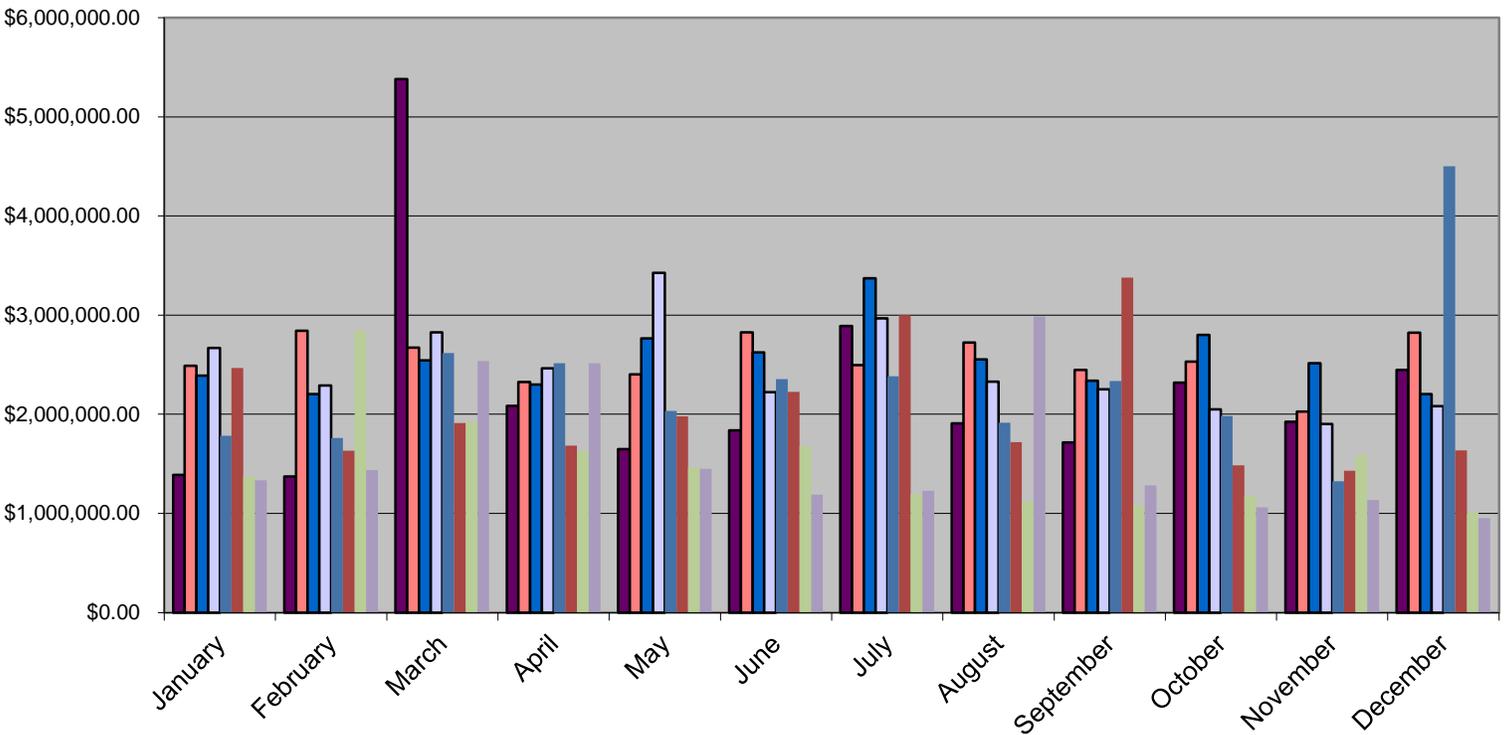
Criminal Cases Concluded

- Criminal Cases 2004
- Criminal Cases 2005
- Criminal Cases 2006
- Criminal Cases 2007
- Criminal Cases 2008
- Criminal Cases 2009
- Criminal Cases 2010
- Criminal Cases 2011



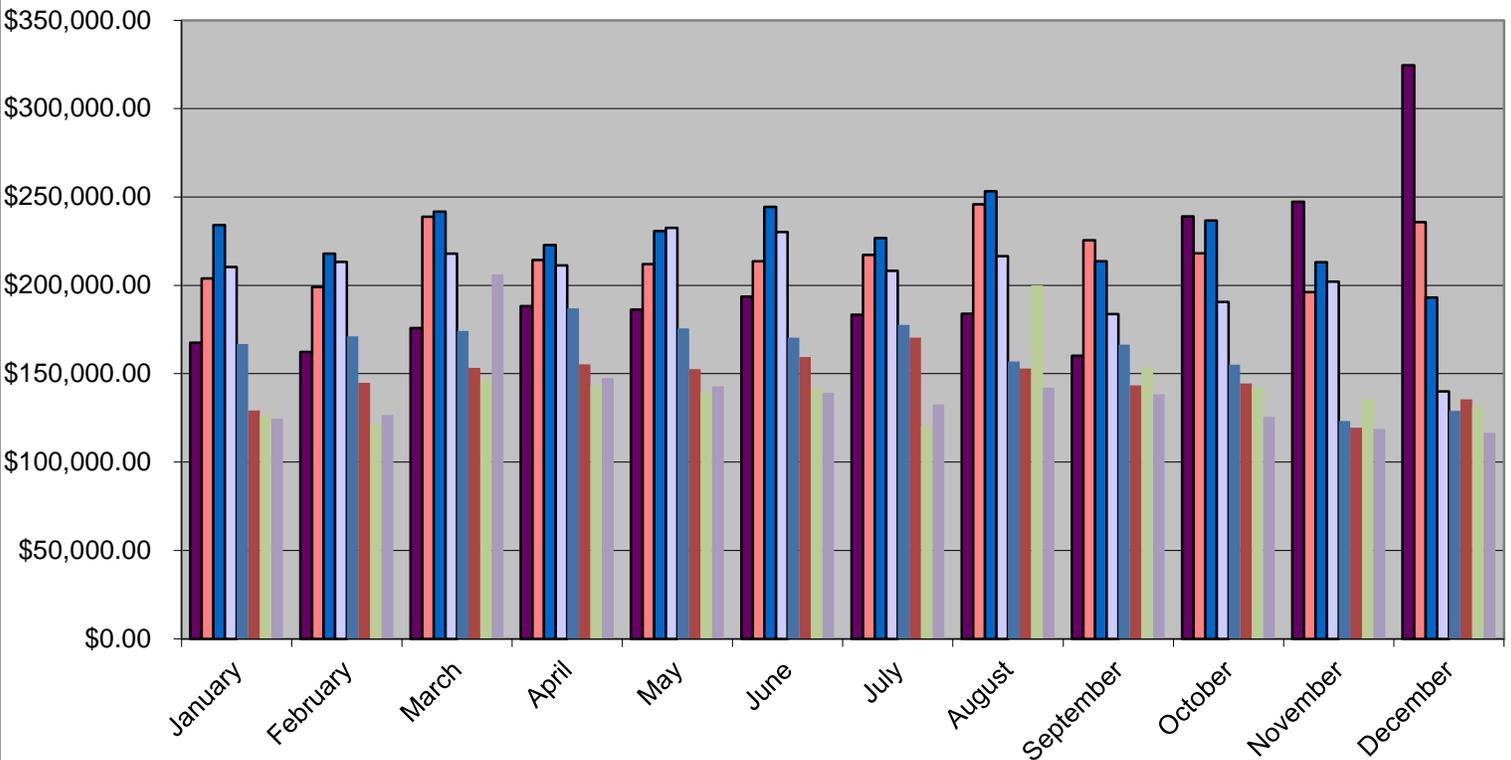
Total Receipts

■ Receipt Total 2004
 ■ Receipt Total 2005
 ■ Receipt Total 2006
 ■ Receipt Total 2007
 ■ Receipt Total 2008
 ■ Receipt Total 2009
 ■ Receipt Total 2010
 ■ Receipt Total 2011

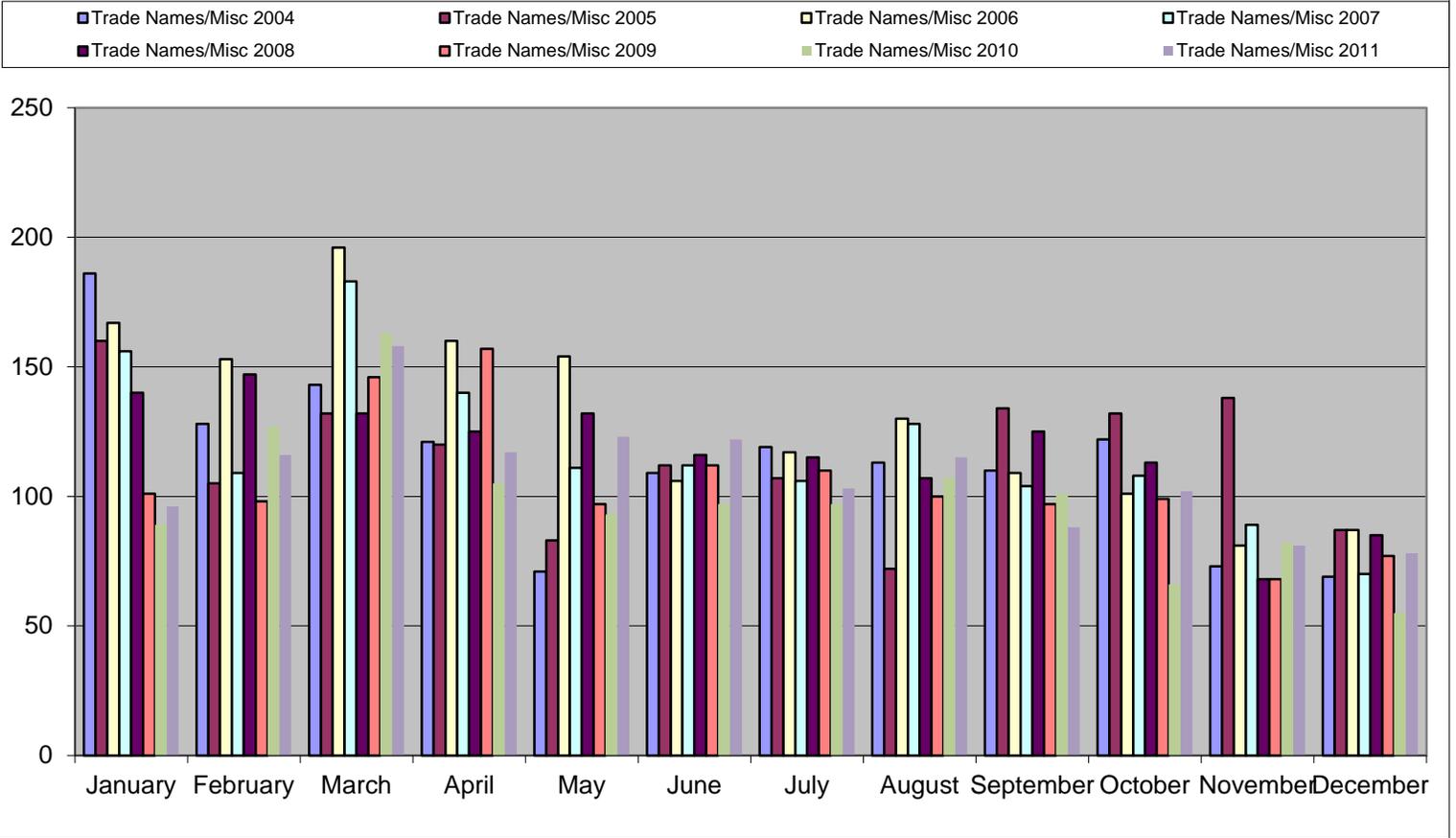


Clerk's Fees

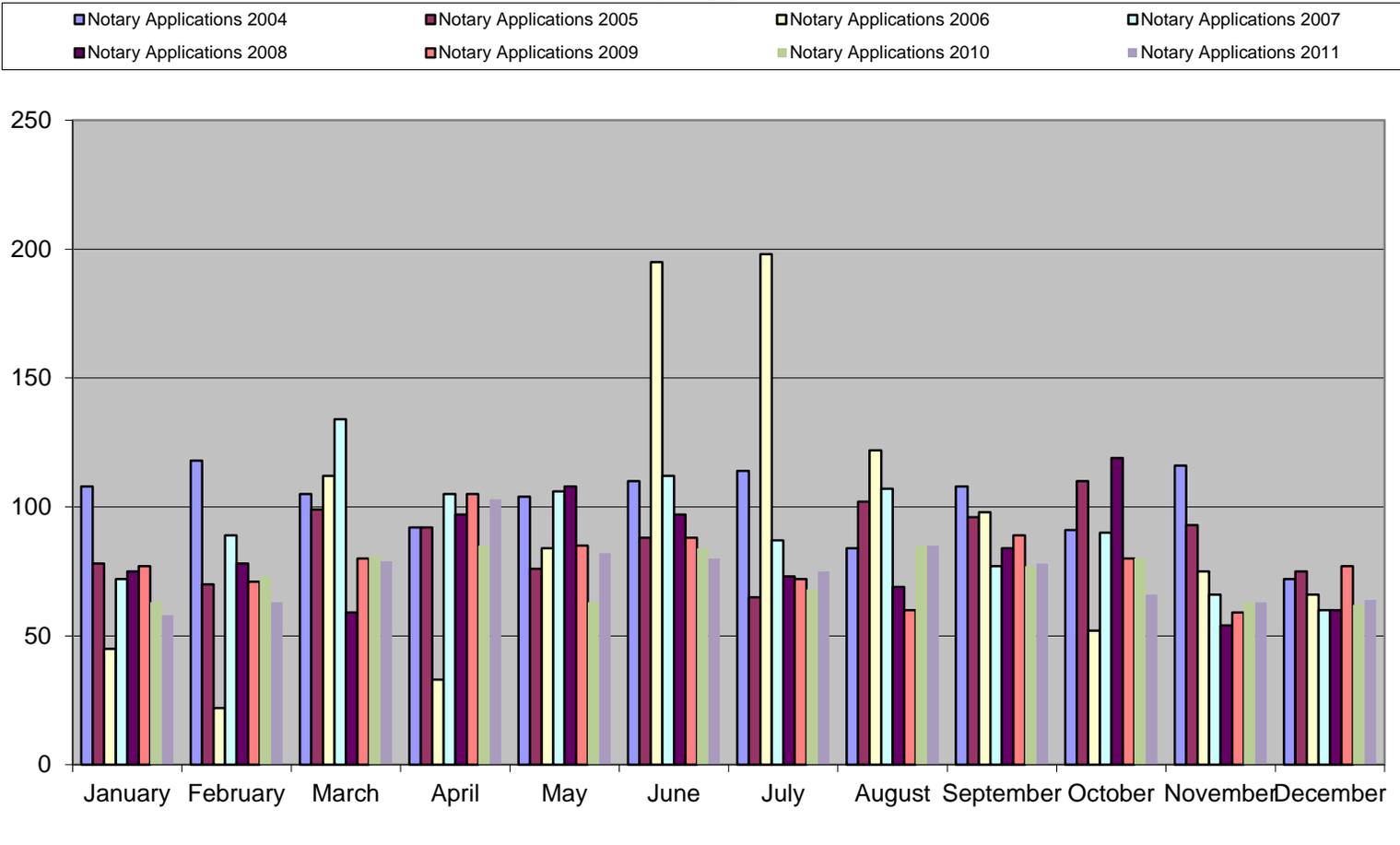
■ Clerk's Fees 2004
 ■ Clerk's Fees 2005
 ■ Clerk's Fees 2006
 ■ Clerk's Fees 2007
 ■ Clerk's Fees 2008
 ■ Clerk's Fees 2009
 ■ Clerk's Fees 2010
 ■ Clerk's Fees 2011



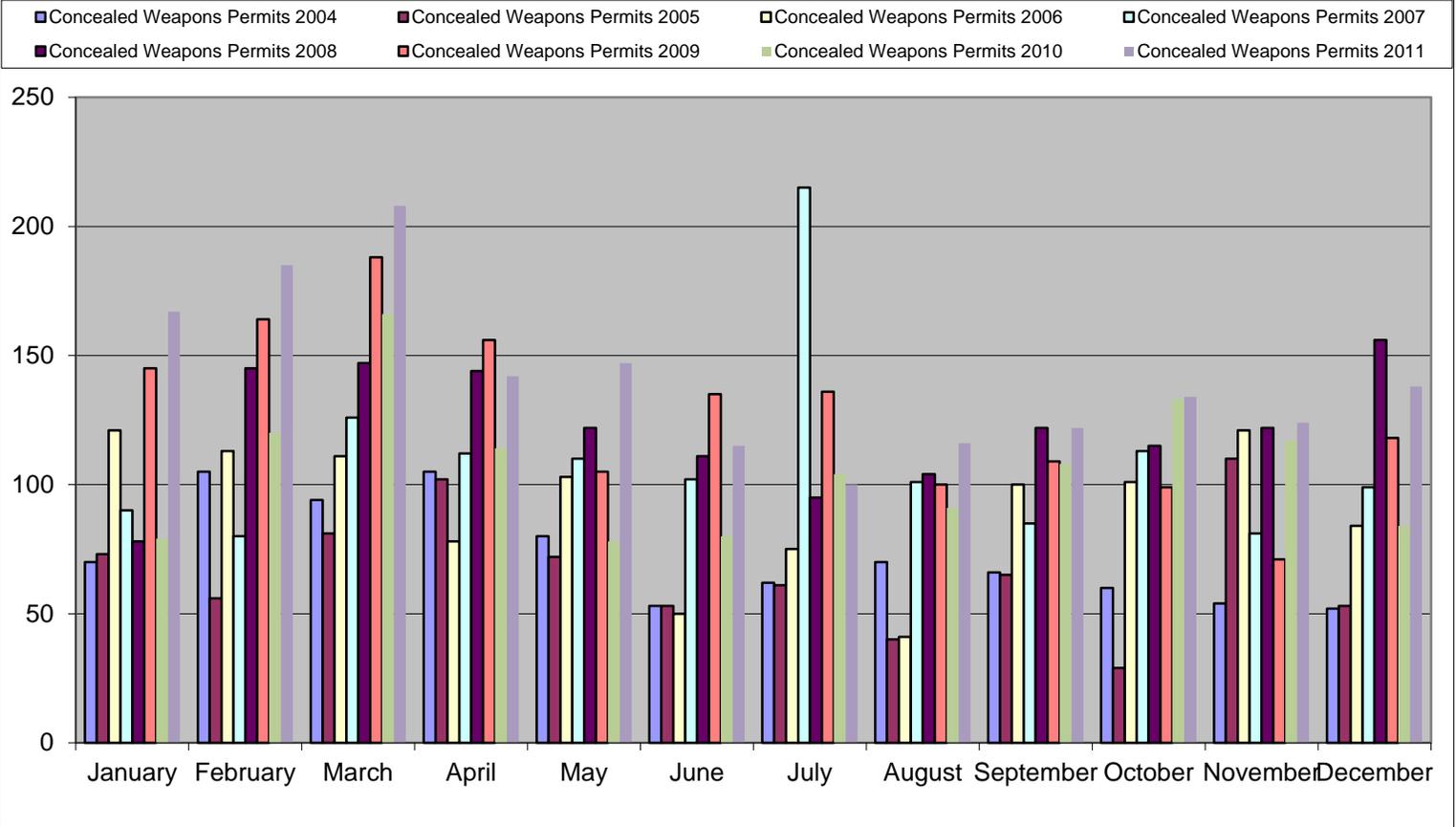
Trade Names



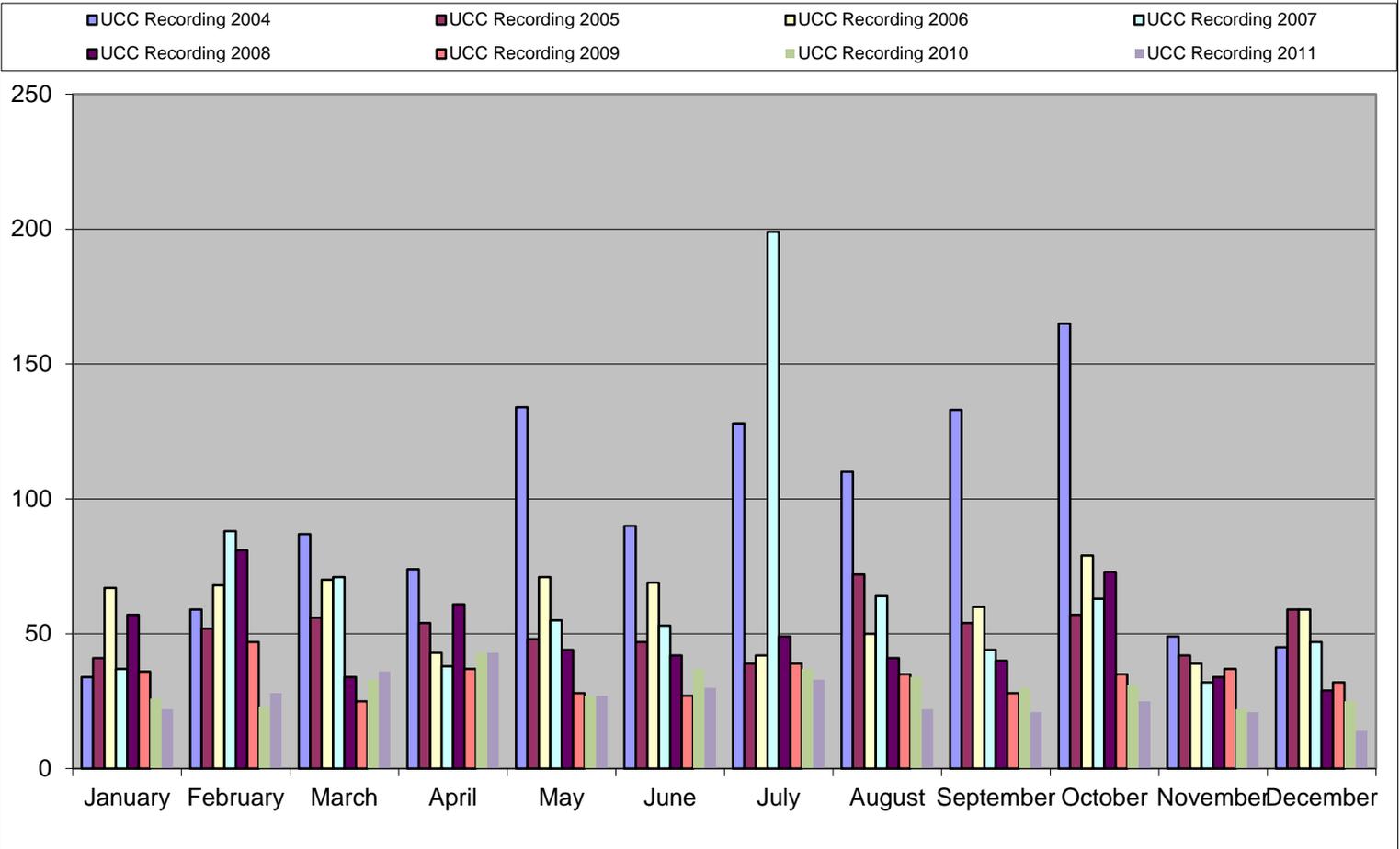
Notary Applications



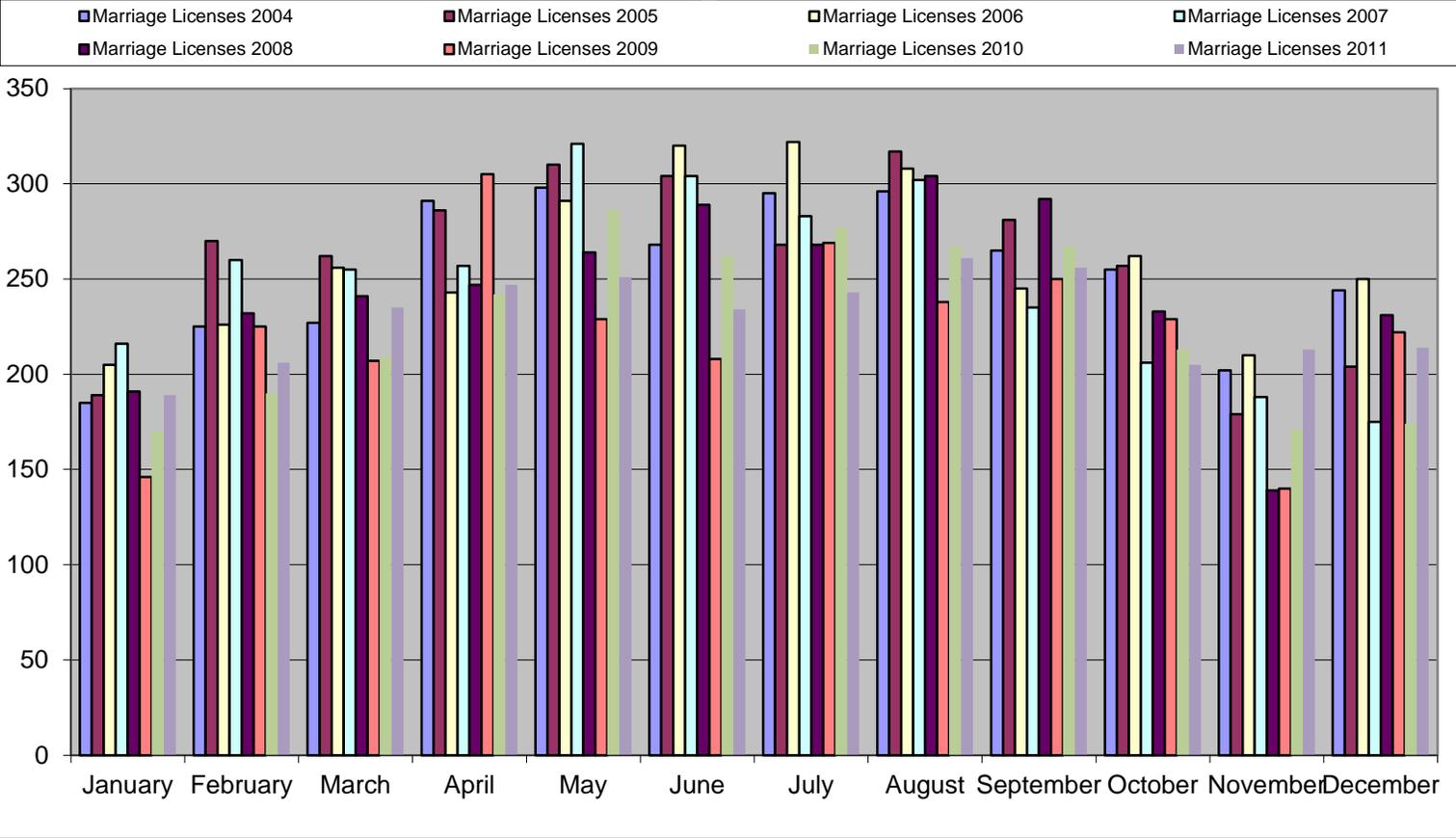
Concealed Weapons Permits



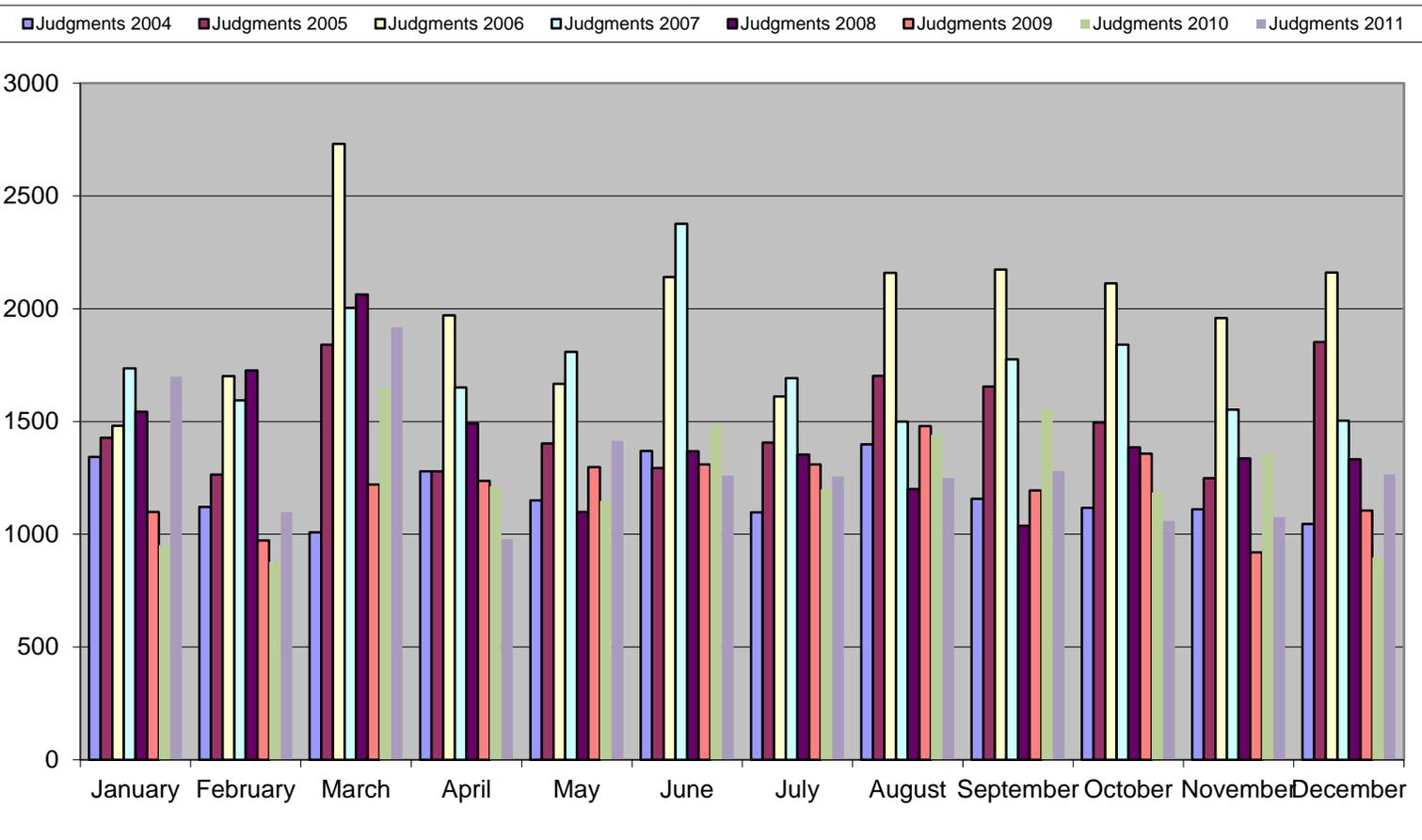
UCC Recordings



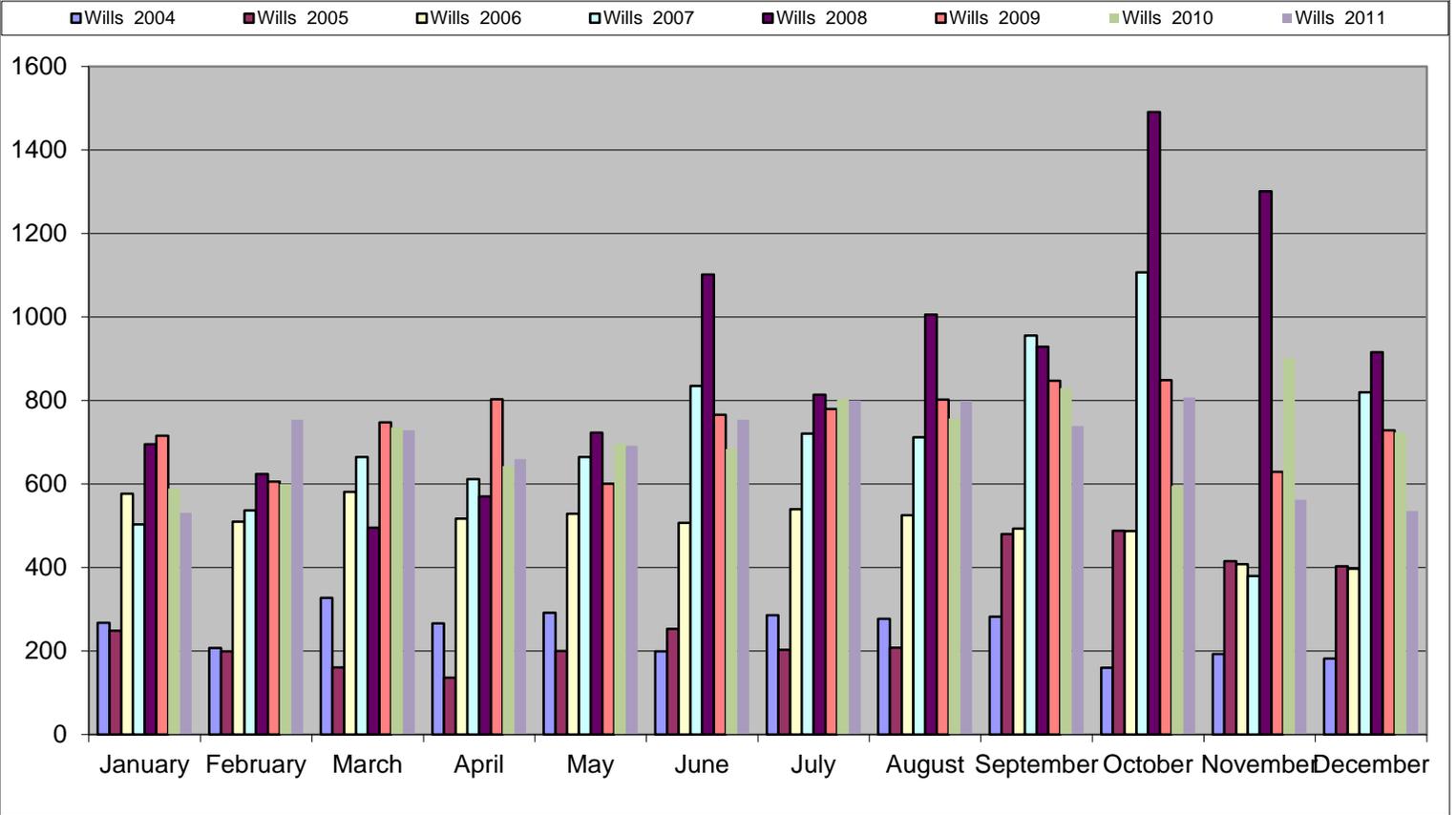
Marriage Licenses



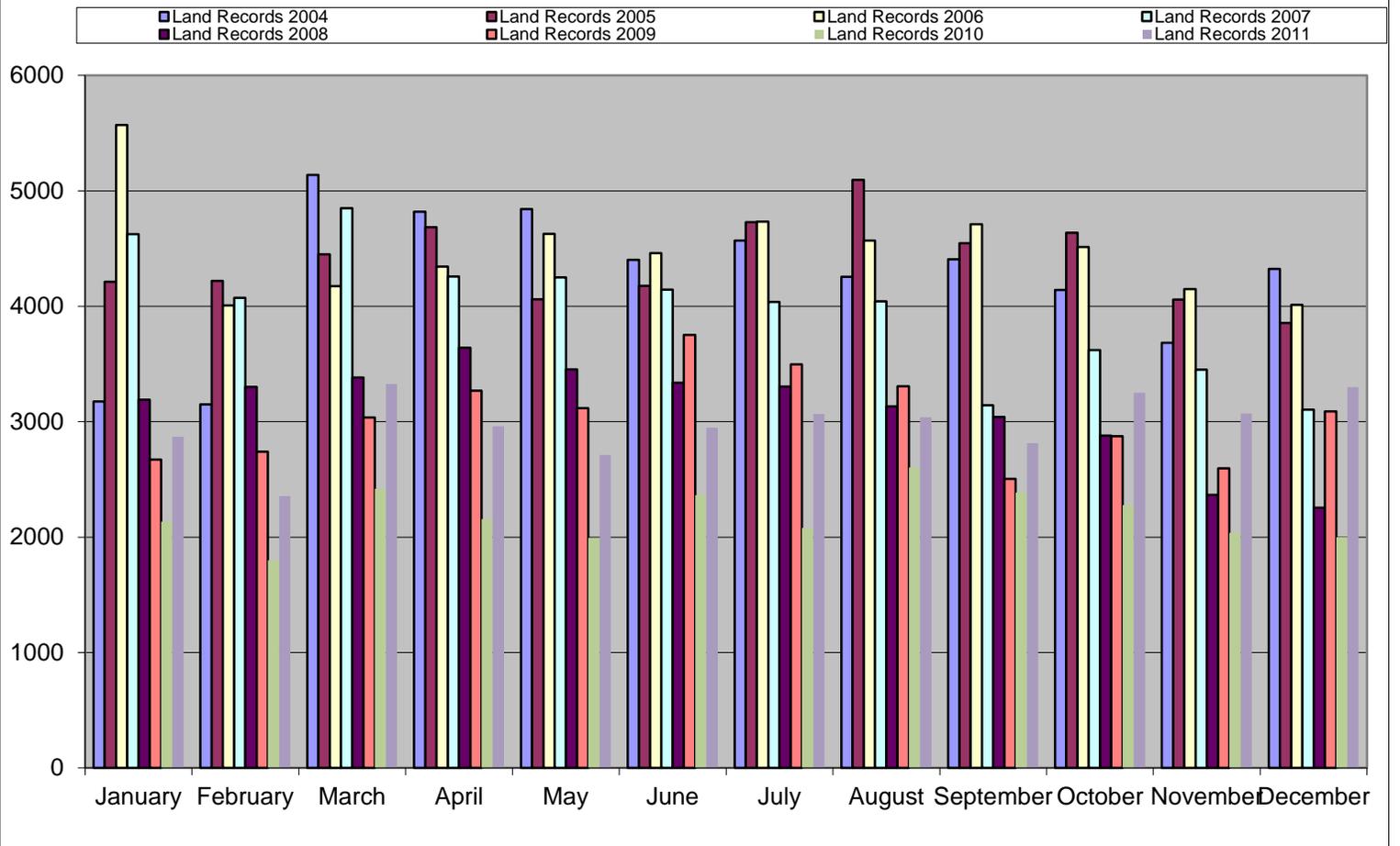
Judgements



Wills

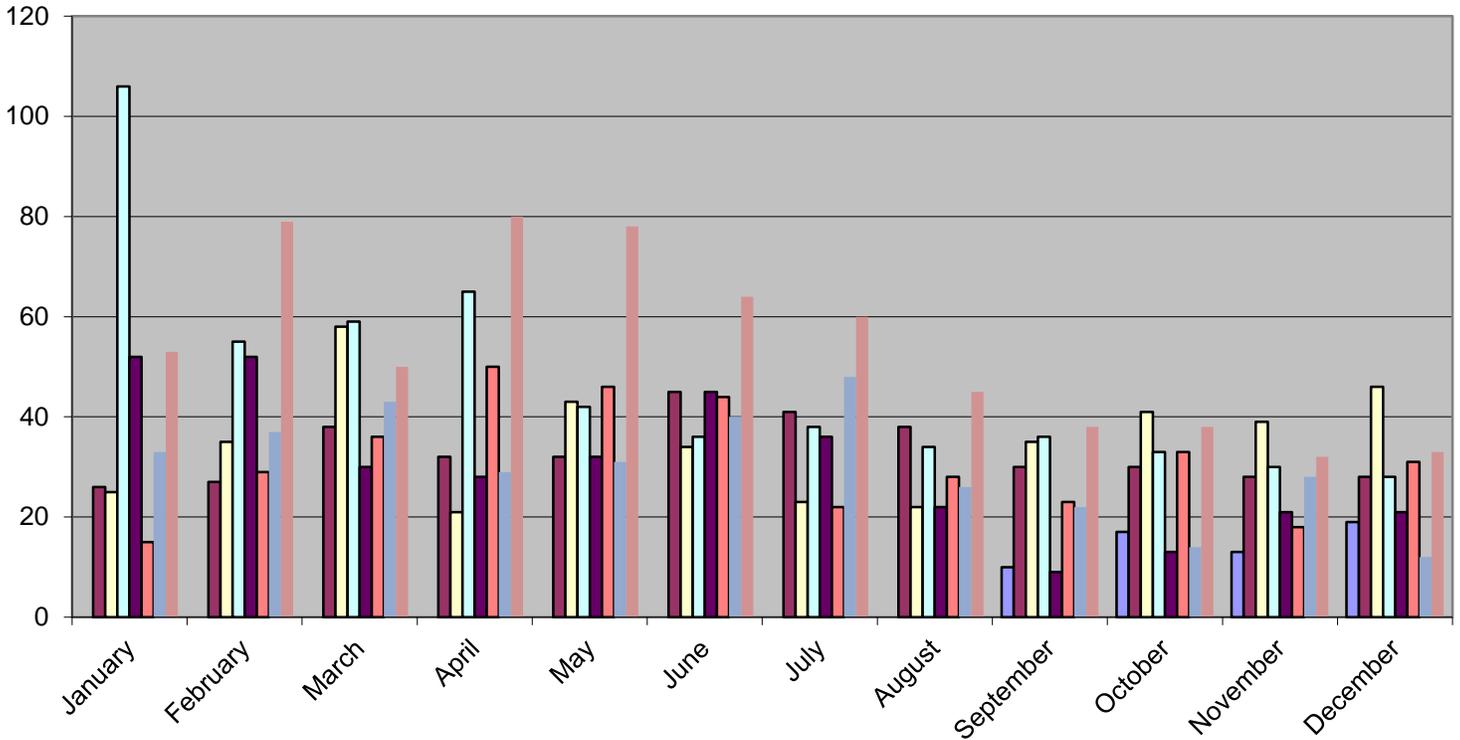


Land Records



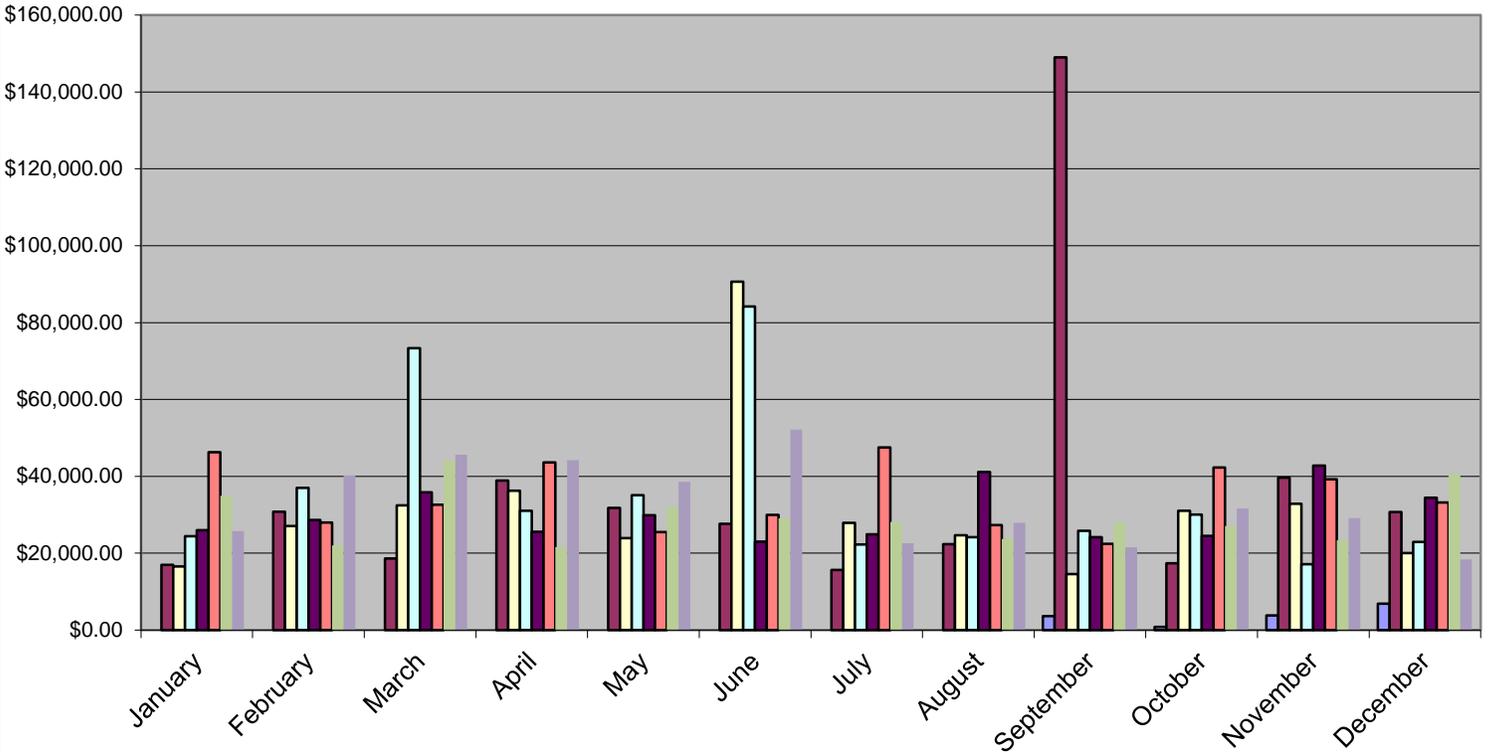
Passports

■ Passports 2004
 ■ Passports 2005
 ■ Passports 2006
 ■ Passports 2007
 ■ Passports 2008
 ■ Passports 2009
 ■ Passports 2010
 ■ Passports 2011



Restitution to Victims

■ Restitution to Victims 2004
 ■ Restitution to Victims 2005
 ■ Restitution to Victims 2006
 ■ Restitution to Victims 2007
 ■ Restitution to Victims 2008
 ■ Restitution to Victims 2009
 ■ Restitution to Victims 2010
 ■ Restitution to Victims 2011



Liens

