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GSCCCA
1875 Century Blvd
Suite 100
Atlanta, GA 30345
Tel: 404.327.9058
Tel: 800.304.5175
www.gsccca.org

Protect Data From Catastrophic Loss

If your courthouse suffered a fire or flood or some other catastrophic event, would your records be protected? If not, consider taking advantage of the Authority's back-up or archival services, offered through Authority vendor Millennium Information Tek (MIT) since 2007. Authority Chairman Tom Lawler has stated that the Data Archive Project "is one of the most important projects the Authority has undertaken" because it protects irreplaceable public records in the event of a simple hard drive failure or a larger disaster at the courthouse.

The archive system consists of two levels of protection:

- ❖ The first level involves backing-up data to a storage device called an "appliance" located at the clerk's server.
- ❖ The second level is storage at a secure remote data center in Atlanta.

In the case of local hardware failure, the data can be restored immediately from the local appliance. Should a larger disaster ever damage or destroy the courthouse facilities, the data is protected at the remote data center and can be restored as soon as the clerk's office is ready.

Fifty-five clerks already have the protection of the archive service and more are signing up each week. Funded entirely by the Authority,

the service is free to clerks and has only two requirements:

- ❖ The clerk must have their Disaster Plan on file with the Council.
- ❖ The clerk must complete the archive application form, indicating what local data is to be backed up and where such data is located.



The Authority has a full-time manager to assist clerks with their applications and to monitor the back-up traffic to assure that the nightly back-ups run successfully. If a nightly back-up fails, Program Manager Tara Johnson deals with it immediately to keep the back-

-up service as current as possible.

Does the archive system work? Superior Court Clerk Betty Bush of Baker County says "Definitely, yes." The county had an unexpected hard drive failure in September and the archived data was promptly restored from the local appliance. Deputy Clerk Stephanie Key says the installation was as easy as plugging the appliance into the local network and that there were no problems with the process.

Research shows that many private businesses cannot survive long after the catastrophic loss of critical records. Those who do must spend substantial sums of money and take valuable time to

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October Board Meeting Review

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

General Business:

The minutes of the July 9, 2008, board meeting were presented and approved. Greg Morgan, with the Authority's accounting firm Mauldin & Jenkins, presented the accountant's review of the financial reports. Morgan focused



Greg Morgan presents the financial reports.

on the year-end audit containing the independent auditor's report. Morgan lauded Jamie McCarron, financial manager of the Clerks' Authority, for her diligent work in compiling and publishing the Auditor's Report. Morgan highlighted information in various financial statements and noted that the Authority's revenue is down due to the "slow down" in the business climate resulting in less real estate filings.

Morgan also presented "A Report to the Executive Board of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority." The report identifies the responsibilities of the auditor and the Authority. No control deficiencies were identified by Mauldin & Jenkins related to auditing controls followed by the Clerks' Authority accounting staff.

HB 1283 – Railroad Property Registry:

Authority Vice Chairman Barry Wilkes presented his committee report on HB 1283, the Railroad Property Registry bill. Wilkes reported that his committee requested and received an opinion from the State of Georgia

Attorney General's office seeking clarification of HB 1283. The opinion states that the Clerks' Authority does not have the authority to create and receive the "railroad" filings which would circumvent the clerks' responsibility. However, the opinion states that the Authority is empowered to assist clerks and provide support in relation to the execution of such a project.

The filing of such maps would not be a continuing process. There are a finite number of these railroad maps that would need to be electronically filed. Through such an e-filing process, the clerks' offices would maintain their local autonomy while eliminating the need to file paper maps. E-filing will streamline the process allowing for rapid filing and storage of documents electronically.

Following the discussion, a motion was approved to authorize Authority staff to move forward with the development and implementation of the e-filing of these railroad maps pursuant to provisions of HB 1283 and to provide this service to Clerks of Superior Court on a voluntary basis. A second motion was



Board member Cindy Mason and R.E. Indexing Standards experts Phil Kobierowski and Gary Yates discuss the Historical Deed Project.

also approved to allow the Authority staff to identify funding for the HB 1283 project.

UCC E-Filing Project:

A report was provided on the progress that has been

made on the UCC E-Filing Project. A pilot project with Fayette County is scheduled to commence by October 20, 2008, with a statewide "roll out" of the program in late November, 2008. Participation will be voluntary on a

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E-Filing to Assist with Railroad Maps

With the passage of HB 1283 during the 2008 legislative session, Georgia railroad corporations have a new way to defend against adverse possession claims in the state of Georgia. This bill allows all courts in the state to take “judicial notice” of certain railroad maps when adjudicating adverse possession claims on property that is claimed by railroad corporations.

These maps define railroad property dimensions and were originally filed with the Interstate Commerce Commission in Washington, DC, pursuant to the

Railroad Valuation Act of 1913. For Georgia courts to take judicial notice of the maps, the bill requires the official maps to be filed with Superior Court in the Georgia county where the subject land is situated.

One of the concerns with anticipated filing and recording of these maps is their large size, often several feet in length. This large size could become a burden to Superior Court Clerks who will need to record, file, and make the maps available to the public. To help clerks, the public, and the railroad corporations deal with this, the Authority

Board of Directors has approved the development of a computer process by which these maps can be filed with the clerk, electronically, with the help of software developed by the Authority.

This software would assist clerks by managing the electronic map images and incorporating them into the existing local land record databases of each clerk. Filers would

send electronic versions of their maps to an Authority-hosted, e-filing “portal,” which is a website that would then forward them to the Clerk of Superior Court for acceptance

or rejection. Clerks would then import accepted map filings for local indexing and recordation.

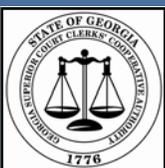
This system will be available free-of-charge to all Clerks of Superior Court who wish to take advantage of it. It will be a breakthrough in the use of e-filing in the State of Georgia as it will prevent the need for physical, paper documents to be filed. More information about this exciting project will be provided to Clerks of Superior Court in the near future. ■

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Thank You, F&F Vendors!

HB 1245 created many changes for Fines and Fees this year. In an effort to make the process of implementing these changes go as smoothly as possible, the Authority and its approved vendors (listed on the Vendor Programs page on www.courttrax.org) were able to work together to ensure a full implementation of the required changes. Through many letters and phone calls, vendors quickly and eagerly executed the required changes. Thank you, vendors, for your hard work and continued vigilance to accurately report Fines and Fees!

If your vendor is not on the Vendor Program list and would like to be, have them contact Rachel Rice at rachel.rice@gsccca.org or 404.327.7322 to schedule a presentation of their Fines and Fees software for review.



Authority's Smith Elected NPA President

Congratulations to Authority Director of Communications **Mike Smith** for his recent election as president of the Notary Public Administrators (NPA), a section of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS). The NPA represents state government and private sector professionals with an interest in notary law. Some of the NPA's objectives include:

- ❖ Gathering, exchanging and disseminating facts, information, and ideas relating to notaries public, the administration of commissioning/licensing programs, the regulation of notaries public, and authentication programs
- ❖ Increasing knowledge of notary law among NPA members and within the general public

Smith helped found the NPA in 1999 in an effort to help facilitate the exchange of ideas and knowledge between notary public state administrators. This ex-



change of information ultimately helps both notaries public and Georgia's Superior Court Clerks as they carry out their duties as commissioning officers of notaries. As president, Smith will represent the Notary Public Administrators at the annual NASS conference. The NPA is currently providing input to the Uniform Law Commission as it undertakes re-writing the Uniform Law on Notarial Acts.

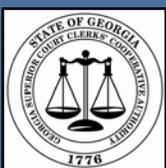
Smith began his tenure with the Clerks' Authority

in 1998 as director of communications. His responsibilities over the years have included overseeing the Notary Public Division, serving as the Authority's point of contact for UCC information, handling UCC bulk sales and dealing with media inquiries. He conducts training seminars across Georgia for banking associations, bar associations, law classes, clerks' offices and the general public on the topics of Uniform Commercial Code, notary public law and court fines and fees. ■

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recreate lost data by manually re-entering records. Even the public office of the Superior Court Clerk would not be exempt from the costs of recovery of unprotected records.

The Authority's Data Archive system enables clerks to avoid the risk of catastrophic loss of records via a daily back-up process. Don't wait until it's too late. Take advantage of this [free](#) service to secure the records in your office. For more information, contact Archive Program Manager Tara Johnson at 678.741.5354 or tara.johnson@gsccca.org. ■



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county-by-county basis. An E-Filing handbook is in development for the benefit of e-filers.

Historical Deed Project:

An update was presented on the Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project. To date, eight counties have provided complete historical deed data from 1990-1991. Approximately 630,000 instruments from 1990-1991 are in the GSCCCA database which is an estimated 25% of the total number of instruments expected from 1990-1991. Thirty-nine clerks have yet to select a vendor for the project. Four vendors have been approved to participate in the 1990-1991 Project. In relation to the Historical Deed Project, it was suggested that discussions take place as to the implementation of a historical plat index. Board members noted that constituents have requested such information be available in an electronic search. Authority Executive Director David Williams informed the board that, at the January 2004 board meeting, a motion approving the Historical Plat Project had been approved in concept subject to funding availability.

Data Archive Project:

A report was given on the Data Archive Project. The latest county to participate is Fulton County, the largest county in the state. Success stories were provided including Baker County that recently had an unexpected hard drive failure that could have resulted in a major loss of data. However, since the county participates in the Data Archive Project, their data was properly archived and was able to be recovered quickly and easily. Authority

Executive Director David Williams encouraged all clerks to participate in the Data Archive Project which is offered at no cost to the clerk's office.

Redaction Project:

An update was given on the Redaction Project. The redaction software has been installed and is being tested. Parameters have been established for the redaction of social security numbers as the documents flow through the system. At this time, redaction is only being performed on UCC documents.

Fines and Fees Division:

A report was given on the Fines and Fees Division which included a presentation of the financial statements of the division.

Civil Case Count Project:

An update was provided on the Civil Case Count Project (SB 176) which has been in existence since 2000. The project requires civil disposition data to be transferred from clerks' offices to AOC. A civil certification program has been established to ensure that the county can provide the data as required. Gwinnett County is currently the only county to be certified. Coweta County is working with Harris Custom Programming and the testing process has proven successful. From this point forward, all vendors will be brought into the process.

UCC Project:

A report was given on the UCC Project. The number of filings for 2008 is projected to be approximately 235,000 which would be the fewest number of annual filings in the history of the UCC Project which began in 1995. ■

Authority Provides Training

Authority Training Coordinator Rachel Rice teaches a Fines & Fees class. The program included changes to the Fines & Fees program brought about by H.B. 1245; the new forms and updated requirements for filling out the GSCCCA Monthly Remittance and Monthly Disbursement reports; and a discussion of the Fines & Fees court review that has been conducted over the past year.

