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## State tax lien eFiling takes effect

Mandated by HB 337, the eFiling of state tax liens became mandatory on January 1, 2018. On that day, the Department of Revenue (DOR) successfully submitted 76,889 liens for eFiling. After months of preparation and training, clerks of Superior Court were ready and prepared for a high volume of filings and worked hard to file the documents timely and accurately.

The Authority continues to assist Superior Court clerks in their efforts to successfully meet the requirements of this new law. Training continues through webinars and other presentations, including a program at the Winter COAG Meeting held recently in Atlanta. As with any new project, however, some questions have arisen regarding processing, notices, corrections, and more.

Following are some of the questions the Authority has received regarding the eFiling of state tax liens.

### What if I charged an incorrect filing fee?

If caught the same day, contact the Authority as we may be able to correct the fee assessment electronically. If caught later, contact DOR at [solved.lienclearance@dor.ga.gov](mailto:solved.lienclearance@dor.ga.gov).

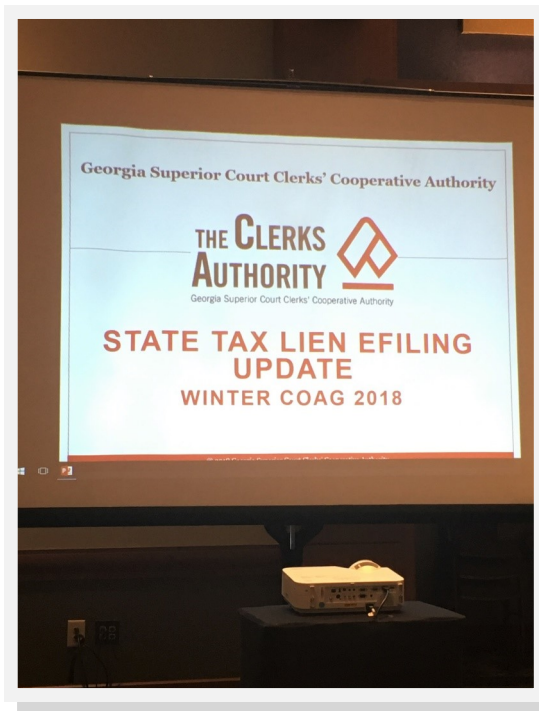
### I had to correct the stamping information on an image. How do I get the corrected image to DOR?

Email DOR a copy of the corrected image with all pertinent information at [solved.lienclearance@dor.ga.gov](mailto:solved.lienclearance@dor.ga.gov).

### What if I wrongfully reject a filing?

The Authority portal allows clerks to unreject a filing, but prior to unrejecting, contact the Authority and your vendor to confirm the filing can be processed. If your vendor can process the filing, it will retain

the original date and time of submission as the file date upon acceptance.



*The Authority presented an update on State Tax Lien eFiling & Indexing Standards Changes at the 2018 Winter COAG Meeting held recently in Atlanta.*

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# January board meeting review

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

## General Business:

The minutes of the October 11, 2017 board meeting were approved by the Board.

Greg Morgan, with Mauldin & Jenkins, provided the Accountant's Review and reported that the Authority's overall financial health is good, and that staff continues to accurately follow all accepted accounting principles and procedures.

## Fines & Fees Division:

It was reported that fines and fees collections are in line with FY 2017. Non-compliance by courts remains very low and is monitored closely by staff.

## Training Update:

The 2018 training program is underway and classes will be offered on the Authority's new Virtual Microfilm Project and State Tax Lien eFiling. Additionally, a webinar to prepare participants for successfully taking the Real Estate Indexing Certification Exam has been added. Classroom training on the Real Estate Indexing Standards will continue to be offered

at various locations around the state. (See more details on the 2018 Training Schedule on Page 5.) Notary classes for the public are currently scheduled at five sites with more to be confirmed. To date, 66 clerks and clerk employees have successfully passed the Indexing Certification Exam.

## eFiling Project:

An update was given on the Authority's eFile Project, and the following participation numbers were reported:

- ❖ UCC eFile: 107 counties (Approximately 42% of all UCCs are filed electronically.)
- ❖ Child Support eFile: 123 counties (Approximately 103,000 cases were eFiled in 2017.)
- ❖ State Tax Lien eFile: 159 counties
- ❖ Plat eFile: 158 counties
- ❖ ACH: 159 counties

## Historical Deed Re-Indexing Projects:

It was reported that approximately 44,000 instruments were published from quarantine during the period ending December 31, 2017, and an additional 13,000 instruments were added to quarantine for review. Forty-four clerks of Superior Court are participating in the Voluntary Historical Deed Project. The 1992 Sponsored Project is still



*Authority Communications Director & Compliance Officer Mike Smith updates the Board on the UCC Project.*



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## *Board Meeting Review — Cont. from Page 2*

ongoing. Specifically, one county remains incomplete for the 1991 Project. All instruments have been submitted with many still in quarantine.

### **Virtual Microfilm Project:**

The Virtual Microfilm Project was undertaken to streamline the microfilm process and reduce costs for clerks of Superior Court. Virtual Microfilm replaced the “old” physical method with a digital microfilm process. All microfilm was virtually captured and saved. Approximately 71,000 deed books (48,800,000 deed images/7,823 rolls of microfilm/2 terabytes) were archived to begin the project. Jonathon Clark is leading the VM Project and has been working closely with clerks’ offices during the transition to virtual microfilm. Some clerks have expressed a desire to capture “old” microfilm and include virtually.

### **UCC Project:**

UCC filings are an indicator of financial activity, and it was reported that filings for the first six months of FY 2018 are tracking with FY 2017. Approximately 42% of all UCCs were filed electronically during the reporting period. Certified Searches reflect a 17% increase compared to the first six months of FY 2017.

### **Subscriber Services:**

It was reported that there are currently more than 16,000 search account subscribers. There was a slight drop in the number of Premium Account subscribers in December 2017. This seems to be an annual, seasonal adjustment that typically rebounds in the new year.

### **Notary & Authentications Division:**

During 2017, more than 46,000 notary commissions were indexed by Notary Authentications staff. Staff also successfully fulfilled 31,000 apostille requests, a number that surpassed the previous year which is attributed to a good economy and uncertainty regarding undocumented individuals. Statistically, 50% of all apostille requests are for countries in the western hemisphere.

### **Legislative Update:**

Staff provided an update on several pieces of legislation.

**HB 337** – As required by HB 337, state tax lien eFiling became mandatory on January 1, 2018, and board members praised Authority staff for their exemplary work meeting the deadline. Currently, Authority staff is working through issues as they arise while maintaining an open dialogue with the Georgia Department of Revenue. Some clerk offices are currently overwhelmed with the volume of re-filings submitted by DOR on the first few days of January but will work through these during this transition period. HB 661, introduced in the 2018 legislative session, would reverse the statewide attachment provision that was included with the passage of HB 337 during the 2017 legislative session.

**SB 132** – Staff reported that, as of January 1, 2018, the Clerks’ Authority is no longer involved in the civil case disposition process. SB 132 changed the reporting method for clerks of Superior Court. All references to civil case dispositions have been removed from the Authority website and all inquiries are referred to the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia.

**SB 299** – This bill would increase penalties from a misdemeanor to a felony for any individual submitting an instrument for recordation without the signature of “an attorney licensed to practice law in this state who is a member in good standing of the State Bar of Georgia at the time of the execution of such signature attesting that, to the best of such attorney's knowledge and belief, such instrument is properly drafted under the laws of this state and is not fraudulent.” SB 299 will be monitored for any potential impact on clerks of Superior Court.

### **Next Board Meeting:**

The next quarterly board meeting will be held on April 10-11, 2018 at the Authority office. ■



## State tax lien eFiling — Cont. from Page 1

### What if there is a blank page?

Filing fees are estimated based on the number of pages, including any blank pages. This

shouldn't preclude a clerk's office from filing.



*Project Manager Rachel Rice leads a program on State Tax Lien eFiling at the 2018 Winter COAG Meeting.*

### Why did I receive a non-critical error when transmitting state tax lien index data containing multiple parties?

For all state tax lien renewals, DOR transmitted party infor-

mation for only one party. As a result, when transmitting indexed data, the non-critical error is notifying the clerk's office that the transmitted data for this file does not match the data the Authority received from DOR.

### What if the control/REV number is not displayed on the statewide lien index on [www.gsccca.org](http://www.gsccca.org)?

Contact the Authority and your vendor. If no REV number is displayed, corrected index data may need to be transmitted.

If you have additional questions, please contact the Authority's HelpDesk (800-304-5174 or [help@gsccca.org](mailto:help@gsccca.org)) or Rachel Rice (800-304-5175, ext. 1010 or [rachel.rice@gsccca.org](mailto:rachel.rice@gsccca.org)). ■

## Georgia's Superior Court clerks — Constitutional officers for over 200 years

Clerks of Superior Court have been elected county constitutional officers since 1798, when framers of Georgia's constitution created the office and provided for election of a clerk in each county of the state.

The clerk is accountable only to the people who elect him. He or she is not an employee or appointee of any county or state commission or any agent or agency of the judiciary. As an impartial county officer, the clerk provides some of the most important checks-and-balances needed in both local county government and the state's judicial system.

The clerk's duties include, but are not limited to, running the business arm of the local court system; accounting for all monies arising from fines, fees, court costs and fees required by law; arraying and managing county trial and grand juries, including summoning jurors for service; providing oversight and administrative support to the county board of tax equalization; and processing, protecting and permanently maintaining citizens' court, land and other important vital records.

*[Reprinted with permission from the office of the clerk of Superior Court of Liberty County.]*



# Authority announces 2018 Training Program

The Authority's 2018 training program is underway and continues to offer three convenient formats: classroom, webinar, and online training.

## Classroom Training:

Classes are three hours in length (9am-noon), hosted by a Superior Court clerk, and offered free-of-charge. Training on the **Real Estate Indexing Standards** will be offered in six different locations. Suitable for new and experienced indexers, this class will include a review of the GSCCCA Standards for indexing real estate, lien and plat records with an emphasis on underlying concepts behind the Standards, common errors, difficult parties and instruments, and the indexing certification test. See dates and locations below. To register, go to [www.gsccca.org/training](http://www.gsccca.org/training).

## Webinars:

Webinars are remote training conducted via the internet and phone and allow a clerk to have as many staff members as they wish participate. Dates and descriptions of the classes are listed below. To register for a webinar, go to <https://gsccca.webex.com> and click "Upcoming."

## **Authority Services How-to-Guide** —

This course takes an in-depth look at the services the Authority provides and how to maximize use of these services. Want to know how to replace equipment, learn about MyVault, access the Clerk Resource Center, set-up new email? Get the answers to these questions and many more through this two-hour webinar.

**Virtual Microfilm** — This one-hour webinar offers an introduction to the Authority's new Virtual Microfilm (VMF) project. The program will cover the features of the VMF dashboard and participants will learn to:

- ❖ View, save, print and download images from archive;
- ❖ Access the convenient image browser and viewing tool;
- ❖ Search for important documents;
- ❖ Purchase and place orders for physical microfilm reels; and
- ❖ Check and track status of microfilm orders.

Additionally, statutory archival requirements and how VMF satisfies those requirements will be discussed, and basic functionality for accessing deed, lien and plat images will be explained and demonstrated.

**Real Estate Indexing Certification Exam: Study Guide** — This one-hour webinar takes an in-depth look at the Indexing Certification

Exam and offers tips and tools for how to successfully pass it.

## Online Training

The Authority also offers a variety of online training opportunities. Courses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, making training completely flexible. Courses include:

- ❖ Introduction to GSCCCA Indexing Standards
- ❖ Extended Real Estate Indexing Standards
- ❖ Fines & Fees Training
- ❖ Notary Public Training
- ❖ UCC Training

## **Need more information?**

Contact Rachel Rice at 800-304-5175, ext. 1010, or [rachel.rice@gsccca.org](mailto:rachel.rice@gsccca.org) with training questions or to inquire about remote training.

## 2018 Training Schedule

### Classroom Training — Real Estate Indexing Standards

February 15	Irwinton
March 14	Trenton
May 16	Decatur
June 14	Thomaston
July 24	Hartwell
September 13	Tifton

### Webinars

March 6	Virtual Microfilm
March 29	R.E. Indexing Certification Exam
May 4	Authority Services: How-to-Guide
June 26	Virtual Microfilm
August 16	R.E. Indexing Certification Exam
September 18	Authority Services: How-to-Guide
October 4	Virtual Microfilm
October 17	R.E. Indexing Certification Exam

