



# The Southern Scoop

U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Georgia

[www.gasb.uscourts.gov](http://www.gasb.uscourts.gov)

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Spring 2025

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## National Bankruptcy Filings Rise 14.2%

Total bankruptcy filings rose 14.2%, with increases in both business and non-business bankruptcies, in the twelve-month period ending December 31, 2024. This continues an ongoing rebound in filings after more than a decade of sharply dropping totals. For more information, including data tables, see the full article at:

<https://www.uscourts.gov/data-news/judiciary-news/2025/02/04/bankruptcy-filings-rise-14-2-percent>.

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia saw a slight decrease in filings with 3,620 cases filed in the twelve-month period ending December 31, 2024. Chatham county had the highest case filings, followed by Richmond and Columbia counties. For more statistics from the Southern District of Georgia, go to page 2 of this newsletter.

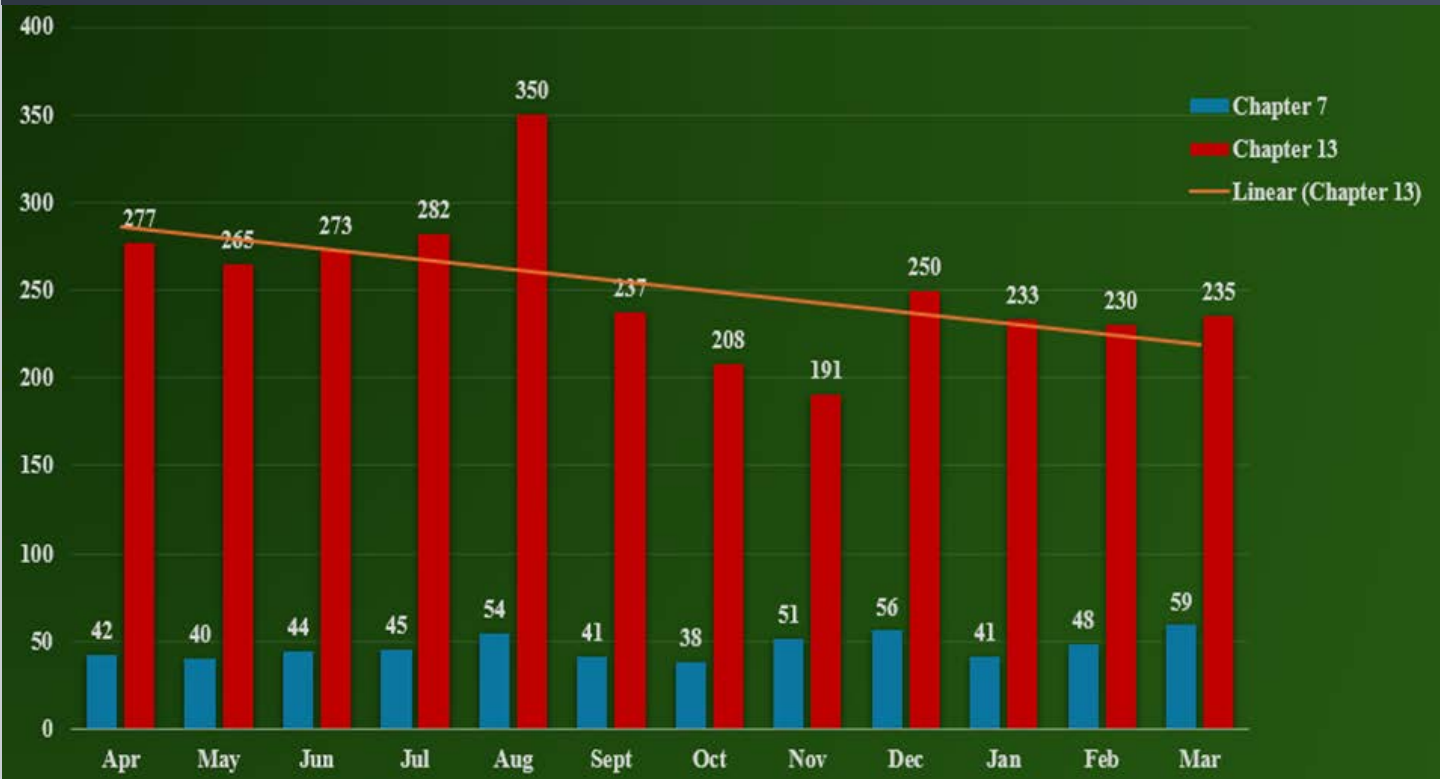
## COURTHOUSE LOCATIONS

*AUGUSTA	*BRUNSWICK	DUBLIN	*SAVANNAH	STATESBORO	WAYCROSS
600 James Brown Blvd Augusta, GA 30901	801 Gloucester St Brunswick, GA 31520	100 N Franklin St Dublin, GA 31021	124 Barnard St Savannah, GA 31401	52 N Main St Statesboro, GA 30458	601 Tebeau St Waycross, GA 31501
(706) 823-6000	(912) 280-1376	unstaffed	(912) 650-4100	unstaffed	unstaffed

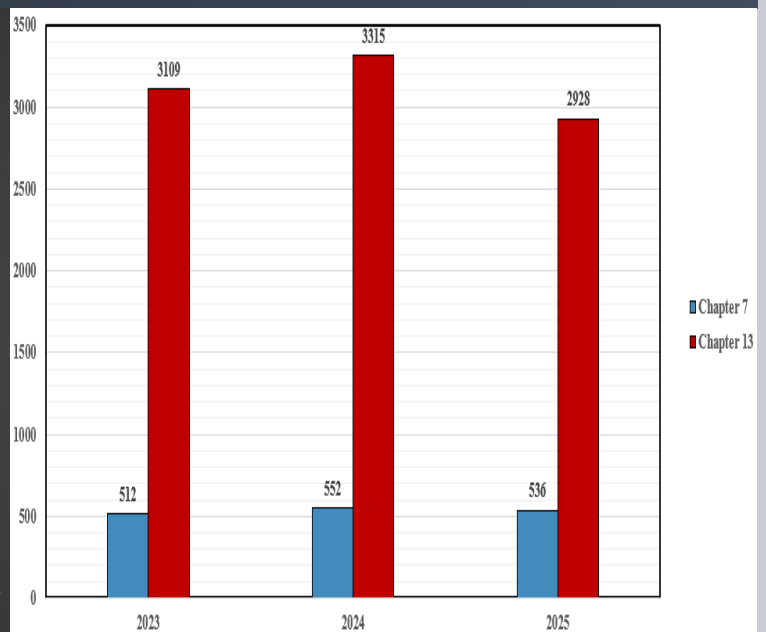
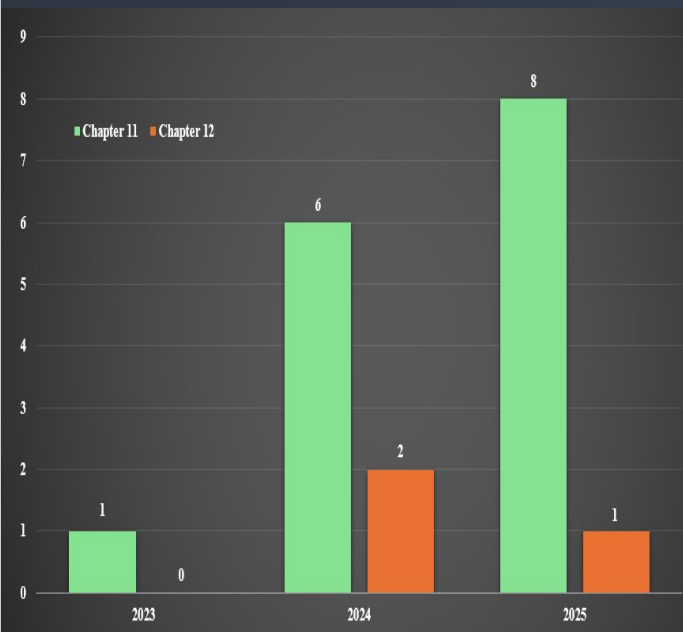
\*Clerk's Office Hours: Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 5:00 pm

## United States Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Georgia

### Case Filings by Chapter for 12-Month Period Ending March 31, 2025



### Case Filing Trends 2023-2025 (12-Month Period Ending March 31, 2025)



# United States Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Georgia

## Recent Caseload Activity

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia has a jurisdiction of 43 counties in southeast Georgia, with divisions in Augusta, Brunswick, Dublin, Savannah, Waycross, and Statesboro.

*For 12-Month Period Ending March 31, 2025*

### BANKRUPTCY FILINGS

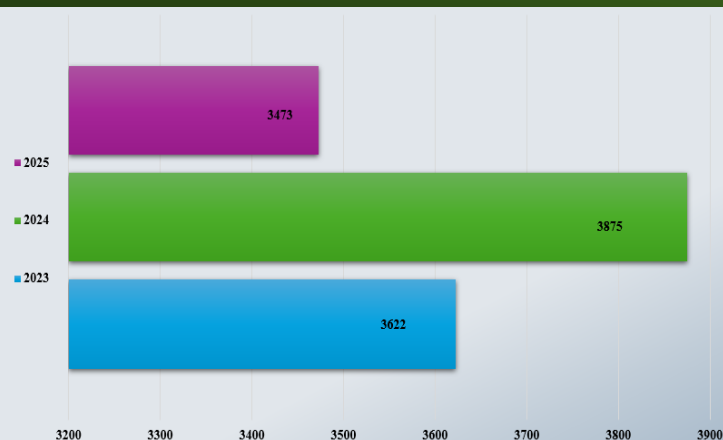
Chapter 7	536
Chapter 11	8
Chapter 12	1
Chapter 13	2928

**PRO SE FILINGS** 91

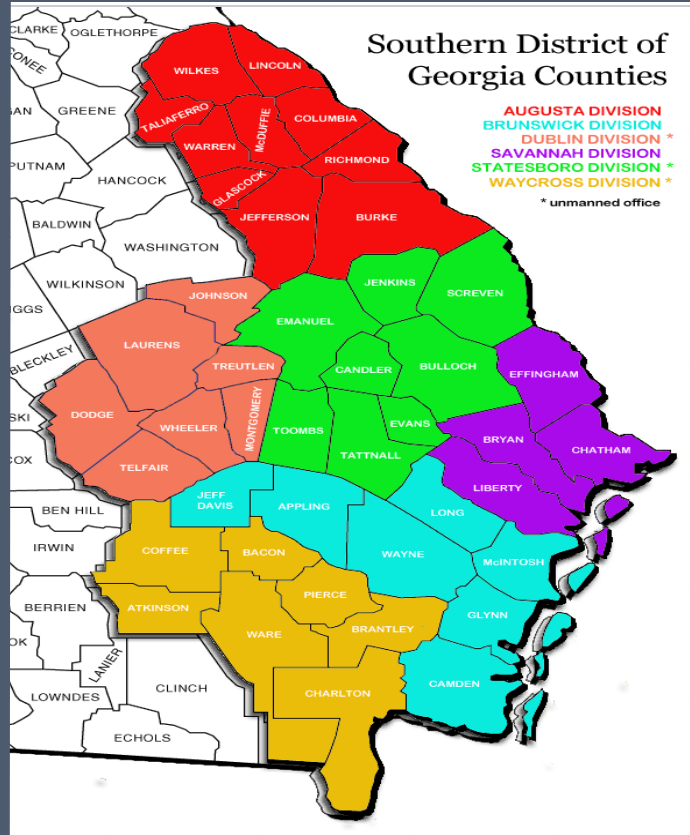
### FILINGS BY DIVISION

Augusta	884
Brunswick	443
Dublin	185
Savannah	1082
Statesboro	335
Waycross	544

### Total Case Filings (All Chapters) for 12-Month Period Ending March 31, 2025



Reopened Cases	41
Conversions	105
Discharges	2536
Dismissals	1561
Adversary Proceedings	35
BK Closings	4189
AP Closings	34



Statistical data is available to the public on the Judiciary's website at:

<https://www.uscourts.gov/statistics-reports/caseload-statistics-data-tables>

## Updated Case Management Digit Assignments

The following case management digit assignment list was revised on October 21, 2024, and is subject to change periodically. Current case management digit assignments are also available on the Court's website at [www.gasb.uscourts.gov](http://www.gasb.uscourts.gov) under *Court Info > General Information > Phone Directories and Case Management Digit Assignments*.

Case Administrator	Phone Number	Ch. 13 (including adversaries)	Ch. 7 (including adversaries)	Ch. 7 and 13 Case Opening	Ch. 11 and 12 (including adversaries)
<b>Becky (RED)</b>	(912) 280-1375	00-32 Bwk/Way	00-32 Bwk/Way	0, 1, 2 Bwk/Way	
<b>Karen (KMS)</b>	(706) 823-6019	33-66 Bwk/Way	33-66 Bwk/Way	3, 4, 5 Bwk/Way	MJK: Case Mgmt: 00-49 Case Open: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4 ***** All SDB
<b>Tory (TGG)</b>	(912) 280-1369	67-99 Bwk/Way	67-99 Bwk/Way	6, 7, 8, 9 Bwk/Way	MJK: Case Mgmt: 50-99 Case Open: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
<b>Holly (HKB)</b>	(912) 650-4123	00-32 Sav/Stb	00-32 Sav/Stb	0, 1, 2 Sav/Stb	
<b>Renaë (RTC)</b>	(912) 650-4132	33-66 Sav/Stb	33-66 Sav/Stb	3, 4, 5 Sav/Stb	
<b>Laura (LLE)</b>	(912) 650-4140	67-99 Sav/Stb	67-99 Sav/Stb	6, 7, 8, 9 Sav/Stb	
<b>Elizabeth (EKB)</b>	(912) 650-4102				All EJC
<b>Charlene (CCB)</b>	(706) 823-6456	00-24 Aug/Dub	00-24 Aug/Dub	00-24 Aug/Dub	All SDB
<b>Vonita (VWW)</b>	(706) 823-6024	25-49 Aug/Dub	25-49 Aug/Dub	25-49 Aug/Dub	
<b>Christina (CMT)</b>	(706) 823-6034	50-74 Aug/Dub	50-74 Aug/Dub	50-74 Aug/Dub	
<b>April G. (AKG)</b>	(706) 823-6038	75-99 Aug/Dub	75-99 Aug/Dub	75-99 Aug/Dub	All SDB
<b>Jacqueline (JWB)</b>	(706) 823-6021				All SDB

*Aug = Augusta; Bwk = Brunswick; Dub = Dublin; Sav = Savannah; Stb = Statesboro; Way = Waycross*

## New Chapter 7 Trustee - Brandy Freeland Helms

The United States Trustee for Region 21 has selected **Brandy Freeland Helms** to the Chapter 7 Bankruptcy Trustee panel for the Southern District of Georgia. Ms. Helms will serve as trustee in Chapter 7 cases filed primarily in the Savannah division, replacing Paul Schofield, who served as the Interim Trustee in Savannah. In 2024, 35 private trustees were appointed to serve in cases under Chapters 7, 12, and 13 in regions throughout the country. For a complete list of private trustees and more information, please visit the United States Trustee's Program website at <https://www.justice.gov/ust/private-trustee-locator>.

## Trustee Contact and 341 Meeting Information for Chapter 7, 12, and 13 Cases in the Southern District of Georgia

To join a virtual 341 meeting, participants will need the Meeting ID, Passcode, and phone number (*if joining by audio only*), assigned to the presiding trustee in the case. This information is included on the Notice of Bankruptcy Case and Deadlines issued in each bankruptcy case. Debtors must attend the meeting to be questioned under oath. In a joint case, both spouses must attend. Creditors may attend, but are not required to do so. The meeting may be continued or adjourned to a later date; if so, the date will be on the Court's docket. For additional meeting information, visit <https://www.justice.gov/ust/moc>.

Name	Meeting ID	Passcode	Meeting Phone No.
Huon Le	335 999 0110	9790417474	(762) 251-7672
M. Elaina Massey	742 441 9900	7256423141	(912) 254-0674
O. Byron Meredith III	336 227 4025	0389013233	(912) 217-5834
Brandy Freeland Helms	434 993 1462	6558354247	(912) 445-7699
James C. Overstreet Jr.	580 647 8998	3649754210	(762) 259-5036
Wendy A. Owens	268 048 1359	5224695809	(912) 217-4149
Joelyn W. Pirkle	918 622 2068	2057013137	(912) 599-7774
Paul A. Schofield	550 813 8218	3999286501	(912) 217-6891
Charles W. Wills	311 326 8149	2918498467	(762) 252-7071

## Judiciary Releases 2024 Annual Report and Judicial Business Data

(Published on the [U.S. Court's website](#) March 11, 2025)

The Judiciary released its 2024 Annual Report on March 11, 2025, providing detailed information about mission critical initiatives and Judicial Business, which addresses the workload of the Judiciary. U.S. Bankruptcy petition filings grew 16% to 504,112. Nonbusiness petitions went up 16% to 481,350, and business petitions climbed 33% to 22,762. Increases occurred in filings under chapter 7 (*up 20%*), chapter 13 (*up 10%*), and chapter 11 (*up 39%*). Filings rose in 87 of the 90 bankruptcy courts.

To access the reports and related data tables, click the following links:

1. [Annual Report of the Director](#) (*this report captures the major activities of the federal Judiciary and the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts (AO) in calendar year 2024.*)
2. [Judicial Business of the United States Courts](#) (*this report presents statistics on the work of the federal Judiciary for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2024, comparing data for this year with data for prior years and, when possible, explaining increases or decreases in caseloads.*)

## Upcoming Federal Court Interpreter Certification Exam

The written phase of the [Federal Court Interpreter Certification Exam](#) for interpreters of Spanish will be administered May 5-19, 2025. Registration is from February 3, 2025 to May 2, 2025. Candidates must pass the written exam to qualify for the oral exam. The oral phase of the examination will be administered August 4-18, 2025; registration will be from June 23, 2025 to August 1, 2025. The Administrative Office of the United States Courts is holding both exams annually to increase the certified Spanish interpreter pool.

For more information, email the Court Services Office Court Interpreting Program at:

FCICE@ao.uscourts.gov

## Recent Apple Update Affecting Receipt of Court Notices of Electronic Filing

A December 2024 software update to Apple devices may affect receipt of the Court's Notices of Electronic Filing (NEFs). Apple released iOS 18.2 in December; among its changes was the inclusion of Mail Categories to every iPhone's Mail app. These mail categories were intended to assist users in prioritizing their email messages.

The Court has been made aware that emails sent via CM/ECF were automatically categorized as Updates and thereby may have been filtered out of CM/ECF users' inboxes. This categorization could result in the unintentional overlooking of important case-related notifications.

Users may modify their automatic categories in the Mail app, or disable the categorization altogether. For more information on the software update and steps for overriding this feature, view the article from CNet at:

<https://www.cnet.com/tech/services-and-software/what-are-apples-mail-categories-and-how-to-turn-them-off-on-iphone/>



### Your Employee Rights and How to Report Wrongful Conduct

Information concerning your employee rights and how to report wrongful conduct can be found on the Court's website at [www.gasb.uscourts.gov](http://www.gasb.uscourts.gov). Included is the Southern District of Georgia's Employment Dispute Resolution Plan with Appendices 1-6, the Rules for Judicial Conduct and Judicial-Disability Proceedings, the Judicial Conduct and Disability Complaint form, and the Judicial Conduct and Disability Act. Listed below are the contacts for the Court's employee dispute resolution process:

**Primary EDR Coordinator**

Connie Shugars  
706-849-4443

**Alternate EDR Coordinators**

Lori Phillips  
912-262-2607

Megan Manly  
912-650-4082

**Circuit Director of Workplace Relations**

Kate Adams  
404-335-6538  
Kathleen\_Adams@ca11.uscourts.gov

**National Office of Judicial Integrity**

Michael Henry, Judicial Integrity Officer  
202-502-1603  
AOOJI@ao.uscourts.gov

## Adjustment of Certain Dollar Amounts Applicable to Bankruptcy Cases Effective **April 1, 2025**

On April 1, 2025, automatic adjustments were made to dollar amounts stated in various provisions of the United States Bankruptcy Code, one provision in Title 28 of the United States Code, and in the bankruptcy forms and instructions listed below. The adjustments apply to cases commenced on or after April 1, 2025.

Section 104 of the Code provides that the Judicial Conference made the adjustments, which are calculated at three-year intervals on the basis of the change in the Consumer Price Index for the most recent three-year period ending immediately before the year in which the adjustment is made and rounded to the nearest \$25. The Conference has delegated that authority to the Administrative Office.

The revised dollar amounts were published in the [Federal Register](#) on February 4, 2025, Vol. 90, No. 22 at pages 8941-8942. (**NOTE: The Federal Register issued a correction on February 24, 2025 - [CLICK HERE](#) for details**).

**Pending Changes to the Official and Director's Bankruptcy Forms, and instructions impacted include:**

- **Official Form 106C**, Schedule C: Property You Claim as Exempt (individuals)
- **Official Form 107**, Statement of Financial Affairs for Individuals Filing for Bankruptcy
- **Official Form 201**, Voluntary Petition for Non-Individuals Filing for Bankruptcy
- **Official Form 207**, Statement of Financial Affairs for Non-Individuals Filing for Bankruptcy
- **Official Form 410**, Proof of Claim
- **Official Form 122A-2**, Chapter 7 Means Test Calculation
- **Official Form 122C-2**, Chapter 13 Calculation of Your Disposable Income
- **Director's Form 2000**, Required Lists, Schedules, Statements, and Fees
- **Director's Form 2500E**, Instructions for Summons to Debtor in Involuntary Case
- **Instructions for Individual Debtors**
- **Instructions for Non-Individual Debtors**

Changes to Official and Director's forms may be viewed at <https://www.uscourts.gov/rules-policies/pending-rules-and-forms-amendments/pending-and-recent-changes-bankruptcy-forms>.



## Changes to PCL's Find Bankruptcy by SSN/EIN Page

Starting **April 13, 2025**, PACER users can once again search for bankruptcy records using only the SSN/EIN on the PACER Case Locator (PCL) Bankruptcy Search page. However, this page will require responding to a CAPTCHA challenge to proceed. **Note:** There are no current plans to update the PCL API. API users will still need to provide a last name or business name when searching by SSN/EIN. For more information, visit the PACER Service Center at <https://pacer.uscourts.gov>.

## Multifactor Authentication for CM/ECF and PACER

In mid-May, the Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts will begin implementing Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) to enhance system security for CM/ECF and PACER. MFA provides an added layer of security to accounts by helping protect against cyberattacks that steal passwords, significantly reducing the risk of unauthorized access.

After implementation, all CM/ECF users with filing and/or other types of CM/ECF-level access will be required to enroll in MFA. Users with PACER-only access will have the option to enroll. From mid-May to the end of 2025, users with any type of CM/ECF-level access who do not voluntarily enroll will be randomly selected to do so. These randomly selected CM/ECF users will be notified of the MFA requirement during login. For more information, visit <https://pacer.uscourts.gov/announcements/2025/04/04/multifactor-authentication-coming-soon>.

## Upcoming Legal Seminars and Other Events

- **Real Property Law Institute**, May 8, 2025 at 8:15 AM to May 10, 2025 at 1:00 PM EDT, Omni Amelia Island Resort, Fernandina Beach, Florida. For more info, visit <https://icle.gabar.org/item/real-property-law-institute-676431>.
- **14th Annual Legal Food Frenzy**, April 14-25, 2025. Co-sponsored by the Georgia Attorney General's Office, State Bar of Georgia Young Lawyers Division, and Feeding Georgia. Contact for more information: <https://galegalfoodfrenzy.org/contact-us/>.
- **Law Day Luncheon and Annual Meeting**—May 25, 2025 at Noon. Sponsored by the Savannah Bar Association. Savannah YLD will present the Judge Edward Hester Award, the Liberty Bell Award, the Robbie Robinson Award, and the John B. Miller Award. Contact: [savannahbarassociation@gmail.com](mailto:savannahbarassociation@gmail.com).
- **State Bar of Georgia Annual Meeting**—June 5-8, 2025. Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort & Spa, 1000 TPC Blvd., Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida. Contact: [danielleb@gabar.org](mailto:danielleb@gabar.org).

## Bankruptcy Rules and Forms Changes Coming **December 1, 2025**

The following rules amendments were prepared by the Judicial Conference's Committee on Rules of Practice and Procedure and transmitted to the U.S. Supreme Court in October 2024. If adopted and transmitted to the United States Congress by May 1, 2025, absent congressional action, these amendments will take effect on **December 1, 2025**:

### **Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure:**

- **Rule 3002.1** (*Notice Relating to Claims Secured by a Security Interest in the Debtor's Principal Residence in a Chapter 13 Case*): The proposed amendment to Rule 3002.1 would encourage compliance with its provisions by adding an optional motion process the debtor or case trustee can initiate to determine a mortgage claim's status while a Chapter 13 case is pending and to give the debtor an opportunity to cure any postpetition defaults that may have occurred. The changes also add more detailed provisions about notice of payment changes for home-equity lines of credit.
- **Rule 8006** (*Certifying a Direct Appeal to a Court of Appeals*): Rule 8006 addresses the process for requesting that an appeal go directly from the bankruptcy court to the court of appeals under 28 U.S.C. § 158(d)(2). The proposed amendment to Rule 8006(g) clarifies that any party to the appeal may file a request that a court of appeals authorize a direct appeal. The amendment dovetails with the proposed amendment to Appellate Rule 6.

### **Official Bankruptcy Forms Updates:**

410, 410C13-M1, 410C13-M1R, 410C13-N, 410C13-NR, 410C13-M2, and 410C13-M2R

### **Federal Rules of Appellate Procedure:**

6 and 39

### **Federal Rules of Civil Procedure:**

16, 26, and new Rule 16.1

*For more information regarding the rules amendments, please visit:*

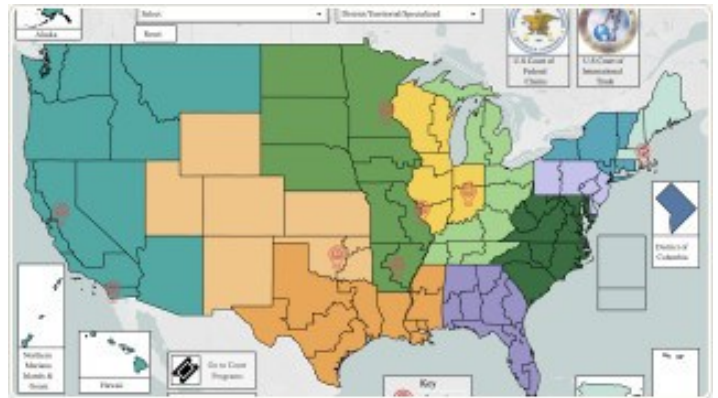
<https://www.uscourts.gov/rules-policies/pending-rules-and-forms-amendments>

## New Interactive Map Highlights Federal Courts' Civic Resources and Programs

Earlier this year, the Federal Judicial Center (FJC) posted an interactive civics map at the request of the Committee on the Judicial Branch. The map is designed to assist judges, court staff, and the public in locating and accessing civics programs and resources information pages hosted on federal court websites. To view the map, visit the FJC website at [www.fjc.gov/content/388213/interactive-civics-map](http://www.fjc.gov/content/388213/interactive-civics-map).

On the website, hover over the geographical area for each court on the map to navigate directly to the following webpages, if applicable for a court:

- A court's homepage
- A court's main civics webpage
- The civics website/webpage for the court's circuit
- A dedicated court information page for media



## Unclaimed Funds - Are You Owed Money?



Funds distributed in bankruptcy cases can go unclaimed for multiple reasons, including incorrect address for the recipient, uncashed distribution checks, and death of intended recipient. A recipient may not be aware that they are entitled to a distribution from the bankruptcy court.

The National Unclaimed Funds Locator was established to help people search for money they might be owed - to search this database FREE OF CHARGE, visit <https://ucfl.uscourts.gov/>.

Procedures for requesting distribution of unclaimed funds in the United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia are located on the Court's website at <https://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/unclaimed-funds-information>.

## Courthouse Accessibility and Accommodations; Communication Access Coordinators

### Communication Disabilities:

Under Judicial Conference policy, Bankruptcy Courts are responsible for providing sign language interpreter services for judicial proceedings as well as communications between counsel and parties when the bankruptcy proceeding is instituted by the United States, or a party has a hearing impairment (*whether or not also suffering from a speech impairment*). The United States Bankruptcy Court for the Southern District of Georgia has designed the following individuals to serve as the Court's Communication Access Coordinators, pursuant to the Guide to Judiciary Policy, Vol. 5, § 255.40:

- **April Rowe, Courtroom Deputy** - All cases assigned to Chief Judge Michele J. Kim, Courthouses located in Brunswick and Waycross, [April\\_Rowe@gas.uscourts.gov](mailto:April_Rowe@gas.uscourts.gov).
- **Jacqueline Bauknight, Courtroom Deputy** - All cases assigned to the Honorable Susan D. Barrett, Courthouses located in Augusta and Dublin, [Jacqueline\\_W\\_Bauknight@gas.uscourts.gov](mailto:Jacqueline_W_Bauknight@gas.uscourts.gov).
- **Elizabeth Bonanni, Courtroom Deputy** - All cases assigned to the Honorable Edward J. Coleman, III, Courthouses located in Savannah and Statesboro, [Elizabeth\\_Bonnani@gas.uscourts.gov](mailto:Elizabeth_Bonnani@gas.uscourts.gov).

The Communication Access Coordinators are responsible for coordinating sign language interpreters or other appropriate auxiliary aids and services to participants in bankruptcy judicial proceedings who are deaf, hearing-impaired, or have other communications disabilities. Individuals participating in bankruptcy court proceedings who require the assistance of a qualified sign language interpreter or other similar auxiliary aids and services must submit requests for services in advance of the court proceeding involved. The Bankruptcy Court does not provide foreign language interpreters.

If a communications disability is not obvious, you may attach documentation from an appropriate health care or rehabilitation professional that is sufficient to substantiate the disability and the need for auxiliary aids and services requested. Documentation is sufficient if it: (1) Describes the nature, severity, and duration of the applicant's communication disability, the activity or activities that the disability limits, and the extent to which the disability limits the applicant's ability to perform the activity or activities; and (2) Substantiates why the requested auxiliary aids and services are needed. Please submit all requests for services via email to the appropriate Courtroom Deputy listed above.

### Physical Disabilities:

Anyone who requires an accommodation at a courthouse location because of a physical disability should contact the appropriate Courtroom Deputy listed above. Please provide a description of the accommodations requested, the building location, and a description of the disability that necessitates the accommodations.

### Matters Pending Before the Court:

In providing accommodations to a person with a disability, the Communication Access Coordinators will not offer any legal advice or engage in any ex parte communication with a litigant concerning any aspect of a case. If a litigant wishes to assert that a disability has or may have an impact on the merits of a case, the litigant should communicate that information in an appropriate filing with the Court.

**Please note:** attorneys registering for CM/ECF access must be admitted to practice in the Southern District of Georgia, or admitted to appear pro hac vice, before full filing access can be granted.

Please review the Attorney Filer Registration and Attorney E-Filing Terms and Conditions at <https://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/cmecf-registration-information>.

For attorney admission procedures, please visit <https://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/attorney-admission-procedures>.

For information regarding appearing pro hac vice, please visit <https://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/attorney-admission-pro-hac-vice-procedures>.

## CM/ECF RESOURCES

### Register for CM/ECF Access

With the implementation of CM/ECF NextGen and Central Sign-On, registering for CM/ECF access in the Southern District of Georgia has never been easier! Users\*\* must first register for a [PACER](#) account, then request e-filing access to the Southern District of Georgia Bankruptcy Court's Live CM/ECF database. All of this can be completed within PACER.

Before requesting electronic access to the Court's database, filers must first read and agree to the Filer Terms and Conditions that are posted on the Court's website at:

[www.gasb.uscourts.gov/cmecf-registration-information](https://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/cmecf-registration-information).

Once you have submitted a request for filing access, or any updates to your current information, questions or concerns may be directed to our CM/ECF Central Sign-On Administrator, Courtney Neibel, at 912-650-4107. Please also visit the Court's website at:

<https://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/nextgen-information>.

***\*\*Please note that Debtors appearing Pro Se (those debtors without attorney representation) are not eligible to receive electronic filing access in the Southern District of Georgia Bankruptcy Court at this time.\*\****

### CM/ECF User Manuals

User manuals for CM/ECF are provided to assist filers in using the CM/ECF system for the U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Southern District of Georgia, and should be reviewed prior to electronic filing. The manuals also provide helpful information and docketing instructions for commonly filed pleadings, including new bankruptcy cases. The manuals were recently updated and are available on the Court's website at:

[www.gasb.uscourts.gov/cmecf-training-user-guidelinesmanuals-and-information](https://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/cmecf-training-user-guidelinesmanuals-and-information).

### To Report a Technical Issue with CM/ECF:

#### During Regular Business Hours

Contact the appropriate Clerk's Office:

Augusta 706-823-6000

Brunswick 912-280-1376

Savannah 912-650-4100

#### After Hours/Holidays/Weekends

Notify the Court immediately via email by clicking [HERE](#).



## CM/ECF Bankruptcy Events Modifications

### New and Modified Docket Events

Menu	Event	Notes
Motions/Applications	<b>Pay Filing Fee in Installments</b>	A prompt has been added to this event, with the following question: “Does the debtor owe any filing fee amount in a previous case filed in the Southern District of Georgia?” Answering yes will result in a display message noting that the application to pay filing fee in installments will be denied if there are any fees owed in a previous case for the debtor(s).
Motions/Applications	<b>Extend Automatic Stay</b>	A prompt has been added to this event to remind the filer to include a verification under oath by the debtor(s) with the filing.
Motions/Applications	<b>Impose Automatic Stay</b>	A prompt has been added to this event to remind the filer to include a verification under oath by the debtor(s) with the filing.

### New Order Type added to the eOrders Module

The order type **REFERRED MATTER** has been added when uploading an eOrder, to categorize a proposed eOrder for a matter which has been referred to a judge other than the judge assigned to the case.

### Can't find the event you are looking for?

Use the **SEARCH** feature in CM/ECF on the top menu bar, or contact Data Quality Analyst Courtney Neibel to recommend adding a new event:  
*courtney\_neibel@gas.uscourts.gov (912-650-4107)*

## New Payment Warning Messages Feature in CM/ECF

During the most recent CM/ECF security update, a new feature was added in CM/ECF to aid in preventing duplicate fee payments by external users. New warning messages are displayed when fees are reselected for payment. The messages are shown below.

If the fee is still owed (*e.g., the payment process was previously initiated but not completed*), the CM/ECF filing user can dismiss the warning message by clicking “OK” and proceeding with payment. Please note that when logged in as a CM/ECF filing user, you may also receive the messages shown below if you are filing multiple pleadings and will be submitting payment at the end of the filing process. This warning appears because CM/ECF may have logged you out of the system in the background without your knowledge. If this occurs and you are certain a fee is due, log out of CM/ECF, start a new session, and select “Pay Now.”

If you are unable to determine whether a payment has been processed or require additional assistance, please contact Leigh Cribbs, the Court’s Budget/Finance Analyst, at 912-650-4139.

**Internet Payments Due**

Select all

Check Fees to Pay	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/>	(4:23-bk-00159) \$1571.00

Next Clear

ecf.cmzb.aocms.uscourts.gov

WARNING: you have selected a filing fee that is either currently in progress or has already been processed. Review the case docket report to ensure a receipt has not already been docketed.

OK

**Internet Payments Due**

Select all

Check Fees to Pay	Amount
<input type="checkbox"/>	(4:23-bk-00159) \$1571.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	t(4:23-bk-00159) \$ 150.00

Next Clear

ecf.cmzb.aocms.uscourts.gov

WARNING: you have selected ALL Internet Payments Due. One or more of those payments due in the list are either currently in progress or have already been processed. The system will now automatically uncheck those items from the list of Internet Payments Due to prevent duplicate payments.

OK



## PHISHING ALERT:

### Fake Notices of Electronic Filing

Last fall, federal courts across the country began receiving reports of fake Notices of Electronic Filing (NEFs) being sent to attorneys and law firms. The emails appeared to be sent from “@uscourts.gov.ecf.digital.” These fake NEFs are phishing attempts to convince recipients to respond to the emails. Once a recipient replies to one of these emails, the recipient is sent a follow-up email containing a link to access a document that leads the user to a malicious website.

**Please take caution** if you receive one of these fake NEFs. Validate cases and case documentation through CM/ECF only, and do not download any attachments or click any links from unofficial or questionable sources. Registered CM/ECF users can verify NEF history in CM/ECF by going to *Utilities (or Reports) > NEF Summary Report*.

## Updating Contact Information

Please note that it is an attorney’s responsibility to keep the Court informed on how he or she may be contacted. Be sure to include a secondary email address in (*preferably with a different email host than the one supporting the primary email address*) in the attorney’s contact information in CM/ECF to minimize the risk of non-receipt.

Email address and mailing address changes must be submitted via the link to Maintain a PACER account. Instructions for updating an attorney mailing address in PACER are available in the CM/ECF Manual for Attorney Users at:

<https://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/cmecf-attorney-user-manual>

## Filing Requirements for a Motion to Extend or Impose Automatic Stay

A Motion to Extend or Impose Automatic Stay filed in the Southern District of Georgia must set forth specific facts to justify the relief requested, and must also include a verification under oath by the debtor(s). A proposed order is also required for a Motion to Impose Automatic Stay.

## Need assistance with filing?

Contact the Clerk’s Office in any of the following divisions during regular business hours (8:30 AM to 5:00 PM):

Augusta: (706) 823-6000

Brunswick: (912) 280-1376

Savannah: (912) 650-4100

## Reminders Regarding Electronic Signatures

When signing a document to be submitted to the Court, please be mindful of the requirements set forth in the Court's [CM/ECF Administrative Procedures](#) and [ECF Local Rule 8](#). Failure to comply with these rules/procedures will result in a deficiency notice issued to the filing party, and the matter may be stricken, dismissed, or denied.

The filing user's login and password required to submit documents in CM/ECF serve as the filing user's signature on all electronic documents filed with the Court. They also serve as a signature for purposes of Fed. R. Bankr. P. 9011, the Federal Rules of Bankruptcy Procedure, the Local Rules of this Court, and any other purpose for which a signature is required in connection with proceedings before the Court.

On the document to be filed, the typed signature must match the identity of the individual registered as the CM/ECF filer, and must be preceded by an "s/".

Digital and/or docu-sign signatures will not be accepted.

## Withdrawing a Document

When filing a withdrawal of a previously filed document, a certificate of service must be included showing service to parties who were served with the original document (*or subsequent documents, such as amendments to the original document*) that is being withdrawn, as well as parties who were served with a hearing notice on the document. Insufficient service will result in a deficiency notice issued to the filing party, and the matter may be stricken, dismissed, or denied.

The CM/ECF docket event for filing a Withdrawal of Document is located under *Bankruptcy > Miscellaneous > Withdrawal*.

The CM/ECF docket event for filing a Withdrawal of Proof of Claim is located under *Bankruptcy > Claim Actions > Withdrawal of Claim*.

The CM/ECF docket event for filing a Withdrawal of a Rule 3002.1 document is located under *Bankruptcy > Miscellaneous > Withdrawal of Rule 3002.1 Document*.

## Requirements for a Motion to Redact Personal Information

A Motion to Redact Personal Information must include the following:

- (1) The motion to redact;
- (2) The proposed redacted document(s) (*attached to the motion*);
- (3) A proposed order (*the following language must be included in the order - "The Clerk's Office is hereby authorized and directed to take steps necessary to prevent future public access to the [document description]"*);
- (4) Certificate of Service; and
- (5) \$28.00 per affected case.

## Service Requirements for Objection to Claim

Pursuant to Fed. R. Bankr. P. 3007(a) and its Committee Note, a claimant must be served by first class mail addressed to the person whom the claimant most recently designated on its proof of claim to receive notices, at the address indicated. There are two additional service requirements under Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7004:

1. If the claimant is an insured depository institution as defined in section 3 of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act, the objecting party must serve a copy of the objection and notice of opportunity for hearing by certified mail to the attention of an officer of the institution pursuant to Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7004(h). Certified mail is not required if the institution has appeared by its attorney, and the attorney is served by first class mail; the Court orders that certified mail is not required after notifying the institution; or the institution has waived in writing its entitlement to certified mail.
2. If the claimant is the United States or any of its officers or agencies, the objection and notice of opportunity for hearing must be served pursuant to Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7004(b)(4) or (5). If the agency of the U.S. is a corporation, the objecting party must serve the corporation under Fed. R. Bankr. P. 7004 (b)(3) to the attention of an officer, a managing or general agent, or to any other agent authorized to receive service of process.

Fed. R. Bankr. P. 3007(2)(B) requires that an objection to claim shall be served by first class mail or other permitted means on the debtor or debtor in possession, in addition to the trustee and the person or entity that filed the proof of claim.

## Motion for Approval of Personal Injury or Workers Compensation Settlement

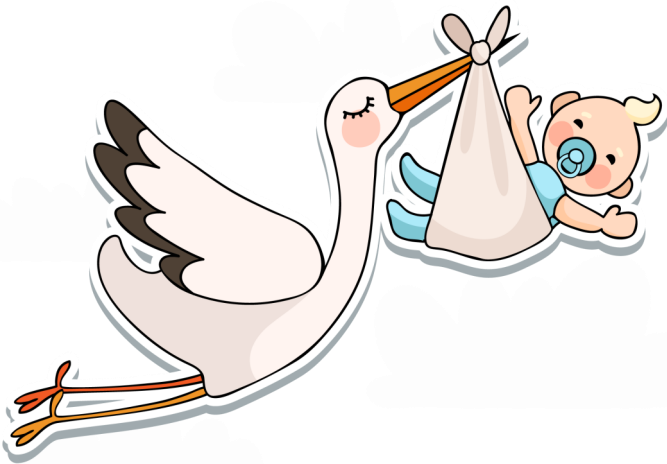
A Motion for Approval of a Personal Injury or Workers Compensation Settlement filed in the Southern District of Georgia must include specific information including settlement fees, expenses, and amounts to be paid and to whom (*including the payee name*). All amounts to be paid from the settlement must add up to the total amount of the settlement. In cases assigned to Judge Coleman, the motion must also include the date of the accident or injury. In cases assigned to Judge Kim, the motion and proposed order must include the name of the medical and/or other provider(s) and the amount(s) owed to each provider.

An attorney receiving funds from the settlement must be approved for employment by the Court; this is achieved by filing an Application to Employ the attorney pursuant to Fed. R. Bankr. P. 2014. If the attorney filing the motion/application is not admitted to practice in the Southern District of Georgia, the debtor's bankruptcy counsel should file the motion/application.

# Employee News

## Congratulations to Holly Bowers

On March 31, 2025, the Clerk's Office hosted a baby shower for Holly Bowers, Case Administrator in the Savannah division. Holly, her husband Ant, and big brother Hayden are expecting a baby boy this June. We are all thrilled to welcome baby Lucas into the Court family! We wish Holly, Ant, and Hayden the very best as they expand their sweet family.



## Hats Off to Carla Wilbourn and April Rowe

Hats off to Carla Wilbourn and April Rowe for recently completing programs offered by the Federal Judicial Center (FJC). Carla, the Divisional Manager in Augusta, completed the FJC's Advanced Supervisors Institute and attended an in-person workshop in Dallas, Texas. April, the Divisional Manager in Brunswick, completed the FJC's New Supervisors Development Program. We are proud of these ladies and their accomplishments - way to go!



## Celebrating milestones in federal service this year:



*Congratulations to Case Administrator  
Renaë Creel on 15 years of service!*



*Congratulations on this special milestone to:*

*Leigh Cribbs, Budget/Financial Analyst  
Courtney Neibel, Data Quality Analyst  
Lainie Saul, Chief Deputy Clerk*

## Sincere Appreciation for Hurricane Helene Relief Provided in Augusta

In late September 2024, the Southern District of Georgia was extremely impacted by Hurricane Helene, which swept first through Florida and moved slowly through the Southeastern United States, causing devastation in its path and in those areas on the outskirts of the storm. The city of Augusta, Georgia was heavily affected, with numerous downed trees, extensive power and water outages, and damaged property. We are grateful that our courthouses did not sustain any damage, and the members of our Court family made it safely through the storm, albeit with some hardships in its aftermath.

John Triplett, Clerk of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia, assisted by other Court staff members, organized relief efforts by gathering supplies and other donations to provide to the Court staff in Augusta. His relief group traveled to Augusta to deliver the supplies to those colleagues, and received countless expressions of awe, amazement, and gratitude for the volume of supplies delivered, along with stories from those folks who came to accept the supplies. John conveyed that credit is due to all of the generous people who donated money and supplies, and scoured stores in search of food and water, as well as those who assisted him in taking everything to Augusta.

The Court expresses its sincere appreciation for these relief efforts, and is proud of the care and love shown to our Court family members in need. We are stronger together, and this was proven by the dedication and support shown during the storm. Thank you!



*Photos by: John Triplett*



## Celebrating Asian Pacific American Heritage

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month is observed throughout the month of May to pay tribute to the achievements of generations who have contributed to American life. In 1992, the official designation of May as Asian Pacific Heritage Month was signed into law. The month of May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants. For more information, please visit:

<https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/annual-observances/asian-pacific-american-heritage-month>

## Law Day is celebrated on May 1 and throughout the month of May.

This annual observance has been a visible part of American legal culture since President Dwight D. Eisenhower established it in 1958 to celebrate the rule of law in a free society.

For more information, please visit:

<https://www.uscourts.gov/about-federal-courts/educational-resources/>



Every year, the American Bar Association suggests a Law Day theme and offers resources, programming, and tips to assist in organizing classroom and community activities. For more information, please visit:

[https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public\\_education/law-day/](https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_education/law-day/)

## Court's GovDelivery Messaging Phone Number Updated

On April 3, 2025, Georgia Southern Bankruptcy Court's GovDelivery messaging phone number was updated to the toll-free number (866) 561-2980.

No action is required by subscribers to the Court's GovDelivery notification system. Thank you for your understanding during this transition.

## Useful Links/Resources

### United States Courts:

[www.uscourts.gov](http://www.uscourts.gov)

### U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Georgia:

[www.gasd.uscourts.gov](http://www.gasd.uscourts.gov)

### United States Trustee Region 21:

[www.justice.gov/ust-regions-r21](http://www.justice.gov/ust-regions-r21)

### 11th Circuit Court of Appeals:

[www.ca11.uscourts.gov](http://www.ca11.uscourts.gov)

### National Creditor Registration Service:

<https://bankruptcynotices.uscourts.gov>

### Federal Poverty Guidelines:

<https://aspe.hhs.gov/topics/poverty-economic-mobility/poverty-guidelines>

### Unclaimed Funds Information:

[www.gasb.uscourts.gov/unclaimed-funds-information](http://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/unclaimed-funds-information)

### Transcript/Audio Requests:

[www.gasb.uscourts.gov/transcriptaudio-requests](http://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/transcriptaudio-requests)

### Debtor Electronic Bankruptcy Noticing (DeBN):

[www.gasb.uscourts.gov/debtor-electronic-bankruptcy-noticing-debn](http://www.gasb.uscourts.gov/debtor-electronic-bankruptcy-noticing-debn)

## Subscribe for News Updates

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Submit

## Contact Us

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**April Rowe, Brunswick Divisional Manager**

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**Savannah Office Main Number**

(912) 650-4100

**Cherish Howard, Savannah Divisional Manager**

(912) 650-4102

The Court will be **CLOSED** in observance of the upcoming federal holidays:

**Monday, May 26, 2025**

**Thursday, June 19, 2025**

**Friday, July 4, 2025**

**Monday, September 1, 2025**

*CM/ECF and PACER will be available for online filing and access to case information.*



*“Always make a total effort, even when the odds are against you.”*  
- Arnold Palmer

A special **THANK YOU** to the following contributors to this edition of *The Southern Scoop*\*:

John Triplett  
Crystal DeLaurentis  
Cherish Howard  
Carla Wilbourn  
Dana Wilson

*\*For questions, comments, corrections, or suggested articles regarding this newsletter, please email:*

**[courtney\\_neibel@gas.uscourts.gov](mailto:courtney_neibel@gas.uscourts.gov)**

*We look forward to your feedback!*