

GOVERNMENT GAB

Government Attorneys Section Newsletter

Vol. 1, No. 4 April 2009

Chair's Corner

As this year's officers' terms start winding down to a close, I pause to reflect on some of the events the Section has hosted and some of the agenda items yet to be accomplished. It is amazing how time quickly passes by when you are coming to the end. This past year, the Section has accomplished many things. We had another successful and enjoyable annual seminar, thanks to the officers, speakers and the many participants. We hosted receptions in which members and judges attended. We have a quarterly newsletter up and running, thanks to editor Chiquita Johnson and the newsletter committee. And, another form of communication, the georgiagasblog.blogspot.com, was formed to invite Section attorneys to vent, express and inform.

There is much more to do, such as update the Section bylaws, have another social, plan lunch and learns, join and form new committees. And the list goes on. Now is the time for you to think about how you would like to get involved. What changes would you like to see? What new ideas do you have to make the Section work for you? The success of this Section depends on you, the members. The officers and committee members plan and make things happen, but the Section is about its membership. The more you participate, the more rewarding your membership will be.

When I am long gone and forgotten, I hope that there will be greater participation and reward in being part of this Section. Government Attorneys need a forum within the State Bar of Georgia and this is it. We cannot sit idle as decisions and policies are being made. We are unique as attorneys in our service to the public sector. This Section gives us all a forum to be heard. Take advantage of it.

Cynthia Cartwright, Chair

CALL FOR GOVERNMENT ATTORNEY SECTION OFFICERS

Nominate yourself or someone you know in the Section who is interested in serving as a GAS officer. The new terms begin in June 2009. Submit your nominations to cartwric.gasupreme.us by April 30. Get involved! This is your chance to have an active role in the Section. As an officer, you will shape the focus and activities of the Section for the benefit of all members.



Department Spotlight: Department of Driver Services (DDS)

by Jennifer Ammons, General Counsel

The Department of Driver Services (DDS) was created in 2005 following the enactment of House Bill 501. This legislation disassembled the Department of Motor Vehicle Safety which was created only four years earlier and transferred its functions to other agencies.

Responsibility for driver's licenses and identification cards was given to DDS. In addition to issuing driver's licenses and ID cards, DDS also maintains driving records for anyone to whom a driver's license or identification card has been issued, and driving record information on nonresidents who have received a traffic ticket in Georgia. Additionally, DDS regulates driver training schools, commercial driving schools, driver improvement clinics, DUI risk reduction programs, ignition interlock providers, and limousine chauffeurs.

DDS' Legal Services Section is made up of the General Counsel Jennifer Greene Ammons, Deputy General Counsel Latoya Graham, Assistant General Counsel Lillie McLean and paralegal Karen Brooks. Their duties frequently involve researching and analyzing a vast array of legal issues beyond mere driver's license eligibility, including issues related to employment law, criminal law and procedure, constitutional law, administrative law, bankruptcy law, domestic relations law, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Not limited to transactional work, the staff of DDS Legal Services serves as hearing review officials and litigates appeals before the Office of State Administrative Hearings. Like many government

attorneys, they find that they are constantly confronted with new and novel legal questions. In short, an analogy can be drawn to life in a general practice firm, yet with only one "client."

"We have been heavily engaged in the procurement and implementation of the DDS' new systems," said Ms. Ammons. "These systems include the design and construction of a new driver's license issuance

system that will result in greater security to prevent counterfeiting and identity

theft and overall better customer service" Once the new system is implemented, DDS will have the capability to access and process paper documents that have been stored in digital format resulting in streamlined processing and a reduction in physical storage space. Finally, the creation of a new document management system will improve data integrity with a



reduction of processing errors.

The Legal Service Section's involvement in these projects required active participation in the development and drafting of the requests for proposals, review of submissions from vendors, negotiating contracts, and responding to Open Records requests about the procurement process.

"The Legal Services team at DDS is particularly proud of the fact that all three (3) procurements were accomplished simultaneously without any protests being filed," said Ms. Ammons.

DDS' Legal Services Section can be reached at 678-413-8765.

Georgia Stimulus Accountability Website

Governor Sonny Perdue announced the launch of the state's stimulus accountability website, www.stimulusaccountability.ga.gov. The website provides details on the state's use of funds made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The website also includes links to federal and local governments and associations that will play a role in receiving stimulus dollars.

Telecommuting - A Statewide Initiative

Work Away is a statewide initiative that encourages telework and work scheduling options for eligible employees. Telework offers employees a more productive working environment with fewer distractions. Both telework and scheduling options have been shown to result in better job performance, improved job satisfaction and employee morale, and a reduction in absenteeism and sick leave usage.

If you have articles that you would like published in future issues of *Government Gab*, please forward them to Chiquita Johnson, editor, at CJohnson4@augustaga.gov



Get Involved

The Section's Event Committee Co-Chairs are looking for topic suggestions and speakers for the future lunch and learns. Submit your ideas to Martin Chen at martin.chen@ed.gov or Angela Jones at anjones@dot.us.

State Bar of Georgia: Board of Governors

Get Out and Vote!

There are Section members and public section attorneys running for seats on the Board of Governors. In particular are the following:

Post 1:

Hon. Diane Bessen, state government

Post 2:

Robert Lewis, federal government and section member

Post 11:

Stephanie Graham, former assistant district attorney in Bronx County, N.Y.

R. Gary Spencer, former public defender

Post 13:

William Barnette, former clerk for Louisiana Court of Appeals, New Orleans, La.

From the cursory reading of the biographies e-mailed to State Bar members, the attorneys listed above were the only ones found to either be Section members, or current or former public sector attorneys. The Section does not endorse any candidate, but encourages you to be informed about the upcoming election or attorneys that will represent you on the Board of Governors.

Job Board

State of Georgia Announcements

State of Georgia Legal Officer-AL (Attorney 2) (95015)

Requisition Number: 422-95015af

County of Vacancy: Fulton

Functional Area: Legal

Recruitment Period: 3/9/2009 - 4/7/2009

Number of Openings: 1Shift

First Screening Type: Resume Review

Statewide job statistics for job code 95015 - Annual

Salary Minimum: \$52,172.55 Annual Salary

Maximum: \$91,137.94 Salary Details: Position

58183. Pay Grade 19.

Duties & Responsibilities: The mission of the Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs is to enforce Georgia's Fair Business Practices Act and other criminal and civil consumer protection laws.

State of Georgia Secretary, Legal (95404)

Requisition Number: SWD-95404ab

County of Vacancy: Fulton

Functional Area: Legal

Recruitment Period: On-going

Retest Code: 1

Screening Type: Scored Evaluation

Statewide job statistics for job code 95404 -

Annual Salary Minimum: \$26,000.00

Duties & Responsibilities: Provides administrative & legal secretarial support; including, but not limited to, typing briefs, correspondence, pleadings, forms, agreements and administrative orders from handwritten notes or dictation; filing pleadings and documents in courts; opening & closing files; responding to calls from clients, attorneys and citizens; maintaining files and records; maintaining leave records, office inventory supplies and updating legal references.

Federal Announcements

Closing	Job Title	Agency	Location	Salary
3/25/2009	Supervisory General Attorney, GS-905-15	Labor, Office of the Solicitor	US-GA-Atlanta	116,364.00 +
3/26/2009	Claims Assistant (Fee Services)	Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration	US-GA-Atlanta	39,687.00 +
3/27/2009	Attorney Adviser Commerce	Economic Development Admin	US-GA-Atlanta	56,411.00 +
3/27/2009	Legal Assistant (OA)	Executive Office, & Office of US Attorneys	US-GA-Savannah	42,214.00 +
3/31/2009	Paralegal Specialist Homeland Security	Customs and Border Protection	US-GA-Savannah	30,772.00 +
4/1/2009	General Attorney Homeland Security	Customs and Border Protection	US-GA-Atlanta	58,734.00 +
4/6/2009	General Attorney (Tax)	Internal Revenue Service	US-GA-Atlanta	73,623.00 +
4/6/2009	General Attorney (Tax)	Internal Revenue Service	US-GA-Atlanta	67,613.00 +
4/6/2009	General Attorney (Tax)	Internal Revenue Service	US-GA-Atlanta	67,613.00 +
4/13/2009	Staff Attorney Transportation	Federal Aviation Admin.	US-Continental	39,400.00 +
5/31/2009	Rating VSR Veterans Affairs,	Veterans Benefits Administration	US-Throughout The Nation	65,315.00 +
8/1/2009	Administrative Law Judge	Multi-Agency	US-Throughout The Nation	112,614.00 +
12/31/2009	Federal Judicial Staff Attorney(s)	US Courts	US-GA-Atlanta	58,734.00
3/8/2010	Contact Representative	Navy Field Offices	US-GA-Kings Bay	18,7320.00

Georgia Appeals Reports and Georgia Reports Needed

The Reporter of Decisions' Office is in need of Georgia Appeals Reports and Georgia Reports. Our office is responsible for supplying sets of Reports to judges and other governmental agencies. Each year there is a demand for complete sets because of new positions created for judges and for various other reasons.

Please contact us if you have sets you no longer need. Please pass the word on to anyone or any organization/agency who may wish to return their books. Thank you.

Contact: Cynthia Cartwright, Assistant Reporter of Decisions, (404) 657-4024.

Equal Justice Works Podcast: The Student Debt Relief Series

Equal Justice Works has launched a new podcast series about student debt relief that offers “tips and tools on how to cope with student debt while working in public service.” Although the series is designed with lawyers, law students, and the legal community in mind, the podcasts are useful to anyone in public service jobs facing large amounts of student debt. The podcasts can be located at <http://www.wcl.american.edu/publicinterest/ejw/podcast.cfm>

In the first episode, *How to Figure Out if You Benefit from the College Cost Reduction & Access Act and How Much?*, Heather Jarvis, Senior Program Manager for Equal Justice Works, focuses on Public Service Loan Forgiveness. The second episode focuses on what types of payments qualify for Public Service Loan Forgiveness. Future podcasts will explain Income-Based Repayment and specific aspects of both programs.

Loan Forgiveness

The federal College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007 (CCRAA) was signed into law (20 USC ' 1087e). This new law helps public service lawyers by lowering monthly loan repayments based on income and ultimately cancels remaining loan debt after 10 years of public service. To meet the requirements for loan forgiveness a borrower must: (1) make 120 qualifying monthly payments on an eligible loan on or after Oct. 1, 2007; (2) be employed in a public service job as defined in the Act during the of the qualifying monthly payments; (3) be employed in a public service job at the time the Secretary of Education forgives the loan; and (4) make qualifying payments under the repayment options enumerated in the Act. In the administration of this new law, the U.S Department of Education published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking last year.

Volunteers are needed: to participate in writing articles for the quarterly newsletter; submitting updates on Attorney General, state and federal opinions; sitting on the technology committee and the annual government attorney of the year committee. Get involved to make this Section work for you and your peers!

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georgiagasblog.blogspot.com is home to the Section blog. Go here to share information and connect with the Section.



Thank you...

...to Georgia Court of Appeals Judge John Ellington and Judge Herbert Phipps for being the guest speakers at the Government Attorney Section Lunch during the 2009 State Bar of Georgia Mid-Year meeting at the State Bar Conference Center and

Thank you...

...to all the participants that had lunch with us and listened to the pearls of wisdom from these two fine appellate judges!

A special thanks to Chiquita Johnson for serving as Editor and to Derrick Stanley for compiling the *Government Gab*.