

## **Registration renewal by phone planned**

### **Erie County to introduce service for drivers Jan. 3.**

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Drivers in Erie County will soon have a new way to renew their vehicle registrations.

County Clerk Chris Jacobs announced Wednesday his office will begin accepting registration renewals by telephone starting Jan. 3.

Jacobs said the new feature will allow residents to update the registration by phone with a credit or debit card. Those who renew through the county's phone system, he said, will avoid a \$5 fee the state charges for its phone renewal system.

He hopes it will also be a revenue generator for the county. The Clerk's Office gets a portion of any transaction that is done at a local office. Otherwise, the entire fee goes to the state.

"We hope that folks know that this does help us have the resources to continue to keep our offices open, keep our satellites open, keep our mobile sites open," Jacobs said. "We have to support our operations with our own resources."

The county will use technology it has already implemented for other departments to collect the renewal fees. Owners of passenger vehicles, light-duty trailers, motorcycles and ATVs will be able to call the Clerk's Office main line, 858-7450, and follow prompts to update their renewals.

Callers will need their license plate number, a valid inspection and a credit or debit card in the same name as the registration.

Registration renewals involving name, address, vehicle or insurance changes cannot be renewed by phone.

Jacobs, a Republican who won the clerk's seat in November, started the job shortly after the election was certified because the seat had been vacant. The county has been without

a clerk since May, when Kathleen C. Hochul resigned after winning a special congressional election.

Jacobs said he wanted to start as soon as possible to give him time to meet with First Deputy Clerk John Crangle, who will retire Dec. 31. Crangle has served as acting county clerk since May.

Jacob said he hopes to build on efforts by Hochul to make it easier for residents to update registrations, renew licenses and do other business through local offices in order to capture a greater portion of the fees collected by the state.

“Certainly, I’m going to continue to push on this issue of finding ways of maintaining our fees and revenues,” Jacobs said. “It’s just critical, and it seems like the state is trying to find more and more ways to hoard the majority of the money there.”

Jacobs said he also hopes to expand the county’s discount program for veterans and to address a backlog of real estate documents that need to be recorded.

He said the backlog is “not acceptable,” and he is working to identify and address the causes.

“We do have a challenge here in the recording area,” Jacobs said. “We have a significant backlog.”