

GSCCCA Update

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August 2021

An update on the activities of the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority

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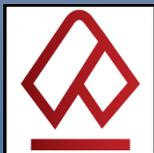
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Attorney-at-Law
Oliver & Weidner, LLC
Clarksville



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

Authority supports clerks through tough year

Following is the Executive Summary from the Authority's 2020-2021 Accomplishments & Year-end Report. Numbers reflect fiscal year-end (June 30) totals unless otherwise stated. Contact Communications Director & Compliance Officer Mike Smith at mike.smith@gsecca.org with questions.

*"To reach a port, we must set sail —
Sail, not tie at anchor.
Sail, not drift."*

—Franklin D. Roosevelt

Understanding the importance of leadership and action, especially during difficult and uncertain times, President Franklin D. Roosevelt spoke these words in 1938 during one of his now-famous fireside chats when the United States was still struggling through the challenges of an economic and social recovery brought about by the Great Depression.

Similar in its adversity and uncertainty, this past year-plus has been among the most difficult in recent history, as Georgians, along with the rest of the world, have endured the unprecedented challenges and devastating effects of a once-in-a-century pandemic. As COVID-19 disrupted everything, it felt like time was standing still, yet also moving faster than ever.

As both a skilled sailor and astute leader, FDR knew that to anchor or drift amidst the storm was not an option. No stranger to sailing in choppy waters, the senior management team and board of directors of the **Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority** knew this as well. To survive the turbulent waters and navigate with purpose to the other side, it was not only necessary but critical to adjust our sails and take bold action. Through thoughtful, proactive leadership and an all-hands-on-deck approach, the Authority made decisions amid the ambiguity, reassessed regularly, and adapted swiftly to ensure we were meeting our primary goal of supporting Superior Court clerks in the operation of their offices.

Continued on Page 4

Table of Contents

Authority supports clerks through tough year	Pages 1, 4-14
July Board meeting review	Pages 2-3
Authority to remove Child Support eFile from portal	Page 10
Authority updates F&F Rules & Regulations	Page 12
Take advantage of remaining 2021 webinars	Page 14

July Board meeting review

The Authority Board met on July 14 for its quarterly meeting. Following is a summary of the reports and actions of the meeting.

General Business

The minutes of the April 14 scheduled board meeting were approved.

Adam Fraley, with Mauldin & Jenkins, provided the Accountant's Review, and reported that the financial health of the Authority is good, and the Authority staff is doing an exceptional job.

2020-2021 Accomplishments & Year-end Report

The 2020-2021 Accomplishments & Year-end Report was presented to the Board. The report documents initiatives undertaken by the Authority throughout the year, capturing the essence of the Authority while also relating detailed data on all Authority projects.

Board Consideration

- ❖ **Fines & Fees Rules & Regulations** – A motion to amend the Fines & Fees Rules & Regulations to reflect consistent use of certain terms and nomenclature was approved.
- ❖ **GSCCCA Annual Fee Schedule** – A motion to amend the GSCCCA Annual Fee Schedule to reflect the \$10 Notary Public Exam fee was approved.
- ❖ **Protective Order Codes** – A motion to modify Protective Order indexing to change from indexing condition numbers to indexing PCO codes was approved.

Historical Plat Image Project

The Board was updated on the status of the Historical Plat Image Project, which involves collecting all plat images from 2003 and prior years. Plats are collected in various ways. Approximately 836,000 plat images have been identified as already contained on the Authority system. At present, 113 counties have received compensation agreements for historical plats transmitted to the Authority; 105 of these

counties have signed and returned the agreements to the Authority representing approximately \$2.4 million in compensation to counties. The outstanding eight agreements represent approximately \$100,000 in compensation due to counties. Several counties have scanned images that are being reviewed for suitability on the Authority system. A third-party vendor, Kofile, is in the process of scanning plat images from another 63 counties. The project is expected to be complete sometime in late 2022.

Software Initiative

The Board was updated on the Authority's initiative to provide Microsoft Office/Adobe Acrobat software to all clerks of Superior Court and their staffs. Authority staff began deploying Microsoft Office to clerks in 2019. There have been 46 installations since the last board meeting for a total of 805 installations since inception of the project. This will be an ongoing effort as new versions of the software are published.

Laptop Computer Initiative

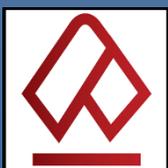
The Board was briefed on an initiative to provide laptop computers to clerks of Superior Court. To date, 132 laptop requests have been received and filled. This effort is being carried out by the Authority at the request of clerk leadership in an effort to better meet the needs of clerks' work demands.

Fines & Fees Division

During FY 2021, \$73 million was collected by the Fines & Fees Division, which is approximately \$6 million less than in FY 2020. Reporting compliance remains high for all courts.

Training & Outreach

The eLearn site continues to grow in popularity, with approximately 51,000 total registrations at fiscal year-end. Of those registered on the site, 49,000 have been notary



Continued on Page 3

Board meeting review — Cont. from Page 2

course users and 2,000 have been court personnel. In addition to online training courses, the Authority continues to offer virtual/Zoom webinars covering subjects such as Real Estate Indexing Standards, Protective Orders, UCC, and Fines & Fees. Additionally, Authority staff will conduct in-person Fines & Fees training for new municipal clerks in Tifton in September and for new municipal judges in Gainesville in October.

eFiling Project

At present, 147 clerks participate in UCC eFile. Of those, 74 mandate eFiling as the only acceptable method of filing, and 59 of those clerks utilize the auto-numbering feature offered by the Authority. Approximately 269,000 UCCs were eFiled in FY 2021.

For Real Estate eFile, 138 clerks accept all document types. Regarding Child Support eFile, 57 counties currently participate. The Notary Online application process has 149 participating clerks, while 47 allow for mail-in renewals.

Historical Deed Re-Indexing Projects

Currently, 67 clerks participate in the Voluntary Historical Deed Project. There are approximately 4.2 million instruments in production, with 100,000 instruments added to production in Q2 of FY 2021.

UCC Project

In FY 2021, more than 316,000 UCCs were filed which is the most filed since FY 2000, the fifth most since 1995, the year the project began, and approximately 40% more than the historical low in FY 2010. Approximately 10,000 UCC Certified Searches were conducted by the Authority for FY 2021 which is the most since FY 2010.

Notary & Authentications Division

In FY 2021, 53,733 notary commissions were indexed by the Authentications Division, a 32% increase from FY 2020. Notary Handbook sales increased 180% from FY 2020 to FY 2021. The number of apostilles issued

***Notary Manager
Peter Keesom
briefs the Board
on the Notary &
Authentications
Division.***



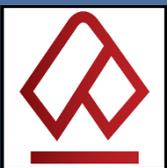
remained relatively flat at approximately 35,000. South Korea, with 16% of the total apostille requests, is at the top of the list of most-requested countries of destination. The Russian Federation and Mexico round out the top three.

Archival Projects

In an update on the Authority's archival projects, it was reported that there are active conversations with vendors regarding the laws for off-site storage and archival mandates to create a process that meets state requirements for storage of data. MyVault is a data storage and retrieval program offered to all clerks at no cost to the clerk. Currently, 156 clerks participate in MyVault. As of June 30, 2021, 196 TBs of clerk data have been archived and safely stored. There have been a total of 185 data restoration requests involving 3.9 TBs of data since MyVault's inception in 2007. The Virtual Microfilm (VMF) Program, which launched in 2017, currently stores 265 million images across 443,000 deed books, along with another 25 million images across 59,000 lien and plat books.

Next Board Meeting

A motion to schedule the next Authority Board meeting for October 20, 2021 was approved. ■



Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 1

Detailed last year and in this year’s report, the Authority acted quickly and throughout the past 15 months to respond to the extraordinary and unprecedented situation in order to direct resources where they were most needed. To be specific, actions included deploying the tools and providing the support to allow for remote

work — including the distribution of 130 laptops to Superior Court clerks and the creation of hundreds of VPN accounts for clerks and their staff, fielding thousands of questions and troubleshooting a myriad of problems to help counties and customers navigate the seismic disruption to normal business operations, scaling up eLearning opportunities across all subjects and departments to

provide critical training, offering search site promo codes to allow for public access to the Authority’s databases when courthouses were closed, and providing a drop box service for apostille and authentication requests with an immediate turn-around option.

To implement solutions in uncharted territory, these actions along with hundreds of others — large and small decisions, pivots, enhancements and updates — were made using a purposeful approach on how best to support clerk offices and to continue offering much-needed services. Despite the volatility and disruption, including being forced to alter our own office operations, the Authority’s mission throughout this difficult year was to provide a seamless level of service to Superior Court clerks and all others that we serve. Feedback from clerks and other custom-

ers is inserted throughout this year’s report including the following comments that speak directly to the importance and appreciation of the Authority’s support, especially its leadership in response to this year’s unprecedented challenges:

“I doubt there is any other agency in Georgia that goes above and beyond as the Authority does. We are so very fortunate for the foresight of those clerks many years ago and for the continued excellence of the staff and all those involved in keeping the Authority on mission. Thanks to you all.”

— Connie Cheatham, Clerk of Superior Court, McDuffie County

“We are so blessed to have the Authority! I just don’t have the words to fully express how I feel about you & the organization you represent. Without the support of the Authority, we would not have been able to handle the challenges placed on us. You’ve supplied the tools & the knowledge we need in order to shine in a way that would not have been possible without you.

“Another thing that amazes me is the staff there. They are all so friendly, caring, respectful, humble, & willing to do whatever it takes to meet our needs. They’re always looking for ways to make things better for us & to prepare us for the future.

“I think back to the days of “Pre-Authority” & wonder how in the world Clerks did their jobs. I often wonder if those Clerks who brainstormed the Authority into existence had any idea just how great the Authority would be for us. I am so thankful for all involved. We are so blessed! Thank you for always being there for us!”

— Regina B. McIntyre, Retired Clerk of Superior Court, Barrow County

There was no roadmap for surviving the transformational challenges presented by COVID-19, but the past 15 months reinforced one important reality: nimble organizations are more

Continued on Page 5

“... the Authority leaned on its muscle memory of continuous innovation and out-of-the-box thinking in order to effectively manage the crisis and provide holistic, much-needed support.”



Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 4

resilient to adversity. For this reason, the Authority had an edge in adapting to the upheaval because we already had processes and structures available to us, in addition to a forward-thinking mindset open to change. In a fog of uncertainty and collective vulnerability, the Authority leaned on its muscle memory of continuous innovation and out-of-the-box thinking in order to effectively manage the crisis and provide holistic, much-needed support.

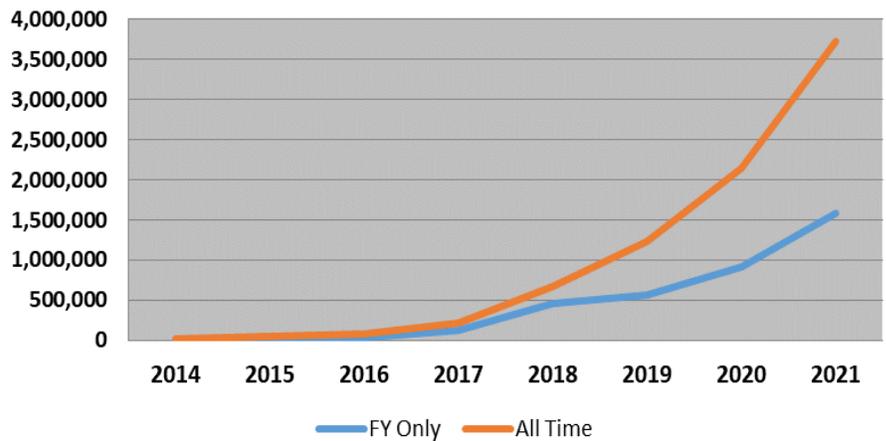
Challenging norms and pushing the needle has been a part of our DNA from the beginning as the Authority has long embraced technology, reinvented

core processes, and adopted new collaborative tools to successfully develop and implement its many projects. That framework was built to keep Superior Court clerks relevant and ahead of the curve in meeting their constituents' needs. But because that framework was already in place, it allowed for a more seamless transition for both Authority staff and Superior Court clerks as we all navigated through turbulent, unknown waters brought about by the COVID storm. Rather than yield to the new challenges and limitations, as many were forced to do, we maintained business continuity with offices operating remotely and services continuing uninterrupted. Many examples will be highlighted throughout this report, but none are more telling than the staggering growth of the eFile Project over the last year. With the system successfully in place and technical barriers for counties to participate largely resolved, a spike in usage following the outbreak of COVID-19 — 66% growth for all documents and 75% for real estate instruments this past fiscal year — came as no surprise but was only possible because of the

work done over the last two decades.

Using technology and data in new ways and accelerating the scope and scale of innovation is at the heart of what the Authority is all about, and the challenges of this past year have further highlighted the importance of the

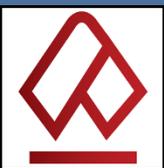
Real Estate eFilings



26-year partnership between the Authority and Superior Court clerks and the profound and lasting impact of revolutionizing Superior Court clerks' offices by ushering in a new era of technology.

Background

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



Continued on Page 6

Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 5

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 and half 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:

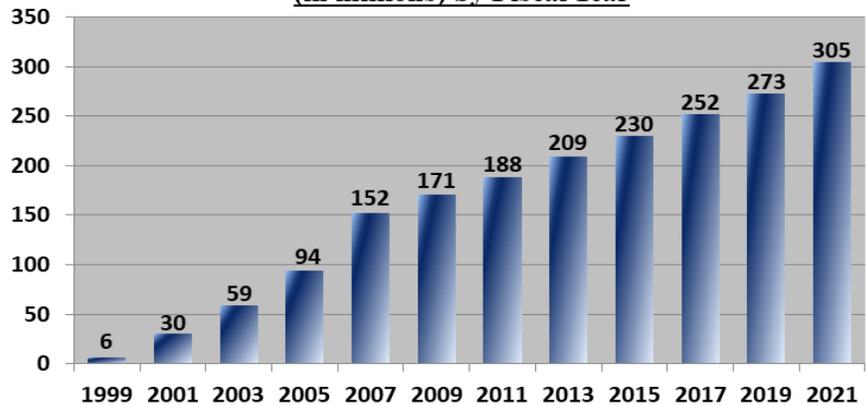
- ❖ Notary & Authentications Division
- ❖ Fines & Fees Division
- ❖ UCC Project
- ❖ Real Estate Deed Project
- ❖ Current Indexing Improvement Initiative
- ❖ Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project
- ❖ County-Funded Historical Deed, Lien & Plat Re-Indexing Project
- ❖ Lien, Plat & Map Project
- ❖ Historical Plat Image Project
- ❖ PT-61 Project
- ❖ UCC eFile
- ❖ Child Support eFile
- ❖ Real Estate eFile
- ❖ Premium Search Account
- ❖ Clerks’ Authority Map Search Application (Mobile App)
- ❖ Protective Order Registry
- ❖ Criminal Case Data Project (Offender-Based

Tracking System)

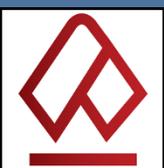
- ❖ Carbon Sequestration Registry
- ❖ MyVault Online Archive Program
- ❖ Media Holdings Project (formerly known as the Georgia Archives Initiative)
- ❖ Virtual Microfilm (VMF) Program
- ❖ Statewide Computer Replacement Project

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:

**Total Images in GSCCCA Search System
(in millions) by Fiscal Year**



- ❖ 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.
- ❖ Over \$100 million in additional funding and over 30,000 pieces of new equipment for clerks’ offices since the Authority’s inception.
- ❖ Information that allows lawmakers to more effectively set public policy.



Continued on Page 7

Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 6

- ❖ 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 to Georgia counties and citizens.

Accomplishments – Highlights from FY 2021

Following are some of the highlights or major accomplishments from the past fiscal year:

- ❖ **Compensated clerks' offices** over \$7.6 million for prints off the Authority website and over \$1.1 million for deed images, resulting in over **\$8.7 million** in additional funding for Georgia's Superior Court clerks this fiscal year.
- ❖ Researched options, then acquired, configured, and deployed **130 Lenovo laptops**, along with docking stations, wireless keyboards, mice, and external monitors, to Superior Court clerks as part of a Laptop Initiative to support clerks' ability to work remotely. This initiative was born from a clerk leadership meeting last August, when the challenges of the pandemic, including working remotely, were discussed.
- ❖ Handled an **increase in support needs** from counties and website customers as everyone adjusted to the changes and challenges brought about by the pandemic. The entire Authority staff prioritized fielding questions and fixing problems to help clerks, their staff, and our other constituencies navigate the "new normal." HelpDesk, the Authority's customer support team, fielded over 24,000 phone calls, a 20% increase from last year, and handled over 18,000 emails, a huge 77% increase from the previous year. Over 90% of HelpDesk tickets were resolved during the initial contact. Along with site navigation, online training questions, and other issues,

many requests for help involved the eFile Project as the pandemic brought a tremendous increase in usage. With the spike in electronic filing, Authority staff was available to walk clerks through the set-up, help new filers understand the system, and work out any other kinks that popped up along the way. Additionally, the Notary & Authentications Division experienced a 69% increase in phone calls fielding nearly 15,500 calls for the fiscal year.

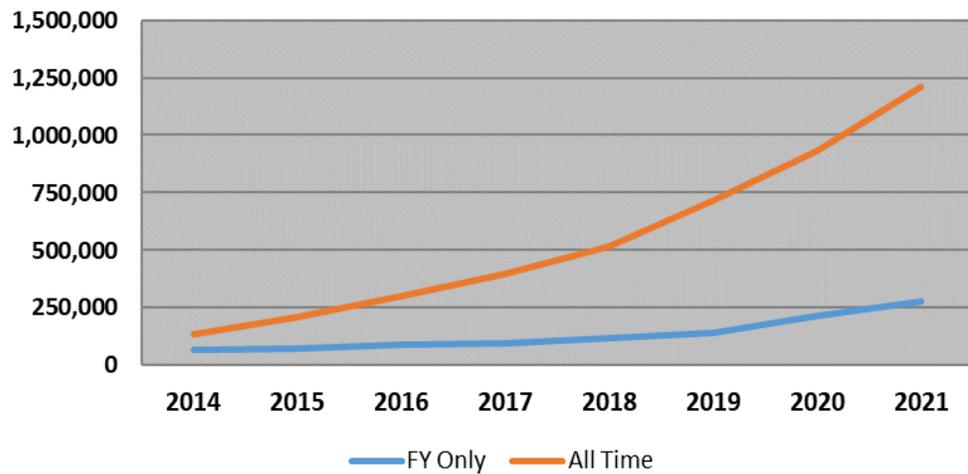
- ❖ Continued to grow **Real Estate eFile**. Since the launch of Real Estate eFile in 2011, over 3.7 million real estate documents have been electronically recorded with the vast majority of those in the last four years. Legislative mandates resulted in all 159 counties participating in the program to some degree, with 137 counties accepting all document types, and an expected increase in eFilings. The pandemic, however, brought about a surge in growth that has seen a 75% increase in usage this year and a staggering 181% increase over the past two years. In FY 2021, nearly 1.6 million real estate documents were electronically recorded. While some filers are returning to courthouses across Georgia to record instruments in person, it is likely that we will see a significant shift with many first-time eFilers from the past year continuing to electronically file in the future.
- ❖ Continued to grow **UCC eFile** with a record 274,000+ UCCs electronically filed for the fiscal year, a 29% increase from the previous fiscal year, and an incredible 99% growth in usage over the past two years. With the pandemic as a driving factor, nearly 90% of all UCCs filed in FY 2021 were electronically filed. Additionally, 3 new counties were activated for a total of 147 counties participating in the UCC eFile program. At fiscal year-end, 69 of those counties — 26 more than last year — mandated or only allowed the electronic filing of UCCs, another indicator of the continuing growth and popularity of the program.

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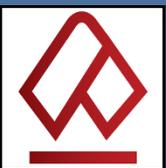
Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 7

UCC eFilings



- ❖ Responded to the increased need for remote learning by leveraging Zoom platform to offer a robust training schedule of **41 webinars** and by **launching another online training course, *Notary Online***. With the addition of this new class, the Authority now offers a total of eight online courses through its eLearn site to Superior Court clerks, deputy clerks, vendors and other members of the public. Gaining in popularity over the last several years due to convenience and cost-savings, virtual learning became critical following the outbreak of COVID-19 as it allowed important training to continue when in-person educational programs were no longer an option. In FY 2021, the Authority trained over 24,000 people through its eight online courses, and likely thousands more through its webinars and other virtual training programs.
- ❖ Acquired and deployed **Microsoft Office** and **Adobe Acrobat** software packages to Superior Court clerk offices. Currently, software has been shipped to 96 clerk offices, with **789 individual software installations** complete and 29 installations scheduled or in progress. This initiative was born from the Authority's strategic planning efforts in 2019. Through that process, the Authority sought feedback from clerks which revealed the need for various pieces of productivity software that had become essential for doing business in the clerk's office.
- ❖ Launched **Historical Plat Image Project** with the goal of making all historical plat images available on the Authority's search system. One of several priority initiatives identified by the Authority Board, the project includes images of plats filed on or before December 31, 2003 in all counties statewide, with a \$3 allowance for counties per plat image. The physical size of plats and the various methods that clerks have used to preserve them over the years makes the project more complicated; however, the Authority is pursuing multiple paths to achieve its goal, and progress has been better than anticipated. Thus far, compensation to clerks' offices has been more than **\$2.5 million**. Completion of the project is expected in late FY 2022, with an estimated total cost of \$4.5 million.
- ❖ Launched **Current Indexing Improvement Initiative** by identifying critical errors found in each of the 159 counties and communicating this information to each clerk of Superior Court with the goal of providing individualized and specific training to those clerk offices that might need or request additional assistance in order to mitigate indexing errors.

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Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 8

The need to improve current indexing data quality was prioritized by the Authority Board at their 2019 Strategic Planning Session.

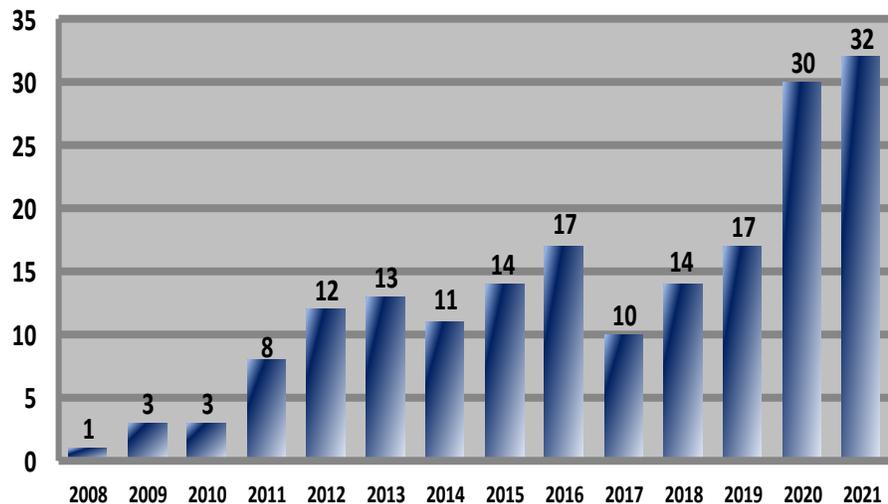
- ❖ Celebrated important milestone in October 2020 by surpassing 1 billion files stored and protected through the Authority’s statewide **MyVault Online Archive Program**, which protects the digital records of Georgia’s Superior Court clerks. MyVault is currently storing and protecting over 1.08 billion files totaling more than 196 TBs of live data, available for recovery in the event of a disaster. Since 2007, MyVault has responded to 185 data loss requests and has restored over 3.9 TBs of data back to county systems. In FY 2021, the Authority received 32 requests to restore data, resulting in over 502 GBs of data successfully restored back to clerk offices.
- ❖ Restored over 600,000 deed and lien images back to 11 clerk offices through the **Virtual Microfilm Program**. Through the VMF system, all deeds, liens and plats ever received by the Authority are directly available to clerks without the clerk having to make a records request or having to search the GSCCCA search system. The VMF image archive program not only provides an alternative to the traditional microfilm process, but provides clerks with easier access to their archived digital records and further protects them consistent with the law. Today, the system stores over

289 million images, across 501,000+ books totaling over 13 terabytes of data that is protected and accessible for viewing through the online portal. In FY 2021, 18 additional counties logged into the VMF website for the first time to view and access their online archival data. While all counties are participating in the program, a total of 88 counties have now actively accessed the VMF website.

- ❖ Advanced the **Media Holdings Project** (formerly the Georgia Archives Initiative). A total of **141 clerks** have elected to participate in this project to analyze the media holdings for their county with the goal of becoming better informed about how and where their data is protected. This analysis may also reveal any gaps in data protection that may exist. The media holdings of 31 counties have now been transcribed and will be queued for phase 3 analysis.
- ❖ Launched the **Fines & Fees Rewrite Project** to fully overhaul www.courttrax.org and streamline the fines and fees process. With the completion of a discovery document detailing all system requirements, future requirements, and system enhancements, in addition to a projected plan, the

Continued on Page 10

MyVault Restore Requests by Fiscal Year



Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 9

Authority's IT team has begun the active rewrite process. Much thought and planning has gone into the rewrite plans, which will include a new and updated look for www.courttrax.org providing both visual appeal and enhanced ease-of-use. As importantly, though, the Authority will incorporate into the new site the option to electronically submit the Monthly Remittance, Monthly Disbursement, and Trust Fund Interest reports through CourtTRAX or by utilizing an API. The new site is expected to launch in 2022.

- ❖ Added additional instruments to our website through the **County-Funded Historical Deed, Lien & Plat Re-Indexing Project** for a total of over 4.2 million 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. During the fiscal year, 12 additional counties began participating in the project for a total of 67 counties in the voluntary program.

- ❖ Improved the Authority's **eFile portal** by implementing payment enhancements including auto-retry of payment failures, detailed exception responses, and automatic detection and limiting of errant system use/abuse to protect clerk network bandwidth. This will empower

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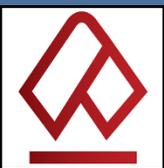
Authority to remove Child Support eFile from portal

In 2010, 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 eFile to its portal. This system has provided 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. Using the GSCCCA portal, clerks have been able to conveniently receive and process child support cases initiated by the Department of Human Services for the last decade-plus.

Recently, however, the Authority received notification from AOC that the Department of Human Services Child Support Division has terminated its contract with AOC. The current contract will end October 1. As a result, effective October 1, 2021, the AOC eFiling portal will no longer function to provide for child support eFilings, and therefore the Child Support eFiling system will no longer be available through the Clerks' Authority.

It is recommended that Superior Court clerks reach out to their Child Services Division to establish the method of filing to be utilized going forward. If your office will be utilizing a new filing method prior to October 1, 2021, please notify Rob Young (rob.young@gsccca.org) or Rachel Rice (rachel.rice@gsccca.org) the date of activation, so the Authority can deactivate your office in its eFile system. Otherwise, all courts will be deactivated on October 1.

It has been the Authority's privilege to support Superior Court clerks in their child support eFiling efforts, and we thank you for entrusting us to be part of this project for the last decade. As part of our portal deactivation process, we will continue to archive and retain all previous portal filings and transactions should they be needed by your office in the future. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us.



Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 10

clerks and their offices to reattempt payment collections increasing processing of real estate eFile instruments.

- ❖ Completed development of a high-performance **Imaging Web API** for transmission of deed, lien and plat images to the Authority. The new API adds flexibility in image processing to support current programs, including the Historical Plat Image Project, and planned future programs, as well as providing vendors with additional submission, retrieval and reporting features.
- ❖ Developed **Protective Order Exemption report**, in collaboration with GCIC, to support clerks and help eliminate errors that occur as GCIC processes the transmitted orders into the Registry. The report will be sent to individual counties when exemptions are created as GCIC processes Protective Orders, and will help clerks' staff identify and correct common errors as well as have some assurance the orders are being accepted. In FY 2021, nearly **53,000 Protective Orders** were indexed by clerks, and then electronically transmitted by the Authority to GCIC.

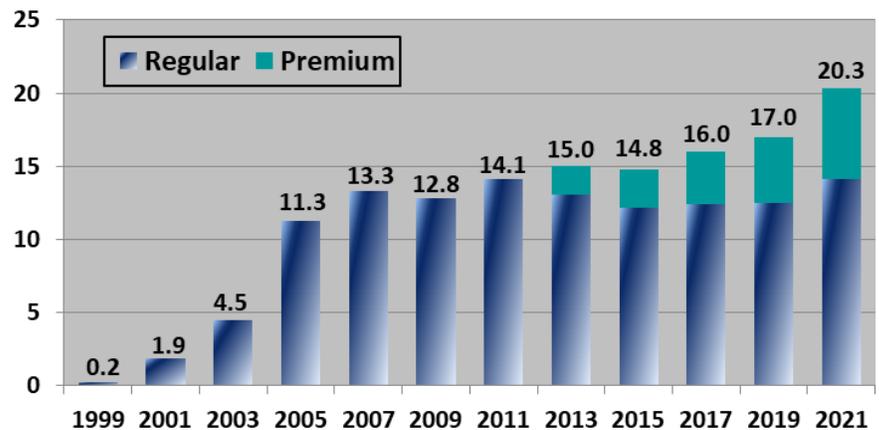
100% for all courts through a dedicated and consistent notification process by the **Fines & Fees Division**.

Program Statistics – Highlights from FY 2021

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. While numbers don't tell the full story, the following statistics show the volume of work handled by the Authority and its importance to Superior Court clerk offices and our other constituencies across the state and beyond.

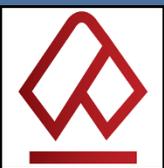
Following are some of the highlights from the past fiscal year:

Website Subscribers (in thousands) by Fiscal Year



- ❖ Increased **Premium Search accounts** by 22% adding over 1,100 new accounts for a fiscal year-end total of 6,155 accounts. Launched in 2012, the Premium Search 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.
- ❖ Maintained a compliance rate of close to

- ❖ Added nearly **19 million** images to the GSCCCA search system for a fiscal year-end total of over **305 million** images accessible to the public through www.gsccca.org.
- ❖ Hosted nearly **1.5 million** unique visitors with **512 million** page views on www.gsccca.org. The public accessed



Continued on Page 12

Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 11

the Authority's invaluable data via the internet nearly **6.4 million times** from **219 countries** this past fiscal year.

- ❖ Ordered, processed and shipped **1,150 pieces of new equipment** to clerks' offices including CPUs, monitors, servers, laptops and scanners. Of this total, the Authority purchased (at a cost of over **\$831,000**) and deployed **761 pieces of new equipment** (325 computers, 285 monitors and 151 scanners) to 75 Superior Court clerk offices to replace depreciated equipment as part of the Authority's Statewide Computer Replacement Project for all 159 counties. The Authority has provided over **30,000 pieces of new equipment** to clerks' offices since opening its doors in 1995.
- ❖ Trained over **24,000** people through **8 online classes** and **41 webinars** on various important and much-requested topics, in addition to collaborating with other groups to offer both virtual and in-person training.
- ❖ Indexed and added to the database over **316,000 UCCs**, the highest fiscal year total since 2000, and conducted nearly **10,000 Certified Searches**, the most since 2011. From the project's inception in 1995, the Authority has indexed over **6.9 million UCCs** — an average of 22,000 per month — and conducted approximately **282,000 Certified Searches**.
- ❖ Increased participation in **Notary Online** by adding 4 new counties for a total of **148 counties** currently participating in the program. **97%** 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 nearly **54,000 notary commissions** were issued by

Continued on Page 13

Authority updates F&F Rules & Regulations

During their July 2021 meeting, the Authority Board adopted updated Fines & Fees Rules & Regulations in accordance with O.C.G.A. § 15-21A-7. The changes were enacted in order to:

- ❖ **Provide consistent vernacular** – Utilizing Georgia code, current acronyms, and current training, the Authority determined standardized naming for all fund names which are now consistently defined in the Rules & Regulations.
- ❖ **Add City General Fund to priority schedule** – While implied, the City General Fund was not expressly named in the most recently adopted priority schedule for non-Superior and State courts. This was remedied to provide uniformity and clarity.
- ❖ **Add “unless otherwise mandated by law” to RR 7.4** – This allows courts to follow the priority schedules as mandated by law and as promulgated by the Rules & Regulations. Specifically, this addresses the disbursement of monies as it relates to offenses which incur the GSIF (Georgia State Indemnification Fund), which mandates all surcharges and deductions are paid first, then GSIF, then the COUNTY/CITY.

Notification has been sent to all courts and available vendor contacts with the request that they utilize the fund naming conventions and acronyms as defined in the current Rules & Regulations. The newly-adopted Rules & Regulations are available on the Fines & Fees website, www.courtTRAX.org.



Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 12

clerks of Superior Court and then submitted to the Authority for inclusion in the state-wide database.

- ❖ Processed over **14,000 apostille and authentication requests** with approximately **35,000 apostilles** issued, and sold **3,000 Notary Handbooks** (a 180% increase) during FY 2021.

to @gsccca.org accounts, in addition to the millions of verified spam senders that are simply rejected automatically.

- ❖ Added another **137 million files** totaling more than **39 TBs of data** to the MyVault remote servers for a fiscal year-end total of over **1.08 billion files** stored and protected in the online vault. MyVault managed **32 restore requests** for clerks, restoring over **502 GBs of data**, and upgraded archive appliances in **27 counties** during FY 2021.

“... the Authority and Superior Court clerks have successfully worked together to innovate, adapt, and continue to move the technology needle.”

- ❖ Collected and disbursed over **\$73 million** in court fees; performed annual court reviews on approximately **1,100 courts** to help ensure the accuracy of the data being reported to the Authority; and processed nearly **31,000 monthly reports** submitted by reporting entities.
- ❖ Electronically transmitted to GCIC nearly **194,000 records of criminal court dispositions** from various courts in Georgia for the purpose of compiling criminal histories and background checks.
- ❖ Facilitated **43 county network moves/upgrades**. With the proliferation of eFiling and the recent increased need for remote access and VPN, network bandwidth demands continue to increase. With the rise of fiber availability, the Authority can work with any service provider necessary to facilitate the needs of the location.
- ❖ Protected users' mailboxes via Mimecast, the GSCCCA email security gateway, by blocking over **740,000** distinct malicious, virus-containing messages and phishing attempts

Building a new & better normal

In a year filled with unprecedented challenges, prioritizing resources became more critical. Yet even while diverting significant manpower and financial resources toward responding to the extraordinary situation, the Authority did not lose its forward-thinking mentality and advanced several important goals that had materialized at the Board's 2019 Strategic Planning session by launching the following initiatives:

- ❖ Current Indexing Improvement Initiative
- ❖ Historical Plat Image Project
- ❖ Microsoft Office/Adobe Acrobat Software Initiative

Although supporting clerks through the COVID storm was priority number one, the Authority managed, through tireless efforts and a thoughtful approach, to continue pushing forward these important initiatives that were born from clerk feedback.

The Authority's success on all these fronts was — and will always be — only possible through the support of Georgia's Superior Court clerks. Fostering and embracing a symbiotic relationship for over a quarter century, the Authority and Superior Court clerks have successfully worked together to innovate, adapt, and continue to move the technology needle. It's truly a testament to what can be achieved when partners work together towards a shared goal.

Continued on Page 14



Authority supports clerks — Cont. from Page 13

We cannot rewrite the past year, but we can learn from it and continue to evolve. Adapting and innovating — whether by choice or necessity — is in our collective DNA, and now more than ever, we must encourage agile thinking, reassess needs and priorities, embrace ideas outside our comfort zone, and work together to make our new normal a better normal. Stability is good, no doubt, but volatile and uncertain environments create opportunity and provide a fertile space for innovation and creativity. We remain optimistic that the Authority is prepared and positioned to capitalize on future opportunities as the storm clouds begin to dissipate and we soon enter a post-COVID world.

With the intent of offering encouragement to the American people, FDR concluded his 1938 fireside chat by saying: “I believe we have been right in the course we have charted. To abandon our purpose ... would be to miss the tide and perhaps to miss the port.”

“ ... we must encourage agile thinking, reassess needs and priorities, embrace ideas outside our comfort zone, and work together to make our new normal a better normal.”

With the same resolute commitment since opening our doors in 1995, the Authority will not miss its port, but will remain steadfastly oriented to our North Star — our purpose, mission, and primary objective of supporting Georgia’s Superior Court clerks, meeting their changing needs and priorities, and advancing their technological resources. With the wind at our back, we will move forward together with a continuing shared sense of purpose that always keeps us on course. ■

Take advantage of remaining 2021 webinars

The Authority continues to leverage the Zoom platform to offer training for 2021. Classes range in length, from 30 minutes to two hours, and cover multiple, much-requested topics. Training is available for Superior Court clerks, their staff, and their vendors. To register for a class, go to

www.gsccca.org/training, select the registration link, and follow the prompts. All registrations require approval, and upon approval, an email will be sent with a link to the training course. With questions, contact training@gsccca.org or 800.304.5174.

August 20	Fines & Fees
August 24	eFile – Common Questions
September 2	eFile Portal
September 9	R.E. Indexing Standards – Clerk Questions
September 20	Fines & Fees
September 22	eFile – Common Questions
October 5	R.E. Indexing Standards – Overview
October 19	eLearn 101
October 26	R.E. Indexing Standards – Sample Index
October 28	UCC
November 3	Protective Orders

