

# GSCCCA Update

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August 2015

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

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## Authority strong in FY 2015

This article is the Executive Summary of the Authority's 2014-2015 Accomplishments & Year-end Report. For additional information or to see the full report, contact Mike Smith, GSCCCA Communications Director, at [mike.smith@gsccca.org](mailto:mike.smith@gsccca.org).

American innovator Henry Ford, founder of The Ford Motor Company, once said ... ***"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself."***

As the Authority celebrates 20 years of success, through partnership with and service to Georgia's Superior Court clerks, the words of Henry Ford could not ring more true. The success we celebrate today was made possible by the efforts of clerks over two decades ago and their understanding that "moving forward together" was their only means to success. This belief, along with a common goal, pushed them to galvanize and fight for the creation of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority.

From the beginning and rooted to its core, innovation, collaboration and vision have defined the Authority. Innovators change

things. They take new ideas and, working together, turn them into realities. But as the Authority and clerks of Superior Court have shown, innovation requires commitment, leadership, taking risks, and having a vision of what the future should be. In the words of Forsyth County Superior Court

Clerk Greg G. Allen: "To think that a group of seasoned clerks of this generation, in an elected position, whose duties were codified over two hundred years ago, not only understood the radical change the world was experiencing but were able to see the future and harness technology to the advantage of the citizens of Georgia is nothing short of amazing."

For 20 years, Superior Court clerks and Authority staff have worked together to create the amazing success story we know today ... or in the words of Authority Chairman Barry Wilkes, "a paradigm for how government can and ought to

work." From the beginning, the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority has been an innovator within the public records arena and has led our state to the forefront of court technology. Using a mix of old-fashioned cooperation and state-of-the-art technology, the GSCCCA has turned ideas that most thought

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# July Board Meeting Review

The Authority Board met on July 8 for its quarterly meeting. Following is a summary of the reports and actions of the meeting.

## General Business

The minutes of the April 15 scheduled board meeting were approved. The Authority's financial statements were reviewed and revealed that the Authority's overall financial health is good. It was reported that the Authority's cash position is up from June 30, 2014. Deed revenues improved in June 2015 but staff anticipates lower deed revenue for fall 2015. The audit process with Mauldin & Jenkins, which will begin in August, has been reduced to approximately 7-10 business days resulting in a more efficient and less expensive process.

## Fines & Fees Division:

Collections for FY 2015 were down approximately \$4 million from last fiscal year. This decrease is attributable to the reduction of the Driver Education Training Fund assessment percentage and will likely continue in FY 2016. Compliance rates are close to 100% for all courts.



## Training Update

The Authority's online training courses continue to attract a significant number of users. The Authority will continue to schedule its successful notary public classes for the public through clerks of Superior Court.

43 clerks and deputy clerks have successfully passed the deed indexing certification exam.

## eFiling Project

The current participation numbers were reported for the eFile Project: 88 clerks' offices participate in UCC eFiling, 104 in Child Support, 24 in Real Estate, and 2 in Lien eFiling.

## UCC Project

Total UCC filings fell in FY 2015 for the first time since FY 2010. The slight reduction of less than

3,000 filings could be only a "blip." However, the number of certified search requests increased to slightly more than 7,000 for FY 2015.

## Notary Division

Notary commissions indexed for FY 2015 were down 5.8% compared to the previous year. Apostilles processed were down 2.4%. The Notary Division has been assisting investigators from the IRS and the U.S. Postal Service with an ongoing fraud investigation.

## Voluntary (County-Funded) Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project

To date, 37 counties are participating in this voluntary project. 13,000 instruments have been added to production since April and a total of 926,000 instruments are in production. Staff expects that many more instruments will be added in the coming months.

## Premium Search Account

The number of Premium Search accounts continues to trend up with a current total of 2,649. The revenue generated by these accounts has increased to approximately \$800,000 annually. The Android application for mobile search will soon be made available.

## GSCCCA Fee Schedule

The board approved a motion to adopt a new GSCCCA Schedule of Fees.

## Office Lease

The board approved a motion authorizing the executive director to negotiate and enter into an operating lease for the office space located at 1875 Century Center Blvd. consistent with the proposed terms discussed and subject to legal review.

## Other Business

**2014-2015 GSCCCA Accomplishments & Year-end Report** – The Authority's 2014-2015 Accomplishments & Year-End Report was presented to the board. The document provides an overview of the Authority and its numerous projects, and a more detailed review of the many accomplishments of the past fiscal year. The document has been published to the Authority website.

**Next Board Meeting** – October 21, 2015 ■



*Authority Strong — Cont. from Page 1*

were not possible into realities, and in so doing, has changed the way many do business and made life easier for those accessing real estate records, financing statements, civil and criminal case data, and other legal documents.

Today, the Authority is well known for its record of success, and closes FY 2015 with another

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strong performance. But the road has not been easy. There have been struggles and roadblocks through the years, including legislative battles and technological challenges, but the clerks' collective dedication to the cause, along with steady and progressive leadership, have allowed clerks to move forward together and the Authority to flourish.

The Authority's strong leadership was necessary again this year, as the organization absorbed the loss of long-time executive director David Williams, who passed away in 2014. For the first time in almost two decades, the Authority experienced an executive management transition, and due to an inclusive management style through the years and prudent planning by the board and staff, the transition was seamless. John Earle, with the Authority since 2004, was elevated by the board to the position of executive director, only the fourth person to hold the job, and leads the Authority into its third decade of service with a dedicated and seasoned management team in place.

Although the culture of innovation and collaboration remains the same, the GSCCCA is a very different organization today than the one that opened its doors in 1995. Since its establishment, the Authority has not only fulfilled its original purpose of establishing a statewide system for the indexing of UCC documents, but has successfully developed and implemented, at no cost to the state, a variety of additional projects at the request of the Georgia General Assembly, other state agencies, and numerous not-for-profit groups. The Authority now oversees the following:

- Notary Division
- Fines & Fees Division
- UCC Project
- Real Estate Deed Project
- Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project
- County-Funded Historical Deed, Lien and Plat Re-Indexing Project
- Lien, Plat & Map Project
- Historical Plat & Map Project
- PT-61 Project
- Premium Search Account
- Clerks' Authority Map Search Application
- Data Archive Project (MyVault Online Archive Service)
- Microfilm Project
- eFile Project
- Civil Case Data Project
- Georgia Protective Order Registry
- Criminal Case Data Project (Offender-Based Tracking System)
- Carbon Sequestration Registry

In successfully developing and implementing these projects, the Authority modernized Superior Court clerk offices and created several one-of-a-kind systems that integrated and standardized information from each of Georgia's 159 counties on a central website, [www.gsccca.org](http://www.gsccca.org). These databases provide accountability, uniformity, efficiencies and cost-savings by affording:

- Unprecedented access to valuable information ... free access through search terminals installed in all clerk of Superior Court offices, and convenient internet access, by subscription, for those desiring 24-hour, 7-day-a-week access.
- Additional funding for clerks' offices.
- Information that allows lawmakers to more effectively set public policy.

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**Authority Strong — Cont. from Page 3**

- Critical and timely crime data to protect the safety of the public and law enforcement officers throughout Georgia.

The GSCCCA is governed by a board of ten members whose meetings are open to the public. The Authority was created, implemented and continues to operate without receiving any funds through local, state or federal taxes, and its activities undergo constant legislative oversight. The Authority has been continually praised for its wise use of available resources, and has proven to be a resounding success for offering unique services for Georgia counties and citizens.

Following are some of the highlights from FY 2015:

- Celebrated 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary by publishing and distributing a history of the Authority, entitled ***For the Record: The Unique Success Story of the GSCCCA***. The book permanently records the early battles, the on-going development and implementation of a myriad of projects, and the ultimate success story of the Authority, and memorializes the vision, inspiration and actions of individuals who worked tirelessly and collectively to achieve what many believed was not possible. *For the Record* was dedicated to the memory of long-time executive director David Williams. The book was presented to Superior Court clerks at their Spring Conference in April, and will be given to a variety of other constituencies throughout the year.
- Administered the re-opened **Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project** to complete the deed indexing for all incomplete indexing and imaging for the year 1992 so as to move the inclusive range of deed data back to 1992 for all counties. In FY 2015, over 15,000 additional

deed instruments were added to the system under this program.

- Added over 242,000 deed and 16,500 plat instruments through the **County-Funded Historical Deed, Lien and Plat Re-Indexing Project**, for a total of over 925,000 additional instruments in production since the program was implemented in 2013. As a result of this project, the public has access to additional real estate information at no additional cost to the Authority, and clerks' offices have access to additional resources through print image fees initiated through the Authority's website. Thirty-seven counties are now participating in the program.

- Secured the **Certificate of Registration TX 7-982-865** from the United States Copyright Office, Register of Copyrights, for the "*Group Registration for the Automated Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority Georgia Statewide Index Search Database.*" This registered copyright provides additional security and protection for the GSCCCA systems, data, and images from unauthorized uses or abuse.



- Developed and secured **GSCCCA Image Agreements** with each of the 159 clerks of Superior Court relating to image transmission, use and financial obligations. These agreements allow

for a transparent process to all parties and help insure that the clerk is in control of helping to maximize the benefits to his or her office and/or county.

- Expanded protection for **MyVault Online Archive Service** to include a second remote storage site in Colorado. With this expansion, MyVault provides additional protection by now storing archived data in three geographically unique locations: on the local appli-

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**Authority Strong — Cont. from Page 4**

ance, offsite in Atlanta, and offsite in Colorado.

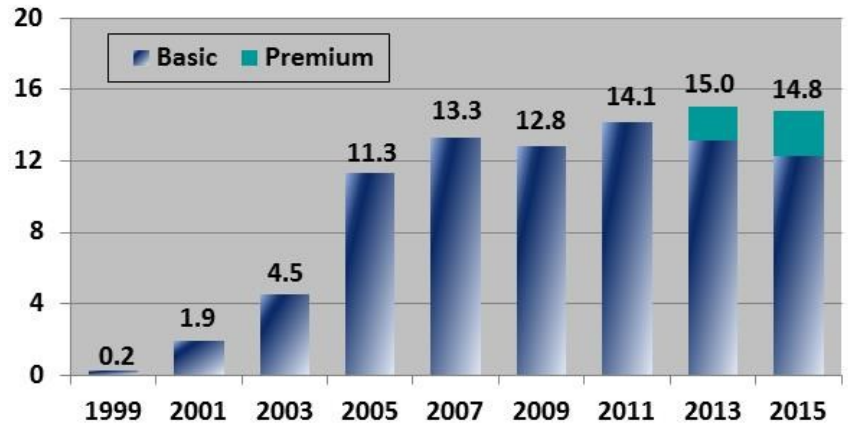
- Increased the number of **Premium Search accounts** by over 15% for a fiscal year-end total of **2,649 accounts**. Launched in 2012, this premium account allows users to search by property address as well as land lot making it attractive to many groups including appraisers and realtors. These accounts represent approximately **\$798,000** in projected annual revenue, and **over \$1.9 million** in additional revenue since the Premium Search account was launched. These numbers are expected to grow in the coming years as the number of Premium accounts increases.

- Published **iPad Map Search application**, providing 24/7 access to valuable real estate information through an additional device, and updated mobile application to support iOS 8, larger screens, and to improve functionality. The Authority also increased addresses searchable in the Clerks' Authority Map Search application by nearly 168,000 properties for a fiscal year-end total of **over 2 million** addresses, making the Map Search app even more valuable.
- Rewrote and published the **UCC Training online course** to reflect new legislative changes. As part of the new program, a self-check section was added to test users' knowledge.
- Increased our **redaction processing capacity** from 200 thousand images each month to 1 million images each month as part of continued redaction efforts. Additionally, the Authority created an on-demand redaction process for real estate and UCC images, and add-

ed an image reporting function to our image viewers so customers can report issues with any image on our site.

- Added the option to create a **Promo Account** on [www.gsccca.org](http://www.gsccca.org). This new option increased the Authority's subscriber base by allowing eligible individuals to "test drive" our website for a limited time, including ac-

**Monthly Subscribers (thousands)**



cess to Premium Search features. During the promotional period, Promo Account users have the option to upgrade to a recurring monthly subscriber account.

- Upgraded our **core SQL Server** from SQL Server 2000 to 2008. This core server is where our most critical databases reside, including those databases that ensure availability of our website and imaging system. The deployment required extensive database, application, and website testing. This upgrade brought the database to a more current version, which is critical to support, and also gave us access to additional features and functionality.
- Installed **new version of ScanSend** in 55 remaining counties to complete the state. ScanSend 3.1 is now active in all 159 counties, as well as the Authority Notary Department, and is installed on 726 workstations in the counties. This was necessary to ensure all counties were using the most up-to-date ver-



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sion of ScanSend available, as ScanSend 2 went “end of life” in February 2015. Completing the upgrade in all counties has a tremendous impact on our server environment and allows for significant upgrades in the future that were not possible due to legacy equipment required by the older ScanSend version.

- Maintained a compliance rate of close to **100%** for all courts through a dedicated and consistent notification process by the Fines & Fees Division.
- Restored over **180 GBs of data** for 12 counties through the Authority’s **MyVault Online Archive Service** in FY 2015. Currently, **131 counties** participate in the program with 15 counties added this fiscal year and 14 more pursuing enrollment. The statistics continue to stagger with the online vault protecting **nearly 500 million** files totaling more than **55 TBs** of live data.

In addition to the many enhancements and new features that were added over the last twelve months, the Authority continued to successfully manage its many existing programs. Numbers don’t tell the full story but the following statistics show

the volume of work handled by the Authority and are further evidence of our growth and success over the past two decades. Following are some of the highlights from FY 2015:

- Added nearly **11 million** images to the system this fiscal year for a June 30, 2015 total of over **230 million** images.
- Had over **368 million** page views and over **1 million** unique visitors to [www.gsccca.org](http://www.gsccca.org). The public accessed the Authority’s invaluable data via the Internet over **4.6 million times** from 198 countries this past year.
- Upgraded **467** Regular subscriber accounts to Premium Search accounts for a total of **2,649** Premium accounts. The number of total active monthly subscribers to [www.gsccca.org](http://www.gsccca.org) was **14,796** as of June 30, 2015.
- Remitted to clerks’ offices nearly **\$777,000** for deed images this fiscal year and over **\$13 million** for deed images since the beginning of the project.
- Returned nearly **\$5 million** to clerks’ offices for prints (\$.50 per print) off the Authority

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## Authority to offer training at COAG meeting

With the 2015 Fall COAG meeting right around the corner, the Clerks’ Authority is excited to announce that it will offer special training classes during conference week. This training will include:

- **Windows 10** – Tuesday, October 6, 8:00 – 8:45 a.m. – Come hear about Microsoft’s latest upgrade which includes an improved start menu and new browser.
- **iPhones & iPads** – Tuesday, October 6, 4:00 – 4:45 p.m. – Learn how to maximize your usage and understanding of these Apple products.
- **Lien eFiling** – Wednesday, October 7, 8:00 – 8:45 a.m. – Join us for a demonstration of lien eFiling through <https://efile.gsccca.org>.

In keeping with conference tradition, the Authority will also host a **computer lab**, open Tuesday, October 6 and Wednesday, October 7. The computer lab and special training classes will be held in the Sloane Room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Hyatt Regency Savannah.



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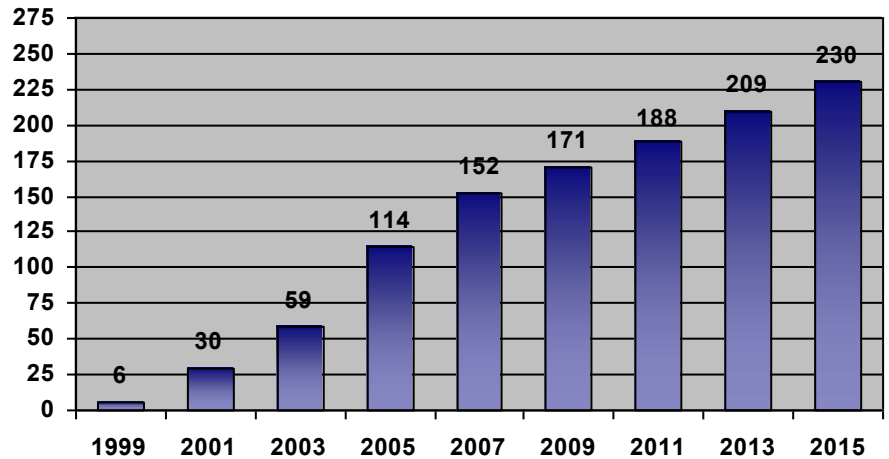
website and **\$41 million** for prints since the Authority was established.

- Ordered, processed and shipped a total of **1,269 pieces of new equipment** to clerks' offices including CPUs, monitors, servers, laptops and scanners. The Authority has provided over **23,600 pieces** of new equipment to clerks' offices since opening in 1995.

- Deployed **710 pieces of new equipment** (526 computers, 130 monitors and 54 scanners) to 54 Superior Court clerks to replace depreciated equipment as part of the Statewide Computer Replacement Project for all counties.
- Electronically transmitted to the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC), a division of the GBI, over **38,000 Protective Orders** indexed by clerks.
- Electronically transmitted to GCIC over **245,000 records** of criminal court dispositions from various courts in Georgia for the purpose of compiling criminal histories and background checks.
- Received over **18,000 calls** and over **8,100 email requests** to HelpDesk.
- Increased participation in **Notary Online** to **125 counties**.
- Maintained the **statewide notary database** (A statewide total of **40,801 notary commissions** were issued by clerks of Superior Court and then submitted to the Authority for inclusion in the statewide database.) and issued **29,263 apostilles**. (Apostille documents originated in 137 different Georgia counties to be used in 81 different countries.) In FY 2015, the Notary

Division served over **8,700 walk-in customers**, processed **3,567 mail-in orders**, and answered **7,985 phone calls**.

**Total Images in System (millions)**



- Backed up over **887 TBs of data**, the equivalent of backing up the printed collection of the U.S. Library of Congress about 88 times!
- Collected and disbursed approximately **\$91.1 million** in court fees.
- Conducted **68** classroom training sessions, webinars and one-on-one programs on various subjects, in addition to offering five online training courses.
- Indexed **224,531 UCCs** and conducted **7,092 Certified Searches** for FY 2015. Since the project's inception in 1995, the Authority has indexed nearly **5.4 million UCCs** and conducted over **230,000 Certified Searches**.
- Submitted **818** rolls of archival-quality microfilm to State Archives for real estate deed books containing nearly **4.5 million** pages. **156** counties participate in the Authority's Microfilm Project, offered free-of-charge to clerks of Superior Court.
- Blocked almost **2.2 million** spam and virus-laden emails. This amounts to over 86% of all incoming email.



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Beyond the numbers, though, we gauge our success by the response and feedback we continue to receive from clerks, bankers, lawyers, realtors and other customers about how integral our products have become to their business. From real estate records and lending information to active notaries and court fines and fees, the GSCCCA enables convenient access to invaluable information helping everyday Georgians and giving the business community innovative tools for making their work more efficient and effective.

As we enter our third decade of service, we celebrate our record of success and commitment to continuous innovation, but stand ready to face the challenges ahead. Our environment will continue to evolve and change, and we will continue to pre-

emptively adapt, and, as we have in the past, respond through innovation in our projects while maintaining sound financial results. We are committed to remaining entrepreneurial and strategic, and positioning the Authority for continued preeminence.

Our productivity and success are no accident, but rather the result of the outstanding and prudent leadership of our actively engaged Board who informs and strengthens our business, the effort, skill and dedication of our professional staff who remain vested and fully engaged in our organ-

ization's mission, and the continuing support of 159 clerks of Superior Court and their willingness to work together for the good of all clerks and the state of Georgia. The Authority is in good hands and poised to meet the challenges ahead and continue our stellar record of innovation for decades to come. ■

**“We are committed to remaining entrepreneurial and strategic, and positioning the Authority for continued preeminence.”**

## Notary Online offers new features

In an effort to continually improve programs and processes in support of Superior Court clerk offices, the Authority is excited to announce that several system improvements have been implemented for the online notary public application process. The upgrades are listed below.

- When viewing scanned commissions, users now have the ability to see who processed the commission and see the type of commission (new, renewal or mail-in-renewal).
- When retrieving applications, users now have the ability to see who deleted an application on or after July 20, 2015.
- Additional safeguards have been added when processing mail-in-renewals to prevent duplicate payments.
- An additional feature called “Lookup Notary” was added to provide a convenient method for clerks' offices to verify an applicant's commission status.

With the new option to view who processed a notary commission, clerks may consider adding an automated clerk signature to the notary public commission certificates. For further information, contact Rachel Rice at [rachel.rice@gsccca.org](mailto:rachel.rice@gsccca.org) or 404-327-7322.

