

GEHR Watershed Minute #31

Atlantic County Government: (185 words)

On February 7, 1837, Atlantic County was created from 561 square miles of land from Gloucester County. The County Seat was established in Mays Landing that year, and the existing courthouse was built in 1838.

The first Board of Freeholders was established in 1837 in Mays Landing with representatives from four townships: Galloway, Hamilton, Egg Harbor and Weymouth. Today, Atlantic County is incorporated into 23 municipalities and 5 voting districts with an estimated population of 271,620 residents as of 2006.

In 1974, Atlantic County voters changed to the County executive form of government. The charter provides for a popularly-elected executive and for a nine-member Board of Chosen Freeholders, responsible for legislation. The freeholders are elected to staggered three-year terms in partisan elections. Five of the freeholders represent equally-populated districts, and four are elected from the county on an at-large basis.

The Atlantic County Government organizational structure includes 9 Departments, 13 Affiliated Agencies, and 2 Authorities which provide a wide range of services to county residents. Service areas include Health, Social Services, Recreation and Leisure, Public Safety, Planning and Infrastructure, Financial Assistance, and Education and Employment.