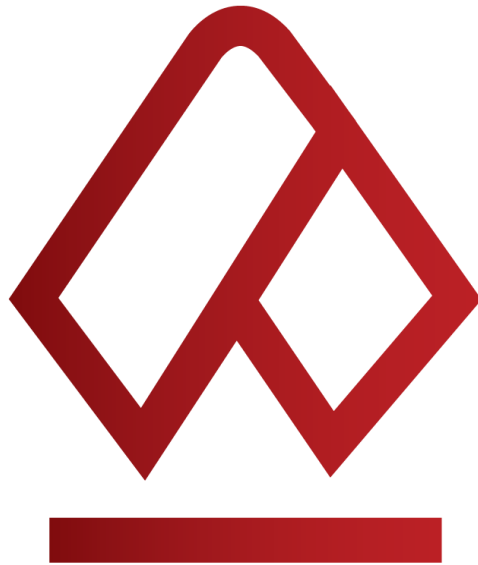# Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority

2014-2015 Accomplishments & Year-end Report

Executive Summary

American innovator Henry Ford, founder of The Ford Motor Company, once said …

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself."

As the Authority celebrates 20 years of success, through partnership with and service to Georgia's Superior Court clerks, the words of Henry Ford could not ring more true. The success we celebrate today was made possible by the efforts of clerks over two decades ago and their understanding that "moving forward together" was their only means to success. This belief, along with a common goal, pushed them to galvanize and fight for the creation of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority.

From the beginning and rooted to its core, innovation, collaboration and vision have defined the Authority. Innovators change things. They take new ideas and, working together, turn them into realities. But as the Authority and clerks of Superior Court have shown, innovation requires commitment, leadership, taking risks, and having a vision of what the future should be. In the words of Forsyth County Superior Court Clerk Greg G. Allen: "To think that a group of seasoned clerks of this generation, in an elected position, whose duties were codified over two hundred years ago, not only understood the radical change the world was experiencing but were able to see the future and harness technology to the advantage of the citizens of Georgia is nothing short of amazing."

For 20 years, Superior Court clerks and Authority staff have worked together to create the amazing success story we know today ... or in the words of Authority Chairman Barry Wilkes, "a paradigm for how government can and ought to work." From the beginning, the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority has been an innovator within the public records arena and 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 has turned ideas that most thought were not possible into realities, and in so doing, has changed the way many do business and made life easier for those accessing real estate records, financing statements, civil and criminal case data, and other legal documents.

Today, the Authority is well known for its record of success, and closes FY 2015 with another strong performance. But the road has not been easy. There have been roadblocks and struggles through the years, including legislative battles and technological challenges, but the clerks' collective dedication to the cause, along with steady and progressive leadership, have allowed clerks to move forward together and the Authority to flourish.

The Authority's strong leadership was necessary again this year, as the organization absorbed the loss of long-time executive director David Williams, who passed away last July. For the first time in almost two

decades, the Authority experienced an executive management transition, and due to an inclusive management style through the years and prudent planning by the board and staff, the transition was seamless. John Earle, with the Authority since 2004, was elevated by the board to the position of executive director, only the fourth person to hold the job, and leads the Authority into its third decade of service with a dedicated and seasoned management team in place.

Although the culture of innovation and collaboration remains the same, the GSCCCA is a very different organization today 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, at no cost to the state, a variety of additional projects at the request of the Georgia General Assembly, other state agencies, and numerous not-for-profit groups. The Authority now oversees the following:

- Notary Division
- Fines & Fees Division
- UCC Project
- Real Estate Deed Project
- Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project
- County-Funded Historical Deed, Lien and Plat Re-Indexing Project
- Lien, Plat & Map Project
- Historical Plat & Map Project
- PT-61 Project
- Premium Search Account
- Clerks' Authority Map Search Application
- Data Archive Project (MyVault Online Archive Service)
- Microfilm Project
- eFile 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 installed in all clerk of Superior Court offices, and convenient internet access, by subscription, for those desiring 24-hour, 7-day-a-week access.
- Additional funding for clerks' offices.
- Information that allows lawmakers to more effectively set public policy.

- Critical and timely crime data to protect the safety of the public and law enforcement officers throughout Georgia.

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

Following are some of the highlights from FY 2015:

- Celebrated 20th anniversary by publishing and distributing a history of the Authority, entitled *For the Record: The Unique Success Story of the GSCCCA*. The book permanently records the early battles, the on-going development and implementation of a myriad of projects, and the ultimate success story of the Authority, and memorializes the vision, inspiration and actions of individuals who worked tirelessly and collectively to achieve what many believed was not possible. *For the Record* was dedicated to the memory of long-time executive director David Williams. The book was presented to Superior Court clerks at their Spring Conference in April, and will be given to a variety of other constituencies throughout the year.
- Administered the re-opened **Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project** to complete the deed indexing for all incomplete indexing and imaging for the year 1992 so as to move the inclusive range of deed data back to 1992 for all counties. In FY 2015, over 15,000 additional deed instruments were added to the system under this program.
- Added over 242,000 deed and 16,500 plat instruments through the **County-Funded Historical Deed, Lien and Plat Re-Indexing Project**, for a total of over 925,000 additional instruments in production since the program was implemented in 2013. As a result of this project, the public has access to additional real estate information at no additional cost to the Authority, and clerks' offices have access to additional resources through print image fees initiated through the Authority's website. Thirty-seven counties are now participating in the program.
- Secured the **Certificate of Registration** TX 7-982-865 from the United States Copyright Office, Register of Copyrights, for the "*Group Registration for the Automated Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority Georgia Statewide Index Search Database."* This registered copyright provides additional security and protection for the GSCCCA systems, data, and images from unauthorized uses or abuse.
- Developed and secured **GSCCCA Image Agreements** with each of the 159 clerks of Superior Court relating to image transmission, use and financial obligations. These agreements allow for a transparent process to all parties and help insure that the clerk is in control of helping to maximize the benefits to their office and/or county.
- Expanded protection for **MyVault Online Archive Service** to include a second remote storage site in Colorado. With this expansion, MyVault provides additional protection by now storing archived data in three geographically unique locations: on the local appliance, offsite in Atlanta, and offsite in Colorado.

- Increased the number of **Premium Search accounts** by over 15**%** for a fiscal year-end total of **2,649 accounts**. Launched in 2012, this premium account allows users to search by property address as well as land lot making it attractive to many groups including appraisers and realtors. These accounts represent approximately **$798,000** in projected annual revenue, and **over $1.9 million** in additional revenue since the Premium Search account was launched. These numbers are expected to grow in the coming years as the number of Premium Search accounts increases.
- Published **iPad Map Search application**, providing 24/7 access to valuable real estate information through an additional device, and updated mobile application to support iOS 8, larger screens, and to improve functionality. The Authority also increased addresses searchable in the Clerks' Authority Map Search application by nearly 168,000 properties for a fiscal year-end total of **over 2 million** addresses, making the Map Search app even more valuable.
- Rewrote and published the **UCC Training online course** to reflect new legislative changes. As part of the new program, a self-check section was added to test users' knowledge.
- Increased our **redaction processing capacity** from 200 thousand images each month to 1 million images each month as part of continued redaction efforts. Additionally, the Authority created an on-demand redaction process for real estate and UCC images, and added an image reporting function to our image viewers so customers can report issues with any image on our site.
- Added the option to create a **Promo Account** on www.gsccca.org. This new option increased the Authority's subscriber base by allowing eligible individuals to "test drive" our website for a limited time, including access to Premium Search features. During the promotional period, Promo Account users have the option to upgrade to a recurring monthly subscriber account.
- Upgraded our **core SQL Server** from SQL Server 2000 to 2008. This core server is where our most critical databases reside, including those databases that ensure availability of the website and our imaging system. The deployment required extensive database, application, and website testing. This upgrade brought the database to a more current version, which is critical to support, and also gave us access to additional features and functionality.
- Installed **new version of ScanSend** in 55 remaining counties to complete the state. ScanSend 3.1 is now active in all 159 counties, as well as the Authority Notary Department, and is installed on 726 workstations in the counties. This was necessary to ensure all counties were using the most up-to-date version of ScanSend available, as ScanSend 2 went "end of life" in February 2015. Completing the upgrade in all counties has a tremendous impact on our server environment and allows for significant upgrades in the future that were not possible due to legacy equipment required by the older ScanSend version.
- Maintained a compliance rate of close to **100%** for all courts through a dedicated and consistent notification process by the Fines & Fees Division.
- Restored over **180 GBs of data** for 12 counties through the Authority's **MyVault Online Archive Service** in FY 2015. Currently, **131 counties** participate in the program with 15 counties added this fiscal year and 14 more pursuing enrollment. The statistics continue to stagger with the online vault protecting **nearly 500 million** files totaling more than **55 TBs** of live data.

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 two decades.

Following are some of the highlights from FY 2015:

- Added nearly **11 million** images to the system this fiscal year for a June 30, 2015 total of over **230 million** images.
- Had over **368 million** page views and over **1 million** unique visitors to www.gsccca.org. The public accessed the Authority's invaluable data via the Internet over **4.6 million times** from 198 countries this past fiscal year.
- Upgraded **467** Regular subscriber accounts to Premium Search accounts for a total of **2,649** Premium Search accounts. The number of total active monthly subscribers to www.gsccca.org was **14,796** as of June 30, 2015.
- Remitted to clerks' offices nearly **$777,000** for deed images this fiscal year and over **$13 million** for deed images since the beginning of the project.
- Returned nearly **$5 million** to clerks' offices for prints ($.50 per print) off the Authority website and **$41 million** for prints since the Authority was established.
- Ordered, processed and shipped a total of **1,269 pieces of new equipment** to clerks' offices including CPUs, monitors, servers, laptops and scanners. The Authority has provided over **23,600** pieces of new equipment to clerks' offices since opening its doors in 1995.
- Deployed **710 pieces of new equipment** (526 computers, 130 monitors and 54 scanners) to 54 Superior Court clerk offices to replace depreciated equipment as part of the Statewide Computer Replacement Project for all 159 counties.
- Electronically transmitted to the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC), a division of the GBI, over **38,000 Protective Orders** indexed by clerks.
- Electronically transmitted to GCIC over **245,000 records** of criminal court dispositions from various courts in Georgia for the purpose of compiling criminal histories and background checks.
- Received over **18,000 calls** and over **8,100 email requests** to HelpDesk.
- Increased participation in **Notary Online** to **125 counties.**
- Maintained the **statewide notary database** (A statewide total of **40,801 notary commissions** were issued by clerks of Superior Court and then submitted to the Authority for inclusion in the statewide database**.)** and issued **29,263 apostilles**. (Apostille documents originated in 137 different Georgia counties to be used in 81 different countries.) In FY 2015, the Notary Division served over **8,700 walk-in customers**, processed **3,567 mail-in orders,** and answered **7,985 phone calls.**
- Backed up over **887 TBs of data**, the equivalent of backing up the printed collection of the U.S. Library of Congress about 88 times!
- Collected and disbursed approximately **$91.1 million** in court fees.
- Conducted **68** classroom training sessions, webinars and one-on-one programs on various subjects, in addition to offering five online training courses.

- Indexed **224,531** UCCs and conducted **7,092** Certified Searches for FY 2015. Since the project's inception in 1995, the Authority has indexed nearly **5.4 million** UCCs and conducted over **230,000** Certified Searches.
- Submitted **818** rolls of archival-quality microfilm to State Archives for real estate deed books containing nearly **4.5 million** pages. **156** counties participate in the Authority's Microfilm Project, offered free-of-charge to clerks of Superior Court.
- Blocked almost **2.2 million** spam and virus-laden emails. This amounts to over 86% of all incoming email.

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 how integral our products have become to their business. From real estate records and lending information to active notaries and court fines and fees, the GSCCCA enables convenient access to invaluable information helping everyday Georgians and giving the business community innovative tools for making their work more efficient and effective.

As we enter our third decade of service, we celebrate our record of success and commitment to continuous innovation, but stand ready to face the challenges of the future. Our environment will continue to evolve and change, and we will continue to preemptively adapt, and, as we have in the past, respond through innovation in our projects while maintaining sound financial results. We are committed to remaining entrepreneurial and strategic, and positioning the Authority for continued preeminence.

Our productivity and success are no accident, but rather the result of the outstanding and prudent leadership of our actively engaged Board who informs and strengthens our business, the effort, skill and dedication of our professional staff who remain vested and fully engaged in our organization's mission, and the continuing support of 159 clerks of Superior Court and their willingness to work together for the good of all clerks and the State of Georgia. The Authority is in good hands and poised to meet the challenges ahead and continue our stellar record of innovation for decades to come.

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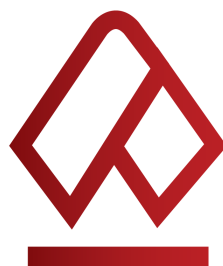
Information about www.gsccca.org

The Authority's website, www.gsccca.org, allows centralized, online searches of data from Georgia's 159 counties giving the public unprecedented access to valuable information including UCC financing statements, real estate deeds, liens, plats and maps, PT-61s, and more. Free access to this information is available during regular business hours through public search terminals installed 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 accessed the Authority's invaluable data via the Internet nearly 4.6 million times from 198 countries in FY 2015. Information that previously required physical trips to county courthouses to retrieve can now be gained from the convenience of one's home or office through the Authority website saving Georgia citizens and businesses an unquantifiable amount of time and money every year.

Website Statistics for FY 2015

> ➢ Images added to the system: **10.9 million**
> ➢ Sessions: **4.6 million**
> ➢ Data transmitted: **8.4 TBs**
> ➢ Page views: **368 million**
> ➢ Unique visitors: **1.03 million**
> ➢ Percentage of visitors who were new this year: **20.94%**
> ➢ Average page views per visit: **33**
> ➢ Average visit duration: **13:27 minutes**
> ➢ Number of countries that visited: **198**
> ➢ Top countries: U.S., India, Philippines, China, and Canada
> ➢ Top browsers: 57.37% of all visitors use Internet Explorer; 87.14% of these visitors use IE 8 or higher. 26.04% of all visitors use Google Chrome, and 12.65% use Firefox.

In 2013, the Authority completely redesigned www.gsccca.org in an effort to better serve its customers and to capitalize in the digital space on the value of its data. The success of the redesigned website has been measured by increased subscribers, better organization of information, improved and easier user experience, and positive customer feedback.

With the volume and diversity of information contained in the website and the variety of audiences that it serves, the Authority wants to ensure that each visitor is provided a user-centric experience that is tailored to his or her needs … whether the visitor is a clerk of court, a real estate professional, a notary public, or a property lawyer. As web users evolve and their needs and devices change, it is more important than ever for online services to grow and expand their online presence. And with over a million annual visitors to www.gsccca.org, the Authority believes that it is critical for its site to be clear, responsive and easy-to-use for its customers, and will continue to look at ways to improve the user experience.

Website Subscribers

> ➢ Total (Regular + Premium Search) monthly subscribers as of 6/30/15: **14,796**
> ➢ Regular monthly subscribers as of 6/30/15: **12,147**
> ➢ Premium Search monthly subscribers as of 6/30/15: **2,649**

- Percentage increase in Premium Search accounts for FY 2015: **15.6%**
- Upgraded from regular subscriber accounts to Premium Search accounts: **467**
- Projected annual revenue from Premium Search accounts: nearly **$798,000**
- Additional revenue generated from Premium accounts since inception: **over $1.9 million**
- Single-use subscribers added during fiscal year: **18,306**

Monthly Subscribers (thousands)

Year	Value
1999	0.2
2001	1.9
2003	4.5
2005	11.3
2007	13.3
2009	12.8
2011	14.1
2013	15.0
2015	14.8

Legend: Basic, Premium

Since 1999, website subscriptions have increased dramatically, clear evidence of the Authority's growth and the growing value of its statewide indexes. Beyond the numbers, though, the Authority gauges its success and relevance on the response and feedback from its customers and how integral the Authority's website and databases have become to their businesses.

When interviewed for the Authority's recently published book on its history, Scott Swafford, chief credit officer at United Bank in Barnesville, spoke of the website's ease of navigation as one of the many benefits. Having used the system for more than ten years to research UCCs, deed records, and more, he notes that the bank's entire lending force and their assistants now access the site daily as well. Read his comments below.

> *"The GSCCCA's website is an efficient tool for those in the banking industry. It also has made banks more independent. We can do our own research instead of having to hire an attorney or another party to do the research for us. It gives us the ability to do our jobs more effectively, and it's a system that the clerks should be very proud of."*

Images Added to Website

Each year, millions of images are added to www.gsccca.org making it an even more valuable resource to our customers. During FY 2015, nearly **11 million** images were added to the system for a fiscal year-end total of over **230 million images**. See the chart and bar graph below for more details.

	Images Added in FY 2015	Total Images 6/30/15
Deeds	8,742,312	201,337,404
Liens	1,421,321	15,825,038
Plats	90,788	929,992
UCCs	298,113	7,199,188
PT-61s	388,770	4,783,944
Total	**10,941,304**	**230,075,566**

Total Images in System (millions)
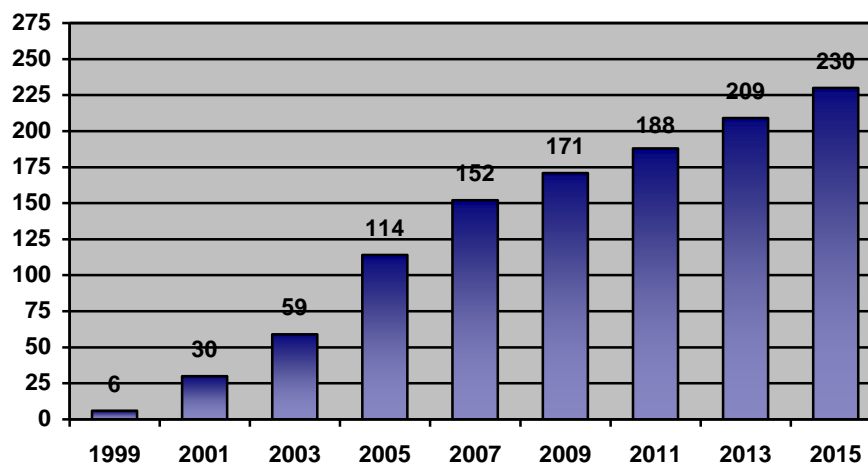
Website Reliability & Security

The Authority places a high priority on providing its subscribers reliable, 24/7 service. Soon after opening, it was realized that any web-based reporting system had points where system failures could occur. In response, the Authority began distributing thousands of PCs, scanners and other equipment to Georgia's 159 counties – over **23,600 pieces of new equipment** since opening its doors in 1995 – to ensure the quality of their equipment. The Authority systematically upgraded its network service and main data center, and continually takes preventive action to avoid service interruptions. Despite growth of 200 subscribers in 1999 to nearly **15,000 subscribers** today, **over 368 million page views** in FY 2015, and **over 230 million images** online, the Authority has virtually eliminated "downtime." Whether a user searches the records after lunch on Wednesday or at 3:00 a.m. on Sunday morning, the Authority's database servers provide the search results in seconds.

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. In fact, the Authority routinely operates from its remote data center during scheduled maintenance in order to prevent users from experiencing downtime during necessary maintenance.

As important, the Authority takes the security of its websites very seriously and constantly evaluates its practices against current standards and industry best practices. If an issue is identified, the IT staff takes appropriate actions to resolve it immediately. See the following comments from Jeff Prater, senior information management specialist with AgGeorgia Farm Credit:

> *"Thanks for the update. I'm glad to see you guys took my concerns seriously and implemented them in a timely manner. If I ever notice any bugs/concerns with your website, I will most definitely let you know. (Haven't found any lately – knock on wood!) You have created a very nice, clean, easy-to-use website and it pleases me to know you are constantly improving it. Thanks again and have a great day!"*

The Authority values its customers and recognizes that their input serves to make our systems cleaner and better. In FY 2015, the Authority added an image reporting function to our image viewers so customers can quickly and easily report issues with any image on our site. Whether it's suggesting an additional feature to a particular program or reporting on a problem with an image, customer feedback – good or bad – is valued and encouraged. The Authority enhances its programs and upgrades its systems regularly, and proudly incorporates customer feedback and suggestions into our products and technical decisions.

Financial Overview

The Authority receives no appropriated funds from the legislature of the State of Georgia. Its primary source of funding is through the real estate deed fee. (The Authority receives a $5 fee for every deed filed with a Superior Court clerk.) These fees, in addition to subscription fees for access to the Authority's statewide indexes, provide the majority of the funding to operate many of the Authority's programs.

The financial condition of the Authority remained stable during FY 2015 even though overall revenues were slightly off budget, driven primarily by an anemic recovery in the housing market. The Authority was able to come in near budgeted bottom line for FY 2015 due in part to aggressively managing project and administrative costs and costs associated with the reopening of the Authority-sponsored 1992 Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project not coming to fruition. At the time of this report, there is uncertainty as to the bottom line financial impact of GASB 68 related to funding the State Retirement Plan. GASB (Governmental Accounting Standards Board) 68 is an accounting pronouncement issued by GASB governing the accounting and financial reporting for pensions. The Employees' Retirement System of Georgia is currently calculating the obligation for each state entity which should be communicated around June 30, 2015. It is believed that there will be no cash impact to the Authority and some nominal impact to expenses for FY 2015. While current trends in deed fee revenues remain stagnant, the Authority staff is optimistic that the organization will be well prepared to respond quickly to the appropriate opportunities as economic conditions improve.

FY 2014 Year-end Audit Completed by Mauldin & Jenkins

➢ Received an unqualified "clean" opinion from Mauldin & Jenkins for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2014 audit.
➢ No audit adjustments were proposed by the auditors.
➢ Coordinated all requests with auditors from Mauldin & Jenkins & 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 95%.
➢ 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.
➢ Provided monthly image agreement statements to Superior Court clerks.

Accounting Information:

➢ Total active subscriber accounts as of June 30, 2015: **14,796**
This includes **2,649** Premium Search accounts.
➢ Average monthly direct access subscription revenue during FY 2015: **$207,214**
➢ Single-use subscription revenue during FY 2015: **$92,426**
➢ Number of monthly check payments processed during FY 2015: **16,045**
➢ Purchased **$465,230** of equipment for counties during FY 2015 as part of the Authority's Statewide Computer Replacement Project.
➢ Deed image fees remitted to clerks' offices during FY 2015: **$776,861**
➢ Deed image fees remitted to clerks' offices since inception of project: **$13 million**
➢ Amount returned to clerks' offices for prints ($.50 per print) off the Authority website during FY 2015: **$4,962,481**
➢ Amount returned to clerks' offices for prints ($.50 per print) off the Authority website since inception of project: **$41 million**.

The FY 2015 break-down for prints is as follows:

     o Deeds $4,344,761
     o Liens $250,427
     o Plats $192,563
     o PT-61s $49,850
     o UCCs $124,880

Administrative

- Secured the **Certificate of Registration** TX 7-982-865 from the United States Copyright Office, Register of Copyrights, for the "*Group Registration for the Automated Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority Georgia Statewide Index Search Database.*" This registered copyright provides additional security and protection for the GSCCCA systems, data and images from unauthorized uses or abuse.

- Developed and secured **GSCCCA Image Agreements** with each of the 159 clerks of Superior Court relating to image transmission, use, and financial obligations. These agreements clearly state the specific arrangement with each clerk surrounding deed, lien and plat images; afford legal protection for Superior Court clerks and the Authority; and help insure that the clerk is in control of helping to maximize the benefits to their office and/or county. The Authority's accounting department developed and monitors the financial transactions relating to each agreement on a continuing basis.

- Continued an **Executive Document Management Imaging Program** providing for searchable electronic documents used by management on a recurring basis. Relevant Attorney General Opinions and other administrative and management documents have been scanned, keyword, topic/subject metadata indexed and made available to Authority management. This project is ongoing.

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 165,000).
- Issuance of apostilles and notary certifications. (An apostille is an international certification of a public document for use in another Hague Convention country.)

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.

Through the Authority website, the public has free access to search Georgia's notary database. An individual desiring to be a notary public in the State of Georgia can obtain an application from the clerk of

Superior Court of the county in which he/she resides. 125 or 78% of Georgia counties are now providing web-based, notary applications using software developed by the Authority.

Serving a vital role in international commerce, the Authority was recognized in 1998 by the U.S. State Department as the only agency, outside of a Secretary of State office, to issue apostilles. The Apostille Treaty is an international treaty (of which the U.S. is a signatory member) that provides for a simplified method of authenticating documents for use in other countries. It certifies the origin (i.e. country) of the public document by authenticating the signature and seal of the issuing public official. Currently, 108 countries participate in the Apostille Treaty, and approximately 4 million apostilles are issued worldwide on an annual basis.

During FY 2015, the Authority's Notary Division:

➢ Maintained the statewide notary database. A statewide total of **40,801 notary commissions** were issued by clerks of Superior Court and then submitted to the Authority for inclusion in the statewide database**.**
➢ Issued **29,263 apostilles** destined for 81 different countries. These documents originated in 137 different Georgia counties.
➢ Issued **180 certificates of authority**, primarily for use in Puerto Rico.
➢ Served **8,700 walk-in customers**; processed **3,567 mail-in requests**; and answered **7,985 phone calls.**
➢ Continued promoting Notary Online with **84%** of notary applications submitted electronically to the Authority via the Notary Online application system. Participation in the program increased to **125 counties.**
➢ Added 2 new counties (for a total of 65) who use **scanned clerk signatures** making commission generation faster and more efficient.
➢ Sold **1,100 Notary Handbooks**, an increase of 10% from the previous year. The increase is credited to a feature added last year to the Authority website to allow ordering the Notary Handbook online.
➢ Conducted **20 training classes** for notaries public at 15 locations around the state with nearly 700 people attending.
➢ Maintained **Notary Online training course** with nearly **8,800** people participating in the training and nearly **3,600** taking the Notary Public Final Exam. A new feature was added this year that allows users who take the Notary Public Final Exam to see which questions they missed.
➢ Conducted a presentation on notary public law and the role of the notary for the Association of Paralegals of Georgia.
➢ Monitored bill to rewrite **Georgia's notary law**. The Authority board appointed a committee comprised of board members, industry experts and Authority staff, and charged the group with making the revisions to notary law. The goal is to modernize Georgia's notary law and to bring it in line with the Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts as promulgated by the Uniform Law Commission. A bill based on the group's work was introduced during the 2015 legislative session but failed to gain passage.

Fines & Fees Division

Legislation was passed in 2004 which established a new funding mechanism for indigent defense. The Authority was mandated to collect, account for, and disburse to the state treasury and/or beneficiary funds the new and existing fees being collected. Additionally, 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. Court fines and fees had been added incrementally over many years and little accountability or standards for their collection existed.

To fulfill its new obligations, the Authority established a new division to handle the mandates of the legislation and promulgated rules and regulations to enable the collection of new and existing fees. Information now provided by the Authority's Fines & Fees Division allows policy makers to make more informed decisions as they formulate future legislation.

In 2006, the Authority developed and began offering a Fines & Fees Online Training course to help educate court personnel, private probation companies, clerks and their staff on the reporting of fines and fees and how to comply with the law. The online course enables the different courts and others with an interest in the court fee system to train their personnel at a time of their choosing and save travel costs. The course is updated annually to include legislative changes.

Since being entrusted to oversee court fines and fees, the Authority has:

➢ Developed a website, www.courttrax.org, to support court compliance with the law.
➢ Created uniform reports.
➢ Provided statewide training.
➢ Issued guidance to all parties affected.
➢ Created an online calculator to help courts properly calculate and assess fines and fees.
➢ Developed internal accounting systems to support the indexing and processing of these fees to ensure that collection data can be timely and accurately made available to the public.

In FY 2015, the Authority's Fines & Fees Division:

➢ Collected and disbursed approximately **$91.1 million in court fees**.
➢ Performed bi-annual 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 over **28,000 monthly reports** submitted by reporting entities.
➢ Continued to hold operational costs to well under the statutory limit of $500,000.
➢ Implemented improvements to the Fines & Fees website to help prevent data entry errors as well as ensure the continued proper operation of the system.
➢ Improved the "Trust Fund Interest" forms by automatically directing users to the correct form based on their login credentials rather than requiring them to choose.
➢ Added new internal reports to facilitate common requests for indexed data.

Through its efforts to provide accountability and uniformity to the collection of court fees, the Authority continues its leadership in providing timely and accurate court fee 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. When the Authority began operation on January 1, 1995, 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.

Personal property is recorded as a UCC (Uniform Commercial Code) Financing Statement. The purpose of this recording is to provide public notice that personal properties have outstanding liens against them. Under the Authority's system, a secured party need only file in one county to receive statewide notification of his lien position. When a filing is presented to a local clerk of Superior Court, the clerk has 24 hours in which to transmit the UCC document to the Authority and the Authority then has 24 hours in which to add the filing to the statewide index. Before 1995, it was necessary to file in all 159 Georgia counties to receive statewide notification. The Authority's central index provides secured parties with greater protection while saving them both time and money.

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. Since the pilot project began in May 2009, over **188,000 UCCs** have been electronically filed, and as of June 30, 2015, **88 counties** participate in the program.

During FY 2015, the Authority:

➤ Rewrote and published the **UCC Online Training course** to reflect new legislative changes. As part of the new program, a self-check section was added to test users' knowledge.
➤ Indexed and added to www.gsccca.org **224,531 UCCs.**
➤ Conducted **7,092 Certified Searches**.
➤ Continued promoting **UCC eFile** with nearly **69,000 UCCs** electronically filed during FY 2015 and **88 counties** now participating in the program, with **10** of those activated this fiscal year.
➤ Continued the redaction of SSNs listed on UCCs.
➤ Created **on-demand redaction process** for UCC images and processed over **16,000 images**. This process schedules an image for immediate redaction when a customer tries to view a quarantined image. If successful, the image is presented to the customer, usually within 2 to 5 minutes, sometimes less. If the redaction is not successful, the Authority schedules it for priority review by our Customer Support team who continuously check the queue in an effort to make images available to the public as quickly as possible.
➤ Created **UCC Historical Redaction Service** and **UCC Historical Redaction Manager** to facilitate redaction of historical UCC images. The Authority processed over **2.1 million** historical UCC images through redaction, and of those images, performed redactions on nearly 479,000.
➤ Conducted **webinars** for Superior Court clerk personnel, banks and the legal community on UCC legislative changes.
➤ Fielded numerous UCC inquiries supporting staff, clerks' offices, the banking industry, private law offices, and the general public.

Since opening in 1995, the Authority has indexed and added to its database nearly **5.4 million** UCCs (approximately 22,000 per month) and conducted over **230,000** Certified Searches. The Authority provides free, statewide access to its valuable database through search terminals installed in all clerk of Superior Court offices. Additionally, the system allows internet access by subscription for parties desiring the convenience of searching the indexes from their office or home.

Real Estate Deed Project

In 1996, legislation was passed in Georgia that required the Authority to develop a consolidated database of the official real and personal property records of all 159 clerks of Superior Court. 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 24/7 access to official land records through the Authority's website, www.gsccca.org (by subscription).

The Real Estate Deed Project contains the following elements:

➢ Computer access to real property deed indexes of all 159 counties.
➢ Integration of all 159 counties into an online statewide system.
➢ Implementation of standards for data files, fields, and index data.
➢ Standardization of all printed indexes statewide.

Since passage of the enabling legislation, the Authority developed and implemented the only statewide intranet network in state government. The system started collecting data from all 159 clerks of Superior Court on January 1, 1999. This data includes the name of the seller and buyer of property, the location of the property, the book and page where the actual deed or property record is filed in the county, and cross index information to other related records. Searches can be performed by name, book and page, property location, or instrument type, and can be done by county, region (i.e. a county plus all counties that border it) or statewide. Additionally, images of the corresponding records are constantly being added to the online system.

The Authority added over **8.7 million deed images** to the system during FY 2015 to bring the total to **over 201 million deed images** in the system. Revenue generated from the printing of images from the system is either returned to the clerk's office where the original document resides or used for the benefit of that clerk's office. Since launching the project, the Authority has paid Georgia clerks' offices over **$13 million** for deed images (almost **$777,000** in FY 2015) and over **$39 million** for real estate-related prints including liens, plats and PT-61s made from www.gsccca.org (over **$4.8 million** in FY 2015). This money, over **$52 million**, is an important source of additional funding for Georgia's clerks of Superior Court.

In 2004, a new feature was added to the system: access to Real Estate Transfer Tax 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 **Real Estate eRecording** statewide. Clerks retain control of the process, and their participation is completely voluntary and at no charge. During FY 2015, **20,138 real estate documents** were eFiled in **18 participating counties**, and over **44,000 documents** have been eFiled since the inception of the program.

Below is a summary of efforts during FY 2015 to support and enhance the Real Estate Deed Project:

➢ Made improvements to processes that monitor incoming real estate data for completeness and accuracy. These processes help ensure incoming data stays synchronized with local courthouse data and create a complete record of real estate document filings.

➢ 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 Records for the State of Georgia*. This is intended to 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. Tens of thousands of real estate, lien and plat data records and images have been reviewed throughout the fiscal year through automated and manual processes.

➢ Continued the administration of the Authority's "Indexing Certification Test" resulting in clerks, deputies, and private vendor personnel becoming certified by the Authority to index real and personal property records in accordance with the *Indexing Standards for Real and Personal Property Records for the State of Georgia*. Thus far, 43 active clerks and deputies from 19 counties have completed the Indexing Certification.

➢ Concluded 25 clerks' office Docket Surveys in FY 2015 resulting in the issuance of official historical indexing guidance to be followed when indexing historical deed, lien and plat instruments. The comprehensive surveys and guidance provide direction to indexers in order to avoid unintentional errors relating to the various book naming conventions and methodologies in use throughout the state. To date, 66 docket surveys have been submitted for staff review and analysis.

➢ Continued efforts to certify the land record recording computer systems of private vendors that are used by clerks for compatibility and compliance with the Authority's data collection system and the Indexing Standards. One new vendor achieved certification for their land record recording system in FY 2015.

➢ Created on-demand redaction process for real estate images and processed over 9,800 images. This process schedules an image for immediate redaction when a customer tries to view a quarantined image. If successful, the image is presented to the customer, usually within 2 to 5 minutes, sometimes less. If the redaction is not successful, the Authority schedules it for priority review by our Customer Support team who continuously check the queue in an effort to make images available to the public as quickly as possible.

➢ Conducted training classes and offered online courses to train clerks and staff across Georgia on the *Indexing Standards for Real and Personal Property Records for the State of Georgia*.

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

➢ Provided ongoing telephone and email 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 Records for the State of Georgia*.

Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project

In 2002, the Authority launched the Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project with the goal of adding land records from Georgia's 159 counties that were filed before the central collection system was implemented to the Authority's online system. (Gwinnett County was the first county to accomplish this feat with a "good-from" date of 1871.) To support this project, the Authority developed further Indexing Standards guidance to help address the challenge of applying current indexing standards to real and personal property records that were locally recorded before the advent of statewide indexing standards.

The project is complex and challenging as the Authority requires the complete re-indexing of these older land records in conformance with current Indexing Standards so as to create a cohesive record with current data in the system. All indexers performing this re-indexing must pass a Deed Indexing Certification Test developed by the Authority, 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 Authority's website for public access.

The current statewide "good-from" date is 1993. The cost to add each additional historical year to the database is approximately $3.6 to 4.5 million dollars. The project, previously suspended for lack of discretionary funds resulting from the recent recession, was re-opened in FY 2014, and a formal program was launched to complete the deed indexing project for all incomplete indexing and imaging for the year 1992 so as to move the inclusive range of deed data back to 1992 for all counties. Agreements were put in place with authorized vendors chosen by the clerks for the completion of the 1992 data. All twenty-four participant clerks' offices and their chosen vendors cooperated with the preparation of formal docket surveys which are reviewed by the Authority for the issuance of indexing and imaging guidance so as to minimize conflicting data and image issues as the project moves forward.

In FY 2015, over 15,000 additional deed instruments were added to the system under this program. Although not fully recovered to its revenue levels of 2007, the Authority is optimistic that it will be able to open the project back to further years in the future.

County-Funded Historical Deed, Lien and Plat Re-Indexing Project

In 2013, the Authority developed and implemented a *County-Funded* Historical Deed, Lien and Plat Re-Indexing Project allowing clerks on their own initiative and funding to image and re-index their property records for inclusion in the Authority's system. Thirty-seven counties are now participating in this program which allows additional index and image data for deeds, liens, and plats at the clerk's option. Participation is completely voluntary and at the election of the clerk of Superior Court. Highlights of the program include the documentation and comprehensive analysis of all county books and dockets along with the issuance of indexing guidance for the prevention of unintentional book naming conflicts. The result of the process provides an indexing roadmap for all future historical indexing for the clerk as well as awareness of the importance of consistency for current indexing.

In FY 2013, in just a few months of operation, over 103,000 deed instruments from four participating counties were added to the Authority's website. In FY 2014, over 435,000 additional deed and plat instruments (index and associated images) were added from participating counties. And in FY 2015, an additional **258,000 instruments** were added to the system, for a total of **over 925,000 additional instruments** since the program began. As a result of this project, the public has access to additional real

estate information at no additional cost to the Authority, and clerks' offices have the opportunity to generate additional funding through print image fees initiated through the Authority's website. Many more instruments are expected to be added in the future.

Lien, Plat & Map Project

When H.B. 1582 took effect in January of 2004, in addition to "grantor/grantee" deed 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 Re-Indexing 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 (DOR) to provide a more efficient process for filing a Real Estate Transfer Tax 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 online. The program provides for the more efficient transfer of tax data to the DOR and local tax assessors via weekly electronic reports.

With the 2012 launch of the Authority's Premium Search account (see more information below), users have additional search and view options related to PT-61 data. Last year, the Authority integrated PT-61 form generation with the Real Estate eFiling process. By combining these two separate systems, eFilers save time and records are filed faster and more accurately.

During FY 2015, the Authority:

➢ Added **388,770** PT-61 filings to the system for a total of nearly **4.8 million** PT-61 records. These filings were accepted and activated by the counties and then sent to the Georgia Department of Revenue and Georgia Department of Audits.

➢ Returned nearly **$50,000** to clerks' offices for prints ($.50 per print) off the Authority website related to the PT-61 Project.
➢ Added nearly **168,000** properties during FY 2015 for a total of over 2 million searchable addresses.

Premium Search Account

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 allows 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.
➢ Search real estate by county and instrument type.
➢ Page through documents.
➢ View data in a variety of new options.
➢ Access data anytime and anywhere through mobile application using GPS data. (See more information below on the Clerks' Authority Map Search Application.)

During FY 2015, the Authority increased the number of Premium Search accounts by **15.6%** for a fiscal year-end total of **2,649 accounts**. These accounts represent approximately **$798,000** in projected annual revenue, and **over $1.9 million** in additional revenue since the account was launched. These numbers will grow in the coming years as the Authority continues to market the Premium Search account.

The Premium Search account, which includes the Clerks' Authority Map Search Application, is a valuable tool, and helps realtors, bankers, attorneys, surveyors, appraisers, and other members of the business company do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. See the comments below from real estate appraiser Bruce Hill who has used the Authority's website for years.

> *"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. If you are a business professional and you are not a Premium member, you are missing out on valuable information, available right from your desktop. The GSCCCA is meeting the needs of various industries that rely on online data."*

Clerks' Authority Map Search Application

Launched in 2012, the Clerks' Authority Map Search Application provides the most up-to-date and accurate real estate sales data in the state of Georgia, and is the only mobile app that provides real-time sales data on the official source of property transfer tax data in Georgia. Real estate professionals, and all other consumers, now have 24/7 access to the most comprehensive real estate information anywhere in Georgia right at their fingertips from their smartphones or tablets.

The Map Search application has received rave reviews from users since launching, and is available free-of-charge to Premium Search account subscribers. The application is available for Android devices and iPhones and, this past fiscal year, the Authority published the iPad Map Search application. During FY

2015, the Authority also updated the mobile application to support iOS 8 and larger screens and to improve functionality. Additionally, nearly 168,000 addresses were added for a fiscal year-end total of over 2 million searchable addresses in the application.

With the Map Search app, consumers can access sales information and supporting property details directly from the Superior Court clerk's office. Features include:

- ➢ Real-time sales information
- ➢ Sales history
- ➢ Official county records
- ➢ Deeds
- ➢ Liens
- ➢ Plats

Data Archive Project (MyVault Online Archive Service)

In 2007, the Authority began offering **MyVault Online 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 an automated online data protection service provided free-of-charge to all clerks of Superior Court, but to participate, the clerk must agree to include all real estate data in the nightly backup. The service is managed and monitored daily using live reporting tools and software analytics to ensure that the nightly archive job runs smoothly and successfully.

For the last eight years, MyVault has been providing remote storage and protection for Superior Court clerks' digital information at a secure data center in Atlanta. During FY 2015, MyVault expanded its service to include a second remote storage site in Colorado. With this expansion, MyVault now stores archived data in three geographically unique locations: on the local appliance, offsite in Atlanta, and offsite in Colorado.

MyVault is currently protecting nearly **500 million files** totaling more than **55 TBs of live data**, available for recovery in the event of a disaster. The Authority performs proactive data auditing to reduce the amount of redundant data that must be stored. 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. Through MyVault, all real estate data in participating counties can be archived and protected, regardless of filing date.

Below are statistics and other information on MyVault for FY 2015:

- ➢ 131 counties currently participate in MyVault with 15 added during FY 2015.
- ➢ 14 additional counties are pursuing enrollment.
- ➢ MyVault stores and protects nearly 500 million files totaling more than 55 TBs of live data. 30 TBs of additional data include previous file versions.

- Have received over 60 requests to restore data since the program started and over 1.3 TBs of data have been restored to date. Have received 12 requests in FY 2015 with 180 GBs of data restored during that time.
- Received 12 inquiries since 2009 to restore data from counties that were NOT participating in MyVault; in one case, the impact was substantial. Many of these counties have since enrolled.
- 63% of counties participating are storing less than 150 GBs of data.
- 27% of counties participating are storing between 250 and 750 GBs of data.
- 10% of counties participating are storing over 750 GBs up to multiple TBs of data.
- 16 of 20 metro Atlanta counties are participating.
- Most common reasons for data recovery requests: server failure, human error, and weather events.
- Requests for data recovery have ranged from a single file to an entire volume of data.

Microfilm Project

In addition to the MyVault Online Archive Service, the Authority also manages a Microfilm Project which provides a redundant microfilm back-up of all real estate images for clerks of Superior Court who elect to take advantage of this free project. Initially launched in 1999, the service includes the collection and review of the source images, the production of archive-quality microfilm, and the delivery of the microfilm to the State Archives Center for long-term security. In 2011, the Authority consolidated the process internally (using a single film processor) and added monitoring and control features. This consolidation allowed the Authority to save hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in microfilm production costs.

Following are statistics for the Microfilm Project for FY 2015:

- Participating counties: 156
- Microfilm Pages submitted to State Archives: 4,474,962
- Rolls of microfilm submitted to State Archives: 818

eFile Project

In 2009, the Georgia legislature mandated that the Authority develop rules and regulations related to the electronic filing of documents. Anticipating this need and with the continuing goal of keeping clerks' offices at the forefront of technology, the Authority had spent years prior to this legislative mandate researching, planning, programming, and testing their eFiling program through an extensive pilot project. Essential to the project was developing a platform that was flexible enough for clerks, bankers, attorneys, and the general public to use.

In 2010, the Authority successfully launched **UCC eFile** to the public and began accepting UCC documents for electronic filing. Ten new counties were activated this fiscal year for a current total of **88 participating counties.** Nearly **69,000 UCCs** were electronically filed during FY 2015, and over **188,000 UCCs** have been electronically filed since May 2009 when the pilot project began.

The Authority also launched **Child Support eFile** in 2010 by developing a system that 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, **107 counties** are participating in Child Support eFile with **16** of those activated during FY 2015. Since January 1, 2010, **over 228,500** filings have been accepted, **over 86,500** of those filings during FY 2015.

In 2011, the Authority built a real estate eFiling portal and successfully launched **Real Estate eRecording** statewide. This portal initially allowed filers to use an approved vendor to submit real estate documents on their behalf. Two years later, the Authority extended **Real Estate eRecording** by making it fully accessible to the public through a web interface, further streamlining the eFiling of real estate documents in Georgia. With this added web-based application, users in Georgia, who are eligible to participate in the electronic recording of real estate documents, can access the Authority's website, **efile.gsccca.org,** to file directly with counties from the convenience of their home or office rather than having to travel to the county clerk's office. Clerks retain control of the process, and their participation is completely voluntary and at no charge.

During FY 2015, **20,138** real estate documents were eFiled in **18** participating counties. Since the project's inception in 2011, over **44,000** real estate documents have been eFiled through the Authority's eFile portal.

To support Real Estate eRecording, the Authority developed and published the **www.efileregistry.org** website in 2011. 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. In FY 2015, **161** participants were added to the eFile Registry for a current total of **437 registered participants**. To further support eFile participants, the Authority maintains an eFile User Manual, a guide to assist filers as they navigate within the site and to provide support for technical questions.

From the beginning, the Authority's goal has been to protect the autonomy of Superior Court clerks, improve the technology within their offices, streamline the document-filing process, and give the public access to convenient and effective tools – all at no cost to state or local government. And to add to these benefits, the Authority offers its eFiling service without imposing additional fees above the base filing fee. Today, the Authority's electronic filing portal, efile.gsccca.org, allows for the filing of UCC, real estate, lien, PT-61, civil case, and child support documents, and the list will continue to grow. As thousands of documents are now being eFiled annually, the Authority continues to assess, improve, and streamline the user experience in its ongoing efforts to stay ahead of the curve and provide state-of-the-art services.

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.

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.

During this past fiscal year, the Authority worked with the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia, the Georgia Judicial Council, and GCIC to modify Protective Order forms to comply with new privacy requirements while still ensuring that the forms comply with standards of the National Crime Information Center.

The Georgia Protective Order Registry, accessed by law enforcement through GCIC terminals, displays all Protective Orders and related data. In FY 2015, over **38,000 Protective Orders** were indexed by clerks, and then electronically transmitted 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 transmission of criminal case disposition data from clerks of Superior Court. Legislation passed in 2001 mandated the electronic collection and reporting of final dispositions, and required that clerks of Superior Court 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), a division of the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI), where it is used to populate the GBI's Computerized Criminal History Database. The Authority worked with the clerks of Superior Court case management system vendors to develop transmission standards and protocols.

In FY 2015, over **245,000 records** of criminal court dispositions were electronically transmitted from the various criminal courts in Georgia to the GSCCCA and then forwarded to GCIC for the purpose of compiling criminal histories and background checks. 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 of 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 ensure 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.

Trade Name Registry

Legislation was introduced during the 2014 and 2015 legislative sessions to create a statewide trade name registry to be hosted by the Authority. While trade name registrations would continue to be filed at the county level with the Superior Court clerk, the bill introduced in 2015 mandated that a standardized registration be completed on the GSCCCA website before being filed with the Superior Court clerk. Both years, the bill passed the House and the Senate, but was surprisingly vetoed by the governor.

In anticipation of the bill becoming law, however, the Authority completed substantial work including the following:

- ➤ Created a sophisticated database for tracking and retaining statewide trade name registrations.
- ➤ Created standardized forms that can be completed online and submitted by the clerk of Superior Court for inclusion in the registry. As these forms are completed online, the data can be automatically captured, reducing or eliminating the need for clerks to manually index the registration information.
- ➤ Created a system and the necessary companion standards for sending electronic trade name data to counties that store such information locally.
- ➤ Updated the GSCCCA ScanSend application to allow for transmission of manually scanned trade name registrations.

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 2015. Whether large or small, these activities enable us to meet our goals and grow and innovate in a constantly changing environment.

Development – eFiling & eRecording

After restructuring its entire eFile site two years ago, the Authority continued to make adjustments in order to incorporate customer feedback, improve the user experience, implement new features, and enhance performance and efficiency. Below are some of the changes made during FY 2015:

➤ Offloaded storage of eFiling filing data from the Authority database to file storage. This reduced our database storage requirements and allowed us to keep more historical data of real estate eFilings as well as increase efficiency in troubleshooting issues for vendors and value-added submitters.
➤ Added "Liens" to the Real Estate eRecording document types that can be submitted electronically by third-party vendors.
➤ Updated the eFile "filings dashboard" to sort Book/Page as a "numeric" rather than "alpha" value, resulting in more intuitive sort results.
➤ Improved the eFile and eFile Registry systems by displaying a message that notifies the timeframe for system maintenance so that users can plan accordingly.
➤ Added safeguards to allow filers to keep better track of money in escrow as well as to know when the money is being held and when it is freed for use. The new alert system ensures that filers always know the status of their money in escrow.
➤ Updated our Child Support Import Service to email stakeholders when an eFiling is received by the Authority that has any issues with the data. This allows the Authority as well as AOC to stay on top of any issues before they become a problem.
➤ Continued to see increase in Real Estate eRecording. 20,138 real estate documents were eFiled in FY 2015, for a total of over 44,000 eFiled through the Authority's eFile portal since the program's inception in 2011. Since its launch in 2013, 696 real estate filings have been processed through the Authority's web interface, 551 of those this fiscal year.

Development – eFile Registry

The eFile Registry was developed by the Authority to facilitate the registration, maintenance and verification of real estate eFile participants. The site provides a secure location for housing approved

participants in the eFiling of real estate documents in Georgia. The eFile Registry has been up and running since November of 2011.

Following is data and other information from FY 2015:

- ➤ Added 161 participants to the registry for a total of 437 registered participants.
  - ○ 56 Self Filers (24 new)
  - ○ 142 Submitters (50 new)
  - ○ 239 Trusted Users (87 new)
- ➤ Continued to provide the capability for third-party systems to automatically verify the validity of participant ID numbers in real time.
  - ○ 57,764 queries processed during FY 2015
  - ○ 117,261 queries processed since the eFile Registry opened in November 2011
- ➤ Added the ability for administrators and eFile Registry users to transfer ownership of a participant ID to another valid person.
- ➤ Updated the eFile Registry to help maintain the identity of the owner of an eFile Registry participant number by preventing users from changing the business or organization name after the time of issue.

Development – Website (www.gsccca.org)

After launching a completely redesigned version of www.gsccca.org to rave reviews two years ago, the Authority continues to tweak and improve the site to better serve its customers. Following are some of the changes from FY 2015:

- ➤ Filmed, edited and published monthly "Featured Clerk" videos to website. This improved format, from a solo narrative to a casual conversation/interview, highlights each clerk's personality and continues the Authority's goal of making the website more engaging for users. The Authority shot 15 "Featured Clerk" interviews during FY 2015, for a total of 27 published videos to our website since switching to the video format.
- ➤ Added the option to create a Promo Account on www.gsccca.org. This new option increased the GSCCCA subscriber base by allowing eligible individuals to "test drive" the website for a limited time, including access to Premium Search features. During the promotional period, Promo Account users have the option to upgrade to a recurring monthly subscriber account.
- ➤ Increased our redaction processing capacity from 200,000 images each month to 1 million images each month by acquiring a new multi-core, high-memory server running an upgraded redaction system. The IT staff also created an on-demand redaction process for real estate and UCC images.
- ➤ Created an image reporting system that allows customers to report an issue on any of our publically available images. The reports are saved to a database queue and processed using a new image reporting management site that was created to handle these submissions.
- ➤ Reviewed the www.gsccca.org website, policies and procedures to help ensure security best-practices are followed. Implemented security best-practices for storing and passing passwords, account creation and activation features, password reset procedures, and other security-related clean-up tasks.
- ➤ Improved the display of Thawte SSL and Security Metrics PCI compliance site seals on our website. These seals provide confidence to our users that they can use our site safely and securely.
- ➤ Updated copyright notice across all sites.

Development – Premium Search Account & Map Search Application

- Published iPad Map Search application, providing 24/7 access to valuable real estate information through additional devices.
- Updated mobile application to support iOS 8, larger screens, and to improve functionality.
- Increased addresses searchable in our Premium Account's Map Search application:
  - 167,970 properties were added during FY 2015 for a total of over 2 million searchable addresses.
  - 51,325 unmatched PT-61 addresses were manually indexed during FY 2015 with 36% of those addresses mapped successfully.

Development – Real Estate

- Created Real Estate Historical Redaction Service and Real Estate Historical Redaction Manager to facilitate the redaction of historical deed and lien images.
- Created on-demand redaction process for real estate images and processed over 9,800 images. This process schedules an image for immediate redaction when a customer tries to view a quarantined image. If successful, the image is presented to the customer, usually within 2 to 5 minutes, sometimes less. If the redaction is not successful, the Authority schedules it for priority review by our Customer Support team who continuously check the queue in an effort to make images available to the public as quickly as possible.
- Developed the "Index Data Export" application which allows the GSCCCA to build an export data file of deeds, liens, or plats stored in its consolidated index and provide it to a clerk for their use.
- Identified, corrected, and documented with errata certain lien and plat records determined to be exact duplicates. The GSCCCA errata system allows the database to be corrected while maintaining the search history so that previous results on the incorrect data can be reproduced and verified, if necessary.

Development – UCC Project

- Created monthly UCC bulk image DVDs for clients throughout the year.
- Created UCC Historical Redaction Service and UCC Historical Redaction Manager to facilitate redaction of historical UCC images.
- Created on-demand redaction process for UCC images and processed over 16,000 images. This process schedules an image for immediate redaction when a customer tries to view a quarantined image. If successful, the image is presented to the customer, usually within 2 to 5 minutes, sometimes less. If the redaction is not successful, the Authority schedules it for priority review by our Customer Support team who continuously check the queue in an effort to make images available to the public as quickly as possible.
- Processed over 2.1 million historical UCC images through redaction, and of those images, performed redactions on nearly 479,000.
- Rewrote the UCC tagging application to be a web application.
- Published new UCC Training online course to reflect legislative changes. As part of the new program, a self-check section was added to test user's knowledge.

Development – Offender-Based Tracking Sytem (OBTS)

- Extended the OBTS system to support the "ctnDelete" and "otnInquiry" CCH transaction types. The GSCCCA OBTS system is the interface used by county case management systems to transmit criminal case dispositions to GCIC's (Georgia Crime Information Center) Consolidated Criminal History (CCH) database. The "ctnDelete" transaction removes a charge from the CCH database. The "otnInquiry" transaction is used to request charge information for a given charge from the CCH database.
- Conducted several iterations of hands-on connectivity and data transfer tests with the Georgia Crime Information Center to assist them in their server consolidation project.
- Improved maintainability of the OBTS production and test databases by moving them to a shared server environment.
- Adjusted the "Program Status Report" to operate with the new consolidated OBTS database server.

Development – Other

- Installed new version of ScanSend in 55 remaining counties to complete the state. ScanSend 3.1 is now active in all 159 counties, as well as the Authority Notary Department, and is installed on 726 workstations in the counties. This was necessary to ensure all counties were using the most up-to-date version of ScanSend available, as ScanSend 2 went "end of life" in February 2015. The new version ensures a quicker installation process for counties with an automatic updating feature that integrates seamlessly with the application, integrates troubleshooting and diagnostic tools to help CSRs troubleshoot issues that might arise, allows CSRs to easily set up and update individual installations from an internal website without the need to access users' computers, and is compatible with Windows 7 and Windows 8. Completing the upgrade in all counties has a tremendous impact on our server environment and allows for significant upgrades in the future that were not possible due to legacy equipment required by the older ScanSend version.
- Developed the "Software Matrix" to help management evaluate factors including the underlying technology, operating system, age, third-party dependencies, and overall mission criticalness of applications developed and operated by the GSCCCA. Using the "Software Matrix," management can thoughtfully prioritize development efforts and determine the best use of resources.
- Worked with the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia, the Georgia Judicial Council, and the Georgia Crime Information Center to modify Protective Order forms to comply with new privacy requirements while still ensuring that the forms comply with standards of the National Crime Information Center.
- Added privacy acknowledgement to civil case initiation filing forms to meet new legislative requirements.
- Implemented improvements to the Fines and Fees system to help prevent data entry errors, and improved the "Trust Fund Interest" forms by automatically directing users to the correct form based on their login credentials rather than requiring them to choose.
- Provided new feature that allows users who take the Notary Public Final Exam to see which questions they missed and to manually generate an exam receipt if they do not receive the original.
- Added new features to the Program Status Report (PSR) to provide more value and usability. The PSR is located in the Clerk Resource Center.
- Filmed Superior Court clerk history interviews for the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia to use in an upcoming history project.

<u>**Systems**</u>

- Upgraded our core SQL Server from SQL Server 2000 to 2008. SQL Server is a relational database management system. As a database server, its primary function is to store and retrieve data as requested by other software applications. This core server is where our most critical databases reside, including those databases that ensure availability of the website and our imaging system. The deployment required extensive database, application, and website testing. This upgrade brought the database to a more current version, which is critical to support, and also gave us access to additional features and functionality.
- Upgraded the Offender-Based Tracking System (OBTS) database from SQL Server 2005 to 2008 and migrated it to a newer hardware platform. This was done to support other OBTS development changes, but also allowed us to consolidate resources and stay up-to-date on SQL Server versions.
- Installed new SQL backup software on critical SQL Servers. This allows for easier management of the database backups, ensuring the availability of our data.
- Provided documentation for our SQL Server environment. This is critical to knowledge transfer and sustainability of our systems.
- Assisted development team with eFile system publishes, which included helping with development efforts and optimizing performance of the code before moving into production. This support ensured that the deployments went smoothly and that negative impact to the user was minimized.
- Upgraded the controllers (servers) on the hard drive array. The previous controllers were approaching "end of life," so they needed to be upgraded to ensure maximum performance, reliability, and ease of support. The controllers manage the storage array and its 120 hard drives with a total storage capacity of 67 TBs. The storage array handles all of the production data and is one of the single most important pieces of equipment owned by the GSCCCA.
- Consolidated and migrated 18 Active Directory servers to 10. This simplified the environment and decreased licensing costs. An Active Directory server acts as a database for all user and computer accounts. During the consolidation and migration, we also upgraded from the Windows Server 2003 Operating System (OS) to the Windows Server 2012 OS. Windows Server 2003 goes "end of life" this year which means that there will be no more support or updates from Microsoft. Windows Server 2012 is the newest operating system.
- Created a Domain Name Server (DNS) farm for the counties to use. This gives the GSCCCA more flexibility in being able to make changes to the DNS infrastructure without inconveniencing our customers.
- Implemented a new phone call recording server allowing us to review calls for improved customer satisfaction.
- Upgraded accounting software to ensure continued support and compatibility for the accounting staff.
- Implemented the Web Farm Framework application to enable the development staff to only publish new code to one server and then the code is replicated to all other servers. This simplifies the publishing process and ensures that all the servers have the same code.
- Moved from using GSCCCA-owned laptops for biannual training to leasing laptops. This change minimizes the cost of the training lab and allows for greater flexibility in the number of laptops we can provide for training purposes. The estimated cost savings of leasing versus purchasing forty laptops is $37,000 over five years.
- Deleted clerk.countyname@gsccca.org email accounts and added each address as an alias for respective clerks. This freed up 159 exchange accounts and saved $8,000 in future licensing costs.

- Updated the Windows 7 install software that is used in all GSCCCA computers to ensure reliability and ease of use for our customers.
- Configured and deployed servers needed to allow MyVault application to run at the Colorado datacenter. This allows for replication of data from the primary datacenter in Atlanta to the new datacenter in Colorado increasing the recoverability of data in the event of a disaster at the primary center.
- Upgraded the VMware software (virtualization software) to v5.5. These products allow us to run multiple servers on a shared hardware platform. The effect is that, on ten physical servers, we run 110 virtualized servers. This allows us to maximize utilization of physical server resources decreasing server hardware costs.
- Blocked almost 2.2 million pieces of spam and virus-laden e-mails. This amounts to over 86% of all incoming e-mail.
- Backed up over 887 TBs of data, the equivalent of backing up the printed collection of the U. S. Library of Congress about 88 times!

Network

- Performed 22 county internet line upgrades to increase connection speeds, upgrade infrastructures, and reduce dependency on third-party VPN providers.
- Assisted with 8 county network moves and upgraded the county's internet line as part of the move.
- Worked with IT staffs from 11 counties to join networks in order to enable clerks' offices to share data and resources with other local offices.
- Performed upgrades on internal load balancers to leverage new support tools, and make available new functionality.
- Audited county internet bills and created a consolidated list of valid bills for the accounting department to reference. This has enabled us to more accurately track the cancelation of lines, and ensure that internet service providers are billing appropriately.
- Worked with HelpDesk and other departments to resolve 210 network-related support tickets, down 38% from the previous year.
- Assisted systems team on upgrades to storage area networks, phone systems, and servers.
- Worked with development team to assist the Georgia Technology Authority in migrating the Offender-Based Tracking System to a shared server environment, improving maintainability of the databases.
- Continued to maintain PCI site certification which guarantees customers that the security measures we provide on the GSCCCA websites are strong enough to protect their data and online transactions.
- Performed the required duties to remain a Cisco Certified Partner.

HelpDesk – Customer Support

HelpDesk is the Authority's customer support team which provides technical support and resolves problems for clerks, clerks' office staff, and website customers. This team of technical support reps responds to thousands of calls and emails annually, providing support from 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. throughout the work week. Their outstanding work is critical to the continued success of the Authority, and is utilized and appreciated daily by clerks and website customers. See the comments below from Jenkins County Superior Court Clerk Elizabeth Landing:

> *"Nathan called this morning and the upgrade is complete. I just want to thank everyone for their support and the "helpful" attitudes that all of you have. THANKS AGAIN!!!!"*

Emails from satisfied website customers are also common. See the comments below from Barry Brown with Texas Environmental Research:

> *"I spent 3 hours with my computer tech trying to get my computer to download images from your website; he couldn't fix it but when I called your technical support team, Cassandra fixed it within 5 minutes. Thanks!!!!!"*

The following annual statistics speak to the volume of work this team handles each year and the efficiency of their performance.
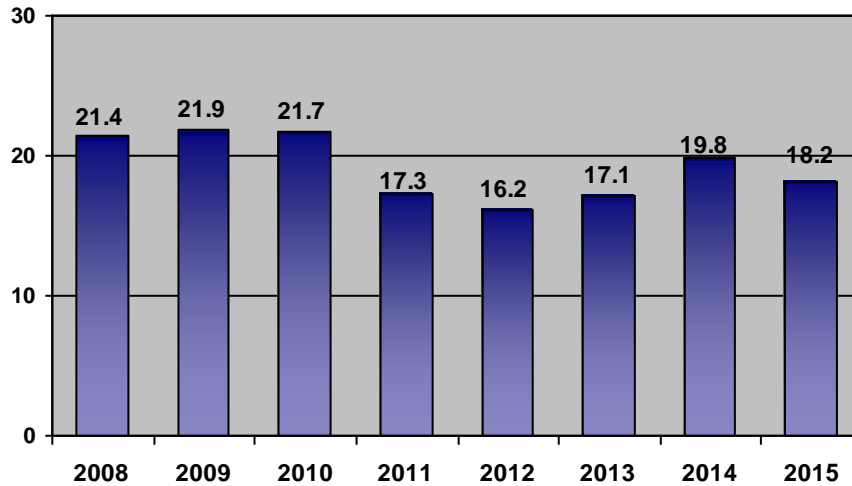
HelpDesk Stats

- Total Calls: **18,243**
- Answer Rate: **95%**
- Average Talk Time**: 5 minutes 15 seconds**
- Average Speed of Answer: **45 seconds**
- Total Email Requests Received: **8,050**+
- Total Hardware/Repair Requests: **405**
- Tickets Received: **13,510**
- Tickets Resolved (during initial contact): **11,389**
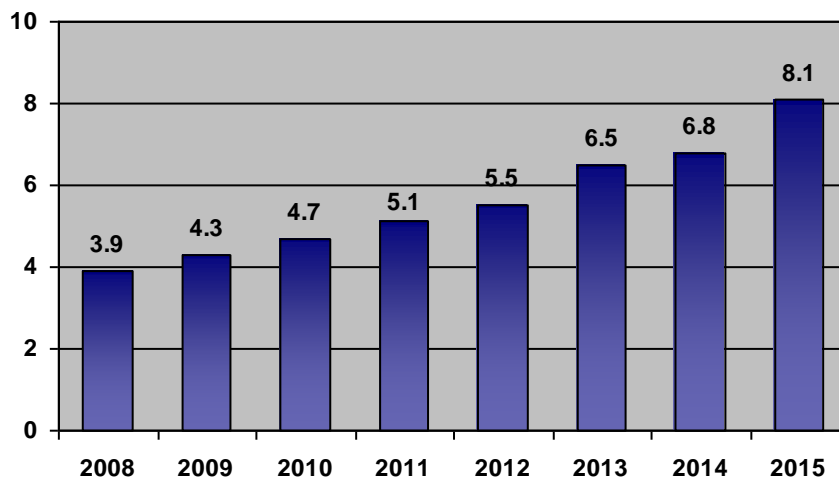- Ticket Resolution Rate**: 84%**

Top 10 Requests

- GSCCCA Website: General Information/Non-Tech Q/A (2,048)
- GSCCCA Website: Username/Password Requests (1,323)
- Account Management: New Account Request (644)
- GSCCCA Website: Unable to View Images (608)
- PT-61: Non-Tech Q/A (334)
- GSCCCA Website: Java Install/Update (302)
- Outlook: Unable to Send/Receive Emails (256)
- eFile UCC: Customer Filing Question (240)
- Account Management: Account Deactivation Inquiry/Request (239)
- Notary Application: Unable to View 3-digit Code/Adobe Reader (192)

HelpDesk Calls (thousands)

Year	Calls
2008	21.4
2009	21.9
2010	21.7
2011	17.3
2012	16.2
2013	17.1
2014	19.8
2015	18.2

HelpDesk Emails (thousands)

Year	Emails
2008	3.9
2009	4.3
2010	4.7
2011	5.1
2012	5.5
2013	6.5
2014	6.8
2015	8.1

Equipment Outreach

In order to successfully implement its many legislatively mandated projects, the Authority has modernized all Superior Court clerk 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. In addition to providing equipment, the Authority's IT staff travels to all 159 counties to service equipment, which is eligible for replacement every four years. 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.

Connie Cheatham, Superior Court clerk of McDuffie County, one of the state's smallest counties, recognizes this benefit from the Authority:

> *"I wouldn't have the amount of equipment that I have now, and I would not have the IT assistance because, in my county, the IT Department serves both the city and the county, and there are only two people in the department."*

Jean Rogers, Superior Court clerk of Crisp County, another very small county, also appreciates the IT support from the Authority:

> *"My county could not afford the technical support that the Authority provides for me and the two courts that I serve. The technology from the Authority has allowed me to do more with less."*

In addition to providing 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 2015:

➢ Ordered, processed and shipped a total of **1,269 pieces of new equipment** to clerks' offices including CPUs, monitors, servers, laptops and scanners. The Authority has provided over **23,600** pieces of new equipment to clerks' offices since opening its doors in 1995.
➢ Deployed **710 pieces of new equipment** (526 computers, 130 monitors and 54 scanners) to **54** Superior Court clerk offices to replace depreciated equipment as part of the Authority's Statewide Computer Replacement Project for all 159 counties.
➢ Successfully negotiated a significant reduction in the cost of computers for the Statewide Computer Replacement Project for a savings next year of approximately $100,000.
➢ Handled **156** Purchase Orders totaling over **$1.19 million** including equipment for the Remote Data Center and Archive Project.
➢ Handled **119** contracts from counties for equipment totaling **$1.03 million**. This included county purchases, Image Trade purchases and county requests for additional equipment.
➢ Performed detailed evaluation of all returned inventory sheets from counties and processed **984** county equipment returns.
➢ Processed **142** 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 approximately **141** non-inventory items including switches, cables, keyboards and mice.
➢ Obtained **277** quotes for equipment purchases for counties.
➢ Saved over **$45,000** through competitive bidding, state contract, and contract with the Western States Contracting Alliance, a group of companies that have banded together to form a buying cooperative.
➢ Saved over **$16,000** by implementing in-house imaging.
➢ Transferred **1,208** pieces of equipment to the Georgia Department of Administrative Services for proper disposal per state guidelines.
➢ Saved **$12,840** in using fully depreciated equipment as replacement for WYSE search terminals in the counties. This is an ongoing project and is not fully completed.

➢ Continued to promote open communication with counties for the purpose of encouraging compliance with all Authority projects including UCC Project, Real Estate Deed Project, and Lien, Plat & Map 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 communication between counties and the Authority by providing real-time information on their inventory, GSCCCA equipment policies and frequently asked questions.

Training

Since the UCC Project launched, training has become one of the Authority's core services and, each year, this critical resource is developed even further. Through this department, the Authority provides the most accurate and current information to clerks, their staff, and other interested constituencies while also prioritizing the convenience and accessibility of the training. Read the comments below from Charles Baker, Superior Court clerk of Hall County:

> *"The Authority is tremendous with the training. They're very hands-on, and they stay on the cutting edge of technology. Whether it's Fines & Fees, Real Estate, or Notary Online training, the Authority staff is so well educated."*

The Authority's goal is to create learning opportunities that are flexible, personalized, and relevant, and, to this end, offers many types of training including classroom, webinars, online, and one-on-one. See more detailed information below.

Classroom

Classroom training is usually hosted by a Superior Court clerk and offered free-of-charge. For FY 2015, the Authority conducted 30 programs across the state. The following topics were offered:

➢ Real Estate Indexing Standards
➢ eFile Training
➢ Notary Public Training (nearly 700 attended this training)
➢ Fines & Fees

The Authority continues to successfully partner with other groups to conduct some of its training. For example, Fines & Fees training was conducted in conjunction with the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education at UGA for various courts and other groups. The Authority also provided training classes to a variety of groups in the real estate and legal communities.

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 training without the time and cost of travel. During FY 2015, the Authority continued to utilize this internet-based training tool by hosting 15 webinars for nearly 340 participants. The following topics were covered:

➢ UCC Training
➢ Real Estate Indexing Standards
➢ Advanced Real Estate Indexing Standards
➢ Protective Order Registry
➢ Fines and Fees
➢ Authority Websites
➢ Authority eFile Projects
➢ Notary Public Training

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. This past fiscal year, the Authority rewrote and published the UCC Training online course to reflect new legislative changes. 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 2015:

➢ Introduction to GSCCCA Indexing Standards
  o 80 people participated in the training
  o 40 users took the Real Estate Indexing Certification Exam and 7 clerk employees successfully passed the exam
➢ Extended Real Estate Indexing Standards Training
  o 56 people participated in the training
➢ Fines & Fees Training
  o 75 people participated in the training
➢ Notary Online
  o 8,778 people participated in the training and 4,240 took the Notary Public Final Exam
  o Added a new feature that allows users who take the Notary Public Final Exam to see which questions they missed
➢ UCC Training
  o Rewrote and published the UCC Training online course to reflect new legislative changes
  o 43 people participated in the training
  o Added self-check section consisting of 30 questions to test users' knowledge

Additionally, the Authority conducted 18 one-on-one training sessions for clerks, other courts, banks, and realtors. The Authority also presented a variety of training programs to different constituencies and hosted a computer lab at the 2014 Fall COAG Conference and 2015 Spring Clerks' Conference.

Outreach & Professional Development

The Authority recognizes and values its symbiotic relationship with Superior Court clerks, and in this vein, works hard to provide support to clerks and their staff in many ways. The Authority also seeks and takes advantage of opportunities to reach the public and provide education on who we are and what we do. Additionally, the Authority recognizes the value of 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 2015.

> ➢ Celebrated 20th anniversary by publishing and distributing a history of the Authority, entitled *For the Record: The Unique Success Story of the GSCCCA*. The book permanently records the early battles, the on-going development and implementation of a myriad of projects, and the ultimate success story of the Authority, and memorializes the vision, inspiration and actions of individuals who worked tirelessly and collectively to achieve what many believed was not possible. *For the Record* was dedicated to the memory of long-time executive director David Williams. The book was presented to Superior Court clerks at their Spring Conference in April, and will be given to a variety of other constituencies throughout the year.
> ➢ Worked with What's Up Interactive to create a conference campaign including booth materials, handouts, promo cards, email templates, and more.
> ➢ Produced quarterly newsletter for clerks that is posted on the Authority website.
> ➢ Continued to strengthen the Authority's social media presence. By utilizing Facebook and Twitter, the Authority is better able to communicate with its customers and reach out to potential subscribers while keeping clerks better informed.
> ➢ 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.
> ➢ Provided a computer lab for the Fall COAG Conference and Spring Clerks' Conference. Conference materials were posted in the Authority's Clerk Resource Center.
> ➢ Visited with clerks of Superior Court in 42 counties and participated in clerk district meetings to discuss joint projects and legislative issues and to promote the benefits of the Authority's Premium Search account and eFiling services.
> ➢ Provided IT assistance with network moves for 8 clerks of Superior Court and upgraded the county's internet line as part of the move; performed 22 county internet line upgrades to increase connection speeds, upgrade infrastructures, and reduce dependency on third-party VPN providers; and worked with IT staffs from 11 counties to join networks in order to enable clerks' offices to share data and resources with other local offices.
> ➢ Conducted various presentations and training to other courts and outside groups including members of the banking and legal communities, the Association of Paralegals of Georgia, the National Association of Legal Secretaries, the University of Georgia School of Law in Athens, the Western Judicial Circuit Bar Association, and multiple boards of realtors.
> ➢ Maintained liaison roles with the State Bar, public users, title examiners, surveyors, GCIC, and courthouse vendors.
> ➢ Regularly communicate with the FBI's Domestic Terrorism Unit regarding sovereign citizen issues. The Authority serves in a liaison capacity between the FBI and Superior Court clerk offices.
> ➢ Participated in an FBI work group addressing mortgage fraud. The Authority's database is viewed as a valuable tool in the research and discovery process for law enforcement.

- ➢ Handled, in conjunction with the Attorney General's office, open records requests from the public.
- ➢ Monitored bill to rewrite Georgia's notary law. The Authority board appointed a committee comprised of board members, industry experts and Authority staff, and charged the group with making the revisions to notary law. The goal is to modernize Georgia's notary law and to bring it in line with the Revised Uniform Law on Notarial Acts as promulgated by the Uniform Law Commission. A bill based on the group's work was introduced during the 2015 legislative session but failed to gain passage.
- ➢ Benefitted from staff members serving in industry leadership positions:
    - o Authority communications director serving as vice-president of the board for 2014-2015 of the Notary Public Administrators (NPA), a section of the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS). 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. As NPA vice-president, he represented the Clerks' Authority at the annual NASS 2015 Winter Conference and reported on the activities and 2015 goals of NPA to the full body of NASS, which is comprised of secretaries of state from all fifty states.
    - o Authority communications director serving as president of the International Association of Commercial Administrators (IACA) for 2014-2015. As president, he represented the Clerks' Authority by promoting the vital role that IACA plays in the UCC filing office, and participated and presented at both the Corporate Registers Forum and the European Commerce Registers' Forum this past year. IACA brings together UCC industry representatives from the private (filings parties) and public (filing offices) sectors. The Clerks' Authority hosted the 2015 IACA Conference in Savannah in May with 230 attendees from 42 U.S. states and 18 other nations.

- ➢ Benefitted from staff members furthering education and training:
    - o IT manager and development manager maintained PMP (Project Management Professional) certification.
    - o Network administrator passed the CCNA security test, maintaining his Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) certification for another three years.

- ➢ Benefitted from staff members being honored for exemplary work within the community:
    - o Project manager presented "Excellence in Training" medal by the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education (ICJE) at the University of Georgia. The Authority regularly participates in Fines & Fees training with ICJE for Municipal, Magistrate and Probate courts.
    - o Authority ombudsman awarded the "Georgia Women's Legislative Caucus Service Leadership Award." The award was given to 26 women across the state for their service to their respective communities, professional leadership, and service through policy, public service, and civic engagement to the citizens of Georgia.

Conclusion

Since opening its doors in 1995, the Authority has seen tremendous growth and strategic innovation, and through its many 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 clerk's 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.
➢ Clerks' offices enjoy additional resources 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 crime data to protect the public.

Much has been accomplished since the Authority was created over twenty years ago but our goals remain ambitious and unchanged. We will continue to:

➢ Strengthen our relationship with clerks of Superior Court and ensure they have the resources they need for success.
➢ Sustain our robust culture of innovation, remain flexible, rethink how we work, listen to our customers, and continually streamline and add value to our programs.
➢ Provide superior customer service to all our constituencies.
➢ Foster existing relationships and partnerships and embrace new opportunities.
➢ Anticipate shifts in the business environment and meet them head-on by preemptively retooling our organization for advantage and growth.
➢ Strategically transform our operations for long-term efficiency.
➢ Seek sustainable solutions to the financial issues with which we are faced.
➢ Achieve preeminence as an acknowledged leader in the public records arena.

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 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.