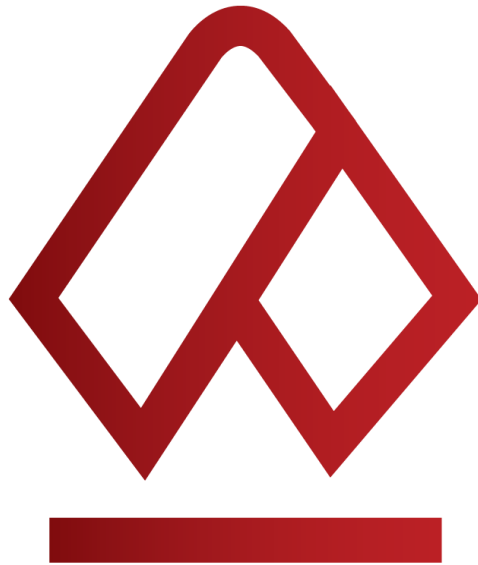


Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority



**2017-2018
Accomplishments &
Year-end Report**

Executive Summary

With a philosophy of hard work and a sometimes obsessive commitment to perfection, 20th century entrepreneur and Marriott Corp. founder J. Willard Marriott once famously noted:

“It’s the little things that make the big things possible. Only close attention to the fine details of any operation makes the operation first class.”

Marriott’s attention to detail and obsession with not just meeting the needs of his customers but providing a quality product and unparalleled customer service played a significant role in his ability to turn a nine-stool root beer stand in Washington, D.C. into one of the leading lodging and hospitality companies worldwide.

Although the scale may be different, one can draw similarities from Marriott’s success story to that of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks’ Cooperative Authority which opened its doors in 1995 with a single project and many doubters. Now, 23 years later, the Authority closes its fiscal year as a successful, diverse entity overseeing nearly 20 projects and an invaluable website that currently holds over 262 million images and was accessed over 5.1 million times this past year by nearly 1.1 million people from 205 countries. Like Marriott, the Authority’s success has been fueled by its attention to detail, a constant drive to anticipate and meet the evolving needs of its customers, a desire to constantly improve its products, and a commitment to provide unmatched customer service across the board.

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. The Authority was created by clerks for the benefit of clerks, and since establishment, has provided to clerks over \$71 million in additional funding and over 26,000 pieces of new equipment. This symbiotic relationship is a critical element in the Authority’s success to date and its ability to achieve even greater results in the future. Below are a few recent comments from clerks about the Authority and its importance to their work:

“You guys are always so nice to us clerks. I am so thankful to have you to call on. I have worked in this clerk’s office since 1979. Since I knew life in the clerk’s office prior to the Authority’s existence, I totally appreciate [everything you do]. Everyone that I’ve called on over the years has always been courteous, professional, and quick to respond to my requests. I am just so thankful to have you to call on.”

– Mildred Peeler

Wilkes County Clerk of Superior Court

“Thanks for all you do for us and our counties!!! You save our taxpayers so much money with all the equipment you furnish for our offices!!!!”

– Linda Dalton Hays

Newton County Clerk of Superior Court

“I just wanted you to know how much I appreciate the work Jeremy did to get us straightened out. He worked with [our IT staff], [staff] from Kofile, and with Windstream. It has taken days – not Jeremy’s fault – to reach this point, but Jeremy didn’t give up. He came by here today to do “hands on” work [... and] I understand that he did a wonderful job. Jeremy is a great example of how the GSCCCA is there for us and will not give up until our needs are met. Thank you and your entire staff for the great work you do and for always being there for us. I really do appreciate everything all of you do for us. All of you help us out so much! It really helps to make our jobs easier knowing that you are with us all the way.”

– Regina B. McIntyre

Barrow County Clerk of Superior Court

“Thanks for all you and Authority do for us.”

– Michelle H. Strickland

Madison 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 inception, 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, criminal case data, and other legal documents.

Today the Clerks’ Authority is a diverse entity that oversees the following:

- Notary & Authentications 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
- eFile Project
- Lien, Plat & Map Project
- State Tax Lien eFiling Project
- PT-61 Project
- Premium Search Account
- Clerks' Authority Map Search Application (Mobile App)
- Data Archive Project (MyVault Online Archive Service)
- Virtual Microfilm (VMF) Project
- Protective Order Registry
- Criminal Case Data Project (Offender-Based Tracking System)
- Carbon Sequestration Registry

In successfully developing and implementing these projects, the Authority helped modernize Superior Court clerk offices and created several one-of-a-kind systems that integrated and standardized information from each of Georgia's 159 counties on a central website, www.gsccca.org. 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 and new equipment for clerks' offices – over \$71 million and 26,000 pieces of new equipment in total.
- 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.

Governed by a board of ten members whose meetings are open to the public, the GSCCCA was created, implemented and continues to operate without receiving any funds through local, state or federal taxes. The Authority has been continually praised for its wise use of available resources, and has proven to be a resounding success for offering unique services for Georgia counties and citizens.

Following are some of the highlights from FY 2018:

- Implemented **Virtual Microfilm (VMF) Project**, a new program for storing and viewing deed images that replaces the traditional microfilming services offered previously to Superior Court clerks. The VMF Project streamlines the microfilm process and provides an enhanced method for

quickly browsing, searching, printing and downloading microfilm content using a PC, laptop or mobile device. Over 51 million deed images within nearly 78,000 deed books have been loaded into the VMF system resulting in over 2.1 terabytes of data stored since the project's launch on November 3, 2017. Liens, plats and historical documents are in the early stages of being uploaded to the VMF system and will be available for viewing by clerks in the near future. (More information on the VMF Project can be found on Pages 29-30.)

- Built the systems and implemented the changes necessary to comply with a 2017 legislative mandate requiring the **electronic filing of state tax liens** beginning January 1, 2018. The project spanned the majority of the year and required over 5,800 hours of aggregate staff time to complete. From passage until the effective date, the Authority was in constant communication with vendors and Superior Court clerks to provide information on critical changes and to offer training to ensure all were prepared when the system went live. On January 1, 2018, when the eFiling of state tax liens became mandatory, the Authority and Superior Court clerks were ready, and the Department of Revenue successfully eFiled 76,889 liens on that day with Superior Court clerks by filing through the Authority's eFile portal. 197,555 liens have been successfully eFiled through June 30.
- 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 revised 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 661, which substantially modified the Act which passed in 2017. The Authority continues to work with all interested stakeholders in the implementation of the complicated provisions of this new revision to the law. Additionally, the Authority revised the Indexing Standards two separate times to conform to these changes in legislation.
- Completed the **1992 Historical Project** moving the inclusive range of deed data back to 1992 for all counties, or, in other words, moving the current statewide "good-from" date from 1993 to 1992. With the completion of this project, 85,253 records were published to production.
- Advanced the **1991-90 Historical Project** with 90 counties currently participating. Since inception of the project, the Authority has added over 71,800 deed records to its publically searchable website, and is reviewing another 149,000 records currently in quarantine.
- Added 70,000 instruments to the system through the **County-Funded Historical Deed, Lien and Plat Re-Indexing Project** for a total of over 1.6 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-nine counties are now participating in the program.
- Compensated clerks' offices over **\$5 million** this fiscal year for prints (\$.50 per print) off the Authority website (**\$56 million** for prints since the Authority was established), and over **\$874,000** this fiscal year for deed images (**\$15.5 million** for deed images since inception of the project).
- Continued to grow the **eFile Project**. With recent legislative changes that have now mandated certain types of real estate documents to be electronically recorded, each of the 159 Superior Court clerks now have systems that directly interface with the GSCCCA eFiling portal. This newfound level of integration is expected to catapult overall participation into the future as the technical

barrier for clerks to participate has now been largely overcome. Considering the momentum of the existing eFiling systems and a successful track-record of implementing legislatively mandated programs, it is expected that eFiling numbers will continue to rise significantly with the increased participation by clerks' offices.

- Increased **Premium Search accounts** by nearly **15%** for a fiscal year-end total of **4,173 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.
- Restored 605 GB of data for 14 counties through the Authority's **MyVault Online Archive Service** in FY 2018. Currently, 153 counties participate in the program with 9 counties added this fiscal year. The statistics continue to stagger with the online vault storing and protecting over 754 million files totaling more than 102 TB of live data. Over 92 million files totaling more than 18 TB of data were added to the vault in FY 2018. In addition to the 9 new installations, more than 20 counties were upgraded with new archive equipment in FY 2018.
- Reorganized the **Quality Control Department** to ensure that all business practices and procedures were institutionalized. Additionally, staff streamlined various long-standing procedures in order to accelerate data review times while not compromising quality and created tools to automate the creation of various reports instrumental in ensuring completion of historical docket series.
- 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 23 years.

Following are some of the highlights from FY 2018:

- Added **11.5 million** images to the system for a fiscal year-end total of over **262 million** images accessible to the public through www.gscca.org.
- Had over **436 million** page views and nearly **1.1 million** unique visitors to www.gscca.org. The public accessed the Authority's invaluable data via the Internet over **5.1 million times** from **205 countries** this past fiscal year.
- Ordered, processed and shipped a total of **620 pieces of new equipment** to clerks' offices including CPUs, monitors, servers, laptops and scanners. The Authority has provided over **26,000** pieces of new equipment to clerks' offices since opening its doors in 1995.
- Deployed **176 pieces of new equipment** (computers, monitors and scanners) to 43 Superior Court clerk offices to replace depreciated equipment as part of the Statewide Computer Replacement Project for all 159 counties.
- Supported Superior Court clerks and staff, website users and other customers by handling over **18,000 phone calls** and over **8,700 emails** to HelpDesk, the Authority's customer support team.

- Conducted **89** classroom training sessions, webinars and one-on-one programs on various subjects for over **2,000** participants at nearly **40** different locations around the state. The Authority also trained nearly **10,000** people through its five online courses. Nearly **76,000 users** have benefitted from accessing the Authority’s Learning Management System (LMS) since its inception in 2006.
- Indexed over **248,000** UCCs and conducted over **9,500** Certified Searches for FY 2018. (The number of UCCs filed in May 2018 – 23,257 – was the highest since March 2006.) Since the project’s inception in 1995, the Authority has indexed nearly **6.1 million** UCCs and conducted over **255,000** Certified Searches.
- Increased participation in **Notary Online** to **136 counties**. **94%** 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 **46,000 notary commissions** were issued by clerks of Superior Court and then submitted to the Authority for inclusion in the statewide database.) and issued **31,000 apostilles** this past fiscal year. In FY 2018, the Notary & Authentications Division served **9,000 walk-in customers**, processed **4,000 mail-in orders**, answered **9,100 phone calls**, and sold **1,300 Notary Handbooks**.
- Collected and disbursed approximately **\$85.4 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 over **30,000 monthly reports** submitted by reporting entities.
- 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 **303,000 records** of criminal court dispositions from various courts in Georgia for the purpose of compiling criminal histories and background checks.
- Upgraded **31** county connections, drastically increasing combined bandwidth while lowering the overall cost, and coordinated **30** county-based network moves, changes, or implementations.
- Backed up **730 TB** of data during FY 2018. If this data were transferred to Ultra HD 4K Blu-rays, it would require 7,475 disks, and the resulting stack would be almost 30 feet tall.
- Processed **11 million** emails and blocked **6 million** pieces of spam and virus-laden emails.

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. And providing exceptional customer service is one of the Authority’s core principles. Whether dealing with a Superior Court clerk or a member of the public, we want to be professional and efficient, as well as friendly and helpful. Below are the contents of an email the Authority recently received that acknowledge the excellent customer service of one staff member but also represent the kind of service we want to provide and impression we want to leave on all our customers and other constituents with whom we interact:

“I write to commend Christy, whose excellent customer service I received today. I called GSCCCA to ask questions regarding pricing for use of the search engine on its website. I hung up before anyone answered, as something else demanded my immediate attention. Before long, [Christy] called me back, explained that someone from my number had called,

and asked if she could be of assistance. I was thrilled that someone in my State's government cared enough to call me back! That kind of caring is generally unheard of!

"[Christy] was (1) friendly, and (2) instead of telling me generally where on the Internet I might find the information I sought, she personally answered my questions and explained billing for use of the website. I greatly appreciate her attention and willingness to answer my questions and explain nuances, as I did not expect that level of customer service. Usually these days, a customer is lucky to get someone to even answer the telephone, let alone getting a call back by someone who can knowledgeably respond to questions.

"[Christy] is exceptional, and the GSCCCA should do something befitting her. She's certainly out of the norm for my customer service experiences."

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 this news isn't the destination, but rather a mile marker on the path we continue to pave. As we enter our 24th 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, and continue to reevaluate and reimagine every aspect of our business. We must out-innovate today, so we can outperform tomorrow. We are committed to remaining entrepreneurial and strategic, and positioning the Authority for preeminence not only for the short term, but for 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 over 5.1 million times from 205 countries in FY 2018. 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 2018

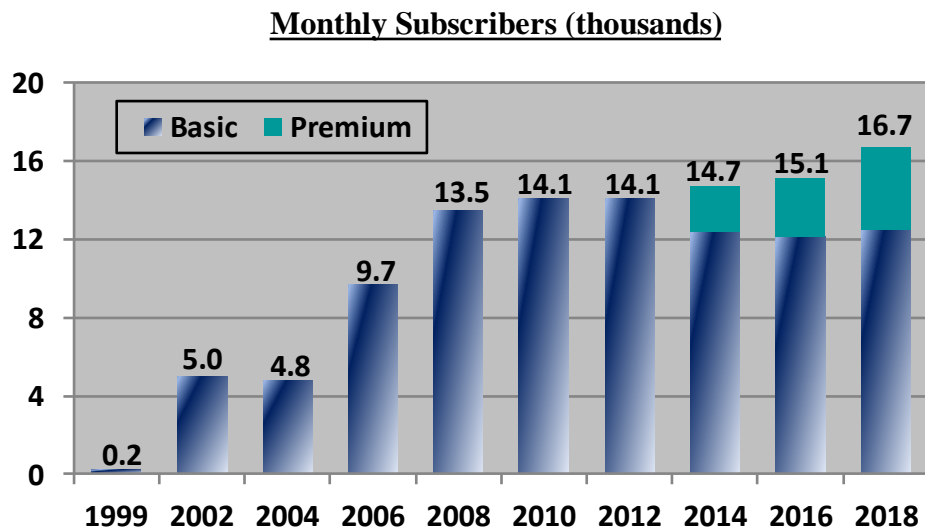
- Images added to the system: **11.5 million**
- Total images in the system: **262 million**
- Sessions: **over 5.1 million**
- Data Transferred/Bandwidth: **10.59 TB**
- Page views: **436 million**
- Unique visitors: **1.1 million**
- Percentage of users accessing website using mobile device: **15.3%**
- Average page views per visit: **26**
- Average visit duration: **13:03 minutes**
- Number of countries that visited: **205**
- Top 4 countries: U.S., India, Philippines, and China
- 42.68% of all visitors use Chrome; 30.35% of all visitors use Internet Explorer; 12.61% use Safari; and 8.21% use Firefox. These numbers represent a 41.6% increase for Google Chrome and a 35% decrease for Internet Explorer. This is the first year that Google Chrome usage is greater than Internet Explorer and other browsers.

The Authority understands the importance of its data, and prioritizes making its website accessible and organized. 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 over a million annual, distinct 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 6/30/18: **16,652**
- Percentage increase in total monthly subscribers for FY 2018: **4%**
- Regular monthly subscribers as of 6/30/18: **12,479**
- Premium Search monthly subscribers as of 6/30/18: **4,173**
- Percentage increase in Premium Search accounts for FY 2018: **14.7%**
- Single-use subscribers added during fiscal year: **24,217**

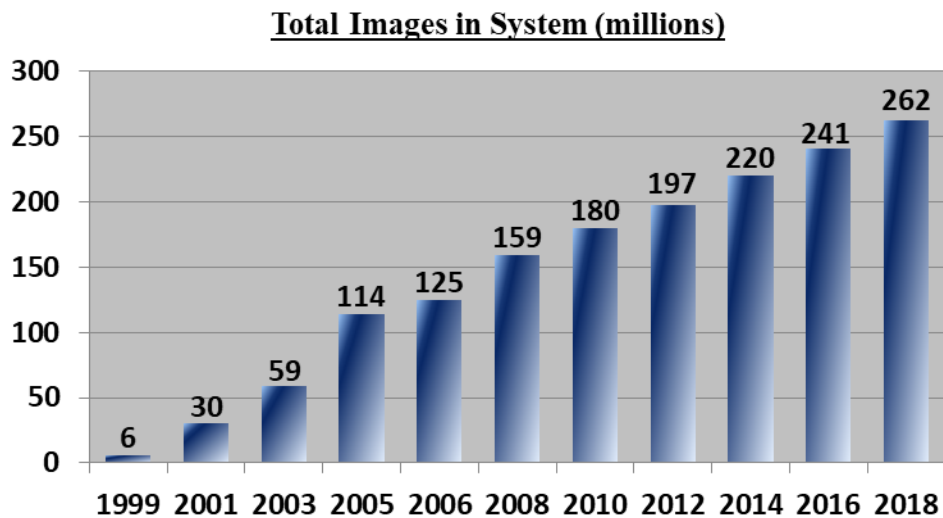


Since 1999, website subscriptions have increased dramatically, clear evidence of the Authority’s growth and the growing value of its statewide indexes. Beyond the numbers, though, the Authority gauges its success and relevance on the response and feedback from its customers and how integral the Authority’s 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 2018, **11.5 million** images were added to the system for a fiscal year-end total of over **262 million images**. See the following chart and bar graph for more details.

	Images Added in FY 2018	Total Images 6/30/18
Deeds	9,313,001	227,254,642
Liens	1,399,985	19,727,087
Plats	89,480	1,141,265
UCCs	322,020	8,151,449
PT-61s	412,266	6,042,145
Total	11,536,752	262,316,588



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 **26,000 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 **16,652 subscribers** today, over **436 million page views** in FY 2018, and over **262 million images** online, the Authority has virtually eliminated downtime. Whether a user searches the records on Tuesday morning or Saturday night, 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 (payment card industry) compliance – adherence to a set of specific security standards that were developed to protect card information during and after a financial transaction. 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 2018 with overall revenues ahead of budget. While deed fee revenue did not meet forecasts, other projects performed ahead of expectations. Additionally, the Authority staff continued to aggressively manage project and administrative costs. The Authority is well positioned to meet its upcoming FY 2019 budgeted obligations which includes the expenses associated with the completion of the 1991-1990 Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project.

FY 2017 Year-end Audit Completed by Mauldin & Jenkins

- Received an unqualified “clean” opinion from Mauldin & Jenkins for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017 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 99%.
- Sent monthly past-due collection letters to help reduce the amount of bad debt write-offs.
- Ensured timely deactivation of past-due accounts to help reduce the amount of charges that can be incurred by delinquent subscribers.
- Managed the financial transactions relating to GSCCCA Image Agreements and provided monthly statements to clerks. During FY 2018, the Authority compensated Superior Court clerk offices over \$5 million for print monies generated and over \$874,000 for deed images transmitted to the Authority by clerks' offices.

Accounting Information

- Total active subscriber accounts as of June 30, 2018: **16,652**
This includes **4,173** Premium Search accounts.
- Average monthly direct access subscription revenue during FY 2018: **\$241,927**
- Single-use subscription revenue during FY 2018: **\$121,080**
- Number of monthly check payments processed during FY 2018: **13,970**
- Purchased **\$409,217** of equipment for counties during FY 2018 as part of the Authority's Statewide Computer Replacement Project.
- Amount compensated to clerks' offices for deed images:
 - During FY 2018: **\$874,018**
 - Since inception of project: **\$15.5 million**
- Amount compensated to clerks' offices for prints (\$.50 per print) off the Authority website:
 - During FY 2018: **\$5,047,392**
 - Since inception of project: **\$56 million**
- FY 2018 break-down for print compensation:
 - Deeds: \$4,419,049
 - Liens: \$231,626
 - Plats: \$221,237
 - PT-61s: \$45,547
 - UCCs: \$129,933

Divisions

Notary & Authentications 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 178,000).
- 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. 136 Georgia counties (86%) 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, 115 countries participate in the Apostille Treaty, and approximately 4 million apostilles are issued worldwide on an annual basis.

During FY 2018, the Authority's Notary & Authentications Division:

- Maintained the statewide notary database. A statewide total of **46,000 notary commissions** were issued by clerks of Superior Court and then submitted to the Authority for inclusion in the statewide database. 94% of these notary commissions were processed through the Authority's web-based system and 6% through traditional methods.
- Issued **31,000 apostilles** this fiscal year destined for 101 different countries. These documents originated in 134 different Georgia counties. Three additional countries joined the Apostille Treaty: Guatemala, Tunisia and Bolivia.
- Issued **194 certificates of authority**, primarily for use in Puerto Rico.
- Provided service to **9,000 walk-in customers**; processed **4,000 mail-in requests**; and answered **9,100 phone calls**.
- Continued promoting Notary Online with **94%** of notary applications submitted electronically to the Authority via the Notary Online application system. Participation in the program increased to **136 counties**. The Authority provides one-on-one training for new counties.
- Sold **1,300 Notary Handbooks**. In addition to direct sales, the Authority continues to provide 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. This year, nine counties participated in the program with a total of **380** handbooks being sold at the local level.

- Conducted **24 training classes** for notaries public at 14 locations around the state with nearly 1,300 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 **9,600** people participating in the training and nearly **5,100** 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.

As evidenced by these statistics, the Notary & Authentications staff handles a tremendous workload, but even more importantly, they provide professional, efficient and helpful service to each and every one of their customers. Their outstanding work is critical to the continued success of the Authority, and is utilized and appreciated by thousands of people each year. Below are a few recent comments from customers that highlight the kind of service provided by this staff:

“I visited this office today to have sixteen documents apostilled for an adoption. I can't say enough about the two women who provided this service for me. This was absolutely the most pleasant experience I've encountered throughout my family's adoption journey. I was met with a level of friendliness, patience and helpfulness that is very rare. I am so appreciative of these ladies' attitudes. I left their office in a much better mood than when I arrived. I'm sorry I did not get their names, but I wanted to express my gratitude for positive interaction.”

“THANK YOU Cheywanda!! We have had the best customer service experience with you! Thank you for being so helpful, responsive, and providing updates. Please pass this note along to your manager to let him/ her know the positive experience we have had with you.”

“I recently ordered apostilles for some of my documents from you. I was so impressed with the overall experience that I decided to send you a quick thank you note. Here are the things I especially appreciated:

- *A complete and precise documentation on your website, I never felt lost or overwhelmed during the process.*
- *The fact that (I believe) the documents were sent back to me the very day they were received. This was incredible -- in Massachusetts, the mail-in option can take 2-3 weeks!*
- *A template for a cover letter, which saved me some time.*
- *Multiple options to pay for the apostle (It happened that the day I wanted to mail the documents, I forgot my checkbook. Fortunately, there was an option to use a credit card!)*

Once again, big thank you!”

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 nearly 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 2018, the Authority's Fines & Fees Division:

- Collected and disbursed approximately **\$85.4 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 over **30,000 monthly reports** submitted by reporting entities.
- Began collecting monies for "**Georgia State Indemnification Fund**" on July 1, 2017 based on an intergovernmental agreement with the Department of Administrative Services. 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.
- Fielded questions related to new legislation (HB 673, SB 407 and SB 369) affecting fines and fees.

- Updated www.courttrax.org, contact information, documents, training materials, forms, rules and regulations, legal advice, the online calculator, and vendor programs to reflect current legislation.
- 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 their 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 **579,000 UCCs** have been electronically filed. **108 counties** currently participate in the program with **4** of those counties activated this year.

During FY 2018, the Authority:

- Indexed and added to database **248,471 UCCs**. The number of UCCs filed in May 2018 – 23,257 – was the highest since March 2006.
- Conducted **9,525 Certified Searches**.
- Continued promoting **UCC eFile** with nearly **109,000 UCCs** electronically filed during FY 2018.
- 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 **6.1 million UCCs** (approximately 22,000 per month) and conducted over **255,000 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 **9.3 million real estate deed images** to the system during FY 2018 to bring the total to over **227 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 2018, the Authority compensated clerks' offices in Georgia over **\$874,000** for deed images added to the system (**\$15.5 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 **412,000 PT-61** images this fiscal year and over **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 2018, nearly **455,000 real estate documents** were eRecorded in Georgia's 159 counties, and over **665,000 documents** have been eRecorded since the inception of the program.

Following is a summary of efforts during FY 2018 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 22 counties have completed the Indexing Certification.
- Concluded 91 clerks' office docket surveys through FY 2018 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, 127 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 2018.
- 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 cost to add each additional historical year to the database is approximately \$3.6 million dollars.

The **1992 Historical Project** was completed in March moving the inclusive range of deed data back to 1992 for all counties, or, in other words, moving the current statewide "good-from" date from 1993 to 1992. With the completion of this project, 85,253 records were published to production.

With a strong economic forecast, the Authority continues to advance the **1991-90 Historical Project** with 90 counties participating. Since inception of the project, the Authority has added over 71,800 deed records to its publically searchable website, and is reviewing another 149,000 records currently in quarantine.

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-nine 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.

This past fiscal year, **70,000 instruments** were added to the system, for a total of over **1.6 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.

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 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 **579,000** UCCs have been electronically filed since May 2009 when the pilot project began, with nearly **109,000** of those eFiled during FY 2018. Four new counties were activated this fiscal year for a current total of **108 participating counties**.

As a service to Superior Court clerks who were seeking a trusted partner to help participate in a voluntary Child Support eFiling program, the Authority added Child Support eFiling to its portal in 2010. This system provides an automated electronic interface to the Child Support eFiling system of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), allowing clerks to integrate directly with the GSCCCA eFiling system instead of a separate system hosted by AOC. The AOC previously contracted with the Department of Human Services (DHS) to provide a workflow and eFiling service for child support cases. Using the GSCCCA portal, clerks can conveniently receive and process child support cases initiated by DHS. Currently, **125 counties** are participating in Child Support eFile with **3** of those activated during FY 2018. Since January 1, 2010, over **522,000** filings have been accepted, with nearly **81,000** of those filings accepted during FY 2018.

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 participation in many of the projects is completely voluntary. All eFile programs are provided to clerks and the public free of charge

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 2018, over **2,000** new participants were added to the eFile Registry for a current total of **5,009 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.

During FY 2018, participation in Real Estate eRecording continued to grow with all 159 clerks' offices participating to some degree:

- 97 offices allow all document types;
- 37 offices allow all document types except deeds;
- 21 offices allow plats and state tax liens only;
- 3 offices allow plats, state tax liens and a combination of deed and/or liens; and
- 1 clerk's office allows only state tax liens.

The increase in eFiling participation is due, in part, to legislation that has passed over the last several years. In 2016, a bill passed that required 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 the law. Specifically, the Authority expanded its eFiling portal to accommodate the shift to mandatory plat eRecording, which allows all Superior Court clerks to be able to electronically process plats that have been submitted to the GSCCCA portal in compliance with the eRecording mandate. Since becoming legislatively mandated on January 1, 2017, **over 36,000 plats** have been electronically filed. The Authority Board adopted plat eFiling rules and regulations which are posted under the eFiling information tab of www.gsccca.org/learn.

In 2017, legislation was passed by the Georgia General Assembly that mandated the electronic filing of state tax liens, but the Act was substantially modified by a second bill that was passed in 2018. During both sessions, the Authority hosted a series of meetings with all interested stakeholders to reach a revised solution, and continues to work with these groups in the implementation of the complicated provisions of the new law. Since the mandatory effective date of January 1, 2018, the Department of Revenue (DOR) has successfully eFiled over **197,000 liens** with Superior Court clerks by filing through the Authority's eFile portal. (More details on the State Tax Lien eFiling Project will follow.)

Since 2011 when the Authority launched Real Estate eRecording, participants have eFiled over **665,000** real estate documents with nearly **455,000** of those eFiled in FY 2018. These numbers are made more impressive when considering the fact that for the majority of the history of the eRecording system, participation has been purely voluntary. With recent legislative changes that have now mandated certain types of real estate documents to be electronically recorded, each of the 159 Superior Court clerks now have systems that directly interface with the GSCCCA eFiling portal. This newfound level of integration is expected to catapult overall participation into the future as the technical barrier for clerks to participate has now been largely overcome. Considering the momentum of the existing eFiling systems and a successful track-record of implementing legislatively mandated programs, it is expected that eFiling numbers will continue to rise significantly with the increased participation by clerks' offices.

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.

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. Due to the accelerated influx of document images along with other system growth demands, the Authority significantly increased the capacity of its core storage system in 2011 from 26 TB to 71 TB.

Legislation was passed in 2016 that required 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 legislatively mandated on January 1, 2017, over 36,000 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.

In 2017, legislation was passed by the Georgia General Assembly that mandated the electronic filing of state tax liens, but the Act was substantially modified by a second bill that was passed in 2018. See more details in the following section.

State Tax Lien eFiling Project

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 (DOR), the Authority helped forge a 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 which was signed into law.

From passage until its effective date of January 1, 2018, the Authority spent tremendous time and effort building the systems necessary for the DOR to successfully eFile liens through the GSCCCA portal, and implementing other changes to the GSCCCA search systems to meet and ensure that clerks could meet the mandates of the new law. 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. Significant effort was spent testing each facet of the system from end to end to ensure all kinks were resolved in advance of the system going live. The project spanned the majority of the year and required over 5,800 hours of aggregate staff time to complete.

During this time, the Authority was in active communication with vendors providing information on critical changes for both eFiling and real estate indexing transmission requirements. Real estate systems provided by various vendors in Georgia must have their programs certified by the GSCCCA to ensure compliance with transmission standards. The Authority was also in constant communication with Superior Court clerks with project updates and conducted webinars and other training throughout the fall to provide instruction on the anticipated indexing standards changes.

On January 1, 2018, when the eFiling of state tax liens became mandatory, the Authority and Superior Court clerks were ready, and the Department of Revenue successfully eFiled 76,889 liens on that day with Superior Court clerks by filing through the Authority's eFile portal.

During the 2018 legislative session, however, the Georgia General Assembly passed another bill (HB 661) that substantially modified the 2017 Act. The Authority again hosted a series of meetings and 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 revised solution, and continues to work with all interested stakeholders in the implementation of the complicated provisions of the new law.

Additionally, the Authority revised the Indexing Standards two separate times to conform to the changes brought about by the new legislation.

The Authority continues to assist Superior Court clerks in their efforts to successfully meet the requirements of this new law, and clerks have worked tirelessly to file, index and transmit state tax lien eFilings in a timely manner. Since the mandated start date of January 1, 2018 through June 30, the Department of Revenue has eFiled 197,555 liens with Superior Court clerks through the Authority's eFile portal. The Authority is continuing to develop tools for clerks to update, review and maintain the accuracy of the pending lien search, and has implemented a streamlined notification process which should reduce processing times.

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, 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 from the 2017 legislative session, relating to the electronic filing of state tax liens, added a Certificate of Lien Clearance to the PT-61 form beginning January 1, 2018. Shortly after, House Bill 661 from the 2018 legislative session removed the Certificate of Lien Clearance from the PT-61 form effective February 20, 2018.

During FY 2018, the Authority:

- Added over **412,000** PT-61 filings to the statewide system for a total of over **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 clerks' offices nearly **\$46,000** for prints (\$.50 per print) off the Authority website related to the PT-61 Project.
- Added over **169,000** properties during FY 2018 for a total of **over 2.5 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.
- 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 2018, the Authority increased the number of Premium Search accounts by nearly **15%** for a fiscal year-end total of **4,173 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, and the Authority continuously improves 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 169,000 properties** were added for a fiscal year-end total of over **2.5 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. When the service was first launched, clerks had to agree to include all real estate data in the nightly backup in order to participate; however, that requirement has been loosened due to the terms of SB 135 (discussed later in this section). Nonetheless, real estate data remains the most substantial part of the backup data received. The archive service is managed and monitored daily using live reporting tools and software analytics to ensure that the nightly archive job runs smoothly and successfully.

MyVault has always provided remote storage and protection for Superior Court clerks' digital information at a secure data center in Atlanta, but, in 2015, the program 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.

Participation in the program has continued to grow with **153 counties** currently protecting their electronic records using the MyVault Online Archive. 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 as needed. Clerks are also encouraged to contact the Authority for assistance at any time, knowing that MyVault is a managed service and jobs are monitored daily to ensure success.

MyVault is currently storing and protecting over **754 million files** totaling more than **102 TB 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 102 TB of live data (current versions of files), the MyVault system maintains 30 days of previous file versions totaling 12 TB of additional data stored in the vault.

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.

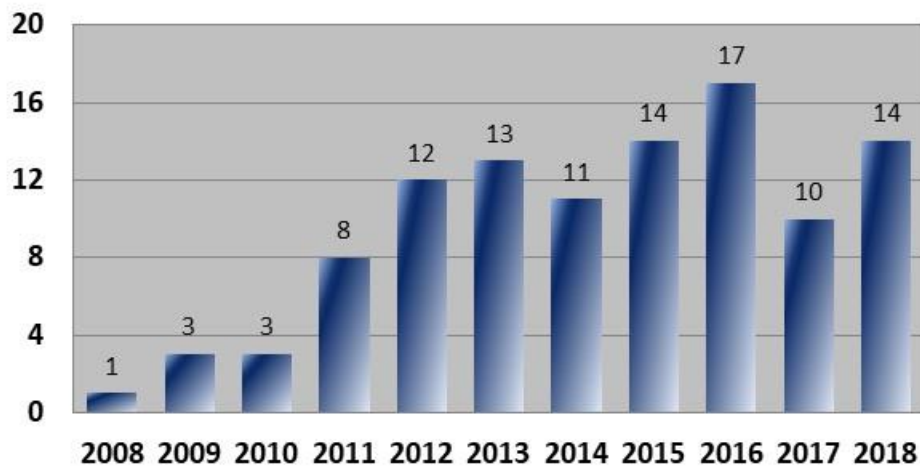
In 2015, SB 135 (Custodianship Bill) was passed to reassert that the clerk of Superior Court is the sole custodian of the records he/she maintains. The bill also defined new requirements for electronic backups of records for which the clerk is custodian. It further maintained that any electronic record under the custodianship of the clerk should be backed up in two specific ways, including the transmission of these records to the Clerks' Authority for offsite protection.

Current MyVault users were already meeting this requirement, so very few changes were needed in order for these counties to become compliant with the law. Other counties have subsequently chosen to enroll in the MyVault program and utilize the archive appliance to facilitate the process of transmitting their office's electronic records to the Authority routinely. By maintaining multiple backups in geographically unique locations, a county can lower its risk of having a catastrophic data loss event due to ransomware

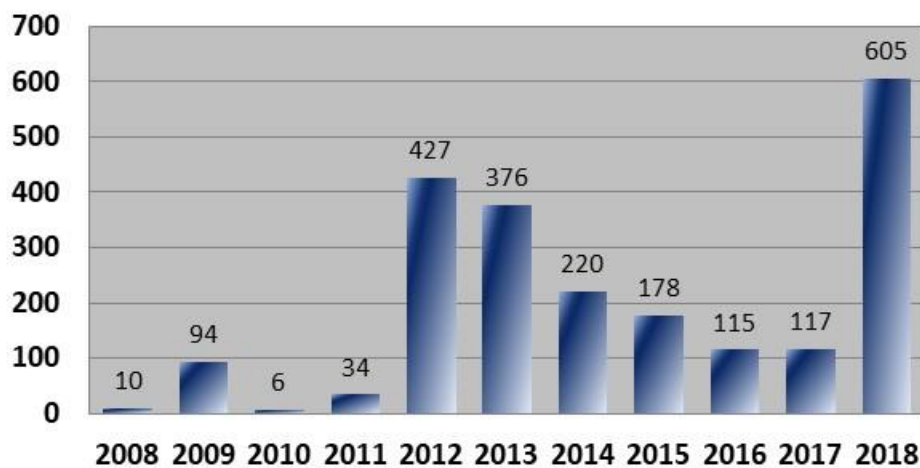
attacks, equipment failure, or human error. In doing so, the Authority has been able to successfully help some affected counties bypass the ransom demands and safely restore files to an operational state.

In FY 2018, the Authority received **14 requests** to restore data, resulting in **605 GB of data** successfully restored. The Authority has received **106 requests** to restore data since MyVault began in 2007, and **over 2 TB** of data has been successfully restored to date. In addition, 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.

Total Number of Restore Requests Received



Total Volume of Data Restored in GB



Hardware failure remains the number-one cause of data loss events that impact business operations. This type of event can cause a minor disruption or can paralyze a business with the loss of time, money and personnel required to recover. In FY 2018, MyVault Online Archive was utilized to restore over 115 GB of data as a result of hardware-related incidents. Since the MyVault program was launched over 10 years

ago, there have been over 30 reported incidents of data loss involving equipment hardware failure. Over 1.3 TB of data has been restored back to county servers from MyVault for this reason.

Data corruption and incidents involving human error are also very common. There have been over 40 requests for data restores from MyVault due to accidental file deletion, missing records and/or data corruption. Seven of these requests occurred in FY 2018. Data restore amounts are typically smaller in these situations but are no less important than any other recovery request.

Ransomware incidents are on the rise, creating havoc across local network resources. Often the infection goes undetected initially, and is triggered unknowingly by a user clicking on a pop-up or email attachment. In the last three years, there have been seven reported instances of county servers infected with a ransomware virus. Two reported incidents occurred during FY 2018. Combined, nearly 4 million files totaling 330 GB of data have been restored from MyVault due to ransomware incidents. In all seven cases, MyVault was utilized to restore critical records and support the local recovery effort in maintaining business continuity.

Restore requests, such as the ones noted below, are not uncommon and illustrate the range of issues and events that occur. They also serve as a reminder of the benefit to maintaining multiple backups.

- *“We had a twin hard drive failure on our server.”* – 2 GB restored
- *“My server crashed for the second time in two months.”* – 300 GB restored (twice)
- *“Two disk RAID drives were lost.”* – 63 GB restored
- *“My server is beyond repair, but we’re trying to salvage the hard drive.”* – 19 GB restored
- *“Our server crashed and our local backup is incomplete.”* – 100 GB restored
- *“Our server died last night.”* – Not a MyVault user (then)
- *“Our server has been unstable and we are replacing it.”* – 25 GB restored
- *“The courthouse lost power and our server crashed.”* – Not a MyVault user (then)
- *“Our courthouse was struck by lightning.”* – 80 GB restored
- *“We had bad storms and our server crashed last night.”* – 56 GB restored
- *“We lost some data last week during a software upgrade.”* – Data location not part of job (then)
- *“Some of our files were accidentally overwritten while migrating to a new server.”* – 35 files restored
- *“Some files on our server are missing.”* – 2 GB restored
- *“Our database is corrupt.”* – 1 file restored
- *“Our server crashed and our backup is corrupt.”* – Not a MyVault user (then)
- *“Someone accidentally deleted some files.”* – < 1 GB restored
- *“We deleted an important folder, can you restore it?”* – 3 GB restored
- *“Our systems have been infected with a ransomware virus.”* – 40 GB restored
- *“We’ve had a ransomware attack in the county.”* – 200 GB restored

Each year, annual audit reports are distributed to all clerks enrolled in the MyVault Online Archive Service. These reports contain details about the clerk’s archive account, equipment, and nightly job(s). The purpose is to encourage periodic review of the job details (content, data location and scheduling) and ensure that the archive jobs are accurate and reflect the clerk’s expectations. In addition to the annual review, audit reports can be generated at any time using the online dashboard or by making a request to the Authority.

Virtual Microfilm (VMF) Project

In November 2017, the Authority launched the Virtual Microfilm (VMF) Project, which was designed and implemented to replace the previous, traditional microfilming services offered to clerks of Superior Court since the early 2000s. The new VMF Project is a GSCCCA-sponsored initiative intended to enhance the microfilm creation process and produce virtual microfilm for:

- Everything previously filmed since 2011.
- All new deeds transmitted to the GSCCCA, totaling more than 7 million images per year.
- All deeds, liens and plats ever received by the GSCCCA, which will exceed another 236 million images once enabled.

In July, 2017 the Authority received advice from the Attorney General's office confirming that the amendment to statute OCGA 36-9-5 (c)(2), regarding the conversion of documents via electronic means, applies to clerks and deed images. This resulted in an opportunity for the Authority to offer a new virtual microfilm service to clerks.

This enhanced alternative to traditional microfilm benefits the clerks by providing back-up for extremely sensitive information in the event of a disaster. Virtual microfilm technology also produces better image quality for viewing and printing while also saving time and resources previously spent recalling film/boxes from storage. Another advantage of the VMF system is it provides a paperless option for those seeking more environment-friendly business solutions.

The Authority receives deed, lien and plat images daily from 159 Georgia counties. The new VMF system captures, protects and preserves these images while making them accessible to the clerk for viewing and/or download through an online dashboard. Stored images are grouped on the website by docket and book, making document retrieval extremely familiar to clerks. Documents are also grouped into containers called "virtual reels" that imitate physical microfilm reels. Such virtual reels are formatted to be wholly sufficient for subsequent physical film production if the need or desire ever arises.

The initial import of deed images was completed in November 2017, totaling more than 44 million deed images across 67,000 deed books. To date, over **51 million deed images** have been loaded into the VMF system totaling **over 2.1 terabytes of data** stored, protected and accessible for viewing. All new deeds actively transmitted to the Authority daily are imported into the VMF system monthly, averaging more than 7 million images per year. Liens, plats and historical documents will be added progressively to the system over the next fiscal year.

One of the features of the VMF Project is an online dashboard that serves as an interface between the clerk and microfilm content for their county. Through the VMF online portal, the clerk is empowered, as custodian of the records, to access and view archived records on a self-serve basis. Since the launch of VMF, **52 clerks** have activated their VMF accounts. The VMF portal allows the clerk's desktop PC, laptop or mobile device to become a high-performance microfilm reader/printer. Every clerk has access to their archived records in the virtual vault by using their password-protected login. Here, the clerk has instant access to their documents and microfilm reel information and can:

- Easily browse through archived images.
- Quickly search for images by book and page.
- Send or save files as PDF, Zip or TIFF image.

- Copy, print and download images.
- Purchase physical microfilm reels if desired.

VMF records are stored securely in two geographically diverse, high-security data centers in Georgia and Colorado. Stored information is secure and the digital content cannot be viewed without proper user credentials/authorization. Each clerk has their own secure login for their individual county, which makes it easy for them to access and verify.

New features to the VMF website have been published, including an easy-to-use search bar where the clerk has the ability to search for a specific document right down to the page number. This allows the clerk to quickly collaborate with customers and staff minimizing cost, time and effort for the clerk’s office. To further assist the clerk in using the VMF website, reference guides have been provided and training webinars have been scheduled throughout the year.

Advantages of converting to virtual microfilm are numerous and include:

- Prevention of record loss.
- Easier access to information.
- Greater ability to distribute documents over the internet or by email.
- Reduction in storage space.
- Ability to respond more quickly to customers’ requests.

November 2017 (Initial Image Load)

Deed Books: 67,733
 Deed Images: 44,480,375
 Rolls of VMF: 7,362
 Data Stored: 1.9 TB

Current VMF Imaging Totals:

Deed Books: 77,662
 Deed Images: 51,331,711
 Rolls of VMF: 8,994
 Data Stored: 2.16 TB

All 159 counties are able to participate in this free program offered by the Authority.

Civil Case Data Project

Legislation was passed in 2000 that required the filing of case initiation and case disposition forms for each civil case filed in Superior or State Court. Under that legislation, anyone filing a civil case with the clerk of Superior or State Court had to complete a Civil Case Filing form, and the clerk was required to send the data/forms to the Authority. The Authority then indexed the information for inclusion into the statewide database that was then sent to the Georgia Court Automation Commission for analysis.

SB 132, which was passed during last year’s legislative session, changed the reporting method for clerks of Superior Court, and as of January 1, 2018, the Authority is no longer involved in the civil case initiation and disposition process. All references to civil case initiations and dispositions have been removed from the Authority website and all inquiries are referred to the Council of Superior Court Clerks of Georgia.

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 2018, 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 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 2018, **303,000 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 which 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 2018. Whether large or small, these activities enable us to meet our goals and grow and innovate in a constantly changing environment.

Development Team – eFiling & eRecording

Over the past fiscal year, the eFile Project has grown both in terms of filers and participating counties. (See Pages 20-22 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 eFile statistics and enhancements made during FY 2018:

- State Tax Lien eFiling:
 - Implemented changes necessary to comply with HB 337 which mandated the electronic filing of state tax liens. The bill was passed during the 2017 legislative session and took effect on January 1, 2018.
 - Ensured legislative compliance by updating eFiling portal to collect information required for state liens filed on and after January 1, 2018.
 - Improved eFile dashboard by adding new search features to help find filings more efficiently.
 - Implemented various reports to help reconcile state lien eFiling activity.
 - Linked eFiled filings to the Authority search system for state tax liens.
 - Created a new callback functionality where the Authority has the capability to alert third parties to various eFiling events and status changes.
 - On January 1, 2018, the mandated start date, the Department of Revenue successfully eFiled 76,889 liens with Superior Court clerks by filing through the Authority’s eFile portal.
 - Implemented changes necessary to comply with HB 661, a bill passed during the 2018 legislative session which required immediate modifications to the state tax lien eFiling process.
 - Since the mandated start date of January 1 through June 30, 2018, the Department of Revenue has eFiled 197,555 liens through the Authority’s eFile portal.

- UCC eFile:
 - 579,373 UCCs have been eFiled through the Authority since its inception in 2009.
 - 108,823 UCCs have been eFiled this fiscal year.
 - 108 counties now participate in UCC eFiling, up from 104 last fiscal year.

- Real Estate eRecord:
 - 665,496 total real estate documents have been eRecorded since its inception; 388,757 of these filings have been eRecorded using the Authority's eFile portal.
 - 303,146 total deeds have been eRecorded since inception in 2010.
 - 326,090 total liens have been eRecorded since inception in 2015.
 - 36,260 total plats have been eRecorded since inception in 2016.
 - 454,870 total real estate documents have been eRecorded this fiscal year; 333,894 of these filings have been eRecorded using the Authority's eFile portal.
 - 142,279 total deeds have been eRecorded this fiscal year.
 - 288,664 total liens have been eRecorded this fiscal year.
 - 23,927 total plats have been eRecorded this fiscal year.

- Completed project to off-load the raw eFiling XML stored in our database to disk to improve performance.

Development Team – 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 2018:

- Improved the user experience of the Participant ID search function on the website based on user feedback and suggestions.
- Added 2,019 participants to the registry for a total of 5,009 registered participants.
 - 2,964 Self Filers (1,363 added this fiscal year)
 - 415 Submitters (129 added this fiscal year)
 - 1,630 Trusted Users (527 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.
 - Over 1.2 million queries processed this fiscal year.
 - Over 2 million queries processed since the eFile Registry opened in November 2011.

Development Team – Website (www.gsccca.org)

With over a million annual, distinct 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 continues to look at ways to improve the user experience. Following are some of the enhancements made during FY 2018 and changes due to legislative mandates:

- Implemented changes necessary to comply with HB 337 which mandated the electronic filing of state tax liens. The bill was passed during the 2017 legislative session and took effect on January 1, 2018.
 - Added “statewide” and “tax ID” Lien Name Search filters for state tax liens filed on or after January 1, 2018.
 - Integrated “GADOR Control/Rev #” lookup feature for state tax liens filed on or after January 1, 2018.
 - Modified Real Estate Index Data Import by adding support for state tax liens.
 - Added State Revenue Department Pending Lien Search.
 - Added Certificate of Lien Clearance to PT-61 form.
 - Updated systems to release searchable filings from pending search when Index Data is transmitted for state tax liens.
- Implemented changes necessary to comply with HB 661, a bill passed during the 2018 legislative session which required immediate modifications to the state tax lien eFiling process.
 - Removed “statewide” and “tax ID” Lien Name Search filters for state tax liens filed on or after January 1, 2018.
 - Modified Real Estate Index Data Import by removing Tax ID support for state tax liens.
 - Removed Certificate of Lien Clearance to PT-61 form.
- Updated SSL Certificates on our public websites to TLS 1.2 keeping our website up-to-date with the latest security standards.
- Upgraded the HTML 5 image viewer to include a feature that allows raw plat images to be saved locally rather than printed. For many home users without large-format printers, the ability to save a plat in full fidelity allows them to send the file to a printer to print the original plat at full size and scale. With the mandate for all plats to be electronically filed, full scale prints in clerks’ offices may no longer be available, making this an attractive feature for some users. With this final change, the HTML 5 image viewer had its “beta” designation removed and is now the preferred and recommended viewer for images on the GSCCCA website.
- Filmed and edited five 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.

Development Team – QA (Quality Assurance)

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 2018:

- Reorganized the Quality Control Department to help ensure that all business practices and procedures are institutionalized.
- Promoted Will Dunn to become the Quality Control Department Manager.
- Promoted Rob Young to become the Quality Control Coordinator.
- Streamlined various long-standing procedures in order to accelerate data review times while not compromising quality.
- Created tools to automate the creation of various reports instrumental in ensuring completion of historical docket series.
- Reviewed over 13,290 records for the 1991-1990 Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project and 106,738 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.

Development Team – Other

- Managed the “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. 41 tracked projects were completed this past fiscal year, which is very notable considering that the State Tax Lien eFiling Project alone (merely 1 of the 41 projects) spanned the majority of the year and required over 5,800 hours of aggregate staff time to complete.
- Made enhancements to eAssist site:
 - Added the ability to process liens, including bulk liens, through eAssist.
 - Added several quality of life updates to eAssist including grouping and filtering, asynchronous downloading of filings, and a streamlined processing user experience for high volumes of liens being eFiled.
- Made improvements to Fines & Fees site:
 - Added support for the Georgia State Indemnification Fund (GSIF) to Fines and Fees forms and CourtTrax Calculator.
 - Increased security by encrypting certain Fines and Fees information.
- Improved ACH features:
 - Increased efficiency by providing reports to simplify county ACH disbursement reconciliation.
 - Added customizable county-specific settings feature.
 - Added chargeback feature for returned ACH transactions.
- Improved productivity of Customer Management Module (CMM) by adding new search and reporting capabilities, and began project to rewrite entire module.
- Improved UCC Bulk Data process and created monthly UCC bulk image DVDs for clients throughout the year.
- Implemented changes necessary to comply with SB 132 which modified the civil reporting requirements for Superior Court clerks and removed the GSCCCA from the process effective January 1, 2018.
- Improved security by upgrading all GSCCCA credit card processing services to comply with latest TLS 1.2 security requirements.
- Improved Notary website and Training website by upgrading both to latest IIS 10.0 and Windows Server 2016 platform.
- Added support for images redacted by the GSCCCA real estate redaction service to the Microfilm export program.
- Processed 68 Real Estate images using On Demand Fast Pass Redaction process and manually reviewed 20 of those images.
- Processed 25,108 UCC images using On Demand Fast Pass Redaction process and manually reviewed ALL of those images.
- Updated eInvoicing to latest .NET version and new web servers.
- Started project to upgrade our main website Content Management System software.
- Created internal web farm to house current and future Web API projects.

Systems Team

- Deployed a new Windows server 2016 platform to handle conversion of documents to different file formats in support of the eFile, Notary, and PT-61 applications. The new platform also handles the viewing of documents through the www.gsccca.org search system. The new server platform offers the latest in security, performance, and reliability enhancements.
- Deployed a new Windows server 2016 platform to handle several internal applications supporting the Notary and Accounting Departments. The new server platform offers the latest in security, performance, and reliability enhancements.
- Deployed a new Windows Services Update Server. This is a security patch management solution from Microsoft that allows for the automated patching of servers and PCs. This solution ensures more consistency of patching and eases management of the process, while also improving server performance, reliability, and security.
- Installed all software updates to our SQL database environment. These updates help to improve database performance, reliability, and security. SQL Server is a relational database management system responsible for storing and retrieving data as requested by other software applications.
- Executed performance analysis on several core databases including eFiling, Fines & Fees, UCC Indexing, and others, in order to vastly improve query processing times. This effort ultimately resulted in overall improved system speeds.
- Provided SQL database training and documentation to staff, increasing the database administrator's availability to meet increased production support and project demands.
- Created several new reports:
 - Filing Fee Discrepancies and Unique Submission Group Deposit Reports – These reports help identify any difference between estimated fees and collected fees for state liens, and enable the GSCCCA to reconcile accounts with the Department of Revenue. This task would be impossible to accomplish without these reports due to the volume of transactions.
 - ACH eFiling Disbursement Report – This report lists ACH eFiling disbursements by county and is delivered to accounting staff daily, saving staff time from having to manually total the disbursements.
 - eFile Pending Search Aging Report – This report is used to identify old eFiles that have been accepted by the county but have not been received by the Authority.
- Enhanced the Daily & Monthly County Disbursement Reports by modifying sort order. This improved readability by Fines & Fees staff decreasing work time. This Fines & Fees report is sent to counties for daily and month-end disbursement distribution.
- Created an eFile Reporting database. This allows applications access to production data without interfering with the operations of production servers.
- Assisted with implementation of State Tax Lien Project: assisted Development team with database design and decision efforts; conducted load testing with Development team to verify that the servers would be able to process the amount of data being filed by the Department of Revenue; and performed in-depth monitoring and support after the application went live.
- Upgraded the primary SQL Server for the MyVault Online Archive Project from SQL Server 2005 to 2008 R2. 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.
- Upgraded the amount of memory on each server for our VMWare ESXi platform increasing their capacity. These products allows us to run multiple servers on a shared hardware platform. The effect is that on 12 physical servers we run 125 virtualized servers. This allows us to maximize utilization of the physical server resources decreasing server hardware costs.

- Deployed a VeeamOne server to better monitor our growing VMware ESXi server platform. VeeamOne specializes in VMWare monitoring and improving server availability through detailed reporting and analytics.
- Added an additional 24 terabytes of space to the backup server. This additional space enables us to keep the database backups for 20 days on disk and all other backups for an additional 30 days on disk. Backups are kept locally on disk and remotely on tape for disaster recovery purposes. Having backups locally on disk helps speed up recovery time in case of a data loss.
- Upgraded our storage array with solid state drives and removed the aging drives from the system. This upgrade greatly increased overall read/write performance and greatly improved the performance of the applications that depend on the storage array. The storage array handles all the data for the GSCCCA and is one of the single most important pieces of equipment in the Datacenter.
- Upgraded the software that runs our backup system. The centralized backup system greatly eases the recovery of data when a loss occurs, narrows backup windows for increased system availability, and simplifies administration.
- 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.
- Upgraded the search terminal management server. Search terminals have been installed by the Authority in all Superior Court clerk offices as a way for the public to gain free access to the Authority's valuable databases. The search terminal management server restricts access to most functions and websites on the search terminals to ensure that they are only used for their intended purpose.
- 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.
- Upgraded the Sage Fixed Asset and Depreciation software to its current version ensuring continued support and compatibility for the Inventory staff.
- Upgraded the Peachtree Accounting software to its current version ensuring continued support and compatibility for the Accounting staff.
- Updated the Windows 7 and Windows 10 install that is used in all computers for the GSCCCA to ensure reliability and ease of use for our customers.
- 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.
- Systems Team Statistics:
 - Processed 11 million e-mails and blocked 6 million pieces of spam and virus laden e-mails.
 - Total hard drive array storage capacity: 119 TB.
 - Backed up 730 TB of data in the last year. If this data were transferred to Ultra HD 4K Blu-rays, it would require 7,475 disks, and the resulting stack would be almost 30 feet tall.
 - Have 56 TB of backup data on disk. That is equal to 12,201 DVDs, which would span more than 13 football fields if lined up on the ground.

- Have 585.4 TB of backup data on tape. Each tape holds up to 6 TB of data and each tape has 3,149 feet (.6 miles) of tape. The Authority has 112 tapes containing all of our backup data. This equals 67.2 miles of tape.

Network Team

- Upgraded 31 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 30x speed increase in average download speed:
 - Before migrations: 2.7 Mbps
 - After migrations: 83.3 Mbps
 - Migrations resulted in an 17x speed increase in average upload speed:
 - Before migrations: 0.5 Mbps
 - After migrations: 9.2 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 30 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.
- Completed migration of remote sites and links from legacy “NetVPN” platform to our current fiber VPN connection. This reduces dependency on outside resources and allows for greater flexibility when evaluating connectivity options.
- 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 360 HelpDesk tickets.
- 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.
- Performed infrastructure upgrades necessary for compliance with current and upcoming PCI (Payment Card Industry) and GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) requirements. The PCI certification 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:

“The associate that helped me today went way over board to help this 71 year young old man. I have never had such kind help from any representative with any web program.”

“I would like to commend Andre for his expertise and for his professional manner in assisting me in the use of your site.”

“I wanted to let you know that I have been dealing with Shane this week on some email issues. He has been most helpful and professional. He told me that he has been working for the Authority for 4 months. I hope he likes it and chooses to stay because he is an asset!”

“Everything went great yesterday! Your CSR was awesome!!”

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: **18,360**
- Average Speed of Answer: **59 seconds**
- Average Talk Time: **6 minutes 9 seconds**
- Total Email Requests Received: **8,700+**
- Total Hardware/Repair Requests: **255**
- Tickets Received: **14,178**
- Tickets Resolved During Initial Contact: **12,078**

Top 10 Requests

- GSCCCA Website: Username/Password Requests (1,710)
- eFile Real Estate: Customer Filing Question (1,436)
- GSCCCA Website: Site Navigation Assistance (1,425)
- GSCCCA Website: General Information/Non-Tech Q/A (1,415)
- Account Management: New Account Requests (924)
- PT-61: Non-Tech Q/A (525)
- GSCCCA Website: Login Verification Code (324)
- eFile UCC: Customer Filing Question (289)
- eFile Real Estate: Clerk Filing Question (260)

➤ GSCCCA Website: Unable to Print Images (253)

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 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 a larger staff, 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 received additional training to become a subject matter expert on eFiling. Another CSR now serves as an Inventory specialist and has received the training necessary to handle essential inventory functions such as shipping and receiving. This specialization allows for overall increased business continuity, and also allows for more streamlined support as many service calls involve the transfer of equipment through the Inventory Department. Finally, another CSR has become the Network specialist, acting as a precision, first responder to county-related network issues. Having this level of expertise allows problems to be identified and solved quickly, often without the need to escalate the issue to the Network Department. This enhanced, specialized support allows 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 2018:

- Ordered, processed and shipped a total of **620 pieces of new equipment** to clerks' offices including CPUs, monitors, servers, laptops and scanners. The Authority has provided approximately **26,000** pieces of new equipment to clerks' offices since opening its doors in 1995.
- Deployed **176 pieces of new equipment** (computers, monitors and scanners) to 43 Superior Court clerk offices to replace depreciated equipment as part of the Authority's Statewide Computer Replacement Project for all 159 counties.
- Handled **98** Purchase Orders totaling nearly **1 million dollars**.

- Handled **169** contracts from counties for additional equipment.
- Performed detailed evaluation of all returned inventory sheets from counties and processed **822** county equipment returns.
- Processed **101** 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 **200** non-inventory items including switches, cables, keyboards and mice.
- Obtained **213** quotes for equipment purchases for counties and GSCCCA offices.
- Handled **5** requests for Acquisition Assistance for county purchases.
- Transferred **over 900** pieces of equipment to the Georgia Department of Administrative Services for proper disposal per state guidelines.
- Replaced **96** aging Windows XP search terminals by repurposing surplus Windows 7 workstations and configuring them to function as search terminals. This resulted in significant savings compared to 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. Nearly **76,000 users** have benefitted from accessing the Authority's Learning Management System (LMS) since its inception in 2006.

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 2018, the Authority conducted 42 programs at 32 locations across the state. The following topics were offered:

- Real Estate Indexing Standards
- Notary Public Training (nearly 1,300 people attended this training)
- State Tax Lien eFiling
- Fines & Fees

➤ Plat eFiling

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, and Plat eFile training was offered at the Winter SAMSOG (Surveying and Mapping Society of Georgia) Conference. 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. Updated software has streamlined the registration and web-based training process. During FY 2018, the Authority utilized this training tool by hosting 28 webinars covering the following topics:

- UCC Training
- Real Estate Indexing Standards
- Real Estate Indexing Standards Certification Exam
- Indexing Standards: Common Mistakes
- Bulk Lien eFiling
- Fines and Fees
- Protective Orders
- Authority Services How-to-Guide
- eAssist Updates
- PT-61 Changes
- State Tax Lien eFiling & Indexing Standards Changes
- Virtual Microfilm

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 2018:

- Introduction to GSCCCA Indexing Standards
 - 109 people participated in the training
 - 28 users took the Real Estate Indexing Certification Exam and 15 successfully passed the exam
- Extended Real Estate Indexing Standards Training
 - 74 people participated in the training
- Fines & Fees Training
 - 90 people participated in the training
- Notary Online
 - 9,628 people participated in the training
 - 5,094 took the Notary Public Final Exam
- UCC Training
 - 27 people participated in the training

Additionally, the Authority conducted 19 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 Winter COAG Conference, 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 2018.

- 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.
- Continued to produce quarterly newsletter for Superior Court clerks that is posted on the Authority website.
- Filmed, edited and published 5 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 able to communicate with its customers and reach out to potential subscribers while keeping clerks better informed.
- Handled and processed to resolution UCC, notary public, real estate, fines and fees, and training inquiries from clerks' offices, UCC filers, online users and the general public.
- Provided a computer lab for the Fall COAG Conference and Spring Clerks' Conference. Conference materials were posted in the Authority's Clerk Resource Center.
- Visited with clerks of Superior Court 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, Mike has had the following responsibilities:
 - Participated on the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) Remote Notarization Task Force which developed industry standards for remote notarial acts. The task force, comprised of Secretaries of State, NPA members, and private industry stakeholders, developed remote standards in an effort to guide U.S. states in the adoption of laws authorizing remote notarial acts.
 - Presented at the International Association of Commercial Administrators (IACA) 41st Annual Conference on remote notarization legislative activity across the U.S. and the development of remote notarization standards.
 - Represented the Clerks' Authority at the National Association of Secretaries of State (NASS) 2018 Winter Conference where he reported on the activities and 2018 goals of NPA, a section of NASS.
 - Set conference agendas for NPA/NASS 2017 and 2018 summer conferences.
- Benefitted from Authority Communications Director serving as past-president of the International Association of Commercial Administrators (IACA) for 2017-2018. In this position, Mike 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. The certification requires passing an extensive test and then retaining credentials through continuing professional development and practice in the field. The Authority's IT director has been certified since 2008 and just completed all requirements and training to renew the credential for the next three years.

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.

