

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 1, 2003

Superior court clerks' statewide database saves Liberty County taxpayers time and money

Citizens of Liberty County are reaping the benefits of a statewide database of real estate and personal property records, according to Clerk of Superior Court F. Barry Wilkes.

Wilkes said all of Georgia's 159 counties have been equipped with an automated information system created and provided by the Georgia Superior Court Clerks' Cooperative Authority (GSCCCA). The authority also provides funding for computer technology to clerks' offices throughout the state and pays counties for copies of Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) and real estate images downloaded by users from the statewide real estate and personal property databases maintained by GSCCCA.

"This allows clerks' offices to become even greater contributors to their respective county's general fund, freeing up local tax dollars for other services," Wilkes said. "The authority has invested well over \$100,000 in computer equipment and communications locally. It also aids businesses and financial institutions by providing statewide access to liens, financing statements, and other legal documents, thus facilitating business and financial transactions across Georgia. As a result, businesses have access to the capital they need to prosper, while lenders are protected from fraudulent activities."

With encouragement from Georgia's superior court clerks, the state legislature created GSCCCA in 1995 to accomplish basic and common project goals, including the creation and maintenance of a statewide database for real property records, plats and maps, real and personal property liens and the UCC index. The authority also acts as the central repository for notary public information.

Successfully implemented, the statewide information system integrated and standardized information from each county on a central website, www.gsccca.org. The database is accessible 24-hours, seven days a week, via public terminals in each county, as well as through the Internet.

"This invaluable data is accessed over the Internet more than a million times a day by the public," Wilkes said.

The UCC financing statement project provides a system for ensuring statewide notice for lenders who file UCC notices in any county of the state, freeing lenders from having to file notices in every county in which property is situated for which they need to protect their interests.

The authority's statewide deed system provides access to real estate and personal property records for every county of the state. Wilkes said that, beginning January 1, 2004, the authority will also provide access to statewide lien and plat records, including images of actual liens and plats filed in all superior court clerks' offices in Georgia.

A board of seven members governs GSCCCA and its activities are subject to monitoring by the Georgia legislature. Wilkes, who was elected vice-chairperson of the authority's board last year, said that the board's meetings are open to the public.

"The authority has been continually praised for its wise use of available resources, and it has had resounding success by offering services that are unique. But, even more importantly, the authority has used not a cent of taxpayers' dollars for any purpose or any project, with all revenues being derived from user fees. If other national, state, and local government agencies functioned as cost-effective and productively as the authority has, issues over budget deficits and lack of funding would not be a topic for discussion these days," Wilkes said.

The local court clerk encourages Liberty County residents to use the services provided by the GSCCCA by visiting www.gsccca.org. For more information, contact Wilkes at (912) 876-3625.

--end--