

An update on the activities of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority

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GSCCCA
1875 Century Blvd. Suite 100
Atlanta, Georgia 30345
Tel: 404.327.9058
Fax: 404.327.7877
www.gsccca.org

Authority promotes IT staff

Authority IT Manager Andrew Wightwick has announced two promotions within his department. Eric Bolton has been promoted to systems manager and Stuart Myers has been promoted to network manager.

Eric joined the Authority staff in 2001 as a CSR working on the helpdesk. He expressed interest in obtaining additional collateral duties working with applications and servers. Eric was recognized for his outstanding achievement in this capacity and was eventually promoted to systems administrator in 2004, working directly under the systems manager. The Authority's former systems manager, Nathan Wood, left to pursue other opportunities and Eric was a natural and easy choice to fill the role. He assumed the position in December.

Eric is a MCP (Microsoft Certified Professional) and is one test away from achieving his MCSA (Microsoft Certified Systems Administrator) certification. He has also received specialized training for Veritas Backup Software, as well as NetApp training. NetApp is the hardware the Authority uses to store all of the images it collects from every county. Finally, he just completed a class on SQL server 2005.

As systems manager, Eric is responsible for the upkeep and availability of all 100 servers and applications running in the Authority data center, including the Authority Search System, e-mail, and all backup and restore functions. He is also an escalation partner for the helpdesk, lending his assistance to those issues and problems that require higher-level

expertise. Finally, he directly manages the systems administrator who functions to assist the systems manager in his daily duties.

Stuart Myers worked under our former network manager, Alex Jerrold. Alex left for other opportunities and Stuart dedicated his free time to obtaining his CCNA (Cisco Certified Network Associate) certification. Upon achieving this goal, the position of network manager was offered to

him and he officially started in that capacity on January 15. He is currently working on his CCNP (Cisco Certified Network Professional) certification.

Congratulations to both Eric and Stuart. ■



Eric Bolton and Stuart Myers

January board meeting review

The Authority Board of Directors met on January 10 for its quarterly meeting. Following is a summary of the reports and actions.

- **General Business** — The minutes of the October 11, 2006, board meeting were approved. Greg Morgan presented the Accountant's Review of Financial Reports. Mr. Morgan reported that funds are being collected and disbursed as expected. The cash amounts are somewhat higher for the reporting period due to earmarked funds being set aside to cover expenses in the future for the Historical Deed Project.
- **Project Reports** — Mr. Williams presented a report on the **UCC Project** providing numbers on statewide filings which have remained consistent for the last three years. Mr. Williams reported that the delivery method of UCC Certified Search Reports has been modified to eliminate the need to send paper reports to the report requestor. Reports will be electronically transmitted to customers decreasing processing costs and improving delivery time.

John Myers reported on the **1992 Historical Deed Project**. Mr. Myers stated that the project is moving forward as expected.

Andy Wightwick reported on the **Online Notary Renewal Project** stating that the development of the project is progressing on time. The program will move into a testing phase in February with a planned "roll out" at the clerks' spring meeting in April 2007.

Mr. Myers provided an update on the **Carbon Sequestration Registry Project**. This project would require that entities/individuals who acquire timber would be granted "credits" that could be harbored and traded. No determination has been made as to whether the filing would take place in the clerks' offices or online. Preference is to have the filings made online to streamline the process and collect the filing fee electronically. The filing fee has not been established and the filing of the registry documents would be

voluntary. The Georgia Forestry Commission will compensate the Authority for the development of the application. The Authority will examine similar systems in other states. Board members requested that filings be cross-referenced with the real estate records in order to provide a more complete picture.

- **Fines and Fees Division** — John Earle presented a report on the Fines and Fees Division. He stated that the online training module has been in operation since December 28, 2006. Eighty-five people have taken the class and test to date. In addition, in-person training will be available at eight sites throughout the state during 2007.

Mr. Earle reported that the Atlanta Municipal Court remitted approximately \$2.3 million dollars during December 2006 in an effort to become compliant with reporting and remitting requirements. The court still has small amounts to remit. At this time, there are 27 courts that have received or will receive notification that they are not in compliance and are more than 60 days past due for reporting/remitting.

Mr. Earle presented a report on the process being developed in order for the Authority to meet its statutorily-defined obligation included in SB 203 to ensure that fine amounts being transmitted to the Authority are reasonably correct and accurate.

On December 18, 2006, Mr. Earle presented testimony before a Senate subcommittee on the status of court fines and fees in the state of Georgia. Mr. Earle stated that the members of the subcommittee seemed to be pleased and satisfied that the system in place as administered by the Authority is providing accurate data and that the program is successfully operational. Mr. Earle stated that the subcommittee chairman, Sen. John Wiles, is adamant that non-compliant courts face stringent penalties for non-compliance. Possible legislative changes to levy tougher penalties for non-compliance may be proposed during the 2007 legislative session.

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Take advantage of training

The 2007 GSCCCA Training Schedule has kicked off with workshops in Waycross, Dublin and Perry. In-person training will continue through October at various sites around the state. See schedule below and register at www.gsccca.org/training.

The Authority has had great response to its two online training courses: "Introduction to Indexing Standards" and "Fines & Fees Training." So far, 92 people from all courts including superior, state, juvenile, magistrate, probate and municipal have participated in the "Fines & Fees" course. In addition, 86 superior court personnel have begun the "Indexing" course with 49 of those successfully completing the course. The Authority will soon introduce an online course for notaries public as well as a course for superior court personnel working in the notary public area.

We are also pleased to announce that the Training Council has given approval for clerks to use GSCCCA training classes as maintenance credit hours in case of hardship. Credit awarded for attendance to GSCCCA classes must be approved by the Training Council. Simply request that your name be submitted to the Training Council for review. ■

Court fee vendor review

Over the last several months, GSCCCA Fines and Fees staff has initiated a volunteer court fee vendor review program. This initiative was undertaken primarily in response to certain obligations placed upon the Authority as outlined in SB 203 wherein the Authority is authorized to make inquiries of clerks, court officials and agents of the court to insure the accuracy of the court fees being reported by the courts. Based on a questionnaire completed by the courts, the Fines and Fees staff has identified those software vendors that provide their product to the courts. To date, the Authority has reviewed the software accounting system for the four largest suppliers of court fee software to the courts in Georgia. These four vendors currently supply their court fee accounting software to over 60% of the courts who have a computerized accounting system.

As a courtesy to the vendors and the courts, the Authority has listed those vendors that have demonstrated that their product accurately accounts for the applicable fees remitted and reported to the Authority on the www.courttrax.org website. The Authority does not endorse or certify vendors and does not receive any financial or other compensation for listing vendors on this site. Courts should make their own independent determination regarding an appropriate vendor based on their specific needs and circumstances. ■

2007 Training Workshops

May 9	Atlanta	Fines & Fees, Indexing Standards
May 10	Atlanta	Fines & Fees, Indexing Standards
June 21	Dalton	UCC, Notary, Protective Orders
June 22	Dalton	UCC, Notary, Protective Orders
July 18	Newnan	Fines & Fees, Indexing Standards
July 19	Newnan	Fines & Fees, Indexing Standards
August 1	Valdosta	Indexing Standards, UCC, Notary
August 2	Valdosta	Indexing Standards, UCC, Notary
August 21	Savannah	UCC, Notary, Protective Orders
August 22	Savannah	UCC, Notary, Protective Orders
September 12	Albany	Protective Orders, Fines & Fees
September 13	Albany	Protective Orders, Fines & Fees
October 3	Gainesville	Indexing Standards, UCC, Notary
October 4	Gainesville	Indexing Standards, UCC, Notary
October 24	Augusta	Protective Orders, Fines & Fees
October 25	Augusta	Protective Orders, Fines & Fees

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Spam ... What is it and what are we doing about it?

Spam. Just reading the word brings to mind images of e-mails regarding some get-rich-quick scheme or e-mails on how to lose weight fast with no exercise.

Spam is not a new phenomenon. It is popularly believed that the first e-mail spam was sent to about 600 addresses in 1978. Since then, spam has gone from 30 billion e-mails per day in 2005 to 90 billion e-mails per day in 2007. It is estimated that 75% - 85% of all e-mail is actually spam. Even Bill Gates gets about 4 million spam e-mails per year. Unfortunately, the Authority is not immune to spam either. On any given day, we catch 7,200 spam e-mails. In 30 days, that number adds up to 216,000 and we still don't catch them all.

Where does all this spam come from? The number-one source of spam is from virus-infected computers that send approximately 80% of all spam in the world.

The Authority blocks spam in a number of ways including using e-mail filters. The first filter scans the e-mail and checks to see if the e-mail is being sent from a known spammer. Next, the e-mail is analyzed to see if it, simply put, "looks like spam." Then, the following filter checks the e-mail for viruses, attachments that could be a security risk, and for language that violates our e-mail policies such as use of profanity. Depending on what filter flags an e-mail as spam, the e-mail could be blocked, an attachment could be removed, or the e-mail could be sent to the junk mail folder.

The next line of defense against spam requires a little help from you. You can make sure your PC does not become a virus-infected spam-sending machine by making sure you have up-to-date anti-virus software and all of the latest security patches. (The Authority provides Trend's OfficeScan anti-virus solution and Patchlink's patch management software for free to all Superior Court Clerks and their employees that use the GSCCCA network.) Lastly, please make sure to use your Authority-provided e-mail account for only work-

related communications. Approximately 34% of all legitimate e-mail that passes through the Authority's e-mail server is not work-related.

To put all these numbers into perspective, out of the 21,600 e-mails that we receive in a day: 7,200 are spam, 7,128 are not work-related, and 7,272 are a mix of spam that slips through and legitimate e-mails.

Unfortunately, spam is here to stay and there is no perfect solution to blocking it entirely. But if we continue to fine-tune our spam filters, use up-to-date anti-virus software and eliminate nonwork-related e-mailing, we can reduce the amount of spam infiltrating our system. With your help, the Authority will provide the best e-mail experience possible. ■

(Board meeting ... cont. from Page 2)

▪ **Other Business** — Mr. Myers reported on the Florida Court Integration System, an index of some criminal court data transmitted on a daily basis to a central location in Tallahassee. The program, supported by the Florida Association of Clerks and Comptrollers, allows data to be transmitted nightly. Involved agencies have the ability to conduct a reverse query on the data contained on servers in only the larger Florida counties. The system is not a case management system. The FACC will forward a white paper containing detailed technical information.

Mr. Lawler presented the board meeting dates for 2007. A motion to approve the dates as presented was made by Mr. Wills, seconded by Ms. Rogers and approved by the board.

Mr. Williams stated that Sen. Chip Rogers has agreed to sponsor legislation that would extend the sunset date for the Real Estate Deed Project to July 1, 2014.

Mr. Williams presented some informational data outlining system growth and user activity associated with the Authority website. The data highlights the tremendous amount of growth the Authority has experienced. ■

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