

GSCCCA Update

Vol. 11, No. 5
December 2007

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

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Authority Staff Changes

The Authority recently made two staff changes.

Jamie McCarron

joined the Authority November 1 as financial manager and will assist in helping ensure that the GSCCCA meets its financial responsibilities and obligations. Jamie is a CPA and brings a wealth of experience to the Authority after spending the last 13 years with the international accounting firm of

Grant Thornton where she served as an audit

manager for a number of governmental clients.

John Earle was recently promoted to director of financial operations after serving as project manager for the Fines and Fees Division since June 2004. In his new role, he will assume a number of financial responsibilities for the GSCCCA in addition to continuing to manage the Fines and Fees Division.

Please join us in welcoming Jamie to the Authority staff and congratulating

John on his well-deserved promotion. ■



Notary Public Training Available

The Authority has made our online Notary Public training course available statewide. Now anyone who is or is going to be a notary public in the state of Georgia has training at the touch of their fingertips! This is a voluntary training course which gives notaries public the opportunity to increase their knowledge of Georgia notary law as well as learn good practices. The course is free-of-charge but the final test has a charge of \$10. When a user passes the final test with a score of 90% or higher, they will receive a certificate of completion. The course and final test are offered free-of-charge to Superior Court clerks and their employees. Training is available through our website: <http://training.gsccca.org>.

Board Meeting Review

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

General Business:

The minutes of the July 11, 2007, board meeting were presented and approved unanimously by the board.

Greg Morgan, with Mauldin & Jenkins, provided a review of the 2006-2007 Fiscal Year Audit and a review of the financial health of the Authority. As part of the audit process, a random audit was conducted within a sample of clerks' offices to ensure that computer equipment issued by the Clerks' Authority was located in the office as stated by the clerk. The report was unanimously approved by the board.

Mr. Morgan then presented the monthly Financial Reports for July 2007 and August 2007 and stated that the overall financial health of the Authority was good. Both reports were approved unanimously by the board.

Project Updates:

- **UCC Project:** An update on the UCC Project highlighted that the statewide number of UCC filings remains stable and Certified Searches continue to show an increase.
- **1992 Historical Deed Project:** It was reported that four vendors have been removed from the "quarantine" list due to the improvement in the quality of their data. Additionally, the Deed Indexing Certification Test is nearing the end of development. The test will consist of questions randomly selected from a pool of approximately two-hundred questions.
- **Archive Project:** The project allows clerks to have designated data backed-up in a safe, secure environment. The next step will be to gather more information from clerks to help target the needs and desires of the clerks. The application process requires the clerk to provide technical information. The Authority IT staff is currently working with the clerks' vendors to obtain this information.

Online Training:

Training Coordinator Rachel Rice provided an update on online training classes offered by the Authority. The Online Notary Public Course will be offered free-of-charge to clerks and their employees. The course consists of learning modules and a final test. There is no charge to access the training course but there is a \$10 charge for a notary public from the general public to take the test.

Fines and Fees Division:

John Earle provided updated financial reports for the Fines and Fees Division and stated that operational costs for the division are a "break even." The F&F Division is entitled by statute to withhold up to \$500,000 to cover operational costs, but last year those costs amounted to approximately \$260,000. The number of non-compliant courts has been reduced mainly because of the audit review process instituted in January 2007. Questions arose in regards to the Indigent Defense Application Fee and the low amount of money being collected versus what was expected to be collected. Consensus was that most public defender offices do not ask for the application fee.

Other Issues:

Andy Wightwick and Mike Smith presented a report on redaction of social security numbers contained in records (UCC, deed, liens, etc) residing in the GSCCCA database. Mr. Wightwick reviewed the study with the board highlighting major points. A motion was made to authorize staff to pursue acquiring software that would interface with the GSCCCA workflow in order to put a redactions solution in place for UCC and lien records. The motion was approved unanimously by the board.

Mr. Myers presented a report on HB 369 detailing the necessary changes to the Civil Initiation and Disposition Forms approved earlier this year by legislation.

Following adjournment of the board meeting, an executive session was called to discuss the executive director's compensation. The board then reconvened to report on the actions during the executive session. The next board meeting will be January 9, 2008. ■

Jean Rogers wins ÉCLAT

Congratulations to **Jean Rogers** for being the 2007 recipient of the **ÉCLAT Award**. Jean is clerk of Superior Court of Crisp County and secretary/treasurer of the Clerks' Authority. The inaugural ÉCLAT Award was presented last year and was established to recognize Superior Court clerks for their achievement. The award is an acronym for exceptional commitment, leadership, accomplishment and teamwork.

Below are some of the comments of attorney Billy Jones who presented the award to Jean.

“The 2007 **ÉCLAT Award** is being conferred today to an individual who could have been singled out for an award anytime during the past 14 years while she has served as clerk of Superior Court of her county. By all accounts, she has been one the hardest working, smartest, dedicated, and enterprising clerks of Superior Court in the history of our profession.

“To understand the influence that this clerk has had on Superior Court clerks' offices, Georgia's judiciary system and local government, you would have had to have been there during the past decade and half as she and a handful of other clerks of Superior Court envisaged, led, labored, and worried on your behalf. Those privileged to know and work along side her will attest that her many contributions locally and statewide are a body of work that simply cannot be measured in a vacuum, and therefore, that no single contribution she has made is unusually more significant

than any other. Yet, today we recognize her not for a body of work or her lifetime achievements but, instead, in fulfillment of the expressed purpose of the ÉCLAT Award, for her exceptional **commitment, leadership, accomplishment** and **teamwork** during the past year.



ECLAT winner Jean Rogers poses with Authority Vice Chairman Barry Wilkes, Superior Court Clerk of Liberty County

“Recently, her labor has come full circle. Even though it has gained her notoriety and acclaim, it just confirms what Superior Court clerks have always known—that she is a visionary and an exceptional leader and with a vision, a prayer and a nominal amount of funding, there isn't

much that she can't accomplish—even becoming the linchpin for creating a new paradigm of inter- and intra-governmental partnering that is destined to keep Superior Court clerks and Georgia's courts on the cutting edge of revolutionary technological advancement. Or, in simpler terms, *there ain't no stopping her when she sets her mind to something.*

“Three years ago, she and other stakeholders in her local law enforcement and judicial communities started looking for a way to streamline and integrate criminal justice information while, at the same time, ensuring accuracy of data. Unsurprisingly, she stepped up to the plate, took the bull by the horns, and shepherded the effort. Of course, being the visionary she is, she insisted from the onset that each participating governmental agency would maintain its individuality in the judicial and law enforcement systems while concurrently creating an electronic record-keeping

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A Message from the Fines & Fees Project Manager

The Fines and Fees Division continues to report impressive rates of compliance and fund collections thanks to the hard work of many different groups. The project has been a real success story in that so many groups have come together over the last 3½ years in a cooperative effort to create an efficient and uniform system of accounting for the various court fees assessed and collected in the state.

As the Fines and Fees project manager, I'd like to recognize the different groups who have been so supportive of the project including the Authority Board of Directors for their guidance and leadership to the staff, the software vendors for providing the necessary accounting systems to track all the court fees, the Authority staff for their diligence and hard work, the probation services used by the courts in assisting with collection efforts, and most importantly, the clerks and their support staff for the countless hours they've spent in complying with all the new statutory requirements placed upon them to provide the needed information. The success of this project would not have been possible without everyone's cooperation and hard work. Thank you!



F&F Staff: Maureen Miranda, Rachel Rice and Julie Maher

— John Earle, Fines & Fees Project Manager

Jean Rogers - Cont. from Page 3

process that allowed offices to communicate with one another and share data to streamline and improve record-keeping. With her at the helm, the state's first circuit-wide Criminal Justice Data Exchange Project was born.

"Like the UCC project from which the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority was born in 1993 and almost all other statewide data-sharing and data-processing projects clerks of Superior Court have created and participated in since, the Data Exchange Project has come to fruition because this year's ÉCLAT Award recipient dared to dream and, even more, was willing to sacrifice her time and energy to giving it life. She set her sight on her goals and charged full steam ahead, knowing that, as a consequence, every clerk of Superior Court and every court of this state will eventually benefit from the seeds she has sown.

"As one of the Superior Court clerks who nominated her for the ÉCLAT summarized, *She has the ability to see the big picture and is able to look beyond the day-to-day operation of the Superior Court clerk's office...which is evident in her work on (the) integrated justice project. There is no doubt that this project would not have gotten off the ground without (her) persistence and ability to get a group of people from all levels of the justice system to work together. Not only has the project worked in her county, but it has now expanded to other counties in her circuit, as well as to other counties elsewhere in the state. Her efforts have set the template of what can and hopefully will happen throughout the state. (Her) dedication, perseverance and vision make her a very deserving recipient of this year's ÉCLAT Award.*" ■

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