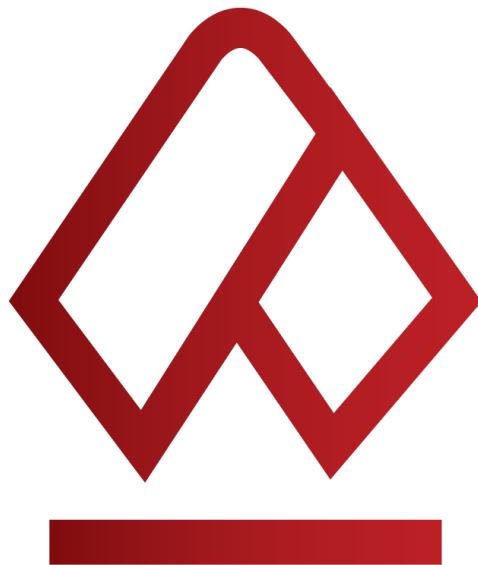


Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority



2016-2017 Accomplishments & Year-end Report

Executive Summary

In today's world, change moves at a breakneck pace. To survive, you must keep up. To be truly successful, however, you must stay ahead of the curve ... anticipating needs, innovating to meet those needs, and then driving the change.

Communications mogul Rupert Murdoch captured this concept perfectly when he famously noted:

***“The world is changing very fast.
Big will not beat small anymore.
It will be the fast beating the slow.”***

FY 2017 marks another successful year for the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority, and this quote highlights much of the reason why. Of course, the Authority would not exist without the paradigm-shifting vision of our founders and the continued support and collaboration of Georgia's 159 clerks of Superior Court. But just as critical to our success this past fiscal year and for the past two decades has been a continuing commitment to streamlining our operations, delivering solid results, providing unmatched customer service, and, perhaps most important in today's fast-paced, competitive environment, remaining focused on innovation and at the forefront of technology. Anticipating and meeting the evolving needs of Superior Court clerks and providing them with the tools to help them not just remain relevant but be successful is our overarching vision and guides every aspect of our business.

The Authority was created by clerks for the benefit of clerks, and this symbiotic relationship is paramount to building on our progress to date and achieving even greater results in the future. Below are a few recent comments from clerks about the Authority and its importance to their work:

“I want to send a shout out to the Authority staff! I have just finished helping a citizen eFile their plat. The process was quick and painless! We had no trouble receiving the participant ID number in a timely fashion. It was there in 2 seconds! I have worried about how this was going to work, and I will worry no more. It was awesome! Thank you all for all the hard work you put into this to make it an easy process! Everyone at the Authority is wonderful and I don't know what I would do without them.”

*– Stacy Haralson
Harris County Clerk of Superior Court*

“Thank you for understanding and your help! I really do appreciate EVERYTHING you guys at the GSCCCA do for us clerks. We wouldn't be able to do our jobs as efficiently as we do without you. Everyone at the Authority allows us clerks to be better clerks.”

*– Rita Harkins
Lumpkin County Clerk of Superior Court*

“Thank you for a great week at St. Simons for all of us new clerks. The Clerks’ Authority is so good to my office in that we do not have a county IT person. Not sure what I would do without you!”

*– Leigh W. Starrett
Elbert County Clerk of Superior Court*

“Thank you [for suggesting a new monitor.] I think I would feel more comfortable with a newer more reliable monitor to go with the new PC. I haven’t told you this in a while – YOU ARE AWESOME! – always on the ball, responsive, helpful and efficient with such a great attitude!”

*– Lynn W. Ham
Monroe County Clerk of Superior Court*

“You are always so helpful and I sincerely appreciate all you do for us.”

*– Debbie Kines
Grady County Clerk of Superior Court*

“Thank you for helping me with this matter!! I do not know what I would do without you!!”

*– Nora Leigh Rogers
Echols County Clerk of Superior Court*

From the beginning and rooted to its core, innovation, collaboration and vision have defined the Authority. Although the culture 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. Effective collaboration with other state agencies and numerous not-for-profit groups for the benefit of the State of Georgia and its citizens has become one of the hallmarks of the Authority’s success and why it is respected both locally and nationally for its progressive, innovative and effective approach to problem solving.

For over two decades, the Authority has been an innovator within the public records arena and has led the State of Georgia to the forefront of court technology. Using a mix of old-fashioned cooperation and state-of-the-art technology, the GSCCCA has taken abstract ideas, that many believed were not possible, to the concrete world of implementation, 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 Clerks’ Authority is a diverse entity that oversees the following divisions, projects, programs and registries:

- 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
- PT-61 Project
- Premium Search Account
- Clerks' Authority Map Search Application (Mobile App)
- Data Archive Project (MyVault Online Archive Service)
- Microfilm Project
- eFile Project
- Civil Case Data Project
- 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.gscca.org. The Authority databases provide accountability, uniformity, efficiencies and cost-savings by affording:

- Unprecedented access to valuable information – free access through search terminals installed in all Superior Court clerk 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 2017:

- Implemented the changes necessary to comply with a 2016 **legislative mandate requiring all plats in Georgia to be electronically recorded** beginning January 1, 2017. Specifically, the Authority expanded its eFiling portal to accommodate the shift to mandatory plat eRecording, and all Superior Court clerks are able to electronically process plats that have been submitted to the GSCCCA portal in compliance with the eRecording mandate. Since becoming effective on

January 1, over 9,800 plats have been accepted through the portal. The process of electronically filing plats will result in a more efficient end-to-end process and higher fidelity reproduction of printed plat copies.

- Worked closely with legislators, the Superior Court Clerks' Association of Georgia, the legal community, the land title industry, and the Department of Revenue to reach a compromised solution for the **electronic filing of state tax liens**. The Authority hosted a series of meetings resulting in the agreement to the terms of House Bill 337, signed into law and effective January 1, 2018. The Authority continues to work with all interested stakeholders in the planning and development of the complicated provisions of this new law.
- Continued work on the **Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project** to include all deed instruments filed with clerks of Superior Court in the calendar years 1991 and 1990. The ability to transmit historical index data and images to the Authority was opened on January 2, 2017. The Authority compensated the offices of those clerks of Superior Court who have previously completed their 1991 and 1990 historical deed imaging indexing pursuant to a *Clerk-Funded Historical Indexing Agreement*. Throughout the year, the Authority administered the project to complete the deed indexing for all incomplete indexing and imaging for the year 1992 with a goal to move the inclusive range of deed data back to 1992 for all counties. In FY 2017, over 4,500 additional deed instruments were added to the system under this program.
- Added over 286,500 deed and 14,300 plat instruments through the **County-Funded Historical Deed, Lien and Plat Re-Indexing Project**, for a total of over 1.5 million 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. Forty-two counties are now participating in the program.
- Complied with legislative mandate to establish "**Safe Harbor Fund**" effective January 1, 2017, and entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the Department of Administrative Services to collect "**Georgia State Indemnification Fund**" monies effective July 1, 2017. To support clerks in their efforts to comply with the new mandates and to ensure accurate collection and disbursement of funds, the Fines & Fees staff notified all courts and vendors with details on the new funds, updated www.courttrax.org to reflect legislative changes and legal advice, and revised Rules & Regulations, indexing forms, training materials and other affected documents. Staff also created a new daily detail report for the Safe Harbor Fund and added it to the online calculator, which will also be done for the Georgia State Indemnification Fund once it becomes effective.
- Implemented **Bulk Lien eFiling**. This new process allows filers to upload multiple, one-page liens as a single electronic document, streamlining the eFiling process. The Authority has offered several webinars to help clerks and filers, including tax commissioners, get started with bulk lien eFiling.
- Increased **Premium Search accounts** by nearly **20%** for a fiscal year-end total of **3,637 accounts**. Launched in 2012, the Premium account includes the Clerks' Authority Map Search Application and allows users to search by property address as well as land lot making it attractive to realtors, bankers, attorneys, surveyors, appraisers, and other members of the business community.

- Improved the functionality of the **Clerks' Authority Map Search Application** on IOS and Android devices ensuring that the applications work as designed with the latest versions of the respective operating systems. The Authority's mobile app provides the most up-to-date and accurate real estate sales data in the state of Georgia and is available free-of-charge to Premium Search account subscribers.
- Upgraded a **core SQL Server** at the Failover Datacenter from SQL Server 2005 to 2008. SQL Server is a relational database management system responsible for storing and retrieving data as requested by other software applications. This particular database server hosts many of the GSCCCA's most critical databases. The deployment required extensive database, application, and website testing. The upgrade brings the database to a more modern version, which is critical to support, and also provides access to additional features and functionality. Of significant importance, the upgrade brings the version of SQL Server at the Failover Datacenter in sync with the version at the Primary Datacenter, allowing feature parity and improved management.
- Upgraded 40 county connections, drastically increasing combined bandwidth while lowering the overall cost, and coordinated 23 county-based network moves, changes, or implementations.
- Instituted a new program providing notary handbooks at a discounted rate to Superior Court clerk offices. The goal of the program is to provide point of sale education materials to Georgia notaries public. Twenty-five counties have participated in the program with a total of **725** handbooks being sold at the local level.
- Maintained a compliance rate of close to **100%** for all courts through a dedicated and consistent notification process by the Fines & Fees Division.

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 22 years.

Following are some of the highlights from FY 2017:

- Added nearly **12 million** images to the system for a fiscal year-end total of nearly **252 million** images accessible to the public through www.gsccca.org.
- Had over **365 million** page views and nearly **1.1 million** unique visitors to www.gsccca.org. The public accessed the Authority's invaluable data via the Internet nearly **5 million times** from 210 countries this past fiscal year.
- Compensated clerks' offices over **\$5 million** this fiscal year for prints (\$.50 per print) off the Authority website, and **\$51 million** for prints since the Authority was established.
- Compensated clerks' offices nearly **\$800,000** for deed images this fiscal year, and **\$14.6 million** for deed images since the inception of the project.
- Restored **118 GBs of data** for 10 counties through the Authority's **MyVault Online Archive Service** in FY 2017. Currently, **144 counties** participate in the program with one county added this fiscal year. The statistics continue to stagger with the online vault storing and protecting **over 662 million** files totaling more than **84 TBs** of live data.

- Ordered, processed and shipped a total of **819 pieces of new equipment** to clerks' offices including CPUs, monitors, servers, laptops and scanners. The Authority has provided over **25,000** pieces of new equipment to clerks' offices since opening its doors in 1995.
- Deployed **374 pieces of new equipment** (171 computers, 135 monitors and 68 scanners) to 50 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, nearly **44,000 Protective Orders** indexed by clerks.
- Electronically transmitted to GCIC **340,000 records** of criminal court dispositions from various courts in Georgia for the purpose of compiling criminal histories and background checks.
- Received over **16,000 phone calls** and over **8,300 email requests** to HelpDesk with a resolution rate of 98%.
- Increased participation in **Notary Online** to **133 counties**. **88%** of notary applications in Georgia were submitted electronically via the Authority's Notary Online application system.
- Maintained the **statewide notary database** (A statewide total of **46,200 notary commissions** were issued by clerks of Superior Court and then submitted to the Authority for inclusion in the statewide database.) and issued **30,000 apostilles** this past fiscal year and **500,000 apostilles** since taking over this valuable service in 1998. In FY 2017, the Notary Division served over **8,900 walk-in customers**, processed **3,800 mail-in orders**, answered **8,500 phone calls**, and sold **1,200 Notary Handbooks**.
- Backed up **500 TBs** of data during FY 2017. If this data were transferred to CDs, the resulting stack would be 4,000 feet tall, or about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile high.
- Collected and disbursed approximately **\$85.2 million** in court fees; performed annual court reviews on approximately **1,100 courts** to help ensure the accuracy of the data being reported to the Authority; and processed nearly **31,000 monthly reports** submitted by reporting entities.
- Conducted **107** classroom training sessions, webinars and one-on-one programs on various subjects for over **2,000** participants at **42** different locations around the state. The Authority also trained nearly **8,000** people through its five online courses.
- Indexed nearly **241,000** UCCs and conducted **7,600** Certified Searches for FY 2017. Since the project's inception in 1995, the Authority has indexed nearly **5.9 million** UCCs and conducted almost **246,000** Certified Searches.
- Blocked **10.6 million** pieces of spam and virus-laden emails. This amounts to over 92% 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. In addition to the comments included earlier, below are some of the recent kudos we have received from clerks and website customers:

"Thank you for keeping us straight."

"Many thanks!!! Great customer service!"

“I really appreciate all the Authority does for me and my office.”

“Thanks for all your expert advice and guidance.”

“We received the new scanner this morning and ready for the old one to be returned. Thank you for everything.”

“I really appreciate you taking the time to explain what happened with my account and for your help in clearing up the charge. I really appreciate the customer service.”

In addition to supporting Superior Court clerks, the Authority enables convenient access to invaluable information – from real estate records and lending information to active notaries and court fines and fees. The Authority’s statewide indexes and other programs help everyday Georgians and give the business community innovative tools for making their work more efficient and effective. 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.

For over 20 years, through legislative battles, technological challenges and economic adversity, Superior Court clerks and Authority staff have worked together to create the amazing success story we know today ... or in the words of former Authority chair Barry Wilkes, “a paradigm for how government can and ought to work.”

Yet, we know our story is far from complete. As we enter our 23rd year of service, we cannot rest on our laurels if we want our future to be as bright as our past. The pace of change is accelerating, creating new opportunities, new challenges, and new uncertainties. In this environment, we will have to be more nimble and more adept, continuously reevaluate and reimagine every aspect of our business, and out-innovate today, so that we can outperform tomorrow. We are committed to remaining entrepreneurial and strategic, and positioning the Authority for preeminence not only over the short run, but also over the long run, and continue our stellar record of innovation and success 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 5 million times from 210 countries in FY 2017. 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's website saving Georgia citizens and businesses an unquantifiable amount of time and money every year.

Website Statistics for FY 2017

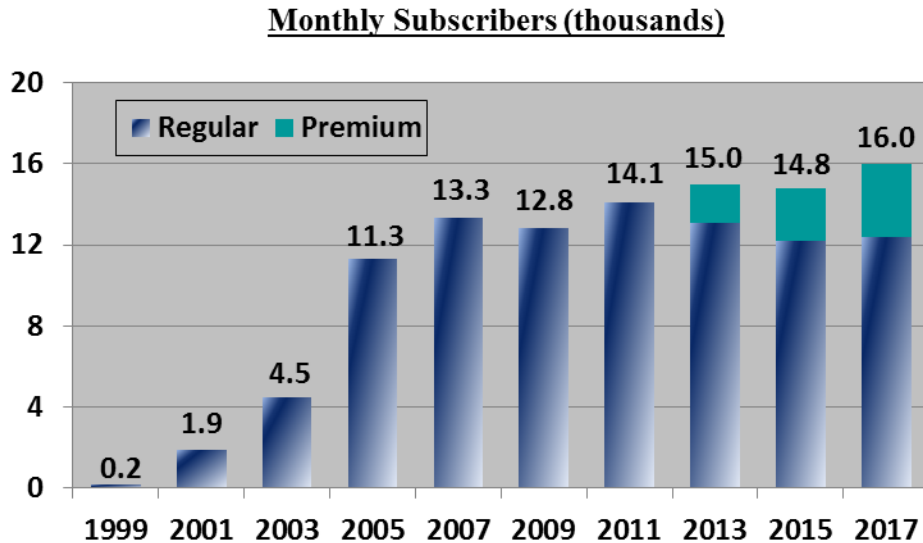
- Images added to the system: **11.8 million**
- Sessions: nearly **5 million**
- Bandwidth: **8.41 TBs**
- Page views: **365 million**
- Unique visitors: nearly **1.1 million**
- Percentage of new visits this year: **nearly 21%**
- Average page views per visit: **27**
- Average visit duration: **13:05 minutes**
- Number of countries that visited: **210**
- Top 4 countries: U.S., India, Philippines, and China
- Top browsers: 47% of all visitors use Internet Explorer, of which 86% use IE 11 or higher; 30% of all visitors use Google Chrome; 15% use Firefox; and 3% use Edge. That is an increase of 61% for Google Chrome and a decrease of 20% for Internet Explorer.

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 Superior Court clerk, 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 nearly 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 6/30/17: **16,008**
- Regular monthly subscribers as of 6/30/17: **12,371**
- Premium Search monthly subscribers as of 6/30/17: **3,637**
- Percentage increase in Premium Search accounts for FY 2017: **19.8%**
- Single-use subscribers added during fiscal year: **22,923**



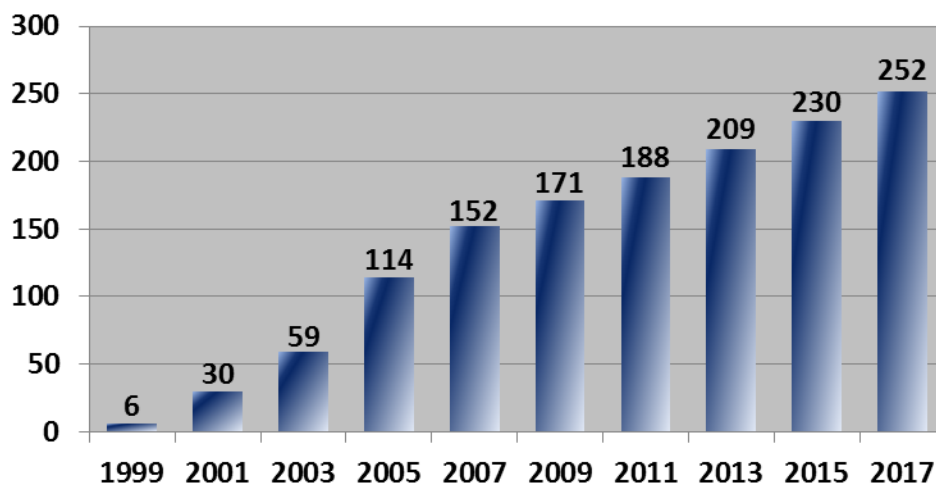
Since 1999, website subscriptions have increased dramatically, clear evidence of the Authority’s growth and the growing value of its statewide indexes. Beyond the numbers, though, the Authority gauges its success and relevance on the response and feedback from its customers and how integral the Authority’s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

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 2017, nearly **12 million** images were added to the system for a fiscal year-end total of nearly **252 million images**. See the following chart and bar graph for more details.

	Images Added in FY 2017	Total Images 6/30/17
Deeds	9,713,917	218,713,352
Liens	1,325,750	18,360,152
Plats	67,033	1,071,653
UCCs	317,239	7,829,509
PT-61s	406,224	5,612,084
Total	11,830,163	251,586,750

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 **25,000 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 over **16,000 subscribers** today, over **365 million page views** in FY 2017, and nearly **252 million images** online, the Authority has virtually eliminated downtime. Whether a user searches the records after lunch on Thursday or at 2:00 a.m. on Sunday, 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.gscca.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. As an example, the Authority conducts quarterly, independent security audits, the results of which are critical to maintaining its PCI compliance. If an issue is identified, the IT staff takes appropriate actions to resolve it immediately.

The Authority values its customers and recognizes that their input serves to make our systems cleaner and better. For example, 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 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.

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 healthy throughout FY 2017 with overall revenues ahead of budget. This surplus is primarily due to deed fee revenue performing better than in recent fiscal years, but also due to other projects performing ahead of expectations. Additionally, the Authority staff continued to aggressively manage project and administrative costs.

Based on a strong financial outlook, the board approved the Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project during FY 2016 to include all deed instruments filed with clerks of Superior Court in the calendar years 1991 and 1990. The Authority staff prepared a timeline and implementation schedule for the project, and commencement began with the ability to transmit historical index data and images to the Authority on January 2, 2017.

FY 2016 Year-end Audit Completed by Mauldin & Jenkins

- Received an unqualified "clean" opinion from Mauldin & Jenkins for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2016 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.
- 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 98%.
- 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.
- Managed the financial transactions relating to GSCCCA Image Agreements and provided monthly statements to clerks. During FY 2017, the Authority compensated Superior Court clerk offices over \$5 million for print monies generated and nearly \$800,000 for deed images transmitted to the Authority by clerks' offices.

Accounting Information

- Total active subscriber accounts as of June 30, 2017: **16,008**
This includes **3,637** Premium Search accounts.
- Average monthly direct access subscription revenue during FY 2017: **\$226,833**
- Single-use subscription revenue during FY 2017: **\$116,373**
- Number of monthly check payments processed during FY 2017: **15,042**
- Purchased **\$472,516** of equipment for counties during FY 2017 as part of the Authority's Statewide Computer Replacement Project.
- Amount compensated to clerks' offices for deed images during FY 2017: **\$797,706**
- Amount compensated to clerks' offices for deed images since inception of project: **\$14.6 million**
- Amount compensated to clerks' offices for prints (\$.50 per print) off the Authority website during FY 2017: **\$5,030,763**
- Amount compensated to clerks' offices for prints (\$.50 per print) off the Authority website since inception of project: **\$51 million**

The FY 2017 break-down for prints is as follows:

○ Deeds	\$4,403,210
○ Liens	\$232,202
○ Plats	\$219,680
○ PT-61s	\$45,647
○ UCCs	\$130,024

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 174,000).
- 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. 133 or 84% 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, 112 countries participate in the Apostille Treaty, and approximately 4 million apostilles are issued worldwide on an annual basis. The Authority has issued over half a million apostilles since taking over this vital service in 1998.

During FY 2017, the Authority's Notary Division:

- Maintained the statewide notary database. A statewide total of **46,200 notary commissions** were issued by clerks of Superior Court and then submitted to the Authority for inclusion in the statewide database. 88% of these notary commissions were processed through the Authority's web-based system and 12% through traditional methods.
- Issued **30,000 apostilles** this fiscal year destined for 92 different countries. These documents originated in 132 different Georgia counties. Four additional countries joined the Apostille Treaty: Brazil, Chile, Morocco and Kosovo.
- Have issued **500,000 apostilles** since taking over this vital service in 1998.
- Issued **200 certificates of authority**, primarily for use in Puerto Rico.
- Served **8,900 walk-in customers**; processed **3,800 mail-in requests**; and answered **8,500 phone calls**. This represents an increase in all three categories for this fiscal year.
- Continued promoting Notary Online with **88%** of notary applications submitted electronically to the Authority via the Notary Online application system. Participation in the program increased to **133 counties**. The Authority provides one-on-one training for new counties.

- Sold **1,200 Notary Handbooks**. The Authority instituted a new program providing notary handbooks at a discounted rate to Superior Court clerk offices. The goal is to provide point of sale education materials to Georgia notaries public. Twenty-five counties have participated in the program with a total of **725** handbooks being sold at the local level.
- Conducted **41 training classes** for notaries public at 22 locations around the state with over 1,600 people attending. Hosted by clerks of Superior Court, these classes provide tremendous exposure for clerks and a valuable service to their constituents.
- Maintained **Notary Public online training course** with over **8,400** people participating in the training and over **3,800** taking the Notary Public Final Exam.
- Monitored and advised Superior Court clerks on HB 120, the **Revised Georgia Law on Notarial Acts of 2018**. The intent of the bill 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. HB 120 did not come up for a vote during the legislative session.

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:

- Developed and maintains a website, www.courttrax.org, to support court compliance with the law.
- Created and maintains uniform reports.
- Provides statewide training.
- Issues guidance to all parties affected.
- Created and maintains an online calculator to help courts properly calculate and assess fines and fees.
- Developed and maintains 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 2017, the Authority's Fines & Fees Division:

- Collected and disbursed approximately **\$85.2 million** in court fees.
- Maintained a **compliance rate of close to 100%** for all courts through a dedicated and consistent notification system.
- Performed annual court reviews on approximately **1,100 courts** to help ensure the accuracy of the data being reported to the Authority.
- Processed nearly **31,000 monthly reports** submitted by reporting entities.
- Complied with legislative mandate to establish "**Safe Harbor Fund**" effective January 1, 2017. In order to support clerks in their efforts to comply with the new mandate and to ensure accurate collection and disbursement of funds, the Fines & Fees staff notified all courts and vendors with details on the new fund, created a new daily detail report, updated www.courttrax.org to reflect legislative changes, added the Safe Harbor Fund to the online calculator, and revised Rules & Regulations, indexing forms, training materials and other affected documents to include information on the new fund.
- Entered into an intergovernmental agreement with the Department of Administrative Services to collect "**Georgia State Indemnification Fund**" monies effective July 1, 2017. To support clerks in their efforts to comply with the new mandate and to ensure accurate collection and disbursement of funds, the Fines & Fees staff notified all courts and vendors with details on the new fund, updated www.courttrax.org to reflect legislative changes and legal advice, and revised indexing forms, training materials and other affected documents to include information on the new fund.
- Continued to hold operational costs to under the statutory limit of \$500,000.
- Continued to refine procedures to ensure the accuracy of the indexed data in the Fines & Fees database.
- Maintained Fines & Fees Online Training course.
- Continued partnering with the Institute of Continuing Judicial Education at the University of Georgia to offer Fines & Fees training to various courts and other groups, in addition to offering training classes around the state, and utilizing remote training by offering webinars on the subject.

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.

A UCC (Uniform Commercial Code) Financing Statement is recorded 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 **448,000 UCCs** have been electronically filed. **105 counties** currently participate in the program with 7 of those counties activated this year.

During FY 2017, the Authority:

- Indexed and added to www.gscca.org **240,703 UCCs**.
- Conducted **7,600 Certified Searches**.
- Continued promoting **UCC eFile** with over **107,000 UCCs** electronically filed during FY 2017. In March alone, more than 10,000 UCCs were eFiled, a record high for a single month. **104 counties** now participate in the program, with 6 of those activated this fiscal year.
- Created monthly **UCC bulk image DVDs** for clients throughout the year.
- Maintained **UCC Online Training** course, and conducted **UCC classroom training** and **webinars** for Superior Court clerk personnel, banks and the legal community.
- 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 **5.9 million UCCs** (approximately 22,000 per month) and conducted almost **246,000 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.gscca.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.

Following passage of the enabling legislation, the Authority developed and implemented the only statewide intranet network in state government at that time. 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 the 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 **9.7 million real estate deed images** to the system during FY 2017 to bring the total to nearly **219 million deed images** in its publically searchable database. Print fees generated from the system are compensated to the clerk's office where the original document resides. During FY 2017, the Authority compensated Georgia clerks' offices nearly **\$800,000** for deed images added to the system (**\$14.6 million** since the project began) and over **\$4.4 million** for deed prints made from www.gscca.org.

In 2004, a new feature was added to the system: access to **Real Estate Transfer Tax forms (PT-61s)**. 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. This feature has added even more valuable information to the real estate system: over **406,000 PT-61** images this fiscal year and over **5.6 million** images since the project began. (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 2017, over **128,000 real estate documents** were eFiled in **158 participating counties**. Over **210,000 documents** have been eFiled since the inception of the program.

Following is a summary of efforts during FY 2017 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 historical 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 historical 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, 67 clerks and deputies from 23 counties have completed the Indexing Certification.
- Concluded 74 clerks' office docket surveys through FY 2017 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, 110 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 2017.
- Conducted training classes and webinars and continued to offer an online course 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 million dollars. 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 2017, 4,500 additional deed instruments were added to the system under this program, and currently only one county remains to be completed.

With a strong economic forecast, the board expanded the Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project to include all deed instruments filed with clerks of Superior Court in the calendar years 1991 and 1990. The Authority staff prepared a timeline and implementation schedule for the project, and commencement began with the ability to transmit historical index data and images to the Authority on January 2, 2017. Under this program in FY 2017, the Authority added over 23,000 deed records from three counties to its publically searchable website and is proceeding to complete the remaining counties. The Authority also compensated the offices of those clerks of Superior Court who had previously completed their 1991 and 1990 historical deed imaging indexing pursuant to a *Clerk-Funded Historical Indexing Agreement*.

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. Forty-two 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. Many additional deed and plat instruments (index and associated images) were added from participating counties over the next three years: 435,000 in FY 2014, 258,000 in FY 2015, and 365,000 in FY 2016. This past fiscal year, **295,000 instruments** were added to the system, for a total of over **1.5 million 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, clerks of Superior Court began to transmit to the GSCCCA lien, plat and map indices and 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.

Legislation was passed in 2016 that requires all plats in Georgia to be electronically recorded beginning January 1, 2017. Through a cooperative effort with clerks and vendors, the Authority implemented the changes necessary to fulfill the requirements of this new law. Specifically, the Authority expanded its eFiling portal to accommodate the shift to mandatory plat eRecording, and all Superior Court clerks are able to electronically process plats that have been submitted to the GSCCCA portal in compliance with the eRecording mandate. Since becoming effective on January 1, over 9,800 plats have been accepted through the portal. The process of electronically filing plats will result in a more efficient end-to-end process and higher fidelity recreation of printed plat copies.

The 2017 legislative session brought significant change to the lien project. Working closely with legislators, the Superior Court Clerks' Association of Georgia, the legal community, the land title industry, and the Department of Revenue, the Authority helped forge a compromised solution for the

electronic filing of state tax liens. A series of meetings was hosted by the Authority resulting in the agreement to the terms of House Bill 337, signed into law and effective January 1, 2018. The Authority continues to work with all interested stakeholders in the planning and development of the complicated provisions of this new law.

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. The Authority also 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.

House Bill 337, relating to the electronic filing of state tax liens, will also have an impact on the preparation and filing of PT-61 forms beginning January 1, 2018. New forms are in development to capture information as provided for in the new law.

During FY 2017, the Authority:

- Added over **406,000** PT-61 filings to the statewide system for a total of over **5.6 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.
- Compensated nearly **\$46,000** to clerks' offices for prints (\$.50 per print) off the Authority website related to the PT-61 Project.
- Added over **167,500** properties during FY 2017 for a total of **over 2.3 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 a mobile application using GPS data. (See more information below on the Clerks' Authority Map Search Application.)

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 community do their jobs more efficiently and effectively. The Premium account features are especially invaluable for searching sales in small counties where there is no MLS or listing of properties for sale.

During FY 2017, the Authority increased the number of Premium Search accounts by nearly **20%** for a fiscal year-end total of **3,637 accounts**. This number will grow in the coming years as the Authority continues to market the Premium Search account.

Clerks' Authority Map Search Application (Mobile App)

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. Since launching, the application has received rave reviews from users, and is available free-of-charge to Premium Search account subscribers.

Features of the Map Search app include:

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

The application is available on Android devices, iPhones and iPads. This past fiscal year, the Authority improved the functionality on IOS and Android devices ensuring that the applications work as designed with the latest versions of the respective operating systems. To add more value, over 167,500 addresses were added for a fiscal year-end total of over **2.3 million searchable addresses** in the application.

Through the Authority's Map Search application, 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.

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 ten years, MyVault has been providing remote storage and protection for Superior Court clerks' digital information at a secure data center in Atlanta. In 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 storing and protecting over **662 million files** totaling more than **84 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.

In addition to the 84 TBs of live data (current versions of files), the MyVault system maintains 30 days of previous file versions totaling **16 TBs** of additional data stored in the vault. By maintaining multiple backups in geographically unique locations, a county can lower its risk of having a catastrophic data loss event due to ransomware attacks, equipment failure, or human error. In doing so, the Authority has been able to successfully help some affected counties bypass the ransom demands and safely restore files to an operational state.

A majority 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.

In FY 2017, the Authority received 10 requests to restore data, resulting in 118 GBs of data successfully restored. The Authority has received over 90 requests to restore data since MyVault began in 2007, and over 1.6 TBs of data has been successfully restored to date. Requests for data recovery have ranged from a single file to an entire volume of data. Server failure, human error, and weather events are the most common reasons for data recovery requests. The Authority has received 14 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 in the program.

Last fiscal year, the MyVault website was upgraded and major enhancements were made to the interface in terms of reporting features and administrative functionality. An online dashboard serves as the portal through which clerks have access to their vault information. The dashboard provides live statistics about the last backup and allows users to view and restore items from their vault. In addition to the website, appliance software was also upgraded to improve software functionality, reporting features and other administrative functions, as well as to add further protection against ransomware attacks.

Below are statistics and other information on MyVault for FY 2017:

- 144 counties currently participate in MyVault with 1 county added during FY 2017.
- MyVault stores and protects over 662 million files totaling more than 84 TBs of live data. The system is currently maintaining an additional 16 TBs of previous file versions.
- In FY 2017, the Authority received 10 requests to restore data, resulting in 118 GBs of data successfully restored.
- A new desktop model was tested this past fiscal year and is now available for counties needing more storage than the current desktop model can support.
- 62 counties are storing between 10 and 100 GBs of data.
- 62 counties are storing between 100 and 500 GBs of data.

- 8 counties are storing between 500 GBs and 1 TB of data.
- 4 counties are storing between 1 and 3 TBs of data.
- 4 counties are storing between 3 and 6 TBs of data.
- 4 counties are storing between 6 and 11 TBs 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.

eFile Project

In 2009, the Georgia legislature mandated that the Authority develop rules and regulations related to the electronic recording of real estate-related 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. Over **107,000 UCCs** were electronically filed during FY 2017, with more than 10,000 UCCs eFiled in March alone, a record high for a single month. Over **448,000 UCCs** have been electronically filed since May 2009 when the pilot project began. Six new counties were activated this fiscal year for a current total of **104 participating counties**.

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, **122 counties** are participating in Child Support eFile with **2** of those activated during FY 2017. Since January 1, 2010, over **441,000** filings have been accepted, with **111,000** of those filings during FY 2017.

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 2017, participation in Real Estate eFile has continued to grow. The Authority nearly tripled the number of participating counties adding **104 counties** this past fiscal year for a total of **158 participating counties**. Since 2011, participants have filed over **210,000** real estate documents with over **128,000** of those filed in FY 2017. It is expected that these numbers will continue to rise with most every county now participating.

Legislation was passed in 2016 that requires all plats in Georgia to be electronically recorded beginning January 1, 2017. Through a cooperative effort with clerks and vendors, the Authority implemented the changes necessary to fulfill the requirements of this new law. Specifically, the Authority expanded its eFiling portal to accommodate the shift to mandatory plat eRecording, and all Superior Court clerks are able to electronically process plats that have been submitted to the GSCCCA portal in compliance with the eRecording mandate. Since becoming effective on January 1, **over 9,800 plats** have been accepted through the portal. The legislative mandate also required the Authority to promulgate plat eFiling rules and regulations. The Plat Electronic Recording Rules were adopted by the Authority Board last fall and posted under the eFiling information tab of www.gsccca.org/learn.

In addition to its work implementing plat eFiling, the Authority recently made bulk lien eFiling available. This new process allows filers to upload multiple, one-page liens as a single electronic document, streamlining the eFiling process. The Authority has offered several webinars to help clerks and filers, including tax commissioners, get started with bulk lien eFiling.

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 2017, over **2,300** new participants were added to the eFile Registry for a current total of **2,989 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 for its eFiling service 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, plat, 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.

Protective Order Registry

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

The Protective Order Registry, accessed by law enforcement through GCIC terminals, displays all Protective Orders and related data. In FY 2017, nearly **44,000 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 2017, **340,000 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.

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. For over two decades, the Authority’s IT staff has developed and implemented 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.

Following is a summary of the many accomplishments of the Authority’s IT Department for FY 2017. Whether large or small, these activities enable us to meet our goals and grow and innovate in a constantly changing environment.

Development – eFiling & eRecording

Over the past fiscal year, the eFile Project has grown both in terms of filers and participating counties. (See Pages 24-25 for more details on the history of this project and its growth this past fiscal year.) After restructuring its entire eFile site several years ago, the Authority continues to make adjustments in order to incorporate customer feedback, improve the user experience, implement new features, and enhance performance, efficiency and reliability.

Below are some of the enhancements made during FY 2017:

- Implemented changes necessary to comply with the 2016 plat eFiling legislation, which mandated that all plats be electronically filed beginning January 1, 2017.
 - Implemented all rules associated with the new legislation and associated Rules and Regulations concerning how plats are required to be filed in the state of Georgia.
 - Created and exposed a public “Application Programming Interface” (API) to enable systems outside the control of the Authority to electronically create eFile Registry accounts. This allows greater integration and automation of software created by other companies that may need to integrate with the GSCCCA eFile Registry.
 - Implemented eAssist, a Windows client application used in counties to process plats submitted through the Authority eFile system. eAssist can download eFiled documents, stamp them, export the stamped image for use with a land records system, send the final document back to the Authority, and alert the filer that their documents have been processed by the county. The eAssist application is provided by the GSCCCA to offer eRecording capabilities to those counties that do not currently have systems that integrate with the GSCCCA portal.
 - Developed a new, expedited and integrated eFile registration process. This new process allows a “first time” filer to setup their eFile Participant ID and eFile account in a single process.
 - Created an “Express” eFiling option for one-time filers.
 - Expanded support for various compression types often used for scanned plat documents.
- Created a Vendor and Value Added Submitter FAQ section that answers common questions in order to alleviate support time and calls to HelpDesk.
- Improved system performance by reducing timeouts and memory issues.
- Significantly increased participation in Real Estate eFile this past fiscal year:
 - 201,473 real estate documents have been eFiled through the Authority web services since its inception with 128,014 of those eFiled this fiscal year.
 - 54,904 filings have been processed through the Authority’s eFile portal since its launch in 2003 with 53,174 processed this fiscal year.
 - 158 counties now participate in Real Estate eFile, up from 54 last year.
- Continued growing UCC eFile this past fiscal year:
 - 448,420 UCCs have been eFiled through the Authority since its inception in 2009 with 107,100 of those eFiled this past fiscal year.
 - 104 counties now participate in UCC eFile, up from 98 last 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 2011.

Following is data and other information from FY 2017:

- Evaluated and modified the functionality of the eFile Registry website based on user feedback and suggestions. This process yielded various subtle improvements across the website; however, the changes are important as they incorporate user feedback to improve the overall user experience and usability of the website.

- Added 2,347 participants to the registry for a total of 2,989 registered participants.
 - 1,597 Self Filers (1,517 added this fiscal year)
 - 298 Submitters (108 added this fiscal year)
 - 1,094 Trusted Users (722 added this fiscal year)
- Continued to provide the capability for third-party systems to automatically verify the validity of participant ID numbers in real time.
 - 622,307 queries processed this fiscal year.
 - 839,258 queries processed since the eFile Registry opened in November 2011.

Development – Website (www.gsccca.org)

After launching a completely redesigned version of www.gsccca.org to rave reviews several years ago, the Authority continues to tweak and improve the site to better serve its customers. Following are some of the enhancements from FY 2017:

- Filmed and edited 9 more “Featured Clerk” videos and published them to our 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 while also promoting Superior Court clerks.
- Added a website account-type comparison chart to the GSCCCA website, which quickly helps subscribers decide which type of account best suits their needs.
- Implemented a feature to allow subscribers to change their account type without interaction from the GSCCCA accounting department. This allows users to switch between account types as the need arises. For instance, a user may have a specific need to upgrade to a “Premium” account, but would like to revert back to a “Regular” account at some time in the future. This new feature allows that to happen.
- Created a video which demonstrates using the GSCCCA website on mobile devices and published the video to our homepage carousel.
- Created GSCCCA website accounts and updated county information pages for the large number of new Superior Court clerks who took office on January 1, 2017.
- Upgraded the HTML 5 image viewer to include all of the features that the legacy Java Applet viewer offered subscribers. The new HTML 5 image viewer is now fully functional.
- Added the ability to save plat images using the GSCCCA image viewer. With the new mandate for plats to be electronically recorded, it was important to give subscribers an option to download the full resolution image of an eRecorded plat. Having the ability to save the original image allows an interested party to bring the file to a large format printer and reproduce the plat at full scale.
- Upgraded the cipher strength of the certificates used on the GSCCCA website. The certificates allow encrypted communication between the GSCCCA servers and a client machine.

Development – QA

QA is a quality assurance system created by the Authority to review historical deed, lien and plat transmissions to ensure the data and images conform to Authority requirements. Following are some of the QA improvements made during FY 2017:

- Implemented automated tools to use data from “Deed, Lien, Plat Docket Surveys” to confirm that historical re-indexed data conforms to the Docket Survey and associated indexing guidance.
- Reviewed over 27,500 records for the 1991-1990 Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project and 259,000 records from the County-Funded Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project for completeness and conformance to the GSCCCA Indexing Standards For Real and Personal Property Records for the State of Georgia.
- Developed new capabilities to improve flexibility in enforcing that deed, lien, and plat index data transmitted to the Authority indicates a required number of certified indexers. This allows, for example, assistance in enforcing that certain re-indexed records are created through a thorough “double-blind keying” with independent verification process that improves the accuracy of re-indexed data.

Development – Other

- Managed “Change Control” document which is used by management and IT staff to track change requests and thoughtfully prioritize development efforts to determine the best use of resources. 62 tracked projects were completed this past fiscal year.
- Updated the Daily & Monthly County Disbursement Report to include the name of the county. This change provides internal staff with more visibility into the report server application and to support internal staff efforts in ensuring that counties received their reports as expected. The daily report is used to provide clerks with detailed information of the nightly deposit generated for any eFiling fees (UCC and/or Real Estate) the Authority collected on behalf of the clerk’s office. The monthly report is a summary report scheduled to run on the 1st of every month which provides a list of all eFiling fees collected by the Authority, as well as, a listing of all deposits. Each report is used by the clerk for reconciliation purposes between deposits and eFiled documents.
- Created the Safe Harbor Report which displays all monies collected and processed by the Fines and Fees Division for the Safe Harbor Fund. This report is a part of the daily reports which are generated on www.courttrax.org. The Safe Harbor Fund became effective January 1, 2017.
- Ensured continued credit card and ACH processing capabilities throughout GSCCCA by responding to changes that affect these services:
 - Implemented application features to ensure compliance with a new “MasterCard Authorization Mandate,” pertaining to the allowable timeframes for collecting authorized transactions.
 - Maintained up-to-date encryption keys to ensure security of payment transaction information. As a PCI-compliant website, the security keys used for communicating with the GSCCCA merchant account are changed annually as part of security best practices.
- Documented the features and functions of the existing CMM (Customer Management Module) application to help define the requirements for upgrading.
- Improved index data import processes by implementing the ability to customize the number of required “Z” indexer identification lines. As the GSCCCA continues to add historical data to its online search system, the requirements for quality control increase. It is anticipated that future projects will require information to be indexed two or more times to ensure consistency and accuracy. As such, the index validation system needed to be enhanced to allow for the information associated with more than a single certified indexer to be transmitted to the GSCCCA. Such information is conveyed in "Z" lines in the index data file that is sent to the GSCCCA, and the system has been changed to allow a pre-determined number of “Z” lines to be expected for each historical project.

- Improved the GSCCCA Offender Based Tracking System by implementing validation rules to ensure that OBTS transmit files are within expected size constraints.
- Created a process to email clerks annually regarding their web and email user information for account maintenance purposes.
- Added updates to ScanSend to ensure full compatibility with Windows 10. ScanSend 3.1 is now installed on 915 total workstations in Superior Court clerk offices. This is up from 716 last year.
- Created monthly UCC bulk image DVDs for clients throughout the year.

Systems

- Upgraded a core SQL Server at the Failover Datacenter from SQL Server 2005 to 2008. SQL Server is a relational database management system responsible for storing and retrieving data as requested by other software applications. This particular database server hosts many of the GSCCCA's most critical databases. The deployment required extensive database, application, and website testing. The upgrade brings the database to a more modern version, which is critical to support, and also provides access to additional features and functionality. Of significant importance, the upgrade brings the version of SQL Server at the Failover Datacenter in sync with the version at the Primary Datacenter, allowing feature parity and improved management.
- Executed performance analysis on several core databases including eFiling, Fines and Fees, UCC Indexing, and others, in order to vastly improve query processing times. This effort ultimately resulted in overall improved system speeds.
- Completed implementation of a new backup system that centralized all backups onto one platform and replaced an aging tape library system. The new environment will greatly ease the recovery of data when a loss occurs, narrow backup windows for increased system availability, and simplify administration.
- Maintained an alternate server and software infrastructure in response to SB 135, the Clerk Custodianship Bill, which mandates that all clerks back up their electronic records locally as well as online to the GSCCCA. Prior to the bill passing, the Authority already offered the MyVault backup and archival system to all clerks in order to facilitate voluntary, free online backup of clerk data to the GSCCCA. Since passage of the bill, the Authority has engineered a variety of other online backup methodologies for those counties that have either elected not to participate in the MyVault program, or have been unable to participate due to technological or policy barriers.
- Deployed a total of six new file servers across both the Primary and Failover Datacenters, increasing the number from two initial servers. The file servers are used to share data between all devices at the GSCCCA and are the central repository for all information. The number of file servers was increased to distribute the work load and to improve backup performance, thereby minimizing any performance degradation caused during backup windows.
- Modified the Distributed File System (DFS) to allow for greater flexibility in the location of data. This allows for data relocation without the need to change applications or notify users that the data has moved to a different server.
- Upgraded the VMware ESXi hardware platform at the Failover Datacenter. These products allow the GSCCCA to run multiple virtual servers on a shared hardware platform, or essentially operate 123 virtual servers on only eleven physical servers. Virtualization allows the GSCCCA to maximize utilization of physical server resources decreasing server hardware costs. Upgrading the hardware at the Failover Datacenter brings performance to levels comparable with the Primary Datacenter.

- Performed an incremental upgrade on the primary storage array at the Failover Datacenter to improve speed, increase storage capacity, and increase the support life of the product. The storage array currently contains 26 hard drives, a total storage capacity of 41 TBs, and houses all production data at the Failover Datacenter.
- Upgraded accounting software to ensure continued support and compatibility for the accounting staff.
- Updated the standard Windows 7 system “image” that is used on all GSCCCA computers to ensure reliability and ease of use for clerks and their staff.
- Created a standard Windows 10 system “image” that will be used on all new GSCCCA computers to ensure reliability and ease of use for clerks and their staff.
- Improved the process for applying system images to new PCs, decreasing the already low number of failed deployments even further.
- Upgraded the Mitel Application Server, providing additional and improved functionality to the GSCCCA phone system, including optimized call routing, additional reporting, and an improved caller experience for clerks and internet subscribers.
- Upgraded the Data Replication Server to bolster the process that perfectly synchronizes GSCCCA data between the Primary and Failover Datacenters. Such data replication is critical to ensure that the Failover Datacenter can activate when there is an outage at the Primary Datacenter.
- Performed routine mock data restores to test the GSCCCA data backups in the event of an actual data loss. The scale of such tests ranged from individual user files to complete sets of interdependent servers.
- Upgraded the Search Terminal Management Server. Search terminals are used in Superior Court clerk offices throughout Georgia as a way to provide the public free access to the Authority’s databases. This management server essentially “locks down” each search terminal to restrict anything other than access to the GSCCCA search site.
- Upgraded multiple county search terminals to a newer Lenovo-based search terminal. The newer platform provides better reliability, increased performance, and ensures compatibility with the GSCCCA website into the future.
- Updated the firmware (operating system) on the GSCCCA email spam filtering appliance to ensure that the GSCCCA email system continues to be protected against the latest types of viruses and unwanted email into the future.
- Blocked 10.6 million pieces of spam and virus-laden emails. This amounts to over 92% of all incoming email.
- Achieved a total storage array capacity for primary operations of 116 TBs.
- Backed up 500 TBs of data during FY 2017. If this data were transferred to CDs, the resulting stack would be 4,000 feet tall, or about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile high.
- Currently retain roughly 103 TBs of backup data on disk. All GSCCCA data is ultimately backed up to tape; however, the GSCCCA maintains several recent copies of the most critical operational data on highly available and immediately accessible storage arrays for fast restoration.

Network

- Upgraded 40 county connections, drastically increasing combined bandwidth while lowering the overall cost. The network team is constantly evaluating the speed and performance of each county network connection against all available options. As such, the team has been proactively identifying and upgrading any county network connection that appears to be operationally slow, congested, or simply inferior to newly available options that have hit the market in the area.

- Migrations resulted in an 18x speed increase in average download speed:
 - Before migrations: 1.48 Mbps
 - After migrations: 27.4 Mbps
- Migrations resulted in an 12x speed increase in average upload speed:
 - Before migrations: 0.274 Mbps
 - After migrations: 3.3 Mbps
- The increases in speed also coincided with a 50% decrease in cost across the affected lines.
- Engaged with 34 different internet service providers offering 8 different types of network access technologies, in order to support the statewide network.
- Coordinated and helped manage 23 county-based network moves, changes, or implementations. A county-based network change is one where the network in question is actually managed by the county IT Department, but interfaces with the GSCCCA network in some way to enable the clerk access to both networks.
- Implemented a new fiber line at the Primary Datacenter, which is dedicated to carrying traffic from county connections. This change increases network capacity and reliability, while mitigating speed issues that were starting to manifest on the legacy connection serving the same purpose.
- Audited, reviewed, and implemented various new or modified access rules on all GSCCCA-wide area network devices to ensure the network is protected against malicious traffic.
- Acted as an escalation partner to solve 270 HelpDesk tickets.
- Worked with ATT to identify and resolve a firmware bug that existed on a particular brand of modem deployed in several counties.
- Revitalized and maintained a statewide vendor contact sheet which enumerates several regional IT contractors. These contractors can be deployed on short notice to help resolve immediate needs in the field, without the time delay caused by dispatching a CSR from the Atlanta office. Recent engagements leveraging the contact sheet have included running wiring in courthouses, as well as discovering faulty fiber devices deployed at a courthouse.
- Implemented new features on the core GSCCCA network router that allows for better dynamic routing. Essentially, these features allow the router to dynamically select the best network “path” to use when delivering traffic to a county, particularly when multiple lines are installed to ensure fault tolerance.
- Assisted other IT teams (systems, development, etc) by imposing several network scenarios and configurations in order to help isolate and troubleshoot issues or test performance under distinct network conditions.
- Maintained a consolidated list of valid bills for the accounting department to reference. This has enabled us to more accurately track the cancellation of lines, and ensure that internet service providers are billing appropriately.
- 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 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 following comments from satisfied users:

“Today I had the pleasure and good fortune to have my call for help answered by Carlos Velazquez. I’m a new clerk...and was having some problems accessing my GSCCCA email and the Clerk Resource Center. I had to enlist the help of my county ICS department which resulted in Carlos taking several calls from me before the issues were resolved. Carlos was very patient and helpful and he got it all working with a smile in his voice. I appreciate him taking the time to help me until 4:57pm on a Friday before a 3-day weekend. That’s just outstanding!”

“I just wanted to take this opportunity to thank one of your phone support team – Trevin Snow. He not only was gracious, he stopped to listen to my specific concerns. And because of his willingness to help, after only a short time, he was able to locate my document and help me resolve my problem.”

“The moving crew was first rate. Rob and Trevin took care of the breakdown and setup in stellar fashion. What was most impressive was the follow-up. Tuesday was a very busy day for them, but they took the time to come back and check on my crew to be sure that all was in place and running properly. I hope they have recovered from the mild head bumps and bruises, especially Trevin, who lost a battle with an aggressive storage cabinet.”

“I appreciate Nathan calling me in response to my earlier email. When I asked our IT person to sit in while I called Nathan, he found an issue on our end that was causing us not to connect. The problem has been solved and I really appreciate your quick response.”

“Brandon was fantastic and got my email working again very quickly. He was also super patient and accommodating, and checked my computer for malware and answered lots of other IT-related questions for me. So glad he’s a member of the team! Thanks for giving me the VIP treatment.”

“Just wanted you to be aware of Jason’s thoughtfulness in replacing the cable which was somewhat awkward. The cable stretched to its max and it was somewhat challenging from time to time to not become entangled or hit the cord when I wanted to stretch my legs. It’s refreshing to know the squeaky wheel doesn’t always have to make a sound.”

HelpDesk Stats

The following annual statistics speak to the volume of work the Authority’s customer support team handles each year and the efficiency of their performance.

- Total Calls: **16,092**
- Average Speed of Answer: **64 seconds**
- Average Talk Time: **5 minutes 37 seconds**
- Total Email Requests Received: **8,300+**
- Total Hardware/Repair Requests: **286**
- Tickets Received: **12,024**

- Tickets Resolved (during initial contact): **11,729**
- Ticket Resolution Rate: **98%**

Top 10 Requests

- GSCCCA Website: General Information/Non-Tech Q/A (1,563)
- GSCCCA Website: Username/Password Requests (1,280)
- Account Management: New Account Requests (891)
- GSCCCA Website: Site Navigation Assistance (520)
- PT-61: Non-Tech Q/A (318)
- eFile UCC: Customer Filing Questions (240)
- Account Management: Account Deactivation Requests (213)
- GSCCCA Website: Unable to View Images (209)
- Account Management: Modify Account Information (168)6
- GSCCCA Website: Unable to Print Images (166)

Over the last decade and a half, the scope of services provided by HelpDesk has more than doubled and the number of monthly subscribers to the Authority's online databases has more than tripled. With this considerable growth and a commitment to maintaining service excellence, the Authority expanded HelpDesk this past fiscal year by adding an additional customer support rep (CSR) to ensure that clerks, members of their staff, and website customers continue to receive prompt, comprehensive service each and every time they call or email. With the move from five to six CSRs, the team also benefits from the added bonus of being able to specialize their support roles. As an example, one CSR has been designated as the eFiling specialist and has received additional training to become a subject matter expert on eFiling. This enhanced service will allow the Authority to more quickly and effectively provide all of its customers with the help and support they need and have come to expect.

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 three 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.

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 2017:

- Ordered, processed and shipped a total of **819 pieces of new equipment** to clerks' offices including CPUs, monitors, servers, laptops and scanners. The Authority has provided over **25,000** pieces of new equipment to clerks' offices since opening its doors in 1995.
- Deployed **374 pieces of new equipment** (171 computers, 135 monitors and 68 scanners) to 50 Superior Court clerk offices to replace depreciated equipment as part of the Authority's Statewide Computer Replacement Project for all 159 counties.
- Handled **89** Purchase Orders totaling over **\$1.07 million** including equipment for the Remote Data Center
- Handled **93** contracts from counties for additional equipment totaling approximately **\$173,000**.
- Performed detailed evaluation of all returned inventory sheets from counties and processed **708** county equipment returns.
- Processed **129** 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 **150** non-inventory items including switches, cables, keyboards and mice.
- Obtained **260** quotes for equipment purchases for counties.
- Saved over **\$50,000** 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.
- Handled **35** requests for Acquisition Assistance for county purchases.
- Transferred **937** pieces of equipment to the Georgia Department of Administrative Services for proper disposal per state guidelines.
- Replaced **156** aging Windows XP search terminals by repurposing surplus Windows 7 workstations and configuring them to function as search terminals. This resulted in a savings of over \$77,000 as measured against alternative replacement options.
- 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. 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. Following is more detailed information about the Authority's training efforts over the past fiscal year.

Classroom

Classroom training is usually hosted by a Superior Court clerk and offered free-of-charge. For FY 2017, the Authority conducted 61 programs at 42 locations across the state. The following topics were offered:

- Real Estate Indexing Standards
- Plat eFile Training
- eAssist Training
- Notary Public Training (over 1,600 people attended this training)
- Fines & Fees
- UCC Training

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, banking, 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. To improve this popular training method, Authority staff recently purchased new webinar training software to streamline the registration and web-based training process. During FY 2017, the Authority utilized this training tool by hosting 25 webinars for 213 participants covering the following topics:

- UCC Training
- Real Estate Indexing Standards
- Advanced Real Estate Indexing Standards
- Indexing Standards: Common Mistakes
- Bulk Lien eFiling
- Fines and Fees
- Protective Orders
- Get to Know the Authority
- Windows 10

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. Following 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 2017:

- Introduction to GSCCCA Indexing Standards
 - 83 people participated in the training

- 30 users took the Real Estate Indexing Certification Exam and 5 clerk employees successfully passed the exam
- Extended Real Estate Indexing Standards Training
 - 50 people participated in the training
- Fines & Fees Training
 - 103 people participated in the training
- Notary Online
 - 8,489 people participated in the training
 - 3,833 took the Notary Public Final Exam
- UCC Training
 - 25 people participated in the training

Additionally, the Authority conducted 21 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 provided training at the Fall COAG Conference, the Clerks' Fall Meeting at Brasstown Valley, the Clerks' Winter Training, the New Clerks' Training, and the 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 2017.

- Continually update and add new information to the Clerk Resource Center. This password-protected website was designed by the Authority to support Superior Court clerks and their staffs. The site contains clerk-specific information including program status reports, conference materials, and links to Notary Online, PT-61 Online, and the Authority's Training Center. The site also provides a one-stop location for the Authority to post and for clerks to access updated information on legislative changes and other dynamic issues that will affect Superior Court clerk offices.
- Produce quarterly newsletter for Superior Court clerks that is posted on the Authority website.
- Filmed, edited and published 9 new "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, while also promoting Superior Court clerks.
- 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.
- Filmed and edited video honoring retiring Authority chair F. Barry Wilkes, who shared his thoughts on Superior Court clerks and the Clerks' Authority. The video was shown at the Clerks' Fall Conference to help educate newer clerks on their history and the Authority.
- 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 across the state and participated in clerk district meetings to discuss joint projects and legislative issues and to promote the benefits of Authority projects including the Premium Search account and eFile Project.
- Conducted various presentations and training for clerks of Superior Court, other courts, and outside groups including members of the banking, real estate and legal communities.
- 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 clerks.
- 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.
- Benefitted from Authority Communications Director serving as president of the board of the Notary Public Administrators (NPA) for 2016-2018. Comprised of state notary administrators, the NPA brings together public and private stakeholders in the notary industry. The Authority's participation in NPA allows us to monitor changes and trends in the area of notary law nationally that could affect the state of Georgia. In his role as president, he has had the following responsibilities:
 - Attended the Special Commission Meeting on the Operation of the Apostille in The Hague, Netherlands, as part of the United States delegation. The meeting brought together members of The Hague Convention Treaty in an effort to make recommendations for the improvement of the apostille process. He also attended the 10th eApp Forum, a meeting focused on adoption of an electronic issuance process of apostilles for contracting states. (The United States is a contracting state.) As part of the U.S. delegation, he was asked to make a presentation on the Notary Public Administrators' *Handbook on Apostilles and Authentications*.
 - Represented the Clerks' Authority at the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) 2017 Winter Conference where he reported on the activities and 2017 goals of NPA, a section of NASS. He also presented the *Electronic Notarization Implementation Guide* to the full NASS body for consideration. The *Guide* was adopted unanimously by NASS and is available to states adopting electronic notarization processes.
 - Leading the development of a "Guiding Principles" document related to Remote Notarization. The Remote Notarization Principles, which will lay the ground work for development of Standards, will be formally presented at the 2017 NASS Summer Conference.
- Benefitted from Authority Communications Director serving as immediate past-president of the International Association of Commercial Administrators (IACA) for 2015-2016. In this position, he represents the Clerks' Authority by promoting the vital role that IACA plays in the UCC filing office. IACA brings together UCC industry representatives from the private (filings parties) and public (filing offices) sectors.
- Benefitted from staff members furthering education and training:
 - IT director and development manager maintained PMP (Project Management Professional) certification.
 - Network administrator maintained his Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) certification.

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.

