



LEGISLATION FORCES CLOSING OF CLERK'S MID-COUNTY BRANCH

SHARON R. BOCK
Clerk & Comptroller
Palm Beach County

A \$7.1 million budget cut resulting from the passage of two Senate bills during the 2009 legislative session has forced Clerk & Comptroller Sharon Bock to announce the discontinuation of services to the public from her office's Royal Palm Beach branch, effective June 30 at 5 p.m. Announcement of the closure came in the wake of 66 layoffs made necessary by the new budget requirements.



Sharon R. Bock

"If there was any way to keep the branch open, I would, but the legislature forced us to eliminate several practices focused on customer convenience," said Clerk Bock.

Located in the Midwestern Communities Service Center, the office has assisted about 1,000 customers a week with traffic ticket payments, marriage licenses and other court and county filings. The mid-county branch does not conduct any court proceedings, and, therefore, was the only location that could be closed without impacting the judiciary, as mandated by the legislation.

Bock's office has been strategically reducing expenses for more than a year due to the economic downturn, cutting operating expenses by 33% and reducing the number of management positions by 16 percent—avoiding for as long as possible any cuts among the employees who provide direct services to the public every day. With the recent layoffs, the office has lost a total of 101 positions this year.

"This legislation has had a severe impact on our ability to operate and because everything we do is directly related to serving the public, any cut we make adversely affects the public in some way," Bock said. "We've done our best to make cuts that have the least impact."

For customers in the Midwestern communities who want to avoid traveling a longer distance to conduct business with the office, the Clerk's Web site at www.mypalmbeachclerk.com offers several online services, such as traffic ticket payments, Value Adjustment Board petition filings, court records searches and self-service court forms.

The Clerk has no plans at this time to close other branch offices.

Clerk & Comptroller Office Locations as of July 1, 2009

Visit www.mypalmbeachclerk.com for location maps.

Main Courthouse

205 N. Dixie Hwy.
West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Phone: 561.355.2996

North County Courthouse

3188 PGA Blvd.
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
Phone: Criminal 561.624.6608; Civil 561.624.6650

South County Courthouse

200 W. Atlantic Ave.
Delray Beach, FL 33444
Phone: Criminal 561.274.1530; Civil 561.274.1588

West County Courthouse

38844 State Road 80
Belle Glade, FL 33430
Phone: 561.996.4843

301 North Olive Avenue, Room 901.1, West Palm Beach, FL 33401
Phone: (561) 355-2996 E-Mail: sbock@mypalmbeachclerk.com
www.mypalmbeachclerk.com

UNHAPPY ABOUT CHANGES IN THE CLERK'S OFFICE?

Senate Bills 1718 and 2108, initiated by Florida judges, supported by the Florida Bar, and sponsored by Rep. Ellyn Bogdanoff and Sen. Ken Pruitt changed the way Clerks are funded, causing more than 1300 layoffs statewide and forcing Clerks to eliminate services that have made access to the court system more convenient for customers. If you are concerned about how these changes affect you, please contact your state lawmakers to voice your opinion.

LEGISLATORS REPRESENTING THE MID-COUNTY AREA:

The Honorable Dave Aronberg, State Senator, District 27

Address: 6415 Lake Worth Road, #210, Greenacres, FL 33463
Phone: 561-433-2627 Fax: 561-434-3995 E-Mail: aronberg.dave.web@flsenate.gov

The Honorable Priscilla Taylor, State Representative, District 84

Address: 1 East 11th Street, # 410, Riviera Beach, FL 33404
Phone: 561-840-4814 Fax: 561-840-4816 E-Mail: priscilla.taylor@myfloridahouse.gov

The Honorable Joseph Abruzzo, State Representative, District 85

Address: 1035 State Road 7, Suite 315-27, Wellington, FL 33414
Phone: 561-791-4774 Fax: 561-791-4778 E-Mail: joseph.abruzzo@myfloridahouse.gov

The Honorable Mark Pafford, State Representative, District 88

Address: 2240 Palm Beach Lakes Blvd. # 102, West Palm Beach, FL 33409
Phone: 561-682-0156 Fax: 561-682-0158 E-Mail: mark.pafford@myfloridahouse.gov

The Honorable Mary Brandenburg, State Representative, District 89

Address: 305 Lake Avenue, Lake Worth, FL 33460
Phone: 561-540-1157 Fax: 561-540-1159 E-Mail: mary.brandenburg@myfloridahouse.gov

Senate Bills 1718 and 2108

Supported by: Florida Judges, Florida Bar
Sponsored by: Senator Ken Pruitt, Representative Ellyn Bogdanoff

LEGISLATION IMPACT

- **\$7.1 million, or 18 percent, cut from Clerk budget (\$46 million statewide)**
- **66 employees laid off (total of 101 positions cut in the past year)**
- **210,000 work-hours lost**
- **Service level reductions are expected to include:**
 - » **Document processing delays**
 - » **Filing backlogs**
 - » **Longer lines**
 - » **Closing of Royal Palm Beach office**
 - » **Elimination of attorney windows, same-day payments for cash bonds and other conveniences**