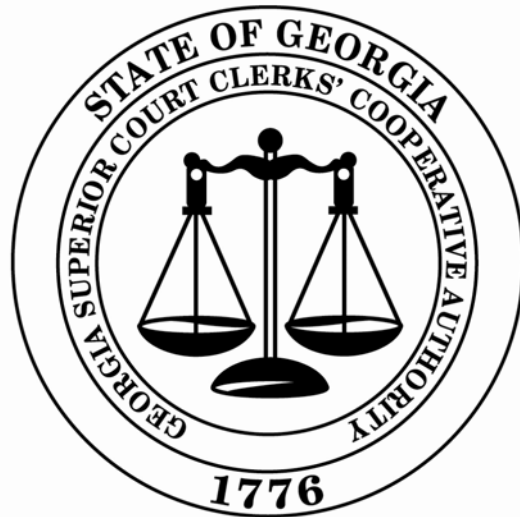# Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority

2011-2012 Accomplishments & Year-end Report

Executive Summary

Linking the past, present and future, the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority has been an innovator within the public records arena, and in so doing, 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 is making life easier for those who need access to real estate records, financing statements, civil and criminal case data, and other legal documents.

With support from Georgia's Superior Court Clerks, the State Bar, the Georgia Realtors, and the Georgia Bankers Association, the state legislature created the GSCCCA in 1993. Today, the GSCCCA is a very different organization 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 a variety of additional projects at the request of the Georgia General Assembly and other state agencies. The Authority has grown into a diverse entity that is respected both locally and nationally for its progressive, innovative and effective approach to problem solving. For this reason, it has been sought by other government and not-for-profit groups to partner on a variety of issues.

The Authority now oversees the following:

➢ Notary Division
➢ Fines & Fees Division
➢ UCC Project
➢ Real Estate Deed Project
➢ Historical Deed Project
➢ Lien, Plat & Map Project
➢ Historical Plat & Map Project
➢ PT-61 Project
➢ Premium Search
➢ Data Archive Project (MyVault Archive Service)
➢ e-File 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. These databases provide accountability, uniformity, efficiencies and cost-savings by affording:

➢ Unprecedented access to valuable information … free access through search terminals in all Clerk of Superior Court offices, and convenient internet access, by subscription, for those desiring 24-hour, 7-day-a-week access.
➢ Additional revenue for county governments.
➢ Important data for lawmakers to more effectively set public policy.
➢ Critical and timely information for law enforcement officials to protect the public.

The GSCCCA is governed by a board of ten members. Its activities undergo constant legislative oversight and board meetings are open to the public. It was created, implemented and continues to operate without receiving any funds through local, state or federal taxes. 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.

Despite the unprecedented recession that continues to affect revenue (down 33% compared to our FY 2007, pre-recession numbers), **the Authority completed FY 2012 financially sound and operationally intact.** The resilience of our results is a testament to the quality of our products and our continued focus on managing costs. As always, we empowered our people to be innovative, to rethink how we work, to listen to our customers, and to strategically transform our operations for long-term efficiency and sustainable growth. Our success reflects the outstanding and prudent leadership of our Board of Directors, and the effort, skill and dedication of our professional staff.

Below are some of the highlights from the past fiscal year.

➢ Achieved **repeal of the sunset provision** on the funding mechanism for the Clerks' Authority. HB 198 was originally written to extend the sunset; however, the Authority Board was unanimous in seeking that the sunset be repealed. The agreement was crafted with the cooperation of the Georgia Association of Realtors and the State Bar Real Property Section.

➢ Officially launched the **Premium Search account** website to provide more in-depth search options in response to customer requests. The account allows users to search by property address as well as land lot making it attractive to many groups including appraisers and realtors. Other features such as reporting and account management changes and new view options were also added. As of June 30, 2012, the Authority had added **1,047** Premium Search accounts.

➢ Developed beta version of a **GSCCCA mobile application** targeting IOS devices such as iPhones and Android devices. This mobile offering leverages location-based searching and mobile document retrieval and builds on the new Premium Search account.

➢ Continued to grow and develop very successful **eFile Project**:
   o Finalized and released an official version of the **"Real Estate Electronic Recording Standards for the State of Georgia,"** per legislative mandate. These Standards took effect January 3, 2012 and allow eFiling of real estate documents to be accomplished in Georgia. The GSCCCA eFiling portal conforms to these standards and currently has **7** participating counties in which **1,728** real estate documents have been eFiled.
   o Developed and published the **www.efileregistry.org** website. This site was designed to facilitate the registration, maintenance and verification of Real Estate eFile participants. Working in cooperation with the State Bar of Georgia and the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Association, the Authority created the eFile registry to provide a secure location for housing approved participants in the eFiling of real estate documents in Georgia.
   o Developed a sophisticated functional prototype of a **Civil eFiling** system in order to demonstrate the clerks' understanding of eFiling processes and technical expertise.
   o Enhanced the existing **Child Support eFiling** document standards to better accommodate participation from filers outside the Division of Child Support Services. The Authority's system automatically interfaces with the eFiling system of the Administrative Office of the Courts, so that clerks can receive child support cases initiated by the Department of Human Services directly through the GSCCCA portal. Currently, **41** counties are participating with **31** activated during FY 2012. Since January 1, 2010, **22,184** filings have been accepted.

- o Continued to grow **UCC eFile.** As of June 30, 2012, **62 counties** were participating and **11,040 UCCs** had been electronically filed during FY 2012. **25,670 UCCs** have been electronically filed since the pilot project began in May 2009.
  - o Began implementing a website that enables individuals to file real estate filings electronically over the internet from the convenience of their home or office, rather than having to travel to the county clerk's office.
- ➤ Maintained a compliance rate of close to **100%** for all courts through a dedicated and consistent notification process by the Fines & Fees Division.
- ➤ Increased participation in the Notary Online program to **109 counties** and added 3 new Mail-In Renewal counties increasing the number to 14 counties.
- ➤ Restored over **400 GBs of data** for 4 counties over the last 2 months through the Authority's **MyVault Archive Service.** (Restored over 500 GBs of total data for FY 2012.) Currently, **102 counties** participate in the program with 2 added this year and 3 additional counties preparing to participate. The statistics continue to stagger with the online vault containing over **295 million** files totaling more than **29 TBs** of data.
- ➤ Deployed **200 new workstations and monitors** in Clerk of Superior Court offices as part of the Statewide Computer Replacement Project for all 159 counties.
- ➤ Developed 38 improvements to the existing automated **deed quality assurance service**. These improvements were identified and aggregated during a usage period of a year, and serve to enhance the quality of data that enters the GSCCCA system. This is a critical process especially as the GSCCCA system begins to accept additional historical records.
- ➤ Developed a geo-encoding process using the addresses in our PT-61 data to support the PT-61 Map Search. Almost **1.5 million addresses** have been encoded so far.
- ➤ Increased Internet connection speeds at our Primary Data Center from 15Mbps to 1Gbps and increased connection speeds for county connectivity to our data center from 6Mbps to 100Mbps while significantly reducing monthly costs.
- ➤ Designed and implemented a solution that facilitates the monthly export and delivery of electronic TIFF real estate deed docket images to The DRS Group for conversion to archival microfilm form. This is the technical implementation of the statewide **Microfilm Project** that allows the Authority to save more than **$700,000** annually in microfilm production costs.
- ➤ Started project to completely refresh and enhance the GSCCCA website.
- ➤ Created a **"Board Resource Center"** on the GSCCCA website to provide a central location for all board materials.
- ➤ Honored late GSCCCA Chairman Tom Lawler by creating a bronze memorial plaque recognizing Tom's contributions to the Authority. The plaque was unveiled at the Clerks' Spring Conference and will be permanently displayed in the Authority office.

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 year … from the thousands of phone calls and email requests successfully handled by Authority staff, to the millions of dollars returned to Georgia's counties, to the billion-plus hits to our website.

Following are some of the highlights from FY 2012:

- ➤ Added over **9.6 million** images to the system this fiscal year for a fiscal year-end total of over **197.2 million** images.

- Had almost **2.1 billion** hits and over **710,000** unique visitors to www.GSCCCA.org. The public accesses the Authority's invaluable data via the Internet **more than a million times a day**.
- Upgraded **760** regular subscriber accounts to Premium Search accounts for a total of **1,047** Premium Search accounts. The number of total active monthly subscribers to www.GSCCCA.org was **14,109** as of June 30, 2012.
- Paid counties almost **$715,000** for deed images this fiscal year and over **$8.8 million** for deed images over the last eight years.
- Returned approximately **$5.4 million** to counties for prints ($.50 per print) off the Authority website and over **$21.8 million** for prints over the last eight years.
- Verified and electronically forwarded to GCIC over **36,000 Protective Orders** indexed by Clerks.
- Electronically transmitted to GCIC over **287,000 records** of criminal history court cases received from various criminal courts in Georgia.
- Received over **5,500** email requests and over **16,200** calls to HelpDesk.
- Processed a total of **43,000 notary certificates**, a 28% increase.
- Issued **32,700 apostilles,** the second highest total ever produced, to 86 different countries.
- Received **15,300 phone calls** to the Notary Division answering about 50 calls per day.
- Backed up over **1,338 TBs** of data. A TB or terabyte is a measure of computer storage capacity and is approximately a thousand billion bytes. Backing up 1,338 TBs of data is the equivalent of backing up the printed collection of the U. S. Library of Congress … about 134 times!
- Protected over **295 million** files totaling more than **29 TBs** of data (3 times the printed collection of the U.S. Library of Congress) through the Authority's **MyVault Archive Service**.
- Blocked over **12 million** spam emails blocking 94% of all e-mail received.
- Collected and disbursed approximately **$108.7 million** in court fees, a high level of collections during a slow economic period.
- Conducted **45** classroom training sessions, webinars and one-on-one programs on various subjects across the state in addition to offering five online training courses.
- Ordered, processed and shipped almost **1,100** pieces of new equipment to counties this fiscal year and over **12,100** pieces of new equipment over the last nine years.
- Indexed over **210,000** UCCs and conducted over **8,200** Certified Searches for FY 2012. Since opening in 1995, the Authority has indexed over **4.5 million** UCCs and conducted over **197,000** Certified Searches.

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 our product and how integral it has become to their business. From real estate records and lending information to notary public registration and court fines and fees, the GSCCCA enables convenient access to invaluable information.

The challenges of today's business environment are real and the pace of change is accelerating. As we have in the past, we continue to respond to this environment through innovation in our projects and an aggressive approach when confronting tough problems. Each day, we work hard to grow and improve our business, and operate more efficiently and effectively. We are committed to remaining entrepreneurial and strategic and positioning the Authority for continued preeminence. Thanks to our Board, to Clerks of Superior Court, and to our staff, our record of success and commitment to continuous innovation and improvement speaks for itself. Going forward, the Authority will continue to incorporate customer feedback into our product and technical decisions as we grow existing programs and develop new initiatives based on the changing needs of our many constituencies.

The following pages provide an overview of the Authority and a more detailed review of the many accomplishments of the past fiscal year.
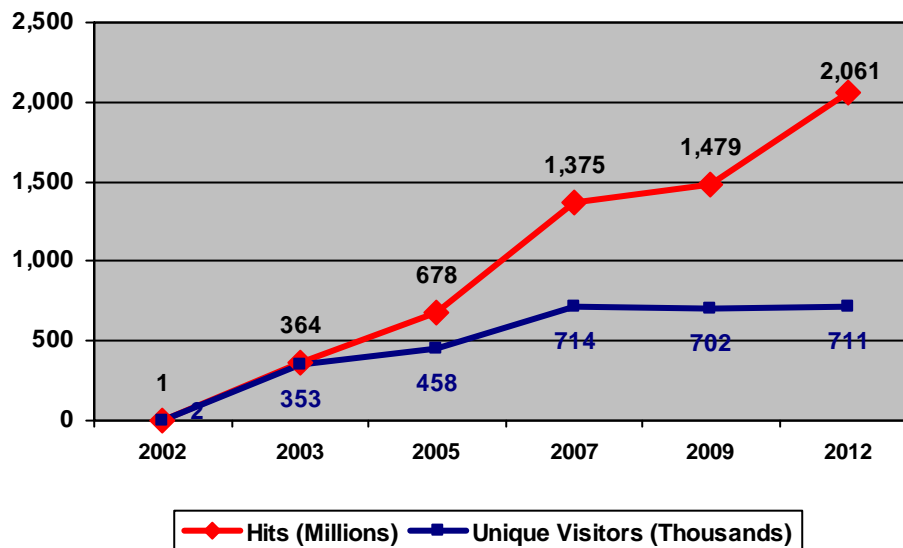
Information about www.GSCCCA.org

Through the Authority, the public now has unprecedented access to valuable information including Uniform Commercial Codes (UCCs), Real Estate Deed filings with liens, plats and maps, and much more. Access to the indexes is provided through the Authority's central website, www.GSCCCA.org, with free access available during regular business hours through public terminals located in each county's Superior Court Clerk office. Convenient internet access is also available, by subscription, and provides users with 24-hour, 7-day-a-week access. The public accesses this invaluable data via the internet more than a million times a day.
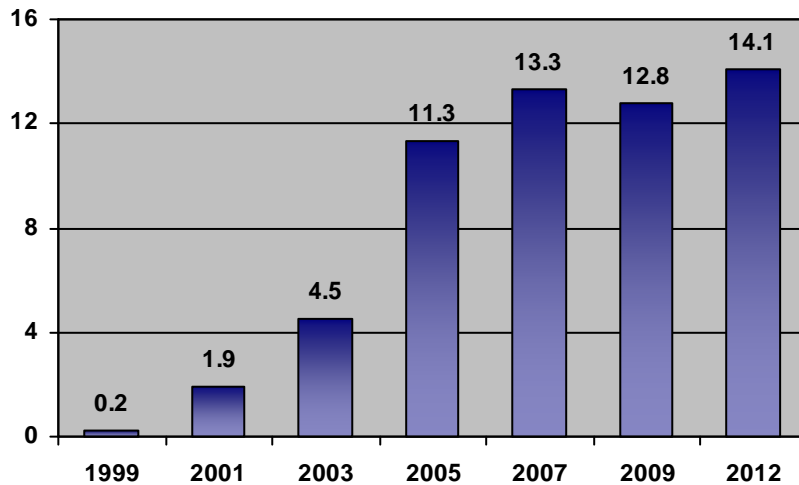
Below are statistics on www. GSCCCA.org from FY 2012:

- ➢ Images added to the system: **9,632,701**
- ➢ Total hits: **2,061,427,223**
- ➢ Bandwidth: **11.5 TB**
- ➢ Page views: **671,503,860**
- ➢ Unique visitors: **710,765**
- ➢ Single-use subscribers added during fiscal year: **11,409**
- ➢ Total active monthly subscribers as of June 30, 2012: **14,109**

Website Hits & Unique Visitors

Legend: Hits (Millions) — Unique Visitors (Thousands)

Monthly Subscribers (thousands)

Year	Subscribers (thousands)
1999	0.2
2001	1.9
2003	4.5
2005	11.3
2007	13.3
2009	12.8
2012	14.1

Since 1999, website subscriptions have increased exponentially, clear evidence of the Authority's growth and success. Beyond the numbers, though, the Authority gauges its success and relevance on the response and feedback from its customers on how integral the Authority's products and databases have become to their businesses. Read the comments below from Chris Stroud, president of Consumer Recovery Services:

> *"I wanted to write to you to express our gratitude for your GSCCCA website.*
> *Our company represents homeowners in their claims against the manufacturers*
> *of defective siding on their homes. These claims require that a deed be provided*
> *to show proof of ownership. Our 30-person company uses your website extensively*
> *to acquire these deeds. This saves us countless hours of courthouse time and*
> *aggravation. Please continue the fine quality of work that has made your website*
> *such an integral part of our success. Thank you."*

Each year, millions of images are added to www.GSCCCA.org making it an even more valuable resource to our customers. Below are statistics on the images added to the Authority system during FY 2012 and the total number of images in the system as of June 30, 2012.
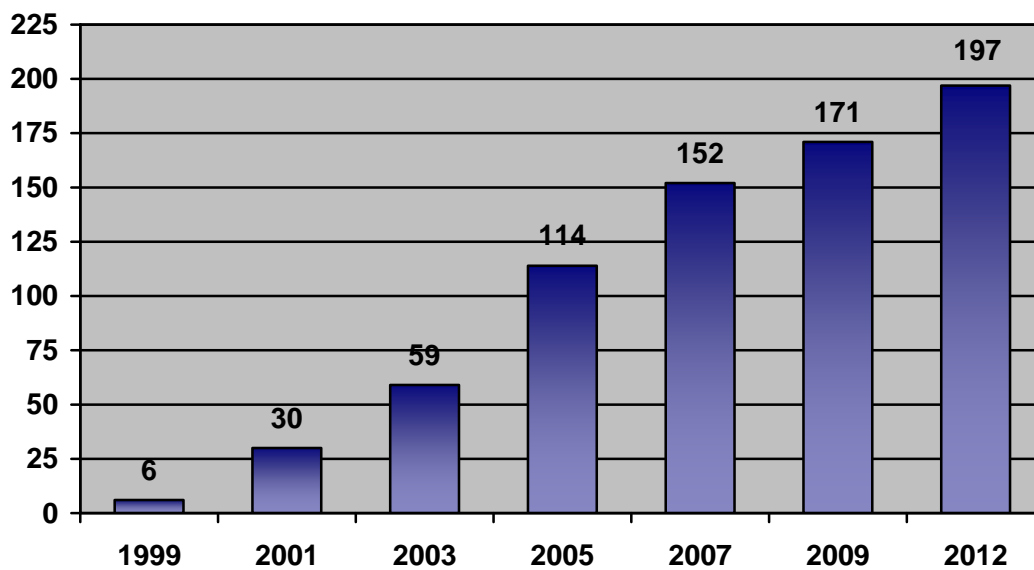
Images Added to System in FY 2012

- Deeds: 7,454,844
- Liens: 1,429,521
- Plats: 93,275
- UCCs: 275,428
- PT-61s: 379,633
- Total: 9,632,701

Total Images in System as of 6/30/12

- Deeds: 175,143,777
- Liens: 11,434,148
- Plats: 733,909
- UCCs: 6,331,314
- PT-61s: 3,591,000
- Total: 197,234,148

Total Images in System (millions)

Year	Images
1999	6
2001	30
2003	59
2005	114
2007	152
2009	171
2012	197

The Authority is committed to the preservation of the data with which it has been entrusted and the public's access to it. To this end, the Authority established a fully redundant remote data center and brought it online in 2009. As a result, the public will be able to search the Authority's databases through www.GSCCCA.org without interruption, even if the Authority's primary data center is destroyed in a disaster.

Financial Accomplishments

FY 2011 Year-end Audit Completed by Mauldin & Jenkins

➢ Received an unqualified "clean" opinion from Mauldin & Jenkins for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011 audit.
➢ No audit adjustments were proposed by the auditors.
➢ Coordinated all requests with auditors from Mauldin & Jenkins and Georgia Department of Audits.

Monthly Financial Information

➢ Provided accurate and timely monthly financial statements, along with an executive summary, to the Authority's Executive Director and Board members helping facilitate informed decisions in uncertain economic periods.
➢ Provided quarterly financial reviews at all board meetings.
➢ Completed monthly reconciliations and review of all general ledger accounts to ensure proper recording of financial data included in the monthly financial statements.
➢ Updated fixed asset database monthly for all asset additions and dispositions.
➢ Aggressively managed GSCCCA subscriber accounts to help boost a collection rate of 99%.
➢ Sent monthly past-due collection letters to help reduce the amount of bad debt write-offs.
➢ Ensured timely deactivation of past-due accounts to help reduce the amount of charges that can be incurred by delinquent subscribers.

Accounting Information:

➢ Total active subscriber accounts as of June 30, 2012 – **14,109**.
   This includes **1,047** Premium Search accounts.
➢ Average monthly direct access subscription revenue as of June 30, 2012 - **$185,900**.
➢ Single-use subscription revenue through June 30, 2012 - **$59,840**.
➢ Monthly check payments processed through June 30, 2012 – **20,101**.
➢ Deed image fees paid to counties through June 30, 2012 – **$714,632**
➢ Returned to counties **$5,364,670** for prints ($.50 per print) off the Authority website through June 30, 2012. This consisted of the following:

   o   Liens $249,460
   o   Plats $157,918
   o   R/E $4,768,139
   o   PT-61 $57,481
   o   UCC $131,672

Divisions

Notary Public Division

In 1997, the Authority was asked by the Georgia Secretary of State to begin maintaining the central database of notaries public. This project contains the following elements:

➢ maintenance of a central database of all active notaries public (approximately 160,000);
➢ renewal notification to all notaries regarding their commission expiration; and
➢ issuance of apostilles and notary certifications.

In 2004, the Authority developed Notary Online with three goals:

➢ to make the processing of notary applications more efficient in Clerks' offices;
➢ to allow counties immediate access to their notary filings and images; and
➢ to simplify the notary application process for the public.

During FY 2012, the Authority's Notary Division:

➢ Processed a total of **43,000 notary certificates**, a 28% increase. This increase is largely due to the Judicial Operations Fund fee no longer being assessed to notary appointments. 74% were submitted electronically via the Notary Online application system.
➢ Increased participation in the **Notary Online** program to **109 counties** and added 3 new Mail-In Renewal counties increasing the number to 14 counties.
➢ Added several new features and enhancements to the **Notary Online** program.
➢ Issued **32,700 apostilles,** the second highest total ever produced, to 86 different countries. Approximately 26% of apostilles are issued via mailed-in requests.
➢ Issued **106 notary domestic certifications**.
➢ Sold **850 notary handbooks**.
➢ Received **15,300 phone calls** answering about 50 calls per day on average.

The Authority continually strives for ways to make its programs more efficient when interfacing with the general public. In this vein, the Authority implemented a very successful credit card pre-payment voucher system in 2011. This new system allows apostille/authentication customers to pay by credit card through the Authority's secure website. Our corporate clients like the streamlined payment process, while our international clients appreciate the added flexibility this system allows. Georgia is the only state in the country that offers a web-based payment system.

Fines & Fees Division (Indigent Defense Funding)

Legislation was passed in 2004 which established a new funding mechanism for indigent defense. The Authority was mandated to develop data on the collection and disbursement of all court fees being collected by the over 1,100 courts throughout the state. Data now provided by the Authority allows policy makers to make more informed decisions as they formulate future legislation.

In 2006, the Authority began offering a Fines & Fees Online Training course to help educate court personnel on the reporting of fines and fees and comply with the new law. The course was updated this year to include legislative changes.

In FY 2012, the Authority's Fines & Fees Division:

➢ Collected and disbursed approximately **$108.7 million in court fees**, a high level of collections during a slow economic period.
➢ Performed quarterly court reviews on approximately **1,100 courts** to help ensure the accuracy of the data being reported to the Authority.
➢ Maintained a **compliance rate of close to 100%** for all courts through a dedicated and consistent notification system.
➢ Processed more than **30,000 monthly reports** submitted by reporting entities.
➢ Held operational costs to well under the statutory limit of $500,000 for the eighth year in a row.
➢ Updated the Fines & Fees online calculator to coincide with legislative changes passed this year.

Through its efforts to provide accountability and uniformity to the collection of court fees, the Authority continues its leadership in providing court information to the public.

Projects

UCC (Uniform Commercial Code) Project

With the passage of legislation in 1993, the State of Georgia established a statewide system for the indexing of Uniform Commercial Code documents. Georgia became the first state in the nation to privatize this traditional state function by outsourcing the indexing of the instruments to a third-party vendor.

Since opening its doors on January 1, 1995 through the close of FY 2012, the Authority had indexed over **4.5 million UCCs** (approximately 16,800 per month) and conducted over **197,000 Certified Searches**.

In an effort to stay at the forefront of technology and meet the changing needs of users, the Authority successfully launched its **UCC eFile** site to the public in 2010 and began accepting UCC documents for electronic filing. The importance of UCC eFile to users of the system is evident in how quickly the program has grown. As of June 30, 2012, **62 counties** had been activated and were participating and **25,670 UCCs** have been electronically filed since the pilot project began in May 2009.

During FY 2012, the Authority:

➢ Indexed **210,244 UCCs** and conducted **8,247 Certified Searches**.
➢ Grew its **UCC eFile Project** with **11,040 UCCs** electronically filed during FY 2012.
➢ Continued the redaction of SSNs listed on UCCs in an effort to help prevent fraud.
➢ Fielded numerous UCC inquiries supporting staff, clerks' offices, the banking industry, private law offices, and the general public.

Real Estate Deed Project

Legislation was passed in 1996 that required the Authority to develop and implement a statewide index for real and personal property records. With this mandate, the Authority created a one-of-a-kind system with no direct cost to the State of Georgia. When the system became operational on January 1, 1999, the public gained unprecedented free access to information within the office of the Superior Court Clerk through search terminals installed by the Authority. Additionally, the business community gained 24-hour, seven-day-a-week desktop access to official land records through the internet (by subscription).

The Real Estate Deed Project contains the following elements:

➢ Computer access to deed indexes in all 159 counties;
➢ Integration of all 159 counties into an on-line statewide system;
➢ Inclusion of standards for files, fields, screen layouts, report layouts and design; and
➢ Standardization of all printed indexes statewide.

Since passage of the enabling legislation, the Authority has developed and implemented the only statewide intranet network in state government. Additionally, images of the corresponding real estate instruments are constantly being added to the on-line system.

The Authority **added over 7.4 million deed images** to the system during FY 2012 to bring the total to **over 175.1 million deed images** in the system. Revenue generated from the printing of images from the system is returned to the county where the original document resides. In FY 2012, the Authority paid Georgia counties almost **$715,000** for deed images and almost **$4.8 million** for real estate prints made from www.GSCCCA.org. This money is an important source of additional revenue for the Clerks of Superior Court and their respective counties.

In 2004, a new feature was added to the system: **access to property tax transfer forms** (PT-61s). This new feature has added even more valuable information to the real estate system. The Authority worked with the Department of Revenue, the Department of Audits, and the Real Property Section of the State Bar of Georgia to bring this project online. (See the section on the PT-61 Project for more information.)

At the end of 2011, the Authority successfully launched its **Real Estate eFiling Project** statewide. Clerks retain control of the process, and their participation is completely voluntary and at no charge. As of June 30, 2012, **7 counties** were participating and **1,728 real estate documents** had been eFiled. The following significant accomplishments for the Real Estate eFile Project were achieved during FY 2012:

➢ Finalized and released an official version of the **"Real Estate Electronic Recording Standards for the State of Georgia,"** per legislative mandate. These Standards took effect on January 3, 2012 and allow eFiling of real estate documents to be accomplished in Georgia.
➢ Developed and published the **www.efileregistry.org** website. This site was designed to facilitate the registration, maintenance and verification of real estate eFile participants. Working in cooperation with the State Bar of Georgia and the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Association, GSCCCA created the eFile registry which provides a secure location for housing approved participants in the eFiling of real estate documents in Georgia.

Below is a summary of other efforts during FY 2012 to support and enhance the Real Estate Deed Project:

➤ Developed and implemented 38 improvements to the existing automated deed quality assurance service. These improvements were identified and aggregated during a usage period of a year, and serve to enhance the quality of data that enters the GSCCCA system. This quality assurance process is critical especially as the Authority begins to accept additional historical records.

➤ Continued using software and monitoring procedures to detect land record data that is not in conformance with the Indexing Standards for Real and Personal Property. This is intended to preview and highlight possible errors in the index data for deed records thus extending the Authority's ability to check the accuracy and ensure the quality of existing and incoming deed records. Several thousand real estate, lien and plat data records and images have been reviewed throughout the fiscal year.

➤ Continued the administration of the Authority's Indexing Certification Test resulting in clerks, deputies, and vendors becoming certified to index real and personal property records in accordance with the GSCCCA Indexing Standards. Thus far, 27 clerks and deputies from 13 counties have completed the Indexing Certification.

➤ Conducted personal training classes and offered two online courses to train clerks and staff across Georgia on Real and Personal Property Indexing Standards.

➤ Continued to accurately forecast the Authority's monthly real estate revenue by monitoring statewide levels of real estate filings.

➤ Continued efforts to certify that the land record recording systems of private vendors (and used by clerks) are compatible with the Authority's data collection system and the Indexing Standards. One new vendor achieved certification for their deed land record system in FY 2012.

➤ Provided continuous troubleshooting of issues relating to the deed, lien, and plat filings at all Clerks of Superior Court and the transmitting and storage of the related index data to the Authority.

➤ Provided ongoing telephone and e-mail assistance, available to all Clerks of Superior Court, regarding the proper indexing of land records in accordance with the Indexing Standards for Real and Personal Property.

Historical Deed Project

In 2002, the Authority launched the Historical Deed Project with the goal of adding all historical deeds filed in Georgia's 159 counties to the index. (Gwinnett County was the first county to accomplish this feat with a "good-from" date of 1871.) To support this project, the Authority developed a Deed Indexing Standards Supplement to help address the challenge of applying current indexing standards to real estate deed data that may have only had local indexing standards applied when filed.

The project is tedious as the Authority is making extensive efforts to ensure the quality of the data. All indexers must pass a Deed Indexing Certification Test developed by the Authority in order to index historical data, and collected data is quarantined or held in a queue until quality checks are completed. After passing the quality control checks, the data is released to the website.

The current statewide "good-from" date is 1993, and counties are now working toward a 1990 date, as the Authority moves the state back in increments of 3 to 5 years. The cost to add each additional historical year to the database is approximately $1.2 to 1.5 million dollars. The project is temporarily suspended for lack of discretionary funds resulting from the recent recession.

Lien, Plat & Map Project

When H.B. 1582 took effect in January of 2004, in addition to real estate records, Clerks of Superior Court were also required to transmit to the GSCCCA all real property, lien, map and plat indices and, whenever required or applicable, digital images. The Authority worked to certify all existing vendors, train Clerks of Superior Court, and provide necessary equipment. New scanners and PCs were distributed to counties and bandwidth (both locally and at the Authority) was increased to accommodate this project.

In 2011, the Authority increased storage capacity of the system to handle the influx of new data. The storage arrays were increased from 36 terabytes to a current capacity of approximately 71 terabytes. The Authority also designed and developed a standard that can be used to electronically file state tax liens directly from the Department of Revenue to the GSCCCA, and subsequently to the counties.

Historical Plat & Map Project

The Historical Plat & Map Project, the most requested new project from users, has been authorized by the Authority Board and will proceed as funds become available. Plat and map historical indexing standards are being developed, so when funding is available, the project will move quickly to catch up to the Historical Deed Project. The goal is to take plats and maps back as far as historical deeds.

PT-61 Project

Launched in September of 2004, PT-61 e-Filing is a collaborative program between the GSCCCA and the Department of Revenue to provide a more efficient process for filing a property tax transfer form (PT-61 form). Rather than completing a multi-part paper form, the new system allows the filer to log onto www.GSCCCA.org from his/her office and complete the form on-line. The program provides for the more efficient transfer of tax data to the DOR and local tax assessors via weekly electronic reports.

During FY 2012, the Authority returned **$57,481** to Georgia counties for prints ($.50 per print) off the Authority website related to the PT-61 Project.

Premium Search

In January of 2012, the Authority launched a Premium Search account with new search and view options for the Authority's valuable statewide indexes. Based on suggestions from subscribers, the premium account will allow users to:

➢ Pinpoint the property for which they are searching by simply entering the street address.
➢ Browse PT-61s for a specific day, week, or month.
➢ Page through documents.
➢ View data in a variety of new options.
➢ Access data through a mobile application using GPS data (This feature will go live in Fall 2012.)

As of June 30, 2012, the Authority had added **1,047 Premium Search accounts**, 760 of them upgrading from Regular Search accounts. From its launch on January 3, 2012 through fiscal year-end on June 30,

2012, the Premium Search account had generated $117,000 in additional revenue for the Authority. The number of accounts is expected to grow significantly, but even at the current number of 1,047, the new account would provide $205,000 in additional revenue per year.

The new Premium Search makes accessing the Authority's database an even more valuable tool for realtors, bankers, attorneys, surveyors, appraisers, and other members of the business company. See the comments from Real Estate Appraiser Bruce Hill below.

> *"THANK YOU sooooo much for enabling this search! I'm a Real Estate Appraiser and work many small, rural counties where there is no MLS. Your site is invaluable in searching sales in these counties."*

Data Archive Project (MyVault Archive Service)

In 2009, the Authority began offering **MyVault Archive Service** in an effort to help Clerks of Superior Court protect their irreplaceable public records in the event of a simple hard-drive failure or a larger disaster at the courthouse. MyVault is designed to provide offsite backup of electronically stored data, and is carefully managed and monitored daily. The service is offered free-of-charge to all Clerks, but to participate, the Clerk must agree to include all real estate data in the nightly backup.

MyVault currently contains over **295 million files** totaling more than **29 TBs of data**. In the past year, the Authority has performed proactive data auditing to reduce the amount of redundant storage in the vault, so although the number of files has gone up significantly, the total storage has gone down. Even as the vault has grown and more new data has been archived, the Authority has been able to proactively and effectively manage storage space and cost.

It is estimated that as much as 80% of the data backed up through MyVault is directly related to real estate records. The amount of real estate data backed up from participating counties actually exceeds the amount of real estate data in the GSCCCA search systems. Although the Authority system is continuously growing, its data is currently constrained to the applicable dates, from 1990 to the present, and doesn't yet include many, many years of historical data in courthouses. Through MyVault, all real estate data in participating counties is archived and protected, regardless of filing date.

The Authority also provides microfilm backup of all real estate data and images for all Clerks who elect to take advantage of this free project.

Below are statistics on the Authority's MyVault Archive Service for FY 2012:

- ➢ 102 counties currently participating with 2 added during FY 2012
- ➢ 3 additional counties preparing to participate
- ➢ Online vault contains over 295 million files totaling more than 29 TBs of data
- ➢ Restored over 400 GBs of data for 4 counties over the last 2 months
- ➢ Restored over 500 GBs of total data for FY 2012
- ➢ 71% of small counties participating (storing < 150 GBs)
- ➢ 21% of medium-sized counties participating (storing up to 750 GBs)
- ➢ 8% of large counties participating (storing > 750 GBs)
- ➢ 60% of metro Atlanta counties participating

eFile Project

In 2009, the Georgia legislature mandated that the Authority develop rules and regulations related to the electronic filing of documents. Prior to that, the Authority had spent years researching, planning, programming, and testing their eFiling program through an extensive pilot project. In 2010, the Authority successfully launched **UCC eFile** to the public and began accepting UCC documents for electronic filing. As of June 30, 2012, **62 counties** had been activated and were participating and **11,040 UCCs** had been electronically filed during FY 2012. Since May 2009 when the pilot project began, almost **26,000 UCCs** have been electronically filed. During 2011, the Authority successfully launched **Real Estate eFile** statewide. Clerks retain control of the process, and their participation is completely voluntary and at no charge. As of June 30, 2012, **7 counties** were participating and **1,728 real estate documents** had been electronically filed.

The Authority developed their eFile site in an effort to keep Superior Court Clerk offices current with the ever-changing technological demands of the public. The Authority also developed an eFiler Guide to assist filers as they maneuver within the eFile site and to provide support for technical questions. During FY 2012, the Authority continued to grow and develop their very successful **eFile Project** and achieved the following significant accomplishments:

- ➢ Finalized and released an official version of the **"Real Estate Electronic Recording Standards for the State of Georgia,"** per legislative mandate. These Standards took effect January 3, 2012 and allow eFiling of real estate documents to be accomplished in Georgia.
- ➢ Worked to comply with the Real Estate eFiling Standards by revising the technical standards for the GSCCCA Real Estate eFiling portal to allow the submission of participant ID information and to expand the set of allowed documents.
- ➢ Developed and published the **www.efileregistry.org** website. This site was designed to facilitate the registration, maintenance and verification of real estate eFile participants. Working in cooperation with the State Bar of Georgia and the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Association, GSCCCA created the eFile registry which provides a secure location for housing approved participants in the eFiling of real estate documents in Georgia.
- ➢ Developed a sophisticated functional prototype of a **Civil eFiling** system in order to demonstrate the clerks' understanding of eFiling processes and technical expertise.
- ➢ Enhanced the existing **Child Support eFiling** document standards to better accommodate participation from filers outside the Division of Child Support Services. The Authority's system automatically interfaces with the eFiling system of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), so that clerks can receive child support cases initiated by the Department of Human Services (DHS) directly through the GSCCCA portal. The AOC has contracted with DHS to provide a workflow and eFiling service for child support cases. Currently, **41 counties** are participating with **31** of those activated during FY 2012. Since January 1, 2010, **22,184 filings** have been accepted.
- ➢ Implemented additional reporting to better manage the eFiling interface that exists between GSCCCA and AOC for the purpose of eFiling. These reports give insight into the volume and types of documents being filed, the types of interactions used to facilitate each filing, and any errors that were experienced while trying to accommodate the filing.
- ➢ Added functionality to the internal website used to manage administrative functions across all eFiling systems. Examples include better tracking of eFiled documents and enhanced ability to manage registered users.
- ➢ Began implementing a website that enables individuals to file real estate filings electronically over the internet from the convenience of their home or office, rather than having to travel to the county clerk's office.

Civil Case Data Project

Legislation was passed in 2000 that requires the filing of case initiation and case disposition forms for each civil case filed in Superior or State Court. Under the law, anyone filing a civil case with the Clerk of Superior or State Court must complete a Civil Case Filing Form. By law, the Clerk must send the data/forms to the Authority. The Authority then indexes the information for inclusion into the statewide database that is then sent to the Georgia Court Automation Commission for analysis.

At the request of the State Bar of Georgia, this information is being gathered for the purpose of studying the number of tort cases filed, the number of overall civil cases filed, the size and scope of the verdicts, and other relevant information. This civil justice database enables Georgia lawmakers to more effectively set public policy regarding judicial reform and allocation of resources to the state's judicial circuits.

During FY 2012, the Authority developed a sophisticated functional prototype of a **Civil eFiling** system in order to demonstrate the clerks' understanding of eFiling processes and technical expertise.

Georgia Protective Order Registry

The Georgia Protective Order Registry is an online service that stores all Protective Orders issued by the Superior Courts of Georgia as authorized by the Family Violence statutes of the state. Clerks of Superior Court are responsible for indexing the required data for Orders filed in their courts; electronically scanning the Orders; and attaching the images of the Orders to the indexed data. Clerks transmit the indexed data and the Order images to the Authority. The Authority then verifies and forwards the transmissions to the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) computer system.

The Registry, accessed by law enforcement through GCIC terminals, displays all Protective Orders and related data. In FY 2012, over **36,000 Protective Orders** were indexed by Clerks, and then verified and forwarded by the Authority to GCIC. Through the efforts of the Authority, critical information for protecting the public is now easily accessible to law enforcement officials nationwide.

Criminal Case Data Project (Offender-Based Tracking System)

Launched in 2003, the Offender-Based Tracking System provides electronic access to a criminal data warehouse. Legislation passed in 2001 mandated the electronic collection and reporting of final dispositions, and required that Superior Court Clerks provide electronic collection and transmission of disposition data to the Authority. The Authority then transmits the disposition data to the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) where it is used to populate the GBI's Computerized Criminal History Database. The Authority worked with the Superior Court Clerks' case management vendor to develop transmission standards and protocols.

In FY 2012, over **287,000 records** of criminal history court cases were electronically transmitted from the various criminal courts in Georgia to the GSCCCA and then forwarded to GCIC. This system provides critical and timely information to protect the safety of the public and law enforcement officers throughout Georgia.

Carbon Sequestration Registry

The Georgia Legislature passed the "Georgia Carbon Sequestration Registry Act" in 2004 to provide for a registry to promote offsetting reductions in greenhouse gases by sequestering carbon. The Authority worked with the Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC) to create the Carbon Sequestration Registry.

The registry has multiple objectives. Its primary objective is to promote the establishment and protection/conservation primarily of above-ground forests to mitigate the effects of harmful emissions worldwide. Beyond this, a second objective is to create a new medium of exchange and revenue stream for owners of the sequestered carbon. This is accomplished by creating "carbon credits" based on the amount of carbon sequestered. Such credits can be sold to industrial clients who have emission "deficits" because they are producing excessive harmful emissions. On one hand, emission violators can "buy" absolution in the form of credits, and, on the other hand, carbon owners profit from their good work in preserving forests or timberlands.

The registry documents and tracks the acreage of timberland that owners will agree to preserve. Periodic and partial re-inspections assure that the quantities remain accurate in case of wildfires, storms or other destructive events. Independent inspectors are used to verify the original registration as well as to re-inspect the sequestered timber.

IT Department

Responsible for the upkeep of our computer and data systems, the IT Department is also the backbone of the Authority … turning legislative mandates and project "dreams" into technological realities. The Authority's IT staff develops and implements cutting-edge programs that offer unique services to Georgia's counties and citizens. The staff is committed to the preservation of the data with which the Authority has been entrusted and ensuring that it is available to the public at all times. Important enhancements and upgrades are made each year to fulfill this commitment. Additionally, the Authority continually seeks ways to increase the speed and improve the efficiency, flexibility, reliability and usability of its systems while also reducing cost. The staff values user/customer feedback and is committed to incorporating it into the Authority's products and technical decisions.

Below is a summary of the many accomplishments of the Authority's IT Department for FY 2012. Whether large or small, these activities enable us to meet our goals and grow and innovate in a constantly changing environment.

Systems Department

- ➢ Created a web page for Authority Customer Service Reps (CSRs) that centralizes network status for the Authority. The new web page eases the task of network monitoring for the CSRs.
- ➢ Performed monthly testing of backups by restoring random files and then verifying data integrity to ensure that the backup data is useable.
- ➢ Created an overflow office for apostille generation due to increased traffic from Georgia legislation pertaining to immigration.

- Implemented VMWare at the GSCCCA main office and have virtualized 90% of environment to date. VMWare allows us to virtualize a physical server and run that server as a virtual machine along with many other virtual machines (VM) on a shared hardware platform. Each VM runs its own operating system and applications. Virtualization increases server utilization (20 VMs on 1 server), decreases spending (no need to buy hardware every time you need a server), conserves power (fewer servers use less power), and increases flexibility (server deployment, backups, upgrades, and management are all easier).
- Implemented VMWare environment at Remote Data Center (RDC). The new hardware will give a much-needed performance boost to the 7+ year-old servers in use at the RDC in addition to all of the normal VMWare benefits.
- Implemented Cisco Nexus software. This allows the Network Team to manage the network inside the VMWare environment with all the same tools they use with the physical environment simplifying the management process for greater stability.
- Implemented new backup server with newest version of Netbackup and Veeam. The previous server was almost six years old and was unable to support the hardware requirements for Netbackup and Veeam. The new server also has 13TBs of local storage for the disk-based backups that Veeam performs. This will allow us to keep daily backups for 30+ days. Local storage was chosen as a more cost-effective way to store backup data versus using the more expensive, high-performance discs on the SAN (primary storage device).
- Implemented Veeam Backup software in VM environment. Veeam allows us to backup data directly from the SAN (removes load from the network), performs <u>in-line deduplication</u> (a type of compression), and allows us to recover a virtual machine in seconds versus several hours using other software.
- Migrated indexer facility PCs to new hardware and Windows 7 for improved reliability and usability.
- Installed 2 new LTO-4 tape drives. These drives are 10 times faster than the current LTO-3 drives.
- Revamped backup tape retention policy. We now keep an annual backup for 5 years, monthly backups for 1 year, and weekly backups for 3 months.
- Planned and began the implementation of Exchange 2010. However, the project was put on hold until Exchange 2012 is released due to cost considerations.
- Setup VM environment for SQL 2008 server upgrade, migration, and consolidation. Once the project is complete, we will have moved from 6 separate servers using 3 different versions of SQL to 2 servers using a single version of SQL. This simplifies management, decreases license costs, and allows the use of new features within SQL. Lastly, support for the version of SQL running our core systems will end in 2013 which is another motivating factor for the move.
- Migrated Notary system to a fault-redundant farmed environment. With the old configuration, if the server had to be restarted, Notary would be down. Now that it is farmed through the F5 network load balancer, the department may only experience a very brief moment of downtime as they are transferred to the redundant server.
- Automated patching in development, staging, testing and quality control environments and office PCs. Patching is a critical process that ensures all machines have the latest software and are protected from known software vulnerabilities.
- Implemented an automated process that monitors the set of disks that store all new images received by the GSCCCA. This monitoring ensures that there is always enough storage capacity to receive new images. When the amount of available storage drops below a predefined threshold, the Systems Team is notified to change the location when new images are stored.
- Built the following reports to help the Notary Department audit billing activities related to their bulk data export services:
  - Notary Monthly Credit Card Activity Report

- o Notary Monthly Export Activity Report
- ➢ Rebuilt the MyVault database logshipping. This is a mechanism of duplicating data across servers often used for disaster mitigation and data loss prevention.
- ➢ Implemented maintenance processes and patching to increase availability and performance of the Precise application. This application allows the Systems Team to monitor the SQL Servers.
- ➢ Created an automated data distribution plan that ensures all database servers at all GSCCCA data centers have up-to-date geo-location information. This information includes longitude/latitude information for all PT-61 documents and enables the GSCCCA to offer a "Street Address" search option.
- ➢ Blocked over 12 million spam emails blocking 94% of all e-mail received.

Networking Department

- ➢ Increased internet connection speeds at our Primary Data Center from 15Mbps to 1Gbps while significantly reducing monthly costs.
- ➢ Increased connection speeds for county connectivity to our data center from 6Mbps to 100Mbps while significantly reducing monthly costs.
- ➢ Increased our external wireless and "testing" network from 1.5 Mbps to 30Mbps.
- ➢ Leveraged bandwidth improvements to remove our point-to-point data center line and replaced it with a VPN, saving its entire cost on a monthly basis.
- ➢ Upgraded network hardware at Primary Data Center with newer, faster equipment that gives us greater capacity and room for expansion.
- ➢ Upgraded Remote Data Center network with old equipment from the Primary Data Center, vastly improving its local network capacity and capabilities.
- ➢ Began work on our plan to reduce our dependency on service providers for engineered solutions, and in turn have migrated 93 sites from third-party engineered VPN solution to a more reliable self-managed VPN solution. We are continually working to migrate the remaining sites.
- ➢ Leveraged existing F5 load balancers to create "iRules" that allowed us to make temporary programming changes and/or workarounds to our websites allowing developers to spend their time on other projects.
- ➢ Implemented UPLOGIX remote management solutions giving us greater connectivity to core networking devices along with built-in monitoring and automated troubleshooting functionality.
- ➢ Continued to maintain PCI site certification which guarantees customers that the security measures we provide on our website are strong enough to protect their data and online transactions.
- ➢ Implemented Cisco's Nexus Virtual Switching to better integrate our VMWare environment with our Cisco network.
- ➢ Performed the required duties to remain a Cisco Certified Partner.
- ➢ Worked with AT&T to reduce our long-distance costs and move from a legacy Bellsouth product to a newer AT&T offering.
- ➢ Revised vendor network connectivity documentation and agreements resulting in a new vendor for the clerks being connected to our statewide network.
- ➢ Provided assistance with nine clerks' office moves.

Development Team

- Officially launched the Premium Search account website on January 3, 2012.
  - Includes two new searches: Real Estate Instrument Type search and PT-61 Map Search. Other features such as reporting and account management changes and new view options were also added.
  - Developed a geo-encoding process using the addresses in our PT-61 data to support the PT-61 Map Search. We have encoded almost 1.5 million addresses so far and continue to encode daily.
  - Added 1,047 Premium Search accounts as of June 30, 2012. From its launch on January 3, 2012 through fiscal year-end on June 30, 2012, the Premium Search account had generated $117K in additional revenue for the Authority. The number of accounts is expected to grow significantly, but even at the current number of 1,047, the new account will provide at least $205K in additional revenue per year.
  - Created a "Premium Search" brand so that areas of the website that require Premium Search access are easily identified to customers.
- Developed a beta version of a GSCCCA mobile application targeting IOS devices such as iPhones and Android devices. This is the first official GSCCCA mobile offering and leverages location-based searching and mobile document retrieval and builds on the new Premium Search offering.
- Advanced and improved eFile site in a number of significant ways:
  - Developed a sophisticated functional prototype of a Civil eFiling system in order to demonstrate the clerks' understanding of eFiling processes and technical expertise.
  - Enhanced the existing Child Support eFiling document standards to better accommodate participation from filers outside the Division of Child Support Services. The Authority's system automatically interfaces with the eFiling system of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), so that clerks can receive child support cases initiated by the Department of Human Services (DHS) directly through the GSCCCA portal. The AOC has contracted with DHS to provide a workflow and eFiling service for child support cases. Currently, 41 counties are participating with 31 of those activated during FY 2012. Since January 1, 2010, 22,184 filings have been accepted, 897 have been rejected and 71 are pending.
  - Implemented additional reporting to better manage the eFiling interface that exists between GSCCCA and AOC for the purpose of eFiling. These reports give insight into the volume and types of documents being filed, the types of interactions used to facilitate each filing, and any errors that were experienced while trying to accommodate the filing.
  - Added functionality to the internal website used to manage administrative functions across all eFiling systems. Examples include better tracking of eFiled documents and enhanced ability to manage registered users.
  - Worked to comply with the Real Estate eFiling Standards which took effect January 3, 2012 by revising the technical standards for the GSCCCA Real Estate eFiling portal to allow the submission of participant ID information and to expand the set of allowed documents.
  - Developed and published the **www.efileregistry.org** website. This site was designed to facilitate the registration, maintenance and verification of real estate eFile participants. Working in cooperation with the State Bar of Georgia and the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Association, GSCCCA created the eFile registry which provides a secure location for housing approved participants in the eFiling of real estate documents in Georgia.
  - Designed and developed the backend functionality of the eFile Registry, including databases and business logic.

- Developed an interface for the Authority and vendors that can be used to determine who can and cannot submit Real Estate eFilings in real time based on current information in the registry. This increases the usefulness of the Registry by allowing automated use of its information and streamlining the process of eFiling.
- Developed a user's guide, xml samples, and an example solution for making use of the eFile Registry web services to help vendors quickly and correctly implement use of these web services.
- Began implementing a website that enables individuals to file real estate filings electronically over the internet from the convenience of their home or office, rather than having to travel to the county clerk's office.

➢ Started project to completely refresh and enhance the GSCCCA website.

➢ Expanded the GSCCCA website subscriber options by updating the behavior of expired single-use accounts. This change allows existing single-use account subscribers the convenience of reactivating their four-hour, single-use accounts, rather than having to create a new account when they need to search the GSCCCA.org website. This saves the user time and effort, encourages more use of the system, and provides a marketing opportunity to solicit the user to upgrade to a recurring monthly account.

➢ Created a hosted blog website for the GSCCCA and developed a GSCCCA brand for the layout of the blog. This blog will be used to present deeper information about Authority projects and personnel.

➢ Developed and implemented 38 improvements to the existing automated deed quality assurance service. These improvements were identified and aggregated during a usage period of a year, and serve to enhance the quality of data that enters the GSCCCA system. This quality assurance process is critical especially as the Authority begins to accept additional historical records.

➢ Made several security enhancements to the GSCCCA credit card system including upgrading encryption certificates.

➢ Designed and implemented a solution that facilitates the monthly export and delivery of electronic TIFF real estate deed docket images to The DRS Group for conversion to archival microfilm form. This is the technical implementation of the statewide Microfilm Project that allows the Authority to save more than $700,000 annually in microfilm production costs.

➢ Performed various updates to the Fines & Fees Online Training course to include legislative changes mandated during the year.

➢ Developed reports that allow for enhanced billing and auditing of bulk export sales of notary data.

➢ Created a "Board Resource Center" on the GSCCCA website to provide a central location for all board materials.

➢ Added several new features and enhancements to the Notary Online program.

➢ Completed the Civil Transmission Certification process for ICON software.

➢ Finalized the migration of all legacy development systems into new development and staging environments.

➢ Updated the Fines & Fees online calculator to coincide with legislative changes passed this year.

➢ Implemented Google Analytics on the GSCCCA website to better understand and analyze the amount of traffic and usage patterns of customers.

Training

Through its Training Department, the Authority continues to provide the most accurate and current information to clerks, their staff, and other interested constituencies while also prioritizing the convenience and accessibility of the training, To this end, the Authority offers three types of training: classroom, webinars and online.

Classroom

Classroom training is hosted by a Superior Court Clerk and offered free-of-charge. For FY 2012, the Authority conducted 10 programs across the state on the following topics:

- ➢ UCC
- ➢ Fines & Fees
- ➢ Real Estate Indexing Standards
- ➢ Notary Public Training (for Troutman Sanders)

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 in the training. For FY 2012, the Authority hosted 12 webinars with a total of 292 participants on the following topics:

- ➢ Real Estate Indexing Standards
- ➢ Protective Order Registry
- ➢ UCC Training
- ➢ Real Estate eRecording Standards

Online

The Authority continues to offer a wide variety of online training opportunities. Courses are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, making training completely flexible. Listed below are the online courses that the Authority offers and the number of clerks, clerk employees, and other Georgia citizens who took advantage of this training during FY 2012:

- ➢ Introduction to GSCCCA Indexing Standards
    - o 63 people participated in the training
    - o 7 clerk employees successfully passed the Real Estate Indexing Certification Exam
- ➢ Extended Real Estate Indexing Standards
    - o 50 people participated in the training
- ➢ Fines & Fees Training
    - o 100 people participated in the training

- Notary Public Training
  - 2,700 people participated in the training
  - 572 users took the Notary Public Final Exam
- UCC Training
  - 26 people participated in the training

Additionally, the Authority conducted 23 one-on-one training sessions for clerk offices and presented programs at the Fall 2011 COAG Conference and 2012 Spring Clerks' Conference. The training topics included:

- Fines & Fees
- Notary Online
- Child Support eFile
- UCC eFile
- Real Estate Indexing Standards
- Mobile Application
- Real Estate eRecording Standards
- OBTS

HelpDesk – Customer Support

HelpDesk is the Authority's customer support team which supports the technical needs and resolves problems for clerks, clerks' office staff, and website customers. The following statistics for FY 2012 speak to the volume of work that this team handles and the efficiency of their performance. Their outstanding work is critical to the continued success of the Authority.

HelpDesk Stats

- Total Calls: **16,220**
- Total Calls Answered**: 15,478**
- Answer Rate: **95%**
- Average Talk Time**: 5 minutes 16 seconds**
- Average Speed of Answer: **17 seconds**
- Total E-mail Requests Received: **5,500+**
- Total Repair Requests: **477**
- Tickets Received: **10,957**
- Tickets Resolved (during initial contact): **8,274**

Top 10 Requests

- ➢ GSCCCA Website: **Username/Password Requests (996)**
- ➢ GSCCCA Website: **Verification Code Q/A (759)**
- ➢ GSCCCA Website: **Site Navigation Assistance (662)**
- ➢ Account Management: **New Account Request (586)**
- ➢ GSCCCA Website: **General Information/Non-Tech Q/A (553)**
- ➢ PT-61: **How to Complete the Form/General Q/A (478)**
- ➢ GSCCCA Website: **Unable to View Images (222)**
- ➢ Account Management: **Modify/Update Account Information (206)**
- ➢ Outlook: **Unable to Send/Receive Emails/Full Mailbox (191)**
- ➢ Account Management: **Cancel Account Request (171)**

HelpDesk Calls & Emails (thousands)

Year	Calls	Emails
2007	20.9	4.1
2008	20.9	3.9
2009	21.9	4.3
2010	21.7	4.7
2011	17.3	5.1
2012	16.2	5.5
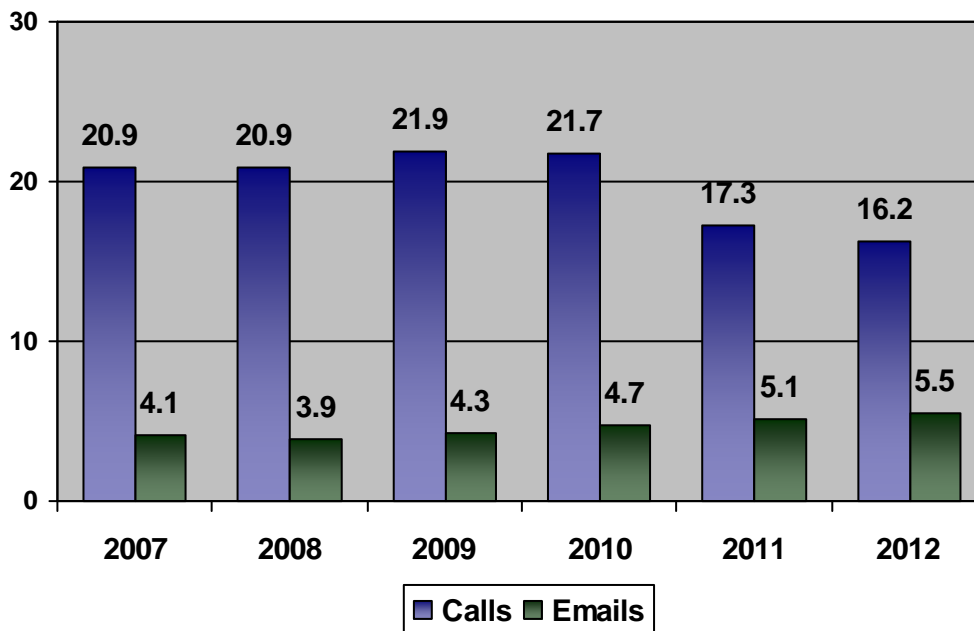
Equipment Outreach

In order to successfully implement its many legislatively mandated projects, the Authority has modernized all Clerk of Superior Court offices in the state by providing thousands of computers, printers, scanners, servers and other equipment. For many offices, this meant automating them for the first time when the UCC project began in 1995. By continuing to provide equipment, in addition to technological assistance and high-speed communications, the Authority supports all counties in their efforts to comply with Authority programs. Acquiring this equipment for most counties would not have been possible without the Authority due to the significant tightening of county budgets.

In addition to offering cutting-edge programs that offer unique services to Georgia's counties and citizens, the Authority can take pride in the fact that Georgia's Superior Court Clerk offices have not only entered the 21st century but have embraced its technology and, in many areas, lead their counterparts from around the country.

Below is a summary of the Authority's equipment outreach efforts during FY 2012:

- Ordered, processed and shipped **1,098 pieces of new equipment** to counties including CPUs, monitors, servers, laptops and scanners. The Authority has ordered, processed and shipped over **12,000** pieces of new equipment to counties over the last eight years.
- Deployed **200 new workstations and monitors** in Clerk of Superior Court offices as part of the Statewide Computer Replacement Project for all 159 counties.
- Handled **194** Purchase Orders totaling over **$2.16 million** including equipment for Remote Data Center and Archive Project.
- Handled **173** contracts from counties for equipment (County purchases, Image Trade purchases and county requests for additional equipment).
- Performed detailed evaluation of all returned inventory sheets from counties and processed **452** county equipment returns.
- Processed **411** equipment repairs essential for daily operations within clerk offices including computers, flat-panel monitors and scanners.
- Tracked all repairs of county equipment and ensured that items were returned in a timely manner.
- Shipped **1,418** non-inventory items including switches, cables, keyboards and mice.
- Obtained **554** quotes for equipment purchases for counties.
- Saved over **$108,000** through competitive bidding, WSCA contract and state contract.
- Saved over **$7,000** by implementing in-house imaging.
- Transferred **452** pieces of equipment to the Georgia Department of Administrative Services for proper disposal per state guidelines.
- Continued to promote open communications with counties for the purpose of encouraging compliance with all Authority projects including UCC, Deed, Plat, and Lien Project.
- Maintained an inventory management tracking component helping to ensure that all county inquiries, problems and other issues are addressed promptly and accurately.
- Distributed inventory sheets, detailed memos and Q&A sheets to all counties for sustained inventory project success.
- Continued to streamline and simplify communications between counties and the Authority by providing real-time information on their inventory, GSCCCA equipment policies and frequently-asked questions.

Outreach & Professional Development

The Authority seeks and takes advantage of opportunities to reach the public and provide education on who we are and what we do, including our critical relationship with Superior Court Clerks. The Authority also values professional development and encourages staff to be involved in industry groups and work toward furthering their own training and education.

Below is a summary of the Authority's outreach and professional development activities for FY 2012.

➢ Won **repeal of the sunset provision** on the funding mechanism for the Clerks' Authority. HB 198 was originally written to extend the sunset; however, the Authority Board was unanimous in seeking that the sunset be repealed as opposed to being extended every couple years. The agreement to remove the sunset provision was crafted with the cooperation of the Georgia Association of Realtors and the State Bar Real Property Section.

➢ Developed a social media strategy for the Authority encompassing a three-pronged approach. By utilizing Facebook, Twitter and blogging, the Authority is better able to communicate with its customers and reach out to potential subscribers while keeping clerks better informed.

➢ Started project to completely refresh and enhance the GSCCCA website.

➢ Created a "Board Resource Center" on the GSCCCA website to provide a central location for all board materials.

➢ Handled and processed to resolution UCC, notary public, real estate, fines and fees, and training inquiries from clerks' offices, UCC filers, online users and the general public.

➢ Produced quarterly newsletter for clerks that is posted on the Authority website.

➢ Maintained liaison roles with the State Bar, public users, title examiners, surveyors, GCIC, and courthouse vendors.

➢ Conducted various presentations to outside groups including the Community Bankers Association of Georgia, the Association of Paralegals of Georgia, the UGA Law School in Athens, the Atlanta Chapter of the National Association of Legal Secretaries, and the Atlanta Chapter of the International Right of Way Association.

➢ Participated in an FBI work group addressing mortgage fraud. The Clerks' Authority's database is viewed as a valuable tool in the research and discovery process for law enforcement.

➢ Conducted special on-site Notary Online training for Clerks of Superior Court participating in the Notary Online application process.

➢ Provided a computer lab for the Fall COAG and Spring Superior Court Clerk Training conferences. Conference materials were posted on the GSCCCA Clerk Resource Center website.

➢ Facilitated the purchase of UCC bulk images and index data by numerous companies.

➢ Represented the Authority's interests as well as Clerks of Superior Courts in the revision of UCC forms to be adopted in conjunction with the enactment of 2010 Amendments to Article 9. The forms/amendments specify a July 1, 2013 effective date.

➢ Represented on the NPA Apostille Handbook Committee. This committee is developing a best practices handbook that can be used as a guide by states in the apostille process.

➢ Oversaw the re-design and implementation of the appearance and attachment of apostilles in order to improve document security and uniformity of appearance among all states.

➢ Handled, in conjunction with the Attorney General's office, open records requests from the public.

➢ Communicated with the Domestic Terrorism Unit of the FBI regarding sovereign citizen issues.

➢ Communications Director serving as 1st Vice-President of the International Association of Commercial Administrators (IACA) for 2011-2012. As 1st VP, he chairs the Website Advisory

Committee which is undertaking a redesign of the IACA site to better meet the needs of membership. IACA brings together UCC industry representatives from the private (filings parties) and public (filing offices) sectors.

➢ IT Manager completed term as ITS Chair of the International Association of Commercial Administrators (IACA). During his term, he accomplished the goal of creating a working group that is resolved to modernize the IACA UCC XML standard and to provide support for domestic and international jurisdictions that may choose to adopt the standard. He facilitated a total of 6 IT sessions and personally presented 3 times to a large audience of members from around the world.

➢ IT Manager and Communications Director served on a panel discussion for Regional Technology Expo hosted by Fulton Co. The topic of discussion was technology from the clerks' perspective.

➢ IT Manager maintained PMP (Project Management Professional) certification.

➢ Communications Director appointed to committee comprised of GSCCCA Board members and industry experts charged with the task of re-writing Georgia's notary law encompassing the Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts as promulgated by the Uniform Law Commission. The Georgia Revised Notary Law is expected to be introduced during the 2013 legislative session.

➢ Communications Director serving as president of the board of the Notary Public Administrators (NPA) for 2011-2012. Comprised of state notary administrators, the NPA brings together public and private stakeholders in the notary industry. The Authority's participation in NASS/NPA allows us to monitor changes and trends in the area of notary law nationally that could affect the state of Georgia. He represented the Clerks' Authority at the annual NASS (National Association of Secretaries of State) 2012 Winter Conference. As president of NPA (a section of NASS), he formally represented the NPA and reported on the activities and 2012 goals of NPA to the full body of NASS which is comprised of Secretaries of State from all fifty states.

Conclusion

The past few years have been a period of tremendous growth, economic challenge and strategic innovation for the Authority. Through the Authority's programs, the following has become a reality without any funding from local, state or federal taxes:

➢ The public has unprecedented access to valuable information in the Superior Court Clerks' office.
➢ The business community has new, innovative tools for making their work more efficient and effective.
➢ The State of Georgia benefits from more modernized Clerk of Superior Court offices.
➢ County governments enjoy additional revenue which is vital as budgets are stretched thin.
➢ Georgia lawmakers have access to data that allows them to more effectively set public policy.
➢ Law enforcement officials have access to critical and timely information to protect the public.

The information contained in this report is respectfully presented to provide an overview of the Authority and a more detailed review of the many accomplishments of the past fiscal year. These achievements would not have been possible without the support and tremendous contributions of Georgia's Superior Court Clerks, the vision and leadership of the Authority's Board of Directors, and the outstanding abilities and tireless efforts of our dedicated professional staff.

For additional information on any of the programs listed or the content of this report, please contact Mike Smith, GSCCCA Communications Director, at mike.smith@gsccca.org.