

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

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Authority has Stellar Year

The Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority completed its 2007-2008 fiscal year financially strong and operationally solid. Beyond its initial mandate of creating a statewide UCC index in 1995, the Authority went on to develop and implement a statewide index for real estate and personal property records in 1999. This fiscal year alone, the Authority added almost 12½

million deed images to this system, which continues to be the only one of its kind in the country. Today, the Authority has grown into a diverse entity that is respected both locally and nationally as progressive and innovative, and most importantly, as a group that can simply get the job done. The Authority now oversees a variety of projects including:

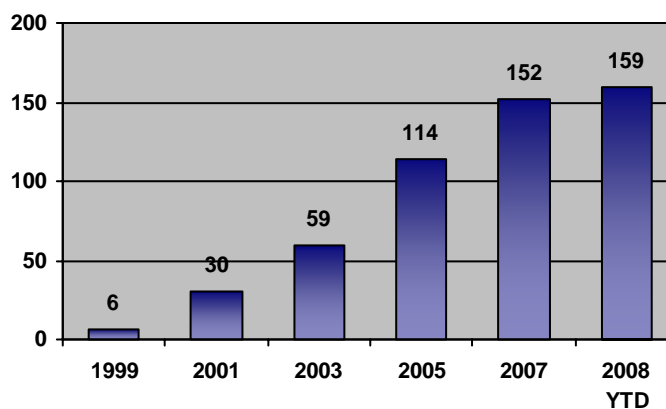
- ❖ UCC Project
- ❖ Real Estate Deed Project
- ❖ Historical Deed Project
- ❖ Plat & Lien Project
- ❖ PT-61 Project
- ❖ Civil Case Filing Project
- ❖ Offender Based Tracking Project

- ❖ Notaries Public Division
- ❖ Fines & Fees Division
- ❖ Georgia Protective Order Registry
- ❖ Carbon Sequestration Registry
- ❖ Data Archive Project

The Authority experienced tremendous growth and success during the past fiscal year. Many significant accomplishments

were made from implementing new projects, to enhancing old ones, to improving systems and programs in every area to be more user-friendly and to allow for greater efficiency and reliability, enhanced productivity and reduced cost.

Images in System (millions)



Following are some of the highlights:

- Implemented the **1991-1990 Historical Deed Project** and enhanced the real estate processing system to allow for the transmission, validation and quality control of 1990-1991 historical records.
- Improved the **Real Estate Data Quarantine System** to make it a more useful tool for applying quality control measures to the

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July Board Meeting Review

The Authority Board met on July 9 for its quarterly meeting. Following is a summary of the reports and actions of the meeting.

General Business

The minutes of the April 9, 2008, board meeting were presented and approved. Greg Morgan presented a review of financial reports for the Authority and stated that the overall financial health of the Authority is good. A motion to continue using Mauldin & Jenkins as the Authority's audit firm was approved.

Project Updates

❖ **Fines & Fees Division** – A report was given noting that operational expenditures remain under good control and operating funds do not

approach the statutory limit of \$500,000. The Board commended the Authority staff for performing such an important function and keeping costs in line. Authority staff requested that the Board take action to modify the court fines and fees priority list for juvenile courts in order to add the Indigent Defense Application Fee to the priority list in position number ten. A motion was approved by the Board.

❖ **UCC Project** -- A brief report was given noting that the overall number of filings is down year-to-date compared to the same reporting period in 2007.

❖ **Historical Deed Project** -- A report was presented noting that the 1991-90 portion of the project is now open and four counties have transmitted records.

Other Issues

❖ **HB 1283** -- A discussion was held regarding HB 1283 which involves the Railroad

Property Registry proposal from the reps of Norfolk Southern. A motion was passed by the Board for the Authority to develop and implement a statewide centralized electronic database to accommodate filing and recording of official maps of any railroad pursuant to the provisions of HB 1283 as enacted during the 2008 legislative session.

❖ **Deed Indexing Standards** -- A proposal to modify deed indexing standards was presented. Modifications incorporate changes due to HB 1018 allowing additional cross referencing and other legislative changes. A motion to accept the proposed changes was approved by the Board.



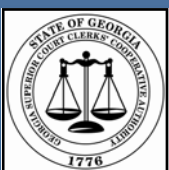
Authority Board (from left to right): David Burge, Mike Johnson, Dwight Wood, Cindy Mason, Jean Rogers, Tom Lawler, Barry Wilkes, Rhett Walker, Dave Wills

❖ **PTO Forms** -- Proposed changes to the PTO forms were presented and approved by the Board. Changes were necessary due to design issues with additional data fields.

❖ **Rule-making Body** -- A motion to support the proposal that the Authority be the rule-making body for any real estate-related electronic recording system was made and approved by the Board.

❖ **Online Training** -- A report was given noting that the deed indexing certification course and test have increased usage.

❖ **2007-08 Accomplishments Report** -- An overview of the 2007-08 accomplishments of the Authority and staff was given. The report will be sent to all clerks as a way of informing them of the activities and accomplishments of the Authority. Board members expressed appreciation to the Authority staff for an outstanding year.



Changes to Court Fee Process

HB 1245 passed during the 2008 legislative session and was signed by Gov. Perdue with an effective date of July 1, 2008. As a result of this bill, several changes have been made which impact both Clerks and the Authority. There are four primary issues included in HB 1245 that impact the court fee process:

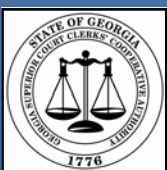
1. A change to the POPIDF-A and POPIDF-B surcharges imposed on bonds (not fines) at the time of posting bail or bond. Both surcharges have increased from the lesser of 10% of the bond amount or \$50 to the lesser of 10% of the bond amount or \$100. As a result of these increased surcharges and reporting requirements, GSCCCA has updated the Consolidated Monthly Remittance Report for all court types as well as updated the Monthly Disbursement Report.
2. A second change refers to how interest earned on funds paid into the registry of the court which are not deposited into an account per a court order for the benefit of one or more parties (a/k/a "Trust Accounts") is to be processed. Heretofore, such interest has been remitted to the Georgia Public Defenders Standards Council. Effective July 1, interest earned on these trust accounts is to be remitted to the GSCCCA. A statement should be sent along with each remittance to
3. Thirdly, the \$50 Indigent Defense Application Fee applicable to Superior Courts was added by statute as number 9 on the partial payment priority list. In an effort to provide Juvenile Courts with similar guidance, the GSCCCA Board has added the \$50 Application Fee as number 10 on their priority schedule. When the application fee becomes a condition of probation, it must now be disbursed in accordance with these amended priority schedules.
4. Finally, HB 1245 extended the 10% Driver Education Training Fund surcharges per Ga. Code Section 15-21-179 to June 30, 2013. This surcharge was set to expire June 30, 2008.

If you have questions regarding these changes, call John Earle at 404.327.7321.

Kudos! Kudos!

After reviewing the Authority's 2008 Accomplishments Report, Carolyn Williams, Superior Court Clerk of Pike County, sent the following message to Executive Director David Williams.

"David, that is awesome. I just can't imagine where clerks would be today without our Authority. I commend and thank you and your staff for making the Authority what it is today. Thanks also to Authority Board members past and present for all you do for us. It's not just a once-a-quarter meeting. You put in a lot of hours for us and I appreciate you. I remember when the Authority started and what a change it was for all of us. Who would have guessed then what we would have today. And thanks to Clerks of Superior Court for trusting the leadership as new innovations are presented to you and you do what is asked of you. Thanks again, David and staff! Job well done everyone!"



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transmission of historical data.

- Implemented **Vendor Certification Test** and monitored test results. (The Authority requires vendors to use only indexers who have successfully completed the Vendor Certification Test.)

- Coordinated the implementation of the **Data Archive Project** and currently have over **56 counties** participating.

- Created a complete e-Filing framework and built a UCC e-Filing applica-

tion on top of it.

year is also evident in the numbers ... from the thousands of phone calls handled by Authority staff, to the millions of dollars returned to the counties, to the billion-plus hits to our website. Below are some of the highlights:

- Added over **14.6 million** images to the system this fiscal year for a current total of almost **159 million** images.

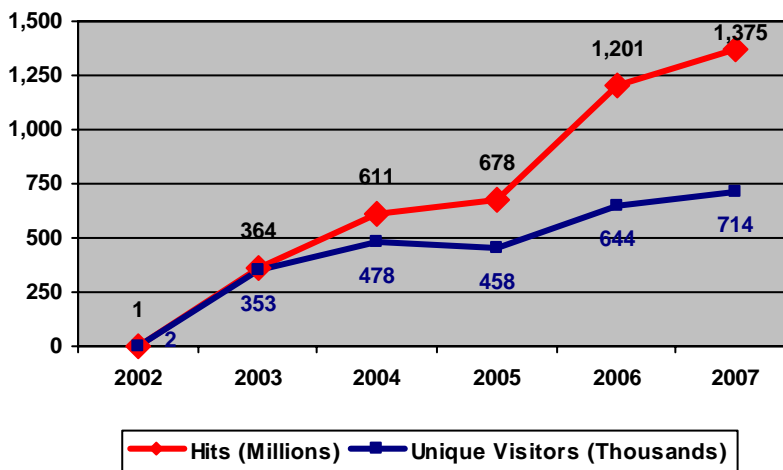
- Had **1.5 billion** hits and almost

750,000 unique visitors to gsccca.org.

- Paid counties over **\$1.2 million** for deed images this fiscal year and almost **\$6 million** for deed images over the last four years.

- Returned over **\$1.8 million** to counties for prints (\$.25 per print) off the Authority website, a **16% increase** from last fiscal year and an **86% increase** from

Website Hits & Unique Visitors



three years ago.

- Developed a list of **Court Review Procedures** for the Fines & Fees Division and reviewed all **1,100 courts** using procedures.

- Continued to maintain a compliance rate of close to **100%** for all courts through a dedicated and consistent notification process by the Fines & Fees Division.

- Created and published the statewide **Carbon Sequestration Registry website**.

- Upgraded **Notary Online** to allow for online training in addition to adding other requested features.

Received almost **21,000** calls to HelpDesk boasting an Answer Rate of **98.4%**, exceeding the industry standard.

- Received almost **4,000** e-mail requests to HelpDesk.

- Issued over **30,000** apostilles, the most ever issued in a fiscal year.

- Received **16,500** phone calls to the Notary Division, answering approximately **65** calls per day.

- Backed up approximately **250TBs** of data this fiscal year. A terabyte is roughly 1 trillion bytes!

Our growth and success over the past

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Upcoming Training Classes

The Authority continues to provide **Fines & Fees Training**. The upcoming classes will cover changes brought about by HB 1245; the new forms and updated requirements for filling out the GSCCCA Monthly Remittance and Monthly Disbursement reports; and a discussion of the Fines and Fees court review that has been conducted over the past year. The upcoming training dates include:

- ❖ August 26 in Jefferson
- ❖ August 27 in Albany

The Authority is also providing training on **Real Estate Indexing Standards** to review the GSCCCA Statewide Standards for indexing real estate, lien and plat records. Suitable for new and experienced indexers, the course will include the reasoning behind the Standards; the latest changes to the Standards; various deed and lien instrument types and their purpose; indexing difficult instruments such as those from securitization trusts; and displaying the Online Standards Training Course. Upcoming dates include:

- ❖ August 20 in Washington
- ❖ September 10 in Valdosta
- ❖ October 2 in Cartersville

Go to www.gsccca.org/training to register online. With questions, contact Rachel Rice, at 404.327.7322 or 800.304.5175, x1010, or rachel.rice@gsccca.org.

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- Conducted **100 training classes** in **51 locations**.
- Ordered, processed and shipped **1,653** pieces of new equipment to counties. The Authority has ordered, processed and shipped over **7,500** pieces of new equipment over the last five years.
- Indexed approximately **20,000** UCCs per month and conducted almost **1,000** Certified Searches per month. (The Authority has indexed almost **3.9 million** UCCs and conducted almost **173,000** Certified Searches since opening its doors on January 1, 1995.)

Beyond the pure numbers, though, our success over the year has truly been felt in the response and feedback we continue to receive from Clerks, bankers, lawyers and other customers about our product and how integral it has become to their business. The genesis for many of our accomplishments came from comments or suggestions from our customers. The goal of the Authority has been and continues to be to meet the changing needs of our constituents and offer a quality product in an effective and cost-productive manner while providing the best customer service in the business.

