

GSCCCA Update

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May 2022

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

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Authority to soon launch new F&F site

The Authority is nearing completion of its two-year **Fines & Fees Rewrite Project** to fully overhaul www.courttrax.org and streamline the fines and fees process.



Much thought and planning was involved in this project, 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 has incorporated into the new site the option to electronically submit the Consolidated Monthly Remittance reports, Monthly Disbursement reports, and Trust Fund Interest reports through CourtTRAX along with an ACH payment. No need for checks or manually printing forms! Form submissions will be visible on a user's dashboard and all court form submissions will be available in the submission history page.

In preparation for this and many other changes, the Authority is offering three webinars to review the changes, highlight new features, and detail court requirements to utilize these features.

New Fines & Fees System webinars will be offered on:

- ❖ June 21
- ❖ July 14
- ❖ October 5

To register for one of these or any of the Authority's webinars, go to www.gsccca.org/training. (For more information on training opportunities, see pages 7 and 8 of this newsletter.) The new Fines & Fees site, including the overhaul of www.courttrax.org, will launch this summer. ■

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April Board meeting review

The Authority Board met on April 13 for its quarterly meeting. Following is a summary of the reports and actions of the meeting.

General Business

The minutes of the January 12, 2022 scheduled board meeting were approved.

Greg Morgan, with Mauldin & Jenkins, provided



the Accountant's Review, and reported that the Authority remains on solid financial footing and the Authority staff continues to do an excellent job by adhering to sound accounting principles. With his forthcoming retirement, Morgan

was recognized for his many years of service as the Authority's independent accounting auditor.

Historical Deed Indexing Project (1987-1989)

A motion was approved by the Board to begin a new Authority-sponsored historical deed indexing project to collect and publish real estate deed instruments from the years 1987, 1988 and 1989. Specifics include:

- a. That the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority Board authorizes the commencement of an Authority-sponsored historical indexing project for deed instruments to be included as a part of the Authority online search system for all deed instruments filed with clerks of Superior Court in the calendar years 1987, 1988 and 1989;
- b. That Authority staff are directed to allocate, dedicate, encumber, and restrict sufficient funds from otherwise current unrestricted available cash to a segregated account to fund the complete project. Funds may not be diverted from dedication to the project or account without the approval of the Board of Directors;

- c. That Authority staff prepare a proposed timeline and implementation schedule for such project beginning in the Authority's Fiscal Year 2022 subject to adjustment as necessary as the project proceeds. Commencement of the project and the schedule of implementation shall be as determined by the Director in his discretion subject to his revision from time to time;
- d. That, unlike previous historical projects, the Authority staff shall determine the vendor for imaging and indexing in each county;
- e. That Authority staff prepare specifications & directions for participants in the project;
- f. That Authority staff prepare agreements and/or other documents for participation of clerks and vendors in the project;
- g. That total compensation to be paid by the Authority for each deed instrument image and index data successfully delivered and released following staff review shall be \$3.00;
- h. That clerks of Superior Court who have not submitted a docket survey to the Authority are urged to submit their completed docket surveys for review so that the project may progress without unnecessary delays;
- i. That compensation shall be made to those clerks of Superior Court who have previously completed their 1987, 1988 and 1989 historical deed imaging and indexing pursuant to a *Clerk-Funded Historical Indexing Agreement, or any full year part thereof*. Such compensation shall be distributed by the Authority at such times as determined by the Director. Such compensation shall be determined by Authority staff according to the number of deed instruments previously submitted by such clerks for such increment at a rate equivalent to \$3.00 per instrument. The Director is authorized to provide such compensation for any one or all years of the project in his discretion. Authority staff shall determine and implement a reasonable plan for the distribution of compensation.

FYE June 30, 2023 Budget

A motion to adopt the proposed FYE June 30, 2023 Budget as presented was approved by the Board.



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Board meeting review — Cont. from Page 2

Trust Fund Interest Remittance Report

A motion was approved to accept the new Trust Fund Interest Remittance Report for PCI compliance, uniformity and to be explicit in the required information. An effective date of 05/01/2022 was set in order to provide sufficient time to communicate and implement the new form.

Statewide Network Upgrade/Outreach Initiative

A recommendation was presented to the Board that the Authority upgrade existing equipment in clerks' offices. The Authority would purchase the necessary equipment and begin the project before the end of CY 2022. The goal is to increase bandwidth to the Authority's statewide network in order to increase efficiency and speed of transmission.

Fines & Fees Division

The collection of court fines and fees has improved compared to FY 2021 but still remains below pre-pandemic levels as courts work on processing a backlog of cases. Compliance rates remain high. Only five of 1,100 courts are non-complaint in reporting.

Training Update

Training participation by clerks, clerk employees and the public remains strong. To date, more than 70,000 individuals have accessed the Authority's eLearn training platform. A majority are individuals accessing the online notary course and exam. In addition to the notary content, the Authority has a wide variety of training courses planned for the remainder of 2022.

eFile Project

As reported at the meeting, 147 clerks participate in the UCC eFiling process, with 117 mandating the electronic filing of UCCs. More than 129,000 UCCs have been eFiled in FY 2022. For Real Estate eFiling, all clerks participate to varying degrees, with 141 clerks accepting all document types. For Notary Online, 150 clerks participate in the online notary application process. All clerks have authorized ACH payments from the Authority.

eFile System Certification

Certification of vendor eFile systems utilized by clerks involves systems being able to process

deeds, liens, plats and UCCs. In January 2022, the Authority communicated notice to vendors of the certification requirement. The Authority received feedback from five of the seven vendors by March 1, 2022. Phase two of the certification involves finalizing the Authority's eFile certification program document, developing system certification tests, and reviewing eAssist to make any necessary programmatic changes to facilitate successful passage of the eFile Certification tests by vendors.

TPO Index

The new Dating Violence forms were approved by the Georgia Supreme Court in February and the forms have been released for use. The Authority system has been updated to accept the new PCO codes.

Electronic Document Certification (eCert)

It was reported at the meeting that 16 clerks were participating in the eCert Program. At that time, a total of 46 clerks had notified the Authority of their intent to participate. Of those 46, 15 were scheduled to activate on either April 15 or May 1; 11 were trained but had not yet scheduled an activation date; and 20 still needed training. (See more information and updated numbers on Page 6.)

Historical Plat Image Project

The Historical Plat Image Project is progressing at a slower pace than anticipated. Currently, 73 counties have been identified with plats to be imaged, with imaging for 40 of those counties completed. However, only 15 counties' plats have been transmitted to the Authority by the vendor for review. The Authority has been assured by the vendor, Kofile, that all imaging will be completed by September 30, 2022. However, the Authority staff is concerned that the project will run past the anticipated end date of October 31, 2022 due to the limited number of transmissions to date. At the time of the meeting, compensation agreements had been sent to 117 clerks, covering approximately 912,000 images equaling \$2.7 million. Of the 117 agreements sent, 110 had been received by the Authority equating to \$2.5 million in payments to clerks.

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Board meeting review — Cont. from Page 3

**Voluntary Historical Deed
Re-Indexing Project**

At present, 72 clerks are participating in the Voluntary Historical Deed Re-Indexing Project. Over 4.5 million additional instruments have been added to the public system since the program began, and another 305,470 instruments are in quarantine undergoing review.

UCC Project

Statewide, 218, 616 UCCs were filed through FY 2022 Q3. At this pace, approximately 291,000 will be filed by the end of FY 2022. This would represent the most UCCs filed in a year since 2001, excluding FY 2021. UCC Certified Search requests are at a pace for FY 2022 to total more than 10,000 for the year. This would be the most since 2008.

Notary & Authentications Division

The number of notary commissions indexed for FY 2022 Q3 was 14,665, down 4.9% compared to the same period from last fiscal year. The

number of apostilles processed has increased 3.9% for a total of 9,438. The most popular destination country for apostilles is South Korea, with the Russian Federation, Mexico, Colombia and Italy rounding out the top five.

Archival Projects

VaultTek Mobile, the Authority's new mobile application, is live and available in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store. The app was developed to provide clerks a convenient tool to monitor and manage their MyVault data backups and access files stored through MyVault.

Next Board Meetings

The Board adopted the following meeting schedule:

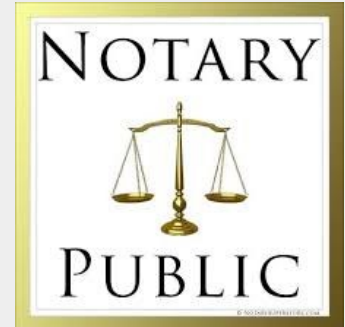
- ❖ July 13, 2022
- ❖ October 19, 2022
- ❖ January 11, 2023 ■

Notary Public Training webinars a big success

The Authority continues to receive very positive feedback from its Notary Public Training webinars. Previously offered as an in-person class, the training is now conducted via the Zoom platform. As before, each session is hosted by a Superior Court clerk who provides a link to the training on their website for public registration. Authority Communications Director & Compliance Officer Mike Smith conducts the training, while Authority Project Director Rachel Rice moderates the chat feature. This allows for Q&A from the audience while the training is able to move forward in a seamless manner. The 90-minute webinar covers the duties of a notary public, best practices, Georgia notary law, and real-life examples of the “dos and don'ts” of being a competent Georgia notary.

After hosting a webinar on May 12, Cherokee Superior Court Clerk Patty Baker received the following message from an attendee: “THANK YOU. THIS WAS VERY INFORMATIVE. I am a notary already. Thanks for emailing me that you were doing this meeting.”

These classes provide tremendous exposure for clerks and a valuable service to their constituents. If interested in hosting the Notary Public Training webinar, please contact Mike Smith (mike.smith@gsccca.org) or Rachel Rice (rachel.rice@gsccca.org) to get your class scheduled.



Haralson named Clerk of the Year



Congratulations to Harris County Superior Court Clerk **Stacy Haralson** who was recently honored by her colleagues by being named Clerk of the Year. The award was presented by the Superior Court Clerks' Association of Georgia at their annual Clerk of the Year Banquet held on April 27 at the King and Prince Resort on St. Simons Island. Stacy is shown in the photo above celebrating with fellow clerks Kim James (Chattooga), Kye Gibson (Meriwether), and Donna Flood (Murray). The poem, "Rejoice," was written for the event and presented by F. Barry Wilkes, shown in the photo below.



"Rejoice"

By F. Barry Wilkes

*Only a few of us remain
Who were there and can somewhat explain
How we got to where we are,
How, with so little, we came so far.*

*Some are gone; others retired,
But, nonetheless, they, too, conspired
And fought to make our dreams come true—
Leaving a legacy to you.*

*Some are voices you've never heard.
Some are photographs, aged and blurred.
Some are names mentioned now and then.
But not a one should be forgotten.*

*We owe homage to them all—
Even those whose names we can't recall—
For the sacrifices they made,
The debts that, for you, they pre-paid.*

*Rejoice that we were anointed
With warriors so well-appointed
Who seized upon the destiny
That would endow us with equity.*

*Rejoice for the visionaries,
Skeptics, revolutionaries,
And soldiers willing to be led,
Who came together and marched ahead.*

*Rejoice that our vision set us free.
Rejoice for the Authority
And other blessings we don't deserve.
Rejoice for all he's called to serve.*

*Rejoice that we, the few who remain,
Are certain that only God can explain
How we got to where we are,
How, with so little, we came so far.*



Attention Superior Court clerks ...

eCert Program available statewide

The Authority continues a statewide roll-out of its eCertification Program, an electronic certified document request and delivery system which allows the public to request and pay for certified documents electronically. Clerks' offices process the requests and deliver the certified documents to the user electronically. Payments are processed through the Clerks' Authority and included in the Daily County Disbursement reports.

Following a beta-test phase, with Forsyth and Chatham counties going live in late 2021, the Authority began rolling out the product statewide. At present, 29 counties are actively participating, with an additional five scheduled to be activated on June 1. Thirty-one counties have been trained and are actively testing, and three counties are awaiting training which should be complete within the first week of June.

For clerks interested in offering eCertification to their constituents, please contact the Authority's customer support team at help@gsccca.org. The Authority will work with each interested clerk's office on a first-come, first-serve basis to get them activated in the program. ■

DETF surcharge to sunset June 30

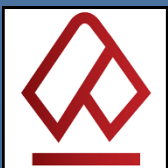
The 1.5% Driver Education and Training Fund (DETF) surcharge created under O.C.G.A. § 15-21-179 will be repealed effective 6/30/2022. DETF applies to all traffic violations, moving and non-moving, but it will only apply to violations with an offense date prior to 7/1/2022. Traffic violations with an offense date on or after 7/1/2022 will **NOT** incur the DETF surcharge. The repeal of O.C.G.A. § 15-21-179 affects all courts, and as part of this, courts may need to revisit their fee schedules, sentencing sheets, vendor systems, and notify probation and judges of the repeal. The Clerks' Authority will be updating the online calculator on www.courtrax.org to no longer calculate the DETF surcharge when traffic violation is checked and the offense date is on or after 7/1/2022.

With questions regarding this change, please contact the Authority's Fines & Fees Division at finessandfees@gsccca.org or 1-866-847-4058. ■

Notary renewal email notification

At the Clerks' Spring Conference, the Authority had the opportunity to share information with Superior Court clerks about its notary renewal email notification service. As part of this service, a courtesy email notification is sent to all notaries with an email address on file, informing them their commission is set to expire within 30 days and providing information necessary to renew their notary public commission.

As shared in the presentation, there is clerk-specific language that can be edited to include any special instructions or requirements. For clerks interested in viewing or modifying this language, please contact the Authority's customer support team at help@gsccca.org.



Take advantage of Authority training

With a variety of educational opportunities available, the Authority's 2022 training program has been well received. Plenty of training options remain including in-person classes, webinars, and online programs. All training is open and free-of-charge to Superior Court clerks, their employees and vendors.

In-person classes

In-person, classroom training is being held on the **Real Estate Indexing Standards**. Two more classes will be held in 2022: August 11 in Albany and September 15 in Savannah. Hosted by Superior Court clerks, the three-hour class is suitable for both new and experienced indexers. Course content includes:

- ❖ A general review of the GSCCCA statewide indexing standards;
- ❖ A review of dockets and instruments;
- ❖ Extracting and indexing instrument types, party names, property data, cross indexing, and use of the general description field in accordance with the GSCCCA Indexing Standards;
- ❖ A review of indexing questions submitted by clerks' offices which may include difficult or seldom seen instruments and content, including GSCCCA guidance on indexing HUD instruments; and
- ❖ Examining indexing transmission errors.

Webinars

Already popular, webinars became an even more important training tool during the pandemic when in-person classes were no longer an option. Due to their convenience and popularity, the Authority is offering seven different programs as webinars, including four new classes for 2022. Descriptions follow with program dates listed above.

- ❖ **Protective Order Exception Report (NEW)** – Working with GCIC, the

Remaining 2022 training dates

Classroom Training

August 11	Albany	RE Indexing Standards
September 15	Savannah	RE Indexing Standards

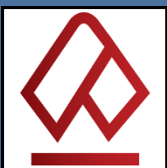
Webinars

June 21	New Fines & Fees System (<i>New</i>)
June 28	PT-61 Transmission Errors (<i>New</i>)
July 14	New Fines & Fees System (<i>New</i>)
July 20	Authority Websites
August 3	Protective Order Exception Report (<i>New</i>)
August 25	Authority ACH 101 (<i>New</i>)
September 13	Get to Know the Authority
September 21	PT-61 Transmission Errors (<i>New</i>)
October 5	New Fines & Fees System (<i>New</i>)
October 20	Pending Lien Search

Authority recently developed a Protective Order Exception Report to support clerks and help eliminate errors that occur as GCIC processes the transmitted orders into the Registry. Clerks receive this report daily by email detailing exceptions generated by GCIC. This 30-minute webinar will explain what each exception means, what action the clerk's office needs to take to resolve each exception, who to contact with questions, and how to add or remove people from the email notification.

- ❖ **Authority ACH 101 (NEW)** – Did you know the Authority offers ACH payments for Notary Online Mail-in-Renewals and will allow this for Fines & Fees soon? This 30-minute webinar will cover how to update or change Authority ACH information, how to track multiple ACH deposits received daily, as well as provide suggested practices for tracking ACH deposits and payments.

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2022 training — Cont. from Page 7

- ❖ **New Fines & Fees System (NEW)** – The Authority will soon be launching a new Fines & Fees platform which will allow users to submit reports and payments via ACH. This 1-hour webinar will cover creating an account, navigating www.courttrax.org, submitting Fines & Fees reports and more!

- ❖ **PT-61 Transmission Errors (NEW)** – This 30-minute webinar will cover critical and non-critical errors made when transmitting PT-61 cross references in deed index data files, a mechanism that can be used by land management systems to prevent the majority of non-critical errors, and how to research non-critical errors utilizing the PT-61 online correction module.

The Authority had the opportunity to present training at the Clerks' Spring Conference in April.

- ❖ **Authority Websites** – Did you know the Authority has multiple websites covering everything from Fines & Fees to processing notary applications? Need to know where to go to index a protective order or how to check a participant ID? Get answers to these questions and more during this 1-hour webinar which will provide information on the Authority's many websites, their multiple functions, and how each site can be used by a Superior Court clerk's office.
- ❖ **Get to Know the Authority** – Want to put a face to the name? This 30-minute

webinar will introduce the staff of the Authority! We will cover each department in the Authority, the department's role, how to contact members, the Authority's history and much more. Join us and get to know the Authority staff!

- ❖ **Pending Lien Search** – When the Department of Revenue files a state tax lien, it becomes part of the pending lien search. As state tax liens are filed and index data transmitted, the liens are removed from the pending lien search and become part of the statewide lien index. Instances occur where required parameters are not met causing state tax liens to remain on the pending lien search. This 30-minute webinar addresses how to find and remove state tax lien eFilings that should no longer be on the pending lien search.

Registration for classroom training and webinars is available at www.gsccca.org/training. With questions regarding the Authority's 2022 training, email training@gsccca.org.

Online courses

In addition to in-person classes on the Real Estate Indexing Standards and the seven webinars being offered via Zoom during 2022, the Authority continues to provide its popular and widely utilized online training courses via its eLearn website. Courses include:

- ❖ GSCCCA Indexing Standards
- ❖ GSCCCA Indexing Standards – Extended
- ❖ GSCCCA Indexing Standards – Common Mistakes
- ❖ Introduction to GSCCCA Fines & Fees
- ❖ Notary Online
- ❖ Notary Online – Mail-In Renewal
- ❖ Notary Public Training
- ❖ Notary Public Final Exam
- ❖ UCC Training

Courses are available 24/7 making training completely flexible. Learn more about the Authority's online training options on <https://eLearn.gsccca.org>! ■

